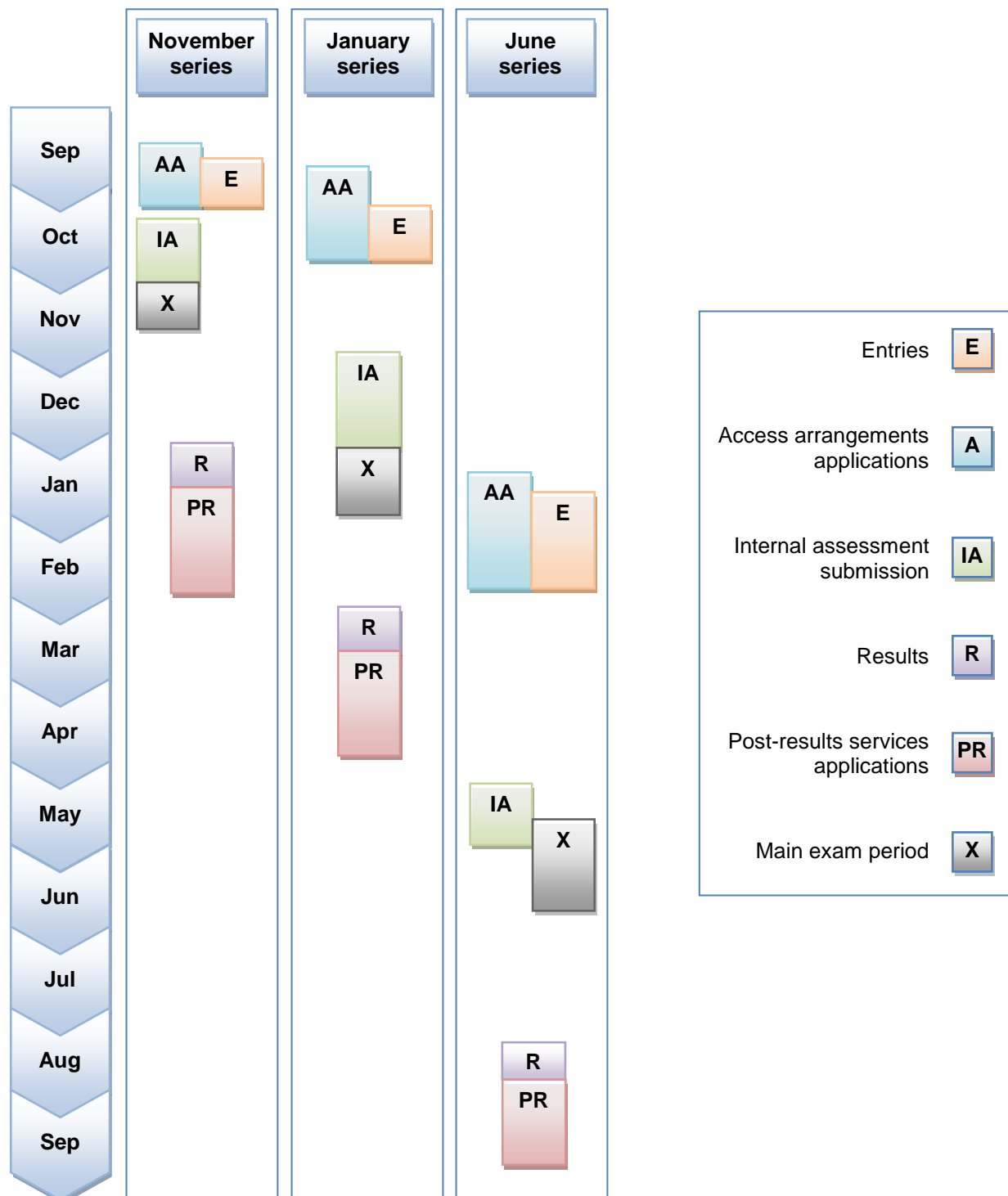




**GUIDANCE FOR PRIVATE CANDIDATES
2015/16**

Overview of the year

The diagram below gives an overview of what you will need to be thinking about at various points throughout the year. Terms are explained in the relevant sections of this guide and in the glossary (see [13.1 Glossary](#)). For details of deadlines and key dates, you should speak to the exams officer at your centre or, alternatively, visit the [OCR website](#).



