



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

Frequently Asked Questions (for Students)

Advance Information for General Qualifications

Summer 2022

Produced on behalf of:



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1. Introduction

This document covers frequently asked questions on advance information. For more details on advance information please speak to your school or college in the first instance.

Further guidance for students will be made available by JCQ once advance information is released by the awarding organisations. This will be by 7 February 2022 at the latest unless the Department for Education (DfE) decides on an earlier release date.

2. Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of advance information

Advance information is intended to communicate, ahead of the examinations, the focus of the content of the examinations (or part of the examinations) that will be assessed in the examination papers. As stated by DfE, the purpose of advance information is to support revision.

2. Where will I get the advance information from?

All awarding organisations will make advance information publicly available on their websites.

Note: Advance information will only be available from the website of the awarding organisation(s) that provides your subject(s). It will not be available from any other source.

3. I am a private candidate, will I be able to see the advance information at the same time as schools and colleges?

Yes, it is important that everyone preparing for summer 2022 examinations has access to the advance information to aid revision. All awarding organisations will make advance information publicly available on their websites at the same time for schools, colleges and private candidates/tutors.

4. Why won't all advance information look the same for each awarding organisation or subject?

The nature of the different specifications and assessments mean different approaches need to be taken (for instance comparing a very content heavy, practical, subject such as science with a subject based on set texts such as English – the best advance information solution for these subjects would be very different). Also, variations between specifications for the same subject across awarding organisations means that the best advance information solution can be different even within the same subject.

5. Why will my subject not have advance information?

The exceptions are either because of the nature of assessments in those subjects (assessment is by NEA in Art and Design qualifications) or because, following consultation by DfE and Ofqual, it has been decided that advance information will not be provided in subjects where optionality is being introduced for 2022.

This applies to GCSE English Literature, History, Ancient History and Geography.

6. What about the November examinations for GCSE English language and GCSE mathematics during the autumn term 2022, will they have advance information?

To ensure fairness to students sitting examinations in autumn 2022, new advance information (specific to the November examinations) will be provided for GCSE English language and GCSE mathematics in July 2022.

7. What are synoptic questions?

Synoptic questions require you to draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and/or understanding from across the specification. You will need to have covered all the specification content to ensure you are best placed to demonstrate what you know and can do in synoptic questions.

8. What do you mean by 'low and high tariff' questions?

This will vary between different specifications but tariff refers to the number of marks allocated to a given question.

9. Why is the advance information mainly being applied to higher mark questions?

While some advance information for some specifications relate mostly to higher mark questions, this is not the case for all advance information.

Advance information has been designed to help all students as much as possible, and it is there to help guide and prioritise revision.

As low mark questions tend to cover a large proportion of specification content, if advance information was provided for low mark questions, it would cover a much wider area of the specifications and be less helpful in guiding you.

It is important to know that specifications and assessments are different across all qualifications, which means a different approach needs to be taken for each subject. Please always check the advance information for your subject.

10. Why can't I bring advance information into the examination if I've been using it to revise?

Advance information, if provided in the examination itself, could provide you with prompts to questions. This in turn could lead to unfair results and damage progression. (You will, however, be permitted to use examination aids in GCSE mathematics, physics and combined science examinations in 2022.) Bringing advance information into the examination could also distract you from giving best attention to the questions in the examination.

11. If I haven't finished the course, can I just focus on what's included in the advance information?

To support your progression, and your best possible performance in the examinations, you will want to revise everything you have been taught, but advance information will help highlight where to focus more specific revision. Some questions in the examinations, for example synoptic questions, will require knowledge beyond what is included in advance information. It is important to note that the advance information will not cover everything that is to be assessed. In many cases the advance information will provide listed topics of specification content (in specification order not in question paper order) that will be the main focus of assessment, but content that is not listed could still be assessed. It is important therefore to ensure you have a good understanding of the specification content.

12. How should advance information inform how I use past papers in my revision – should I just look at the questions aligning with the advance information?

A good understanding of all the content of the specification is always the best preparation for success in an examination. It is important to bear in mind that all of your learning in a key topic or area might prove useful in an examination, particularly in synoptic questions.

As noted above in response to question 10, advance information is intended to help guide and prioritise your revision. For example, if the advance information for a particular subject qualification states that one part of the assessment will focus on a reduced range of specification content, you may wish to prioritise that content when using past paper questions within your revision.

However, to support your progression and best possible performance in the examinations, your revision plans should take account of everything you have been taught. Advance information will not necessarily cover all aspects of specification content that will be assessed in the 2022 examinations, so to make the best use of past papers you should revise a broad range of content. Using full past papers can also help you to familiarise yourself with the style of exam questions as part of your exam preparation.

13. Why are you not releasing the advance information until 7 February 2022?

Advance information will be provided to support revision for the summer 2022 examinations. The Government's position is that the best time for advance information to be available to support revision is 7 February 2022.

14. Will there be advance information for summer 2023?

The current advance information approach only applies to the summer 2022 examinations to help mitigate for the level of disruption to teaching and learning as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further advice and support

For advice about how advance information relates to the examinations you are taking in 2022, please speak to your school or college in the first instance.