Cambridge Nationals

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KS4 PERFORMANCE TABLES

Cambridge Nationals Level 1/Level 2

Cambridge Nationals explained

April 2025

ocr.org.uk/cambridgenationals

Cambridge Nationals explained

Please note that information is correct at time of publication (April 2025).

What are Cambridge Nationals?

Our Cambridge Nationals are Level 1/Level 2 qualifications designed specifically for students aged 14 to 16. They provide an excellent start for vocational study, contribute to a broad curriculum offer and enable progression to A Levels, apprenticeships or Level 3 vocational qualifications such as our Cambridge Advanced Nationals or Cambridge Technicals.

Cambridge Nationals are available in a range of engaging subjects that are equivalent in size to GCSEs and all subjects have been approved for inclusion on the key stage 4 performance tables in England.

- **Child Development**
- **Creative iMedia**
- **IT**
- **Engineering Design**
- **Engineering Manufacture**
- **Engineering Programmable Systems**
- **Enterprise and Marketing**
- **Health and Social Care**
- **Sport Science**
- **Sport Studies**

Cambridge
Nationals

Purpose of this document

This document is for teachers and heads of department. We want you to be able to plan and deliver with confidence, so we've created this to answer your more technical questions about the suite and point you to further support and resources.

Other support you might find helpful

This is just one of the many items we produce to support you. As well as the essentials such as the specification, Teach Cambridge, our secure website for teachers, also contains support such as schemes of work, curriculum planners and the OCR-set assignments. With access to subject specialists, network groups and comprehensive professional development support – we offer a wide range of support to make your job as straightforward as possible.

Key characteristics of Cambridge Nationals

- These are combined Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications. All students start on the same programme, with their final mark determining which level they achieve, Level 1 or Level 2.

- All Cambridge Nationals have a high proportion of non-exam assessment (60%). This allows students to demonstrate their skills in real-life contexts, as well as develop other essential transferable skills – vital for later study and employment.

- All Cambridge Nationals contain external assessment of 40%. This means that they are robust enough to meet the DfE's requirements for recognition on performance tables. All Cambridge Nationals examinations are timetabled, paper based, easy to administer and set in a vocational context to give students the best chance to demonstrate their knowledge.

- The assessment process recognises students' strengths. Good performance in some units will compensate for weaker performance in others. There is no requirement to obtain a particular grade in the external assessments to pass overall.

How do you get started?

Will my centre need to ask for centre approval before I can offer Cambridge Nationals?

If your centre is already approved with us for GCSEs, A Levels or other general qualifications you will be automatically approved for Cambridge Nationals so the majority of centres are already set to go.

If you are completely new to OCR or a vocational centre who has never offered general qualifications before, you will need to apply for approval by contacting **centre.approval@ocr.org.uk**

How do I access resources and assessment material?

Support resources and assessment material is on Teach Cambridge, our secure website for teachers. If you do not have access, your exams officer can add access for you.

Understanding our administration requirements

We pride ourselves on our straight-forward administration. In summary, it aligns with our GCSE process so is likely to be familiar to you and your exams officer.

- key processes such as making entries, submitting marks for moderation are the same
- key dates such as entry dates, mark submission dates and results release dates are the same
- our post-results service is the same, with access to Active Results, access to scripts and reviews of marking or moderation

The first place to bookmark is our Cambridge Nationals admin overview webpage. This lists the main steps required for Cambridge Nationals and includes links to more detailed information for each step of the administration process. Your exams officer will also require the entry codes booklet.

Do I need to register my students in advance?

Students do not need to be registered for the qualification in advance. They are simply entered for each individual unit in the relevant series you want them to be assessed by OCR. At the end of the course, a certification entry ('cash-in') must be made as this pulls together unit results so an overall subject grade can be calculated. To help us support you better, complete a teach with OCR form and we can ensure you receive timely information from us throughout the year.

How are entries made?

You can make your entries via **A2C** using **basedata** or via our secure website, **Interchange**.

When are the assessments available?

Cambridge Nationals are series based and all units, both externally and internally assessed, are available every January and June.

What are the entry deadlines?

