

Guidance on running exams in the November 2020 series

A guide for exams officers and Heads of Centre

We know that, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, many of our centres have questions about running exams in the November 2020 exam series. To support you, and help answer your questions, we have produced this guide. You should use this, as well as the guidance in our current *Cambridge Handbook*, when planning the exam series in your centre. To make it easier to use and understand, we have structured this guide around the phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle.

We understand how important it is for students to take their exams, and we want to help you to run the November exam series safely and securely. If you decide to hold exams, you must comply with any guidance or instructions from national and local governments, and healthcare authorities. You also need to follow the regulations in the *Cambridge Handbook*. Where these conflict, or are difficult to combine, please contact us for advice.

How do we know if it is safe to hold exams?

The safety of your candidates and colleagues is more important than running exams. If it is not safe to hold exams during the November 2020 exam series then you should make arrangements for your candidates to take their exams in a future series.

To decide if it is safe to hold exams, you should first assess your national and local government regulations and advice. If you are allowed to meet in groups, it may be possible to hold exams. However, you will need to make sure that you follow any regulations, such as social distancing and hygiene procedures. If your country is in lockdown, and has very restricted movement, you may not be able to hold exams. If this happens, or you are not sure whether the situation in

your country means that exams can or cannot go ahead, you should contact us so that we can support you.

A If you work with us through another organisation, such as the British Council, you should contact your Cambridge Associate if you have questions about holding exams.

Important information

You must give clear information and instructions to candidates and to staff, including invigilators and examiners, in your centre. Before exam day, tell candidates, invigilators and examiners about any measures you need them to take, such as additional hygiene procedures. We cannot provide protective equipment, such as hand sanitiser or face masks, to centres – this is the responsibility of the centre.

Will there be any extra allowance for loss of teaching time?

We know that many of our centres have concerns about lost preparation and teaching time. We recognise that this may have held back the learning of some candidates, and that this is not their fault. In the November 2020 series, for some coursework, speaking and practical components, teachers and students will be able to adjust their approach to the course or their administration of the test to meet the requirements of the component.

You can find more information on our website at: www.cambridgeinternational.org/coursework-component-adjustments

For more information about loss of teaching time, see page 8 of this guide.

Important information

The health and safety of candidates and centre staff remains the responsibility of your centre. This guidance does not overrule or replace advice or regulations provided by any central or local government at federal or state level, including any public health authorities or regulators, in any country. Such regulations should be followed as normal. You must also follow the regulations set out in the *Cambridge Handbook*. Where these conflict or are difficult to combine, please contact us.

Phase 1: Preparation

Key Times and Full Centre Supervision

You must still follow our Key Times and Full Centre Supervision regulations. You can use our Key Time regulations to help you manage your exam timetable while still complying with any required social distancing arrangements.

If you need to put candidates under Full Centre Supervision, you will also need to maintain your national or local social distancing arrangements. This may impact you in different ways, depending on how many candidates you have, and how much space is available in your centre:

- You may need to use more rooms for Full Centre Supervision because social distancing means you can fit fewer candidates into a room than normal.
- This may mean you need more trained supervisors available to watch candidates.
- You may wish to provide hand sanitiser in each of the rooms, and also allow time to clean the rooms between different periods of Full Centre Supervision.

The diagrams above are examples only and not necessarily the same as Key Times for your centre. The yellow arrows indicate Full Centre Supervision.

Preparing your exam timetable

When planning your exams you should think about how you can fit all of your candidates into an exam while also

maintaining your local social distancing arrangements. This may include running your exams in multiple exam rooms with extra invigilators. To help you with this, you can ask us for additional sittings, timetable deviations, or for candidates to take exams at an alternative venue. If you need to apply for a timetable deviation you must apply for each sitting separately.

You must refer to the current *Cambridge Handbook* to find out how to apply, and the regulations you need to follow. You can also find out which form you need to complete, and the deadline for sending it to us.

