

# Revision help for students published for summer exams

Students will have access to information from today (7 February) to help focus their revision for summer GCSE, AS and A level exams, as part of a range of adaptations to maximise fairness following the disruption to learning caused by the pandemic.

Some of the exam content, texts, topics and sub-topics, themes and skills due to be assessed have been made available for the majority of GCSE, AS and A level subjects, including maths, biology, chemistry and languages.

The additional information aims to focus students' revision without providing exact questions that will appear.

Advanced sight of the content is one part of the adaptations in place to help mitigate the impact of the pandemic on education, recognising this cohort of students were affected by school closures during periods of lockdown and disruption due to absences. Other adaptations include a choice of topics in some GCSEs like English literature and history, and support materials like formulae sheets in maths.

Exams and formal assessments will go ahead as planned this summer. More than 500,000 exam entries for vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) successfully took place in January, giving confidence in the exams system.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

Exams are the best and fairest form of assessment, and we firmly intend for them to take place this summer, giving students a fair chance to show what they know.

We know students have faced challenges during the pandemic, which is why we've put fairness for them at the forefront of our plans. The information to help with their revision published today, as well as the range of other adaptations, will make sure they can do themselves justice in their exams this summer.

Ofqual Chief Regulator Dr Jo Saxton said:

Students have shown so much resilience during the pandemic and we know that they are seeking certainty. Advance information published today is one of the ways we are supporting students to have that certainty as they prepare to show what they know and can do.

We are also ensuring there is a safety-net for students with a generous approach to grading.

A common set of principles has been developed for the advance information, for example avoiding providing so much detail that answers could be pre-prepared and memorised, but the information will look different for each subject and exam board, reflecting the nature of those subjects and their assessments.

Students will also benefit from other adaptations to exams and the approach to grading this year to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on their education.

There will also be choices of topics or content in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography, and a formulae or expanded equations sheet available in exams for GCSE maths, physics and combined science. There are also changes to the requirements for practical assessments in sciences and art and design, recognising how the pandemic will have affected students' opportunities in these subjects.

Ofqual's plan for grading being more generous recognises the challenges these students have faced. Ofqual wants to get back to normal grading but over a two-year period. This summer will be a transition year, to be fair to this year's students. Examiners will be asked to be more generous when setting grade boundaries, to provide a safety net for students who might otherwise just miss out on a higher grade.

The Government is fully committed to exams going ahead this summer, and does not expect that to change except in the very unlikely case of a public health emergency which would prevent students being able to physically sit exams. GCSE, AS and A level exams for each subject have also been spread out to maximise the opportunity for students to sit exams this year.

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## [Call for transport leaders to help 'super-charge' skills and build future workforce](#)

- call for evidence to promote careers and boost diversity
- youngest ever President of Institution of Civil Engineers heads up expert taskforce
- comes as HS2 announces 2,000 apprentices for life of project

The government today (7 February 2022) is calling for industry leaders and the wider public to help find and train the next generation of transport leaders.

A [12-week consultation](#) will help to better understand the future skills

needed to boost diversity, plug the skills gap and promote careers across the industry, with participants able to post their views and ideas.

A new taskforce, launched during National Apprenticeship Week 2022, will lead the charge on promoting careers and aims to create thousands of opportunities for the next generation of talent.

Minister Andrew Stephenson said:

We want the brightest and best to join the transport sector, and these plans will super-charge apprentice schemes and other training routes and help attract top talent from the full spectrum of society.

This taskforce will break down barriers to the leaders of the future who will deliver services that are essential to keep our country and economy moving.

The taskforce will be led by Rachel Skinner CBE, the youngest ever President of the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and only the second woman to hold the role. She will work alongside a representative group of industry leaders from across the transport sector.

She will also look to improve diversity in the industry, where women make up just 20% of the workforce and ethnic minorities are still underrepresented. The taskforce will look to overhaul how, and where, we find future transport professionals.

Rachel Skinner CBE, Chair of Transport Employment and Skills Taskforce, said:

I know how challenging, rewarding and fascinating working within the transport sector can be, particularly at the forefront of our net zero transition.

It's well-known that a more diverse and inclusive workforce increases creativity, collaboration and productivity, and I'm excited to use my experience to ensure people from underrepresented groups can build brilliant careers in transport.

The announcement comes as HS2 says it's on course to smash its target of 2,000 apprentices during the lifespan of the project, with 825 new starters already on board less than 18 months after main works construction began.

Associated British Ports, the UK's leading port operator, has also launched its apprentice programme for 2022, offering exciting maritime industry roles across its 21 locations. Meanwhile, Logistics UK bosses have urged members to take advantage of apprentice schemes to tackle industry shortages.