The entry deadlines will be familiar if you are already delivering GCSEs as they follow the standard general qualifications entry deadlines for the January and June series:

Series	Entry deadline
January	**21 October**
June	**21 February**

Entries can be accepted after these dates but there will be an additional late entry fee.

An extended entry deadline is available for students who sat an examination in January and need to wait until the results are available before deciding whether to re-enter for the **same** unit in the June series.

Essential training

We've created an interactive, online training course, Essentials for the NEA, to help you support and guide your students in line with our requirements.

The Essentials for the NEA online course will take around 30–45 minutes to complete. It can be found in Teach Cambridge under 'Training: Online courses'. It's a requirement that all Cambridge National teachers complete the course, and we recommend doing so before you start to assess your students' work.

Overview of the moderation process

Moderation of non-exam units (NEA)

The administration tab on our website walks you and your exams officer through each step. It mirrors our GCSE processes.

How are marks submitted?

Marks are submitted to OCR via A2C or through our secure website, Interchange. It is a raw mark that is submitted to OCR and not a grade.

What submission methods are available for internally assessed (NEA) units?

All units can be submitted via post or uploaded to OCR through our Submit for Assessment service.

Whichever method is used, the outcome of moderation is confirmed on the relevant results day.

What might I consider when choosing my submission method?

Method	Points to consider
Upload to OCR	No postage costs. Well-suited to qualifications where evidence is collected in electronic formats.
Postal	Simple process. Well-suited to qualifications where evidence is collected in paper format.

OCR-set assignments

All internally assessed (NEA) units are assessed using an OCR-set assignment. These will be available from our secure website for teachers, Teach Cambridge.

The OCR-set assignments are available from 1 June for submission in the following January and June series. The live assessment dates will always be shown on the front cover of the assignment and are replaced each year.

When you submit work for moderation, you must make sure it is based on the assignment that is live for that series.

Terminal rule

All Technical Awards, such as Cambridge Nationals, are subject to a terminal assessment requirement or a 'terminal rule' for the examination. This means the examination must be taken in the final series (when the student is completing the qualification). Students may take the exam earlier, however this will be counted as a 'practice' attempt and will not contribute to the final grade.

Internally assessed (NEA) units can be submitted before or in the same series as the terminal examination.

Resits

Are resits permitted for Cambridge Nationals?

There is one resubmission opportunity per NEA assignment for internally assessed (NEA) units. Students can only resubmit work using the **same** assignment if the assignment is still live. We will use the best result from both attempts towards the qualification result.

First submission	Re-submission	Notes
January Year 10	June Year 10	Re-submission will be on the **same assignment**
January Year 11	June Year 11	Re-submission will be on the **same assignment**
January or June Year 10	January or June Year 11	A **new assignment** will be needed for re-submission as the assignment used in Year 10 will no longer be live for use

Point scores

Performance tables

All Cambridge Nationals subjects are classified as Technical Awards and are included on performance tables in England.

Cambridge Nationals achievements will be counted in the final three 'other qualifications' slots for Progress 8.

What performance points are available?

Cambridge National grade	Points
Level 1 Pass	1.25
Level 1 Merit	2.00
Level 1 Distinction	3.00
Level 2 Pass	4.00
Level 2 Merit	5.50
Level 2 Distinction	7.00
Level 2 Distinction*	8.50

What are DfE discount codes?

The DfE decides which qualifications discount against each other because their content is too similar. If a student has taken two qualifications that discount against each other then only one will count. Their list is updated every year, so it's important that you check this before finalising your curriculum.

How is the 'early entry rule' applied to Cambridge Nationals?

The 'early entry' rule is applied to qualifications that count towards Key Stage 4 performance tables. It helps define which qualification will count when two qualifications which discount each other are taken by a student.

For Cambridge Nationals, it is the best grade of all internally assessed (NEA) units taken (including any permitted resubmission) and the grade from the examination taken in the final series when first certificating. It is the date of the award of this first overall certification result that is reported to the DfE and used for the performance tables.

How do Cambridge Nationals grades compare to GCSE (9–1)?