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1 Who this guide is for

This guide is designed to provide private candidates wishing to obtain an OCR qualification with the administrative information they need to get started. Exams officers may also find this information useful. Terms and abbreviations are listed in the glossary (see [Section 13.1](#)).

A **private candidate** is someone who pursues a course of study independently but takes an examination or assessment at an approved examination centre. A private candidate may be a part-time student, someone taking a distance learning course, or someone being tutored privately.

As an awarding body, OCR is set up to deal with **centres** (schools, colleges and similar institutions), but we are aware that a number of candidates wish to operate as private candidates. Our administrative processes can be adapted to support candidates wishing to take this route; however, please be aware that most of the arrangements for your exams will be made through your accommodating centre (see [Section 3](#)). The **exams officer** will be the first port of call at your centre for any queries.

The qualifications this guide refers to are:

- Cambridge Nationals
- AS and Advanced GCE (including Applied GCE)
- GCSE (including Applied GCSE)
- Entry Level Certificate
- Free Standing Maths Qualification (FSMQ)
- Level 2 Award
- Level 1/2 Certificate
- Level 3 Certificate
- Principal Learning
- Project.

As vocational qualifications are administered differently from the above qualifications, they are not covered in this guidance. For information about vocational qualifications, including Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills and Cambridge Progression, please visit the [OCR website](#) or call our Customer Contact Centre (see [Section 2](#)).

See [Section 3](#) for details of how to find a centre which can accommodate you for OCR vocational qualifications as well as for those listed above.

2 Contacting OCR

If you have questions about taking assessments with OCR, our website should be the first place to look for information: www.ocr.org.uk. In particular, you may also find the OCR [Admin Guide: 14–19 Qualifications](#) useful.

However, if you still have any queries, please contact the OCR Customer Contact Centre:

Telephone: 01223 553998 (08:00–17:30 Monday to Friday)
Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk
Post: OCR, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU

As part of our quality assurance programme, calls may be recorded or monitored for training and monitoring purposes.

3 Finding a centre

UK centres (e.g. schools and colleges) that are approved to enter their own candidates for OCR examinations may also accept entries from private candidates.

If you are looking to enter for any of the 14–19 qualifications listed in [Section 1](#), or if you are interested in taking any of OCR's vocational qualifications (including Cambridge Technicals, Functional Skills and Cambridge Progression), the Customer Contact Centre can provide you with a list of OCR centres in your region that may accept private candidates. However, there is no guarantee that the centres listed can assist with requests for the particular subjects you wish to take.

The Head of Centre (e.g. headteacher or principal) decides whether or not the centre will accept requests from private candidates, so you should contact centres directly to establish whether they are willing to host you. We recommend that you allow yourself plenty of time to start contacting centres well in advance of when your entry needs to be made (see [Section 6](#)).

We also suggest that you contact your local authority for further advice on finding centres that may be able to help you. You can search for your local authority's contact details at www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council.

4 Teaching and learning

As a private candidate, you will be studying independently of the centre through which you take your exams. Therefore, your centre is not responsible for the teaching of your subject(s). Similarly, though OCR provides the exams and assessments you will take, it is your course provider or tutor who is responsible for teaching you. Therefore, you should contact them if you have any questions about your course.

We advise you to obtain a copy of the **specification** for any subjects you wish to study; these are available to download, along with some **past papers**, from the relevant qualification pages of the [OCR website](#). If you are unsure which specification you are following, your course provider or tutor should be able to confirm this for you.

Although all OCR subjects are available to you, certain specifications may not be suitable for you as a private candidate. It is important, therefore, that you establish the suitability of the specification you intend to follow and obtain initial confirmation from a centre that they are prepared to host you as a private candidate. We advise you to contact your course provider or the OCR Customer Contact Centre (see [Section 2](#)) for further information about OCR specifications.

