



Cambridge Nationals: The terminal rule

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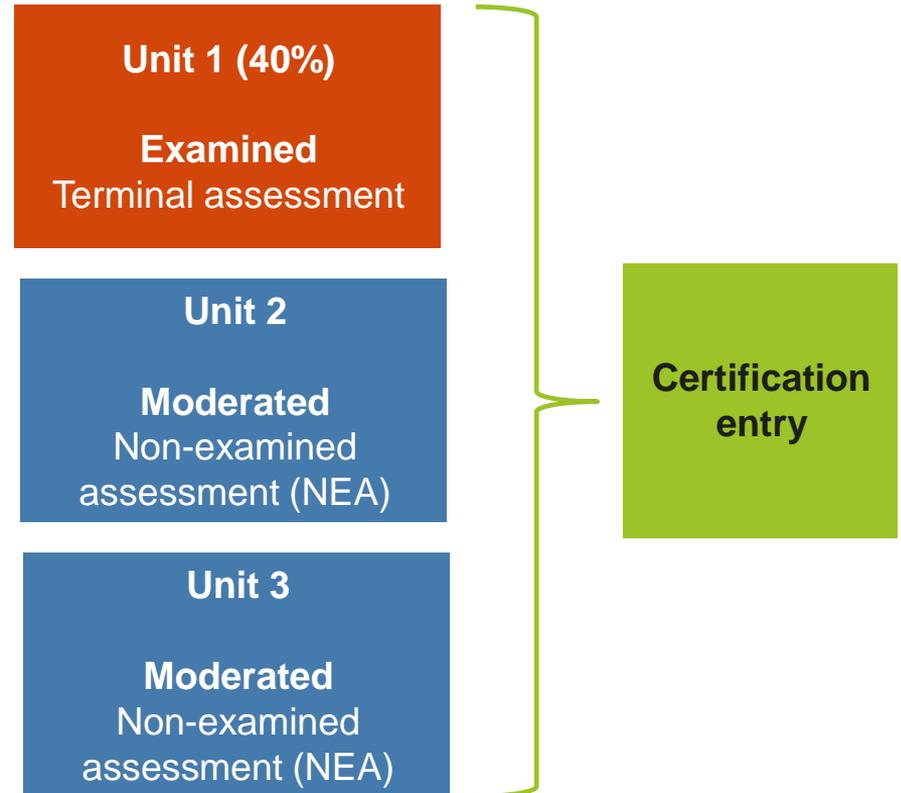


Cambridge Nationals explained



Cambridge Nationals explained

- Cambridge Nationals are unitised, series-based qualifications
- All subjects require students to complete three units: one exam and two non-examined assessment (NEA) units that are centre-assessed and OCR moderated
- An entry is made for each unit in the series it is being taken – January or June
- A certification entry is made at the end of course, in the final assessment series – this is when the terminal rule must be met



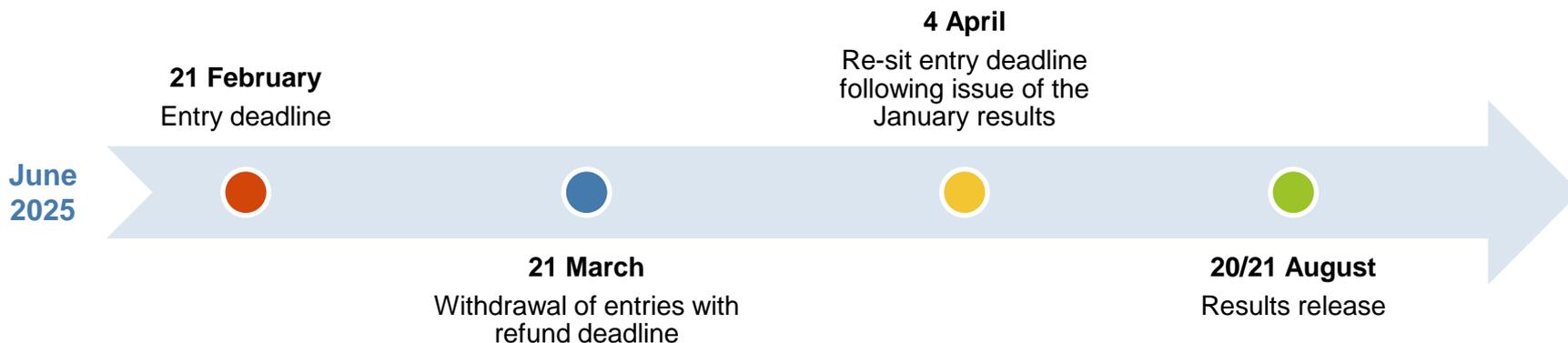
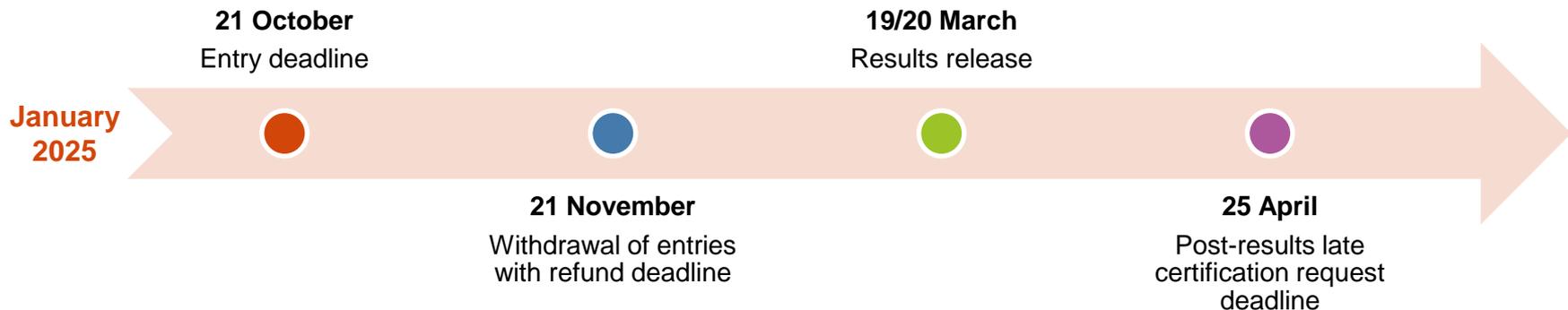
What is post-results late certification?