	Cambridge Nationals	GCSE (9–1)	GCSE (A*–G)
Level 2	Distinction*	9	
		8	A*
	Distinction	7	A
	Merit	6	B
		5	
	Pass	4	C
Level 1	Distinction	3	D
			E
	Merit	2	F
	Pass	1	G
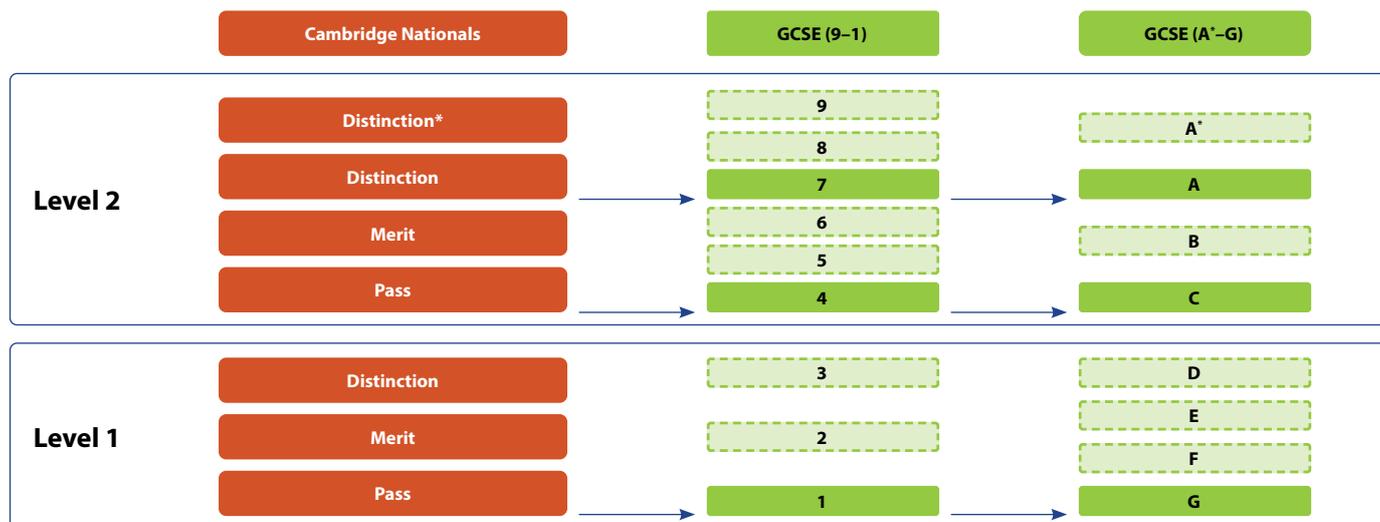
Grades for Cambridge Nationals and for GCSEs align at key points.

Level 1 covers GCSE grades 3–1 (or D–G) and Level 2 GCSE grades 9–4 (or A*–C).

*   The bottom of a Level 1 Pass is aligned to GCSE grade 1
*   The bottom of a Level 2 Pass is aligned to GCSE grade 4
*   The bottom of a Level 2 Distinction is aligned to grade 7

Assessment availability

All units are available every January and June series for both moderation and the examined unit for all subjects.

| Every January series	Every June series

• Examined unit
• Moderated units (NEA)
    ✓ Postal
    ✓ Upload to OCR
	• Examined unit
	• Moderated units (NEA)
	    ✓ Postal
	    ✓ Upload to OCR

The examined unit, NEA units and overall certification is available every January and June but the student must take the exam in their final assessment series when they are completing the qualification (the 'terminal rule').

Support overview

We offer a range of support services to help you at every stage of the journey of teaching a Cambridge National, from getting ready to teach to preparing your students for assessment. All of our resources and training can be accessed through Teach Cambridge, our secure website for teachers.

Our comprehensive support for you includes:

- Textbooks and teaching and learning resources from leading publishers, including Cambridge and Hodder Education. For details of all the published resources that we endorse, check the Cambridge Nationals page on our website

- A broad range of free professional development courses covering everything from getting started to guided practice marking assessments. There are also regular Q&A opportunities with subject advisors, moderators and examiners. To find out more, visit our professional development page

- Free OCR resources to help you plan your teaching, including overview curriculum planners and detailed schemes of work for every unit

- Detailed guidance on how to deliver, mark, and administer the non-exam assessment, including free on-demand eLearning courses for every qualification that give you extensive hands-on practice. If your centre is new to Cambridge Nationals, you can also request an advisory support call with an OCR moderator