5 Fees

You can find details of fees in the OCR Fees List, which is available on the [OCR website](#). Please note that the information in our fees list should be treated as an indication only. Although your centre will charge you the relevant fees for the cost of the assessments you are taking, they may also charge an administrative fee. These vary from centre to centre, so you will need to clarify this with the exams officer at your centre.

6 Entries

In order to take an assessment and receive a result, you will need your centre to enter you for a qualification. Final entries provide OCR with detailed data for each candidate, showing each assessment to be taken.

- In **linear qualifications**, all the examinations are taken at the end of the course. For each linear qualification, one entry needs to be made for you.
- **Unitised qualifications** are made up of separately assessed units which may be taken over several exam series. A separate **unit entry** is required for each unit you plan to take. In addition to these, your centre will need to make a **certification entry** for you in order for you to be awarded an overall grade at the end of the course. There may be certain restrictions that you will need to be aware of if you intend to resit any units – you should check this with your centre.
- Current GCSEs are **linear with a unitised entry structure**. For these qualifications, your centre must make both unit and certification entries, but you will take 100% of the assessment at the end of the course.

As a private candidate, you are entirely responsible for arranging your own entry through your centre for any OCR exams and assessments you wish to take, and for paying the related fees.

6.1 Information needed to make entries

When your centre makes your entries, they will require the following information from you:

- **Full name, date of birth and contact details** – Your entries should be made in your legal name as it appears on your birth certificate or passport.
- **Evidence of your identity** – For example, passport or birth certificate.
- **Details of the subjects for which you wish to enter** – You can find the relevant entry codes in the *OCR Admin Guide: 14–19 Qualifications*, which is available on the [OCR website](#).
- **Unique candidate identifier (UCI)** – The UCI is a 13-character code which is unique to you and is used to link your results together (for example, if you have taken units at different centres). If you have previously taken GCSE or GCE A Level exams, you should already have a UCI; you can find this on your statement of results. If you do not already have a UCI, your centre should be able to provide one for you.
- **Unique learner number (ULN) (optional)** – The unique learner number (ULN) is a personal ten-digit number, which is used to ensure your results are provided to the Personal Learning Record (PLR). The PLR, available on a secure website, enables learners, education providers, training providers and employers to access achievement data in one place. For more information, and to generate a ULN, please refer to the Learning Records Service www.gov.uk/government/collections/learning-records-service.
- **Details of any coursework** – If applicable. See [Section 8.1](#) for more information about coursework.
- **Payment details** – Speak to your centre about what they require.

If you have entered for any exams elsewhere, you should tell your centre at this point, as this will help avoid any timetable clashes and duplication of UCI numbers.

6.2 Once your entries have been made

You should make sure that you receive a **statement of entry** from your centre. This shows what qualifications you are entered for and gives details of your timetabled exams. You should check that your personal details on the statement of entry are correct. You need to keep this in a safe place, and we recommend you take it with you to your exams so that you have the information you need to hand.

7 Access arrangements and special consideration

If you have any special requirements that may affect your ability to complete an exam or assessment, your centre may apply on your behalf for the arrangements outlined below. If you have any special requirements, it is worth discussing these with your centre as soon as possible.

More detailed information about access arrangements and special consideration can be found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* and *A guide to the special consideration process*, which are available from the [JCQ website](#).

7.1 Before the exam: Access arrangements

Access arrangements are made prior to an assessment to allow a candidate with particular requirements (e.g. special educational needs, disability or temporary injury) to demonstrate their knowledge and what they can do without changing the assessment. For example, you may require a reader, a word processor or a Braille question paper.

It is a good idea to make your centre aware of any access arrangements you might need when you first approach them with a request to be hosted as a private candidate. You must request any access arrangements through your centre as soon as possible. You will normally be required to provide evidence to support an application for access arrangements.

7.2 After the exam: Special consideration

If, on the day of the exam or whilst completing an assessment, you are affected by a temporary illness, injury or other indisposition, you may be entitled to apply for special consideration. Special consideration is an adjustment made to a candidate's mark or grade.

You must request special consideration through your centre at the time of the exams; it cannot be requested after you receive your results. If you feel you may need special consideration, speak to your exams officer, who should be able to advise you.

