

Exams Handbook

For international students

TRAVELLING TO THE UK FOR EXAMS

SITTING EXAMS IN YOUR HOME COUNTRY

EXAM PARTNERS

PREPARING FOR EXAMS

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Introduction

This handbook is for students who are studying outside of the UK. If you are sitting Pearson Edexcel, CAIE or OCR exams then it may be possible for you to locate an exam centre in your own country. Unfortunately, AQA does not allow exams to be taken overseas, so you would have to come back to the UK for exams where they are the awarding body.



Travelling from overseas to sit your exams in the UK

If you are travelling from overseas to sit your exams in the UK you may require a visa. NEC can provide you with a letter to confirm your enrolment and your intention to sit exams in the UK. When applying for a visa, you will need to apply for a holiday visa rather than a student visa as you will not be attending an institution for a lengthy period of time. We advise that approval of your visa is obtained well in advance of the exam session and prior to the submission of your exam application form, as refunds cannot be given in the event of a rejected visa application.



We strongly recommend that all students choose one of our partnership exam centres. By choosing to take your exams at one of our partnership exam centres you can be confident that the application process will be seamless and it will allow us to support you along the way.

Sitting exams in your home country

We understand that travelling can be stressful and may not always be possible for students. It is possible to locate an exam venue in your home country. Below you will find information from the British Council and the Awarding Bodies about sitting exams in an international centre.

The British Council

The British Council works with 1,600 international schools around the world. Their website states the following:

"We work with four UK awarding bodies (Cambridge Assessment International Education, Pearson, AQA and Oxford International AQA) to offer these exams internationally. In a number of countries we work with approved schools who prepare their students for these exams. We can also cater for students who want to sit these exams as private candidates, although not in all countries".

The website for the British Council on the School Exams is here:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/exam/uk-boards-overseas/school>

Any approved centres with the British Council become part of their Partner Schools Global Network. More information about this community of schools can be found [here](#).

Pearson Edexcel

Pearson Edexcel provides two main qualification types:

UK Qualifications - these are the standard UK qualifications and are what NEC provides.

International Qualifications - these are usually abbreviated to IGs (international GCSEs) and IAL (international A Level). NEC offers Pearson IALs in Maths, Biology, Chemistry and Physics as well as the IG Sciences, Humanities, Business and MFL subjects.

It is very important that you apply to sit your exams for the right qualification. The specifications will be different for the UK and International versions of the subject. You can find this information on the About Assessment section of your course.

Important note:

Pearson recommend that you speak to your local British Council to confirm which centres are approved to host you for the exams you are looking to take.

Pearson have also created a search page for approved centres that have said they are happy to host private candidates. This may not be the entire list of centres who are approved to host Pearson qualifications, but they are the ones who have given explicit consent for their information to be shared.

You can find the search pages here:

- [UK centres](#)
- [International centres](#)

Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE)

CAIE work with 10,000 schools within a 160 countries across 9 regions. Their website says the following:

"More than 10,000 schools are part of our Cambridge learning community. We operate in 160 countries across 9 regions: North America, Latin America, UK & Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East & North Africa, South Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia & Pacific. We have Cambridge representatives in every region.

Cambridge International is a trusted education partner for governments in over 30 countries. In some countries, such as Singapore, we work with public bodies to provide the national examinations for learners in secondary schools. In other countries, such as Egypt and Bahrain, we work with governments to develop and introduce new education and assessment systems".

They have a number of regional representatives. These can be found [here](#).

NEC only offers 2 IGCSEs with the CAIE specification. These are for Geography and Combined Science.

Important Information

CAIE exams can be taken at international centres. We always recommend that you speak to your local British Council to confirm which centres are approved to host your exams. However, to assist with your initial search for a centre, CAIE have a centre search ability which can be found [here](#).

Important note:

CAIE exams can be taken at international centres. We always recommend that you speak to your local British Council to confirm which centres are approved to host your exams. However, to assist with your initial search for a centre, CAIE have a centre search ability which can be found [here](#).

OCR are a UK leading awarding body. Unlike Pearson and Edexcel, it doesn't have its own international section. For this, they partner up with their sister company CAIE. Information on this awarding body can be found [here](#).



Timofei was seventeen years old and lived in St Petersburg, Russia when he enrolled with NEC. His ambition was to study at university in the UK so he chose to continue his school education with a distance learning college based in the UK. He had studied IGCSEs in the Russian education system and wanted to seek out a high-quality provider to study A levels. After trying another distance learning provider for a year, Timofei decided to switch to NEC, as it had a "very good reputation" so he was confident that he would get the very best support and course materials.

Timofei studied four A levels with NEC in maths, further maths, physics and economics and achieved great results, obtaining an A, two A and a B grade respectively. He is now studying mathematics and physics at the University of Edinburgh. [Read Timofei's full story on our website.](#)*

Exam partners

NEC has partnered with Tutors and Exams, a private candidate exam centre. Tutors and Exams have a large number of UK centres as well as a growing network of International centres. You can inquire about using their services [here](#).



TUTORS & EXAMS®
Opening Learning Doors!



Preparing for your exams

Make sure that you are ready for your exam. In addition to your revision, the day before the exam check that you know:

- where the exam is taking place; how to get there and how long it will take you to get there
- the start time
- your candidate number / centre number
- what you are allowed to bring to your exam.

Plan the details of your journey, allowing plenty of time to get to the exam centre to make sure that you arrive at the examination room about 30 minutes early.

Get ready your proof of identity or photo ID, anything you need to take such as pens, pencils, a calculator if you are allowed one, any maths equipment you are permitted to take into the examination room, and a bottle of water to keep you hydrated.

Build in contingency time, in case the exam is running late.

The invigilator will tell you when to start the exam. Sometimes the exam may start a little later than planned. If you have transport booked, children to collect from school, caring responsibilities, or other plans for after the exam, make sure you have allowed extra time in case your exam is running late. You don't want to have to leave before the end.

Be prepared for minimal noise.

Whilst your exam centre will do their best to make sure that the examination room is as quiet as possible, there may be some minimal noise. Invigilators may need to have a short, quiet conversation; other students may need to leave the room for short periods; and there may be external noise that is beyond the control of the exam centre. Don't expect complete silence.

Leave your mobile devices at home.

If a mobile phone, smartwatch or other electronic device such as an iPod or MP3/4 player, even turned off, is found on you during your exam you are likely to receive a penalty and may even be disqualified from the exam and overall qualification. So, make sure that you leave your devices outside the examination room, or even at home.

You must also:

- make sure you have read any notices displayed outside the examination room before you enter
- follow the instructions of the invigilator
- not talk to or attempt to talk to or distract in any way, other candidates once you enter the examination room.