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## SLC marks National Apprenticeship Week with Darlington Programme Announcement

The recruitment drive is being launched during National Apprenticeship Week and the first cohort of successful applicants will start their 18-month apprenticeship in April.

The Apprenticeship Programme, which will be delivered in conjunction with Darlington College, will offer applicants Administrative Assistant roles in the Pre-Assessment department, which is central to the application process for almost two million new and returning students each year. As well as being supported and developed by colleagues in the organisation, the apprentices will also spend one day a week at the college for off the job training.

The apprentices will follow the Apprenticeship Standard for the relevant role, completing learning outcomes and achieving functional skills leading to an end point assessment. Chris Larmer, Executive director of Business Operations, at SLC said:

At SLC, we are committed to investing in our people and our Emerging Talent programmes are a significant element of our People Strategy. We want colleagues to have the opportunity to further their development and enhance their skills to help grow their careers.

I'm thrilled to launch our recruitment campaign during National Apprenticeship Week and look forward to welcoming 20 new colleagues to our Darlington site. The North East is full of talent and we want to offer young people the chance to unlock their potential and gain a recognised qualification, as well as valuable experience in the work environment.

Claire Turner, Marketing and Engagement Manager for Darlington College, added:

It is fantastic to be recruiting a new cohort of apprentices for the Student Loans Company to support its organisation. We have a longstanding relationship, and it is always inspiring to see how this training, along with the support of the employer, leads on to great careers for our apprentices.

SLC's Darlington site employs almost 1,400 employees across a range of functions, including technology, customer service and operations. It currently has 12 colleagues taking part in its Emerging Talent programmes in

the North East, with more than 100 across the entire business. As well as its Apprenticeship Programmes, it also has a Graduate/Degree Apprenticeship Programme, Graduate Programme and Internship Programme.

## **Apprenticeship case studies**

### **Ebony French**

Having just started with the Student Loans Company as an Apprentice, Ebony French, 19, is already seeing the benefits of being on the programme.

Ebony is an e-learning apprentice in the Organisational Development Team in Darlington. She said:

I'm really enjoying working at SLC and the experience of the workplace, alongside the skills I am learning in my apprenticeship, go hand-in-hand. It's all coming together to help me in my role in the Organisational Development team.

To be an apprentice, I think it's really important to ask questions and take advantage of all the opportunities to learn something new as it will only benefit you and your future career.

Ebony also has a disability and uses a wheelchair. She added:

SLC has been incredible in ensuring I have all the equipment I need to allow me to work comfortably. My team and manager's support has been amazing as I've settled into my role. I look forward to progressing in the organisation and putting the skills and knowledge from my apprenticeship to good use.

### **Kirsty Downing**

Darlington-based Kirsty Downing, 32, was SLC's first degree apprentice to graduate with a First-Class Honours Degree in Management Practice from Teeside University in 2021. She has also achieved her Chartered Management Institute Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management, alongside her full Chartered Manager Status.

Kirsty joined SLC in 2012 as an Administrative Assistant and has grown in the business, being appointed to a number of operational roles. The Emerging Talent Programme allowed her to balance her career ambitions with family life so she could work and study at the same time. She enrolled in the Degree Apprenticeship Programme in 2018. She said:

I have always wanted to enter higher education, to expand my skills and knowledge, but having a family meant that there was no way I could give up work to study. Being able to complete an

apprenticeship allowed me to do both. It's been a lot of hard work but I'm really proud of myself and grateful to SLC for the opportunity to enrol in the programme.

Having spent her apprenticeship as an Operations Manager, Kirsty has moved into an Operational Support Specialist role. She added: "I've already been able to apply the skills I learned in my new role. I want to make a significant positive impact on the way we work at SLC and hopefully in the future I can progress into another leadership focused role.

For more information about the Apprenticeship Programmes please visit the [Darlington College website](#). And for all the latest SLC vacancies, including a number of frontline operational roles in Darlington, please visit [careers.slc.co.uk](#).

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## [Northern Ireland Office moves to UKG Hub in Heart of Belfast](#)

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) is relocating from Stormont to a new home in the heart of Belfast city centre as part of its mission to make Northern Ireland a better place to live, work and invest.

The plan will expand the UK Government Hub in Belfast city centre, highlighting the department's desire to become a more accessible, open and modern Civil Service department as it marks the 50th anniversary of the Northern Ireland Office's formation.

The move comes as the UK Government's Places for Growth programme continues to restructure the civil service by putting local people at the heart of decision making and ensuring civil servants are rooted in the communities they serve. Erskine House is another example of the programme's success which will see 22,000 Civil Service roles moved out of London by 2030.