8 Internal assessment arrangements

Internal assessment can be either coursework, controlled assessment or non exam assessment (see [Section 13.1](#) for definitions). The arrangements for coursework, controlled assessment and non exam assessments are summarised in the sections below. If you have any questions about internal assessment that are not answered here, you should speak to your tutor or exams officer.

If you are taking any of the following qualifications, you may be required to submit **coursework**:

- Current GCE AS or A Level
- Cambridge Nationals

- Entry Level Certificate.

If you are taking any of the following qualifications, you may be required to submit **controlled assessment**:

- Current GCSE
- Principal Learning
- Project.

If you are taking any of the following qualifications, you may be required to submit work for your **non exam assessment**:

- GCE AS and A Level (first teaching 2015)
- GCSE (9–1) (first teaching 2015)

8.1 Coursework arrangements

When submitting completed coursework to your centre, you are required to complete a **candidate authentication statement** (available on the [OCR website](#)) to confirm that your work is your own, and give this to your centre with your coursework. Your centre is then responsible for confirming to OCR that they are satisfied that you completed the work under the required conditions. If you or your centre cannot confirm the authenticity of your work, you may not receive a mark. You must, therefore, discuss the arrangements for completing your coursework with your centre, and ensure that you comply with all the qualification specific requirements.

You should check with your exams officer when you will need to submit your coursework, as your centre may require it well in advance of the dates by which they must submit the work to OCR.

8.2 Controlled assessment arrangements

The controlled assessment process consists of three stages:

- **Task setting** – Tasks are normally set either by OCR or by the centre.
- **Task taking** – This is how you carry out the tasks and the conditions under which the assessment takes place.
- **Task marking** – Tasks will usually be marked by your teacher or tutor but, depending on the subject, may be marked by OCR.

Different levels of control (high, medium and limited) are set for each of these three stages, depending on the subject. The control level determines the level of supervision you must have at each stage of the assessment.

Important: You can only undertake controlled assessments through your centre, and elements with high control levels will need to be completed under appropriate supervision by your teacher or tutor. For all elements of the assessment, you must be available on the dates and times specified by your centre to complete them.

Your centre is responsible for:

- Authenticating your tasks (to confirm to OCR that they are satisfied that you completed the work under the required conditions)
- Storing your work securely between sessions
- Assessing your completed tasks (where applicable).

8.3 Non exam assessment arrangements

Non exam assessments measure subject-specific skills that cannot be tested by timed written papers. In 2015/16, this only applies to GCE AS Level Art and Design (first teaching 2015) and the arrangements are similar to current AS Level Art and Design (see Section 8.2).

9 Examination arrangements

Exams take place within **series** at different points during the year (November, January, and June); not all exams are available each series so you can see what's available from the OCR timetables, which can be downloaded from the [OCR website](#). The published start times for examination **sessions** are 9.00am and 1.30pm, but your centre will determine the appropriate start time, based on the timetable and the associated regulations. You are not permitted to take an exam before the date shown on the timetable.

If two or more of your exams are scheduled at the same time, you should contact your centre straight away so that alternative arrangements can be made if necessary.

9.1 On the day of the exam

You should check with your exams officer how early you need to arrive on the day of your exam. You must arrive on time for all your exams; if you arrive after the exam has started, you may be allowed to enter the exam room and sit the exam, but this is at your centre's discretion.

You will be required to prove your identity, so you must ensure you have an appropriate form of identification with you (e.g. passport or photographic driving licence). We also recommend that you take your statement of entry with you, as you will be required to write your centre number and candidate number on your exam paper.

You must not take any unauthorised materials or equipment into the exam room (e.g. calculator cases/instruction leaflets, bags, or electronic or radio communication devices, including mobile phones). If you take a pencil case into the exam room, it must be see-through.

You can find more information about the regulations governing exam arrangements in the JCQ document, *Instructions for conducting examinations*, which is available on the [JCQ website](#). In particular, you should read the *Warning to Candidates* and the *Information for Candidates*, which can be found at the end of the document.

10 Results

Results are released to centres and candidates to allow any queries to be resolved before certificates are issued. Until certificates are issued, results are deemed to be **provisional** and may be subject to amendment following the outcome of any post-results services (see [Section 11](#)).