We recommend you schedule any windowed exams at the start of a window, in case your centre is closed at short notice. Exam timetables are available on our website: www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

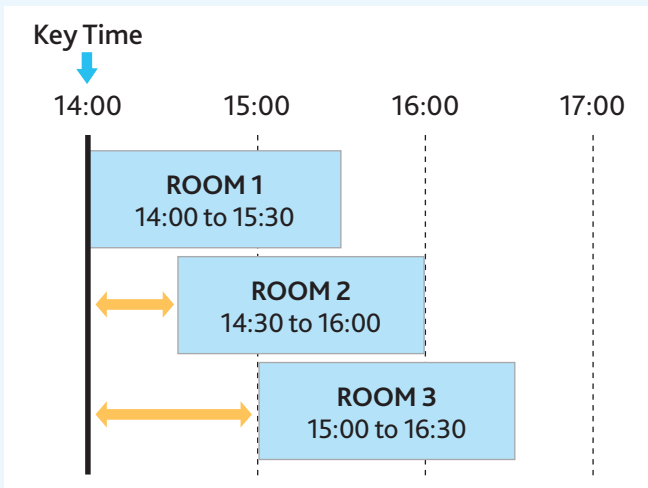
Alternative venue

If you have approval to use an alternative venue, you must find out about any Covid-19 related restrictions or guidance at the new venue, before the day of the exam.

You should also check in advance what measures are being taken to protect your candidates. Measures may include a requirement to wear protective equipment, such as a face covering or gloves, or maintaining social distancing.

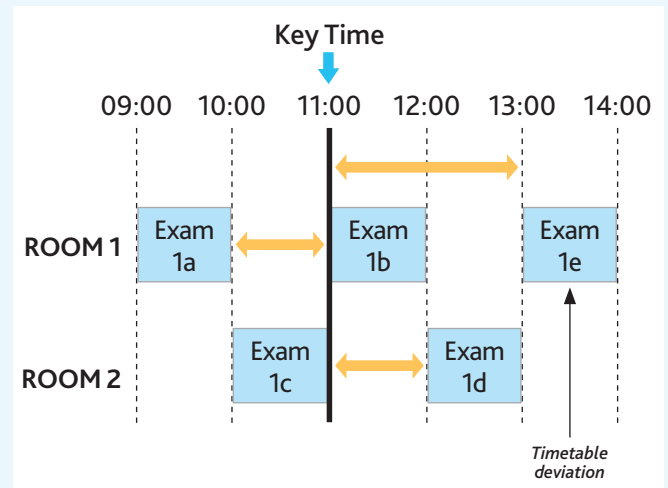
You should make your candidates aware of these kinds of requirements before they arrive at the venue on exam day so they feel reassured and they know what to expect.

Example 1



You may use multiple rooms for the same exam. If you need to clean the rooms between sittings, you may need to stagger start times and create additional sittings. This can be done, as long as the relevant candidates are in Full Centre Supervision. See section 1.2.4 of the *Cambridge Handbook* for more information about applying for additional sittings.

Example 2



You may be unable to fit your planned additional sittings into the relevant timetabled session. In this diagram, Exam 1e is no longer in the morning session. You will need to apply for a timetable deviation to have this start time approved. See section 1.2.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* for more information about applying for timetable deviations.

Examples of an alternative local venue could include:

- A Cambridge school.
- A college or university.
- A school.
- A hotel conference room.
- A conference centre.
- A hall or sporting venue.

If one of your candidates is in a different country and is unable to return to your centre in time for the exams, they should be entered as a private candidate at an alternative Cambridge school, or entered in an alternative exam series e.g. June 2021.



Administrative forms

All forms are available on our website:

www.cambridgeinternational.org/forms

- Timetable Deviation: Preparation – Form 2.
- Additional Sittings: Preparation – Form 8.
- Using an Alternative Venue: Entries – Form 5.

Contingency plans

You should create a contingency plan so that, if you or any of your invigilators or examiners suddenly fall ill, or show symptoms of Covid-19, exams in your centre can still take place.

Access arrangements

If you have candidates who need access arrangements then you might need to put in place extra provisions when planning exams in your centre. You may also consider using a computerised alternative for the following access arrangements:

Access arrangement	Alternatives
Human reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computer reader.• Reading pen.• Reading aloud.• 25 per cent extra time.
Scribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voice-activated software.• Word processor.

In all cases, you must make sure you follow your national or local government advice. This may include a minimum space between your candidate and the person assisting them. This advice must be followed if it is a regulation in your country.

Candidates should be allowed their approved access arrangements – even if these arrangements involve extra time in the exam room. During extra time, or rest breaks,

candidates must remain supervised and social distancing regulations must be maintained. If this contradicts any local or national regulations, please contact us so we can advise you.