- Active Results: our free results analysis service to help you review the performance of individual students or whole school

- Exambuilder: our free question-building platform that helps you to build your own tests using past OCR exam questions

- Expert subject advisors who are part of their subject communities and here to support you with advice, updates on resources, and information about training opportunities.
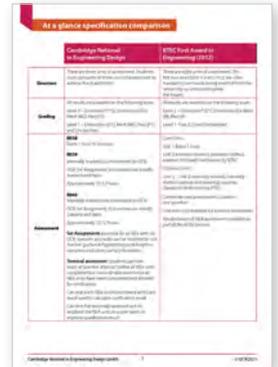
Overview of our product range

Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Child Development

Scheme code	Qualification number	Title	Key stage 4 performance tables
J809	603/7114/6	Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National Certificate in Child Development	✓

Unit	Marks	Duration	GLH
R057: Health and well-being for child development Written paper, OCR-set and marked	70	1 hour 15 mins	48
R058: Creating a safe environment and understand the nutritional needs of children from birth to five years Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 12 to 14 hours	36
R059: Understand the development of a child from one to five years Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36

Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Health and Social Care

Scheme code	Qualification number	Title	Key stage 4 performance tables
J835	603/7116/X	Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Health and Social Care	✓

Unit	Marks	Duration	GLH
Mandatory (students take both)			
R032: Principles of care in health and social care settings Written paper, OCR-set and marked	70	1 hour 15 mins	48
R033: Supporting individuals through life events Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36
Optional (students take one)			
R034: Creative and therapeutic activities Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36
R035: Health promotion campaigns Centre-assessed tasks, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36

Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Engineering Design

Scheme code	Qualification number	Title	Key stage 4 performance tables
J822	603/7086/5	Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National Certificate in Engineering Design	✓

Unit	Marks	Duration	GLH
R038: Principles of engineering design Written paper, OCR-set and marked	70	1 hour 15 mins	48
R039: Communicating designs Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36
R040: Design, evaluation and modelling Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36

Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Engineering Manufacture

Scheme code	Qualification number	Title	Key stage 4 performance tables
J823	603/7087/7	Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National Certificate in Engineering Manufacture	✓

Unit	Marks	Duration	GLH
R014: Principles of engineering manufacture Written paper, OCR-set and marked	70	1 hour 15 mins	48
R015: Manufacturing a one-off product Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36
R016: Manufacturing in quantity Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36

Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Engineering Programmable Systems

Scheme code	Qualification number	Title	Key stage 4 performance tables
J824	603/7088/9	Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National Certificate in Engineering Programmable Systems	✓

Unit	Marks	Duration	GLH
R047: Principles of electronic and programmable systems Written paper, OCR-set and marked	70	1 hour 15 mins	48
R048: Making and testing electronic circuits Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36
R049: Developing programmable systems Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36

Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Creative iMedia

Scheme code	Qualification number	Title	Key stage 4 performance tables
J834	603/7090/7	Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National Certificate in Creative iMedia	✓

Unit	Marks	Duration	GLH
Mandatory (students take both)			
R093: Creative iMedia in the media industry Written paper, OCR-set and marked	70	1 hour 30 mins	48
R094: Visual identity and digital graphics Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	50	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	30
Optional (students take one)			
R095: Characters and comics Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	70	Approx. 12 to 15 hours	42
R096: Animation with audio Centre-assessed tasks, OCR moderated	70	Approx. 12 to 15 hours	42
R097: Interactive digital media Centre-assessed tasks, OCR moderated	70	Approx. 12 to 15 hours	42
R098: Visual imaging Centre-assessed tasks, OCR moderated	70	Approx. 12 to 15 hours	42
R099: Digital games Centre-assessed tasks, OCR moderated	70	Approx. 12 to 15 hours	42

Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in IT

Scheme code	Qualification number	Title	Key stage 4 performance tables
J836	603/7115/8	Level 1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in IT	✓