Provisional results will be provided electronically to your centre, who will make them available to you on the dates shown below.

Series	Qualification	Results published
November 2015	GCSE (Mathematics English, English Language) – resits only unless you were 16 or older on 31 August 2015 Cambridge Nationals	7 January 2016

January 2016	Level 2 Award, Entry Level Certificate, FSMQ, Principal Learning, Project, Level 1/2 Certificate, Level 3 Certificate, Cambridge Nationals	3 March 2016
June 2016	GCE, FSMQ, Extended Project, Level 3 Principal Learning, Level 3 Certificate	18 August 2016
	GCSE, Entry Level Certificate, Project, Level 2 Principal Learning, Level 2 Award, Level 1/2 Certificate, Cambridge Nationals	25 August 2016

Your centre should provide you with a statement of results showing your marks and grades. You should make arrangements either to collect your results from the centre or for the centre to forward them to you. Please note that OCR **cannot** provide results directly to you.

Your certificate(s) will follow at a later date (see [Section 12](#)).

10.1 Interpreting your results

In addition to grades, the following results indicators could appear on your statement of results.

Indicator	Meaning
No Result	A result has not been issued. This may be for a number of reasons; for example, if your work was not submitted or if you were issued with more than one UCI.
#	This character, used to denote partial absence , will be shown next to a grade if you failed to submit work for some, but not all, of the subject's components.
Pending	You should check with your centre. In all cases, OCR should have provided them with an explanation for this status.

Special consideration: If you have been given an enhanced grade due to special consideration (see [Section 7.2](#)), there may not be an obvious correlation between the marks and grades shown on your statement of results.

If any of the above indicators appear on your statement of results, speak to the exams officer at your centre. More information about interpreting your results is available on the [OCR website](#). Details of available post-results services are given in [Section 11](#). For details of how Speaking and Listening results for GCSE English (J350) and GCSE English Language (J355) are recorded on certificates, see [Section 12](#).

11 Post-results services

If your results are not as you expected, we offer a number of post-results services, some of which you can apply for independently (see below). Please note that you will be required to provide proof of identity and pay the appropriate fee before your request is processed. Your centre may also apply for these services on your behalf; however, as a private candidate, you are advised to check with your exams officer whether your centre is willing to do this. Forms and further information are available on request from the OCR Customer Contact Centre.

Available post-results services are summarised below; these are explained in greater detail in the *OCR Admin Guide: 14–19 Qualifications*, which is available on the [OCR website](#). You may also find the *JCQ Post-Results Services Booklet* useful; this is available on the [JCQ website](#).

For details of fees associated with post-results services, please see the [OCR Fees List](#).

11.1 Missing and incomplete results (MIR)

This service is only available through your centre.

Centres may request an investigation into a candidate's results where it is believed that one of the following result indicators has been incorrectly applied (see [Section 10.1](#) for an explanation of what these indicators mean):

- No Result
- # (partial absence)
- Pending.

This service should also be used if you are missing an individual subject result, or you have not received any results. There is no charge for an MIR query.

11.2 Late certification

This service is only available through your centre.

When your entries were made for any unitised (or linear with a unitised entry structure) qualifications, your centre will have entered you for the individual units making up the qualification(s) you plan to take. In order for you to receive a qualification at the end of the course, a **certification entry** should also have been made (this allows your individual unit results to be combined and the qualification to be awarded).

If, however, the certification entry was not made, you can still be entered for certification after the release of the January and June series unit results. This is known as a late certification, and the request will need to be made by your centre. There is no charge for this service, with the exception of GCSE Short Courses, for which a certification entry fee is made.

11.3 Enquiries about results (EAR)

You may apply for this service independently of your centre.

Contact the OCR Customer Contact Centre (see [Section 2](#)) for forms and further information.

Several enquiry about results services are available, depending on the qualification. Enquiries about results include the following services:

- **Request for clerical checking** – A re-check of all the clerical procedures leading to the issue of your result.
- **Review of marking** – To check that the mark scheme was applied correctly.
- **Review of moderation** – To check that the assessment criteria were applied correctly. (Note that an application for this type of enquiry would need to be submitted by your centre as the outcome could affect other students in your moderation group.)