- Following the release of unit results, if you have not previously made a certification entry, you can make a post-results late request, which is known as a **late certification**
- You must make requests by the agreed deadline for the series – **late certifications are not available after the deadline**
- All late certification requests should be made via Interchange – hover over ‘Post results’ in the left-hand menu and click on ‘Late certification’
- This is a free service

Key dates for January and June 2025

Cambridge Nationals key dates are available in our [key dates document](#) on our website



Understanding the terminal rule



What is the ‘terminal rule’?

- The DfE requires all technical awards offered to 14 to 16-year-olds from September 2022 to have at least 40% of the total marks assessed by examination – this includes Cambridge Nationals
- Students must take these exams as terminal assessment – the exam must be taken in the student's final assessment series (when they are finishing the qualification)
- This is known as a ‘terminal assessment rule’ or, simply, the **‘terminal rule’**



Cambridge Technicals are not ‘technical awards’ – the terminal rule does not apply to Level 2 / Level 3 Cambridge Technicals qualifications

What does the terminal rule mean for Cambridge Nationals?

- Cambridge Nationals exams are taken, and non-examined assessment (NEA) units are submitted in a series – **January or June**



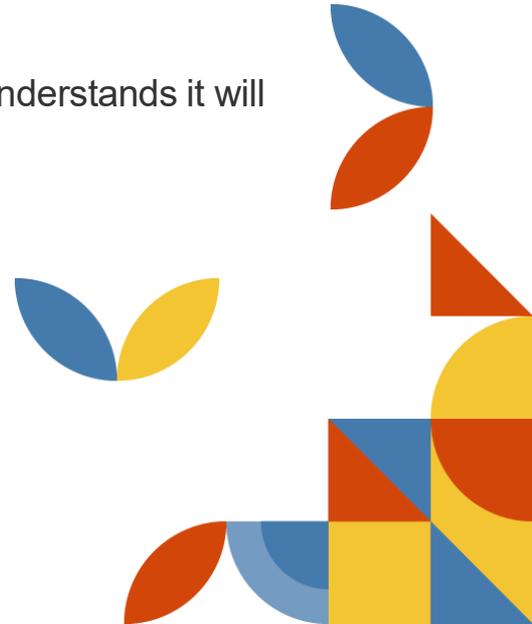
The terminal rule means the **exam** must be taken in the student's final assessment series (when the student is finishing the qualification) – this could be either January or June



Non-examined assessment (NEA) units can be taken in any series but must be submitted in a series before the exam is taken, *or* in the same series as the exam is taken

What does the terminal rule mean for Cambridge Nationals?

- If a student takes the exam in a series before both NEA units have been submitted, this does not meet the terminal rule as it is not their final assessment series
- Exams taken before the final assessment series are considered a '**practice**' attempt and will not contribute to the student's final qualification grade
- We will still accept the entry and mark the exam. It's important the student understands it will only count as a 'practice' attempt
- The student **must** take the exam again in their final assessment series. It is this exam result which will be used towards the final qualification grade – **even if it is lower than a previous attempt**



Terminal rule examples



Cambridge Nationals units

Certification entry code	The terminal rule is met when:		
	The unit 1 exam is taken in the student's final assessment series	NEA unit 2 is submitted before or in the same series as the exam	NEA unit 3 is submitted before or in the same series as the exam
J809: Child Development	R057	R058	R059
J834: Creative iMedia	R093	R094	One of R095-R099
J822: Engineering Design	R038	R039	R040
J823: Engineering Manufacture	R014	R015	R016
J824: Engineering Programmable Systems	R047	R048	R049
J837: Enterprise and Marketing	R067	R068	R069
J835: Health and Social Care	R032	R033	R034 or R035
J836: IT	R050	R060	R070
J828: Sport Science	R180	R181	R182 or R183
J829: Sport Studies	R184	R185	R186 or R187