The NIO will join government colleagues in Erskine House, bringing together UK Government departments including HMRC and the Competitions and Marketing Authority, with the Department of International Trade and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities also expected to base staff in the central UKG hub later in the year. The new location will allow departments to collaborate, to work in new ways, deliver better services for the people of Northern Ireland, and provide a modern and safe working environment for their staff.

From its new location, the NIO will be able to engage more effectively with a broad range of stakeholders to collectively build better outcomes for all

citizens in Northern Ireland. The move will also bring increased footfall to the centre of Belfast, boosting the local economy as Northern Ireland continues to recover from the pandemic.

**Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Brandon Lewis said:**

“I am delighted that the department will be moving to this fantastic new building in the heart of Belfast city centre.

“Our new workspace will provide a modern working environment that will act as a foundation for the NIO’s work to support the Government’s levelling up agenda and make Northern Ireland a better place to live, work and invest.”

**Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Steve Barclay said:**

“There is fantastic work being done in Northern Ireland to ensure that the civil service is deeply rooted in the communities it serves.

“This move brings long-term job opportunities for people around Belfast and will boost town and city centre businesses through the increased footfall. It’s great to see levelling up in action.

**Jim Harra, HMRC’s First Permanent Secretary and Chief Executive, said:**

“I’m delighted to welcome Northern Ireland Office colleagues to Erskine House. They will join staff at HMRC and the Competitions and Markets Authority at our Belfast UK Government Hub, building a professional and vibrant civil service community to deliver great services to our customers.”

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## **UK’s major year of sport and culture to be showcased at Expo 2020 Dubai with Culture Secretary visit**

- Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries and Minister for Exports Mike Freer to lead the government’s delegation at UK National Day at Expo 2020 Dubai
- Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will be showcased to a global audience at Expo as the UK gets set for the Games
- The Queen’s Baton Relay and the Birmingham 2022 Business and Tourism Programme will be landmark fixtures of UK National Day celebrations

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries and Minister for Exports Mike Freer will promote the UK’s blockbuster year of sport and cultural events at Expo 2020 Dubai on UK National Day as the Queen’s Baton Relay makes an historic visit to the region.

Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, and Unboxed: Creativity in the UK will showcase global Britain on the world stage and be a driving force for international tourism, trade and investment to the UK this year.

Their visit comes as the government confirms the UK is now one of the strongest and most open economies in Europe, as testing and quarantine restrictions end for fully vaccinated visitors.

As part of the Birmingham 2022 showcase at Expo, the Queen's Baton Relay will attend UK National Day alongside His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge to bring Commonwealth nations attending Expo 2020 Dubai together in anticipation for the upcoming Games. After Expo 2020, the Baton will continue on its 72-nation tour before arriving in Birmingham for the Opening Ceremony of the Commonwealth Games on 28 July.

Nadine Dorries, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, says:

2022 is set to be an incredible year of celebration for the UK, with three amazing global events on home soil. The arrival of the Queen's Baton Relay in Dubai will help build excitement about Birmingham 2022, the Platinum Jubilee and Unboxed.

As world leaders convene at Expo 2020 Dubai, I'm proud to be promoting the very best of global Britain at UK National Day, encouraging people to come and experience our spectacular year of sport and culture.

UK National Day will feature new and diverse music, theatre, arts, poetry, comedy, film, food and innovation across the whole Expo 2020 site, inviting the world to see things differently about the UK as it celebrates extraordinary UK talent.

Laura Faulkner OBE, UK Commissioner General for Expo 2020 Dubai, says:

UK National Day will be the highlight of our participation in Expo 2020 Dubai, offering visitors from 191 countries the opportunity to see things differently, to celebrate our extraordinary talent from the UK and discover how we innovate all over the world.

I'm delighted to see the Birmingham 2022 Queen's Baton Relay is officially part of the celebrations, combining the strong relationships we have with each and every Commonwealth nation with an opportunity to appreciate the world-class sporting talents we have in the UK.

Ten years on from London 2012, the UK is also hosting the UEFA Women's EURO 2022, the Rugby League World Cup and the World Gymnastics Championships, in

addition to the Birmingham Commonwealth Games. The visit to Expo 2020 Dubai is part of a wider international programme across the Gulf region from 7-11 February, including a major keynote address from the Culture Secretary at the formal launch of [VisitBritain's newly-announced £10 million international GREAT Britain marketing campaign](#), promoting the blockbuster year of 2022 to the UK's most valuable markets.

The Culture Secretary will also speak at the 'Culture and Sport in the Global Economy' event (9 February) alongside global sporting organisations including Qatar 2022, the Global E-sports Federation, Rugby League World Cup, City of Gold Coast and World Games 2022. The summit will explore the transformational impact the major cultural and sporting events of 2022 will have on the social and economic recovery of the UK.