Please be aware that, with an enquiry about results, your mark and grade may go down as well as up. The fees associated with enquiries about results are provided in the [OCR Fees List](#).

If you still have concerns following the outcome of an enquiry about results, you may appeal against it. This must be done in writing, within 14 calendar days of receipt of the outcome, and sent to the Appeals Team at appeals@ocr.org.uk. For more information about appeals, please see the *JCQ Guide to the Awarding Bodies' Appeals Processes*, which is available on the [JCQ website](#).

11.4 Access to scripts (ATS)

You may apply for this service independently of your centre.

Contact the OCR Customer Contact Centre (see [Section 2](#)) for forms and further information.

We will provide access to electronic copies of marked scripts for AS/Advanced GCE, FSMQ, GCSE, Principal Learning, Level 2 Award, Level 1/2 Certificate, Level 3 Certificate and Cambridge Nationals. 'Script' refers to any externally assessed work which is primarily written. The access to scripts service does not apply to coursework, controlled assessment, non exam assessment, orals or audio/video tapes.

If you need to obtain your final results quickly (for example, to support a university application) you may request a copy (referred to as a priority copy) of your script(s) to help you decide whether to submit an enquiry about results. Please note that this is only available for GCE, Level 3 Principal Learning, Advanced FSMQ and Level 3 Certificate qualifications.

You may also request a non-priority copy of your script (also known as a script to support teaching and learning) for GCE, GCSE, FSMQ, Level 2 Award, Level 1/2 Certificate, Level 3 Certificate, Principal Learning and Cambridge Nationals qualifications. Please contact your centre for details of the deadlines for requesting these services. The fees for these services can be found on the [OCR website](#).

12 Certificates

Certificates will be sent to your centre after the relevant deadline for post-results services. You should make arrangements either to collect your certificates from the centre or for the centre to forward them to you (in this case, you should make sure you inform your centre immediately if your address changes).

If you do not receive a certificate, contact your centre.

Certificates are issued in the name we have for you at the time the award is made. Your entry should have been made in your legal name, which can be supported by appropriate documentation (e.g. birth certificate). Replacements will not be provided to accommodate a subsequent change of name (including a change by deed poll).

Certificates are issued only when you have achieved the minimum grade or above; certificates are not produced for unclassified (U) grades.

GCSE Speaking and Listening: As the result for Speaking and Listening does not contribute to the calculation for GCSE English (J350) and GCSE English Language (J355), this result will be shown independently of the qualification grade on the certificate, on a five-point scale: 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, of which 5 is the highest and 1 the lowest. A Speaking and Listening grade will not be shown on the certificate unless you receive a graded (A*–G) result for the GCSE.

12.1 Certificate conditions of issue

A certificate is and remains the property of OCR and is issued on the following conditions:

- A certificate must be returned upon OCR's request. OCR reserves the right to replace certificates if necessary.
- Any alteration or defacement of a certificate renders it invalid and may result in the withdrawal of grades.

- Your centre is responsible for forwarding your certificates to you. They may be handed to you in person or posted to you by a traceable method. Any certificates lost in transit, which were not posted by a traceable method, cannot be replaced; in this case, you may apply for a **certifying statement of results** (see [Section 12.2](#)).
- If you do not claim your certificate, your centre may destroy it after 12 months.

12.2 Certificate replacements

Replacements for certificates lost by your centre or to amend personal details (e.g. incorrect date of birth or misspelt name) are available for six months from the date of issue of the original certificate. However, please note that you can only apply for these through your centre and there is a charge any changes to a certificate (see the [OCR Fees List](#)).

If you lose your certificate, you must apply for a **certifying statement of results**. This is an official copy of the final exam results held by OCR. There is a charge for each certifying statement of results (see the [OCR Fees List](#)).

The application form for a certifying statement can be downloaded from the [OCR website](#).

Certifying statements of results are issued in your legal name at the time the award is made. Replacements will not be provided to accommodate a subsequent change of name (including a change by deed poll).