Modified question papers

Every modified paper is made to order, to make sure that each candidate's specific needs are met. Our deadline for modified paper applications was 1 July 2020 and has now passed. It reflects the time it takes to produce and deliver these papers. Due to COVID-19, we have also faced our own restrictions and limitations in the production of some of our modified papers. As a result, we are unable to guarantee some of the modifications we have previously been able to produce.

If we cannot fulfil your request, then you should contact us; we may be able to work with you to find an alternative. If you are using an alternative venue to help with social distancing during exams, then you must make sure you transport any modified papers to your alternative venue.

Phase 2: Entries

Entry and withdrawal deadlines

Given the challenges of sending question papers to you during this changing situation, it is particularly important that you submit your entries to us by the deadlines below, or earlier wherever possible.

First time entries:

- **16 August** (international centres)
- **21 September** (UK centres)

Retake entries:

- **21 September** (international and UK centres)

Fees for late entries will be charged as normal. However, you will receive credit for any withdrawals made before the end of the day on 30 August. This is to support centres who may be uncertain about making entries because of the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

We are offering a discount for retake entries in the November series. To receive this discount, please make sure you tick the 'retake' box when you make your entry. You cannot tick this after you have submitted your entries.

Phase 4: Before the exams

Submitting forecast grades and internally assessed marks

You need to submit your forecast grades and internally assessed marks electronically using Cambridge International Direct or A2C (UK centres only). This means that you cannot use an Internal Assessment Mark Sheet (MS1) to submit your internally assessed marks to us.



Pre-exam despatches

Your pre-exam despatch will not include Forecast Grade Forms or Internal Assessment Mark Sheets. We will send your pre-exam despatch in mid to late September 2020.

Receiving and storing question paper despatches

Security of your question papers is a priority, and you must follow the regulations in sections 4.3 and 4.4 of the *Cambridge Handbook* when you receive and store your question paper despatches. You must make sure you comply with any local or national requirements, such as wearing personal protective equipment and maintaining social distancing, when working alongside others.

You must not quarantine the despatches we send you. The contents of all despatches must be checked as soon as possible once you receive them.

Two suitably trained people must still check all your question paper despatches. If your secure storage does not allow two people to be in the room while still maintaining local social distancing requirements, you may need to change the way you check your question papers. For example:

- Check your question papers in a different room from your current secure storage.
- Once you have checked them, one person must move the papers to your secure storage.

You must not move or change your secure storage facilities to allow social distancing without written permission from us. If you have questions about this, please contact us to discuss your secure storage arrangements.

If, for any local or national reasons, our couriers cannot deliver to your centre, they will return your question paper despatches to us. If this is because your country is currently closed for despatches, we will send your despatch at a later date. If you haven't received your question papers you should contact us.

If we cannot send question papers to you in time for the exam we will discuss with you whether alternative arrangements can be made. **We are unable to deliver your question papers to a different address.**



Important information

The warehouse where we pack your question papers is a Covid-19 secure environment and complies with UK government regulations. We provide all our staff who pack your question papers with protective equipment, such as masks and gloves.

Speaking tests

If you are running speaking tests, you may need to think about additional steps to keep you and your staff, your examiners and your candidates safe.

You should comply with national or local guidance on social distancing, but make sure that examiners and candidates are near enough to the recording device so they can still be clearly heard. If face masks need to be worn during speaking tests, you should remind examiners and candidates to speak loudly and clearly.

For the November 2020 series only, you can photocopy your Role Play cards – we understand that more speaking tests will be happening at the same time and you may wish to dispose of the cards after each use. If you make copies of your Role Play cards, you must keep them in your secure storage until they need to be used and dispose of them **securely** after use.

For speaking tests with confidential material, the test must be conducted face to face with the examiner and cannot be conducted remotely. This is because of the security of the confidential materials, and how they are used during the test. If your candidate is not able to complete the test because a face-to-face test is not possible, you should apply for special consideration for 'Candidate absent with good reason'. You can find out more about this on our website: www.cambridgeinternational.org/special-consideration-2020

Practical exams

If you have candidates sitting practical exams, you may need to consider putting extra measures in place to make sure your candidates feel safe, that you comply with any local or national regulations in place due to Covid-19, and that you are also able to comply with our regulations. To help you plan your practical exams you may want to think about the following:

Cambridge IGCSE Art & Design (0400/01/02 and IGCSE (9-1) 0989/01/02), O Level (6090/01/02/03

You must provide all candidates with the equipment they need for their practical exams, such as brushes, paints and pencils. Candidates should not need to share basic art equipment.