Unit	Marks	Duration	GLH
R050: IT in the digital world Written paper, OCR-set and marked	70	1 hour 30 mins	48
R060: Data manipulation using spreadsheets Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36
R070: Using augmented reality to present information Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 12 hours	36
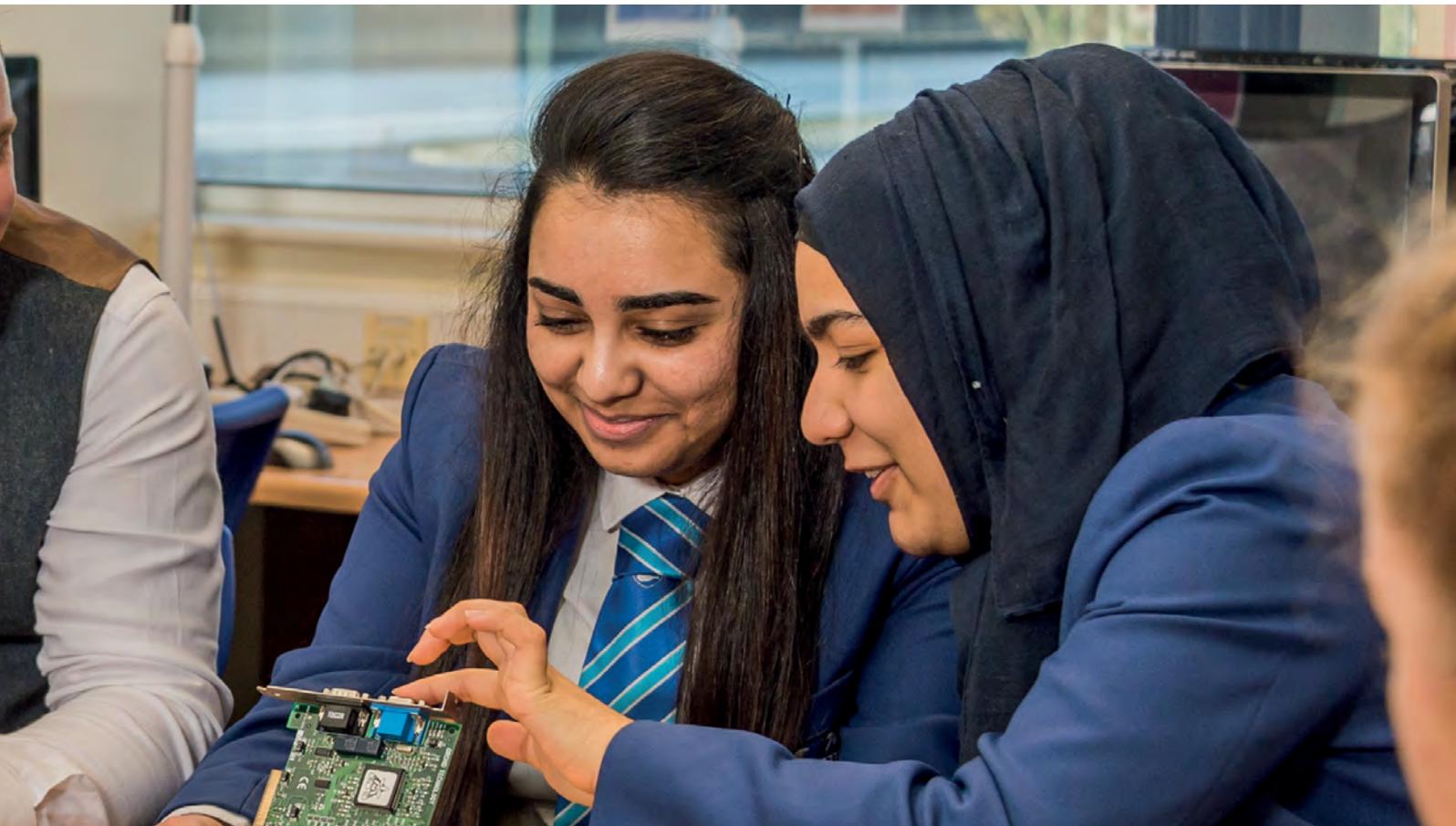
Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Enterprise and Marketing

Scheme code	Qualification number	Title	Key stage 4 performance tables
J837	603/7093/2	Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National Certificate in Enterprise and Marketing	✓

Unit	Marks	Duration	GLH
R067: Enterprise and marketing concepts Written paper, OCR-set and marked	70	1 hour 15 mins	48
R068: Design a business proposal Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 14 hours	36
R069: Market and pitch a business proposal Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	60	Approx. 10 to 14 hours	36

Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Sport Science

Scheme code	Qualification number	Title	Key stage 4 performance tables
J828	603/7106/7	Level 1/2 Cambridge National Certificate in Sport Science	✓

Unit	Marks	Duration	GLH
Mandatory			
R180: Reducing the risk of sports injuries and dealing with common medical conditions Written paper, OCR-set and marked	70	1 hour 15 mins	48
R181: Applying the principles of training: fitness and how it affects skill performance Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	80	Approx. 16 hours	48
Optional (students take one)			
R182: The body's response to physical activity and how technology informs this Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	40	Approx. 8 to 10 hours	24
R183: Nutrition and sports performance Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	40	Approx. 8 to 10 hours	24

Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National in Sport Studies

Scheme code	Qualification number	Title	Key stage 4 performance tables
J829	603/7107/9	Level 1/Level 2 Cambridge National Certificate in Sport Studies	✓

Unit	Marks	Duration	GLH
Mandatory			
R184: Contemporary issues in sport Written paper, OCR-set and marked	70	1 hour 15 mins	48
R185: Performance and leadership in sports activities Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	80	Approx. 16 hours	48
Optional (students take one)			
R186: Sport and the media Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	40	Approx. 8 to 10 hours	24
R187: Increasing awareness of outdoor and adventurous activities Centre-assessed task, OCR moderated	40	Approx. 8 to 10 hours	24

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Active Results	A free online results analysis service to help you review the performance of individual students or your whole school. It provides access to detailed results data, enabling more comprehensive analysis to give you a more accurate measure of achievements.
Cambridge Nationals	Level 1/Level 2 qualifications designed specifically for 14 to 16 year olds; the same size as a GCSE (120glh). They are recognised in performance tables under the Technical Award category.
Cambridge Advanced Nationals	Our Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) for post-16 students.
Cambridge Technicals	Available at Level 2 and Level 3 – these are OCR's vocational qualifications for post-16 students in full time study. Basically – our version of Pearson's BTEC!
Certification entry/'cash-in'	When a certification entry is made (as opposed to unit entry), OCR will calculate the overall result from all the units a student has taken.
DfE discount code	The code allocated by the DfE which indicates which qualifications discount against each other when performance table data is calculated.
External assessment	Assessment that is both set and marked by the awarding organisation. For Cambridge Nationals all external assessment is completed through a written timed exam.
Non-exam assessment (NEA)	Assessment that is marked by teachers at a centre. NEA allows students to demonstrate different skills and knowledge over a period of time which would be difficult to do in a short paper-based exam. Teachers' marking is checked, and adjustments applied where needed by the awarding organisation. For Cambridge Nationals we produce set assignments for every NEA unit.
Last entry	Last date you can make student entries.
Mark submission dates	The date by which we ask you to communicate your standardised marks for internally assessed units.
Submit for Assessment service	This is a secure website for centres to upload student work and for assessors to access this work digitally. Centres can use the Submit for Assessment service for uploading marked student work ready for moderation.
Performance tables	The DfE approves qualifications to count on performance measures for a school or college. The points achieved by each student are combined according to calculate a total for the school or college and are reported in national performance tables.
Qualification number	Qualification number – a useful number to use when searching the Ofqual register.
Technical Award	DfE category in the technical guidance for Level 1 and Level 2 pre-16 vocational qualifications.
UMS	Uniform mark scale. A learner's uniform mark for each assessment unit is calculated from the learner's raw mark on that assessment. The raw mark boundary marks are converted to the equivalent uniform mark boundary. Marks between grade boundaries are converted on a pro rata basis.
Unit entry	Each Cambridge National contains three units. Each unit needs to be entered separately.

For more information visit
- **ocr.org.uk/cambridgenationals**
- **facebook.com/ocrexams**
- **instagram.com/ocrexaminations**
- **linkedin.com/company/ocr**
- **tiktok.com/@ocrexams**
- **x.com/OCR_Vocational**
- **youtube.com/ocrexams**

Call our customer support centre on
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Alternatively, you can email us on
support@ocr.org.uk

Visit our online support centre at
support.ocr.org.uk

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