13 Reference

13.1 Glossary

Access arrangements	An arrangement made prior to an assessment to allow a candidate with particular requirements to demonstrate their ability.
Access to scripts (ATS)	A post-results service which provides access to marked scripts for GCE AS/A Level, FSMQ, GCSE, Principal Learning, Level 2 Award, Level 1/2 Certificate, Level 3 Certificate and Cambridge Nationals qualifications.
Centre	A school, college or similar institution that is approved to offer OCR qualifications.
Certification	The process of awarding a grade for a subject, specification or whole qualification.
Certifying statement of results	An official copy of your final exam results held by OCR, issued to replace a lost or damaged certificate.
Component	Discrete parts (e.g. a written exam or a piece of coursework) which make up a whole unit or qualification.
Controlled assessment	Internally assessed work under supervised conditions. Similar to coursework but with levels of control which determine where and how you complete the work. Only required for certain qualifications/subjects.
Coursework	A type of internal assessment which may form part of your course. It is an alternative to written exams and can take a variety of forms; for example, it could be a written project or essay, a performance or an art portfolio. Coursework is being replaced by controlled assessment for many qualifications/subjects.
DfE (Department for Education)	The department of the UK Government responsible for education for children and young people up to the age of 19.

Enquiries about results (EAR)	A post-results service available from OCR which allows for clerical checks and reviews of marking or moderation.
Entry code	A unique code allocated to each OCR unit or qualification, which must be quoted when your centre makes your entries.
Exams officer	The person appointed by the Head of Centre to act on behalf of the centre to administer exams.
Head of Centre	The most senior member of a centre, usually the headteacher or principal of a school/college.
JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications)	A forum of examining boards in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which seeks to create common standards, regulations and guidance.
Late certification	A post-results service available from OCR which allows you to be entered for certification after the release of the January and June unit results.
Linear	A specification for which all the examinations are taken at the end of the course.
Linear with a unitised entry structure	Specifications where centre unit and certification entries are made, but 100% of the assessment is taken at the end of the course.
Malpractice	Failure to comply with the regulations surrounding examinations, which may impact on a candidate's result(s).
Missing and incomplete results (MIR)	A post-results service available from OCR which allows centres to query missing results, partial absence and cases where no results have been received.
Non exam assessment (NEA)	Non exam assessments measure subject-specific skills that cannot be tested by timed written papers.
Qualification	An overall grade awarded to you by OCR once you have successfully completed all the units/components which are required for the subject and level you are studying.
Script	Any externally assessed work which is primarily written.
Series	A group of examinations in the same range (for example, GCE A Level or GCSE) with a common closing date for entries. Each series is defined by a month and year, e.g. January 2015 or June 2015.
Session	A period in a day in which an examination may take place, i.e. am or pm. Each session is usually of not more than three hours' duration.
Special consideration	A post-assessment adjustment to a candidate's mark and/or grade to reflect a temporary illness, injury or other indisposition at the time of the assessment.
Specification	A document produced by OCR with details of the content of a qualification and how it is assessed. Available on the OCR website .
Statement of entry	A document showing centre and candidate information, the qualifications you are entered for and details of your timetabled exams.
Statement of results	A statement of provisional results that your centre should provide to you on results day. Results are classed as 'provisional' at this stage as marks and grades may be subject to change following any post-results services.
UCI (unique candidate identifier)	A unique 13-character code allocated to a candidate by a centre that must be supplied when entering for units or certification.
ULN (unique learner number)	A personal, ten-digit number which is used to ensure learner's results can be provided to the Personal Learning Record (PLR) Service. The PLR, available on a secure website, enables learners, education providers, training providers and employers to access achievement data in one place.

Unit	The smallest part of a qualification for which results can be issued. A unit may consist of separately assessed components.
Unitised	A specification made up of separately assessed units that may be taken over several examination series.

13.2 Useful websites

You may find the following websites useful for further information and advice:

- DfE (Department for Education) – www.gov.uk/dfes
- JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) – www.jcq.org.uk
- OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations) – www.ocr.org.uk



www.ocr.org.uk
OCR Customer Contact Centre

General qualifications
Telephone 01223 553998
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