We give centres a final date by which the exam must be completed and you can schedule the exam date(s) within that period. In some cases it may be necessary for centres to schedule different groups of candidates to take the same exam on different days. For example, candidates *A to M* take the exam on 4, 5 and 6 October and candidates *N to Z* take the same exam on 10, 11 and 12 October. This may also help to support social distancing, or any other local or national regulations in place due to Covid-19.



If a candidate is not able to complete either their coursework final outcome or their externally set assignment final outcome, you should apply for Special Consideration absent from a component for an acceptable reason. If a candidate is not able to complete both their coursework final outcome and their externally set assignment final outcome, we will be unable to release a syllabus grade for this syllabus.

You can find more information on our website:
www.cambridgeinternational.org/coursework-nov-2020

Cambridge International AS & A Level Chemistry

If candidates need to share a weighing balance you should try to place this in an area with lots of space around it. If candidates need to queue to use it, you should maintain social distancing and make sure you comply with your local or national government regulations.

If you are not able to find the equipment or chemicals you need for your practical exam please contact us so we can advise you.

Cambridge International AS & A Level Physics and AS & A Level Biology, and Cambridge IGCSE™ Physics

We know that candidates usually swap equipment, such as microscopes for biology and whole sets of apparatus for physics during their practical exams. If possible, and you have enough room in your centre, you may want to set out more workstations for your candidates so that they do not have to share equipment. If you do provide extra workstations and equipment, you must still follow the timings for the use of each piece of equipment as set out in the confidential instructions for each exam.

However, we understand many centres will not have the space to do this. Instead, you may wish to clean equipment between candidates using it, or encourage candidates to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser before and after using any equipment.

Important information

You must give clear information and instructions to candidates and to staff, including invigilators and examiners, in your centre. Before exam day, tell candidates, invigilators and examiners about any measures you need them to take, and any measures that you are putting in place, such as additional hygiene procedures. Tell candidates to arrive early for their exam – they may need to think about local traffic restrictions and allow more time for their journey.

We cannot provide protective equipment, such as hand sanitiser or face masks, to centres – this is the responsibility of the centre.

Preparing the exam room

You must make sure your candidates and invigilators feel as safe and as comfortable as they can before, during and at the end of an exam. You should also follow local social distancing measures.

This may include:

- Allowing time between exams to clean the rooms and desks.
- Increasing the distance between exam desks – you must follow the regulations in section 4.5 of the *Cambridge Handbook*. If national or local regulations mean that desks have to be further apart, you should include this extra space even if it means you can fit fewer candidates into the exam room.
- Requiring invigilators and candidates to wear masks.
- Having a one-way system for invigilators and candidates to move through the exam room.

To further reduce movement in the room, you can put question papers face up on the desks before the exam starts. Once you have done this, two invigilators or members of staff from your centre must remain in the exam room with the question papers until the exam has started. This is to make sure the security of the question papers is maintained.

Invigilator requirements

The behaviour of your invigilators should be the same as it normally is during exams, and you should follow the regulations in section 4.6 of the *Cambridge Handbook*. If national or local government regulations mean your invigilators cannot work in the usual way, please contact us so we can support you.

You must make sure **all** your invigilators receive training on any new procedures and you should update your training materials. For example, make invigilators aware of any additional hygiene procedures, and make sure you have a plan in place so that invigilators can deal with any suspected malpractice before or during the exam. If you need more invigilators than usual, you will need to train them and make sure they understand our regulations. You must also follow our invigilator ratios.

Your invigilators can wear masks while in the exam room. It is important that candidates still receive all the instructions and information they need, and can hear the invigilator. Candidates must not miss out on important information about their exam because your invigilators are wearing masks. If they do wear masks, make sure candidates can hear them clearly.

You must make sure candidates have access to the instructions in the *What to Say to Candidates in an Exam* document. To do this, you could:



- Pre-record the contents and then play it to your candidates at the start of the exam.
- Give candidates a printed copy of the document.
- Use a microphone.



Important information

Make sure your invigilators understand any Covid-19 safety measures which are in place in your centre and particularly in the exam room. Invigilators must feel safe, be prepared to deal with candidates, and run the exam.

If your exams officer or your invigilators suddenly become unwell, or need to self-isolate, you should use your contingency plan so that exams can still take place.