This event is hosted by the West Midlands Growth Company and is part of a series of events across the UAE for Birmingham 2022's Business and Tourism programme – a £24 million central and local government investment into the West Midlands – to demonstrate the scale of the economic opportunity available in the Games' host city and long-term capital investment potential of the region.

In addition to the programme of activity with the Culture Secretary, Minister for Exports Mike Freer will be attending Expo, and talking to the business community to promote the Government's Export Strategy published at the end of last year and the 'Race to £1 Trillion' target to boost exports and ensure the UK recovers from the pandemic and builds back better and greener.

His visit to the region follows the closure of the Department of International Trade's public consultation on a new trade deal with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), of which the UAE is a founding member, with the intention of negotiations on a new agreement being launched this year. The UK government already has a strong trading relationship worth £32.5 billion with the large, diverse and vibrant group of the GCC countries. A new deal will take this a step further, helping the UK become a truly Global Britain, breaking down barriers to trade and supporting growth and jobs for UK workers.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Please see supplementary quotes from Birmingham 2022 partners in Annex A.

Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

The [Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games](#) will take place from 28 July to 8 August 2022 and will be the biggest sporting and cultural event ever held in the city featuring thousands of world-class athletes and over a million spectators. Home to more than 187 nationalities, Birmingham 2022 will be a home Games for every nation.

Backed by £778 million of public funding, Birmingham 2022 will deliver 11 days of amazing sport. Alongside the sport programme, the Games will be

accompanied by a six-month cultural festival and the Queen's Baton Relay will travel around the Commonwealth and the UK before arriving in Birmingham for the Opening Ceremony. A £24 million business and tourism programme will convert the excitement and interest generated by the Games into increased trade, tourism and investment opportunities for the West Midlands, promoting the region and the UK to the world.

#### The UK at Expo 2020 Dubai

The UK is participating in Expo 2020 Dubai, taking place from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. More than 200 participants, including 190-plus countries, are taking part in what will be the Arab world's largest event. The overarching theme for Expo 2020 Dubai is 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future'. Under the theme 'Innovating for a Shared Future', the UK's participation will boost the UK's global reputation, drive future partnerships and provide long term economic benefit.

The UK's participation in Expo 2020 Dubai will be led by the [Department for International Trade \(DIT\)](#), with support from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, the Department for Transport, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and the Devolved Administrations. The UK's presence will consist of a self-build country Pavilion, based in the 'Opportunity' District and an accompanying business, cultural, tourism and education events programme.

#### Annex A: Supplementary quotes from Birmingham 2022 partners

Ian Reid, Chief Executive of Birmingham 2022, says:

The Queen's Baton Relay is a much-loved tradition – it brings together people, athletes and communities from across the Commonwealth as excitement builds for the Games. Our involvement in UK National Day provides another opportunity to connect and strengthen relationships with the Commonwealth nations and territories present at the Expo, as we work towards hosting the biggest sport and cultural event to ever be staged in the West Midlands. The Queen's Baton also highlights the region's innovation and creativity, making it a special moment to showcase these skills at a world expo.

CGF President Dame Louise Martin, DBE, says:

The Queen's Baton Relay symbolises hope, solidarity and collaboration across the Commonwealth, at a time when it is needed most. The visit to the Expo site on UK National Day provides a unique opportunity for the Baton to further engage with Commonwealth nations that have come together in one place. It marks another exciting moment for the Baton to inspire communities on its journey to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony

on July 28th.

Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council, says:

As the excitement builds for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, we're pleased to be bringing the Business and Tourism Programme to Expo 2020 Dubai, highlighting Birmingham and the wider West Midlands' aspirations on the world stage.

The Games present a unique opportunity to forge new ties with our international counterparts across trade, tourism and investment, as well as cement existing ones. The West Midlands boasts one of the UK's most vibrant displays of arts and culture, coupled with a business environment that has attracted more foreign investment than any other UK regional location, for four consecutive years.

Our programme of strategic engagement across the Commonwealth and UAE markets aims to advance mutual opportunities for economic prosperity and we look forward to meeting international partners at Expo 2020, and of course, at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

VisitBritain CEO, Sally Balcombe, says:

We know there is pent-up demand for travel and this year's landmark events, set to be global tourism draws, are exciting and timely opportunities to promote our welcome to the world and to showcase the outstanding experiences that visitors can only have here in Britain.

As well as harnessing these global events, we're shining the spotlight on our vibrant cities, telling the stories of our renowned heritage with a modern twist, our buzzing contemporary culture and innovative food and drink scene, showing that Britain is packed full of fresh and exciting experiences to come and see today and that now is a fantastic time to book a trip.