If you need to keep candidates under Full Centre Supervision you might need to use extra rooms so that social distancing between candidates can be maintained. Therefore, you may need extra supervisors. You will need to train your supervisors so they understand our regulations and feel confident keeping candidates safe and secure.



Extra guidance

Extra documents are available on our website:

- *What to Say to Candidates in an Exam* document – www.cambridgeinternational.org/examday
- *Training your invigilators: Invigilating Cambridge Exams 2020* – www.cambridgeinternational.org/beforetheexams

A If you work with us through another organisation, you should contact your Cambridge Associate if you have questions.

Phase 5: Exam day

At the beginning of an exam

It is your responsibility to make sure your candidates feel as safe and as comfortable as possible. You must follow the regulations in the *Cambridge Handbook* and also comply with any national or local social distancing regulations.

Face coverings

Candidates may wear face coverings during their exam. Remember to tell your invigilators that masks and face coverings may be used to conceal unauthorised materials such as notes or communication devices. Your invigilators must monitor candidate behaviour closely during the exam. They should particularly look for candidates who may be

talking, or any activity which suggests a candidate has concealed unauthorised materials in their face covering.

Identifying candidates

You must still identify candidates, even if they are wearing a face covering. If you have questions about this, please contact us at least three days before the exam so we can discuss different options with you.

Authorised materials

Candidates can take hand sanitiser and medication into the exam room. Your invigilators should check that it follows the regulations in the *Cambridge Handbook* – for example, that the packaging does not contain any notes or communication devices.

Tell candidates that if they leave anything behind after the exam (such as a pencil case), these items may be thrown away or destroyed for hygiene reasons. Candidates must make sure they take all their belongings with them when they leave the exam room.

Checking washrooms

We understand that centres have concerns about hygiene; however, you must still check the washrooms before the start of an exam to make sure no unauthorised materials are hidden there.

Inspections

We are planning to carry out inspections in the November 2020 series where it is safe and practical to do so. Therefore, your centre may be subject to a Cambridge inspection.

Entering the exam room

To help candidates enter the exam room safely, and to support social distancing, you may wish to put some extra measures in place. This could include:

- Making sure candidates maintain social distancing before they enter the exam room.
- Having a one-way system to allow candidates to move through the exam room to their desk.
- Allowing candidates whose exam desks are furthest away from the entrance to enter the exam room first.
- Allowing candidates to enter the room gradually, in smaller groups.

During the exam

If candidates need to use the washroom during the exam, they must be accompanied by an invigilator and social distancing should be maintained.

At the end of the exam

At the end of the exam the invigilator should read out the 'Finishing the examination' section of our *What to Say to Candidates in an Exam* document. You may wish to use the



same method as you used at the start of the exam e.g. a pre-recorded version (see page 5 of this supplement).

You must collect all candidate scripts and question papers before candidates leave the room. You may wish to provide your invigilators with extra equipment to help them collect exam materials safely e.g. gloves or hand sanitiser.

Candidates must leave any additional exam materials on their desks but make sure they take all their personal belongings with them.

To help candidates leave the exam room safely, and to support social distancing, you may wish to put some extra measures in place. This could include:

- Having a one-way system to allow candidates to move through the exam room to the exit.
- Allowing candidates nearest the exit to leave first.
- Allowing candidates to leave the room gradually, in smaller groups.



Extra guidance

Watch our 'Packing and despatching scripts' video at www.cambridgeinternational.org/examday

Fill in our Script Return Form at www.cambridgeinternational.org/scriptreturn

Packing and sending scripts

You must send your exam scripts back to us as soon as possible, following the regulations in section 5.4 of the *Cambridge Handbook*. You should not quarantine your scripts before you send them to us. If it is difficult for you to send us your scripts because of restrictions in place due to Covid-19 e.g. your postal service is unavailable, then please contact us so we can support you.

It is really important that you complete our Script Return Form every time you send scripts to us. It will help us track the progress of your scripts, and quickly identify any disruptions or delays in transit caused by Covid-19.

A Cambridge Associates are responsible for sending scripts from their Associate Centres to us. Cambridge Associates should make arrangements with their Associate Centres for receiving their scripts safely and securely, complying with any national or local Covid-19 regulations.

Candidates with a contagious disease

Section 4.5.3.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* explains how to deal with candidates who may have a contagious disease. For the November 2020 series, if you suspect a candidate, invigilator or examiner may have Covid-19, you should disregard the advice in the current handbook and follow these steps.

1. Before exam day, tell candidates they cannot take the exam and should not come to the exam venue if they display symptoms of Covid-19. If they are displaying symptoms, or if they have been in contact with symptomatic people or travelled to places restricted by your local authorities, tell them to stay at home. They should follow local or national regulations on self-isolation and/or quarantine. There is also more information and a comprehensive set of FAQs on the World Health Organisation's website.

2. Before the exam, ask candidates, invigilators and examiners if they have recently:

- displayed symptoms (suggested by WHO. Please follow guidance from your authorities).
- been in contact with symptomatic people.
- travelled to places restricted by your local authorities.

3. For an invigilator or examiner, you must replace them with somebody else for that exam session.

What should I do if I think someone has symptoms of Covid-19 during an exam?

You should develop your own plan in case someone displays symptoms of Covid-19 during the exam. If this happens, it is very important to handle the situation sensitively. It may be upsetting for the candidate, and for the other candidates and staff in the exam room.

Candidates and staff in the exam should follow your local or national regulations for anyone who has been in contact with a suspected case of Covid-19. You must also make sure the security of the exam is maintained.

Special consideration

We know that many centres have questions about special consideration. To help you, we have created a web page with information and examples:

www.cambridgeinternational.org/special-consideration-2020

Instructions for particular exams

We know there are coursework, speaking and practical components that your candidates may not be able to complete according to the syllabus requirements for the November 2020 exam series. To support you, and to make sure as many of your candidates as possible can meet all the requirements of their chosen syllabus, we have put together some information and guidance:

www.cambridgeinternational.org/coursework-nov-2020

Malpractice

We want all candidates to feel safe and secure during their exams. We also understand that the majority of candidates wish to sit their exams fairly and honestly. However, some of the regulations which have arisen because of the



Covid-19 outbreak, such as social distancing and the need to wear face coverings, may provide an extra opportunity, and make it easier, for a small number of candidates to try to bring unauthorised materials into the exam room. It is very important that your invigilators are aware of this. Invigilators must have a plan in place to deal with any suspected malpractice. As detailed in the 'Before the exams' section of this supplement, invigilators should monitor candidates closely during their exam.

You must still follow the regulations in section 5.6 of the *Cambridge Handbook*. Please make sure you familiarise yourself with this section.

Will there be any allowance for loss of teaching time?

We are not able to offer special consideration to schools or candidates to compensate for lost preparation and teaching time.

An exam grade on a certificate indicates to users of the grade (such as universities and employers) that the candidate has demonstrated a particular level of achievement to us in their exam. If we awarded grades to some candidates who had *not* shown us that level of achievement, that would be unfair to other candidates, disadvantaging them as they compete for opportunities in education or employment.

Perhaps more fundamentally, awarding grades to some candidates who have not demonstrated the necessary level of achievement would be misleading the employers and universities that use the grades. Public trust in qualifications can evaporate if exam boards dilute their standards. If we allowed that to happen, then all of our candidates, past, present or future, would be cheated of the recognition their achievements deserve.

The purpose of special consideration is to make a small allowance for circumstances on the day of the exam which prevent a candidate from demonstrating fully what they know and can do. This does not undermine the standard – we have reason to believe that the candidate's knowledge and skills are there, it is the *demonstration* of them that has been affected. Making a small allowance under these circumstances does not threaten the integrity and recognition of the grades. This is not the same as making allowances for a loss of learning. To award grades to candidates who do not have the knowledge and skills required for the grade is to undermine the standard, and risks the recognition and value of everybody's grades.

More support

More information about Covid-19 and the different ways we are supporting our schools is available on our website:

- Our **website** contains lots of useful guidance and information to support you throughout the Covid-19 outbreak.
- Read our **weekly update to schools**.
- Make sure you are receiving our **monthly exams officer eNewsletter**.
- We are running **monthly webinars** to support our exams officers, and to give you a chance to ask us questions.
- The '**Help**' section of our **website** contains our FAQs, which are updated regularly, and lots of other information to help and guide you.
- You can contact us 24 hours a day, Monday to Saturday: **info@cambridgeinternational.org**

Learn more! For more information please visit www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsOfficers or contact Customer Services on +44 (0)1223 553554 or email info@cambridgeinternational.org