Example 1

- Exam taken in January of Year 11
- Last NEA submitted in January of Year 11
- Certification entry in January of Year 11



	Unit 1 exam	Unit 2 NEA	Unit 3 NEA
January Series (Year 10)			
June Series (Year 10)		NEA	
January Series (Year 11) CERTIFICATION ENTRY	Exam		NEA
June Series (Year 11)			



Example 2

- Exam taken in June of Year 11
- Last NEA submitted in June of Year 11
- Certification entry in June of Year 11

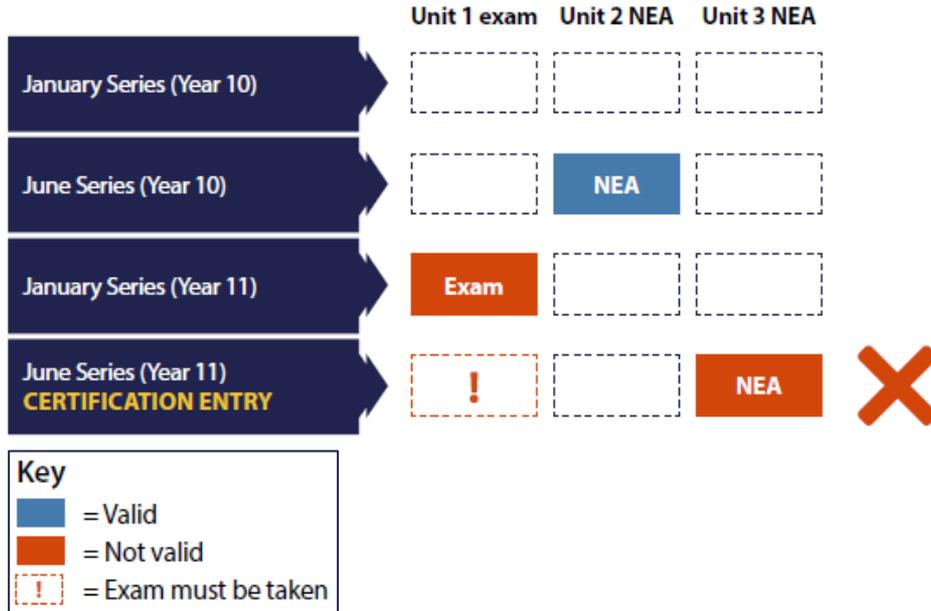


	Unit 1 exam	Unit 2 NEA	Unit 3 NEA
January Series (Year 10)			
June Series (Year 10)		NEA	
January Series (Year 11)			
June Series (Year 11) CERTIFICATION ENTRY	Exam		NEA



Example 3

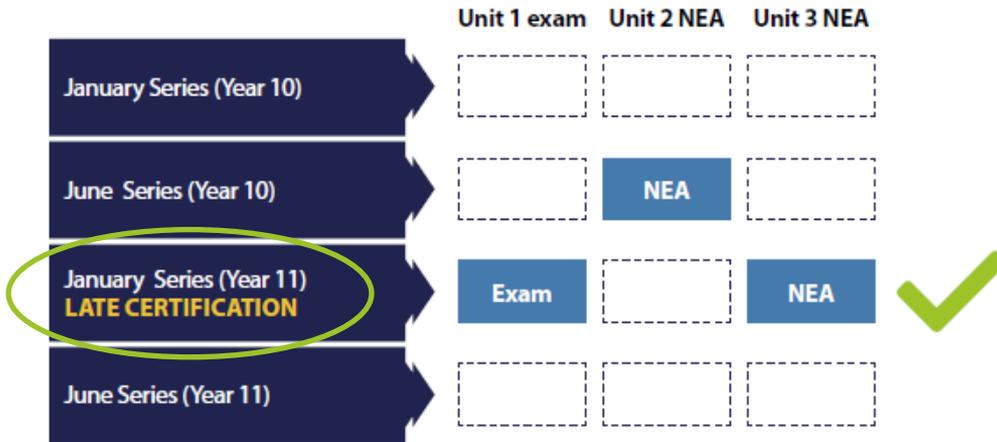
- Exam taken in January of Year 11
- Last NEA submitted in June of Year 11
- Certification entry made in June of Year 11



- The exam taken in January of Year 11 will be considered a **'practice'** attempt and will not contribute to the student's final qualification grade
- The exam will need to be taken again in June of Year 11 and this will be used towards the student's final grade, **even if this is lower than the January result**

Example 4

- Exam taken in January of Year 11
- Last NEA submitted in January of Year 11
- A post-results **late certification request** made in January of Year 11



- In this example, a certification entry for January is not made in advance
- Once January results are published, you can use our free post-results **late certification service** to request certification – requests are free and are made via Interchange

The terminal rule and resits



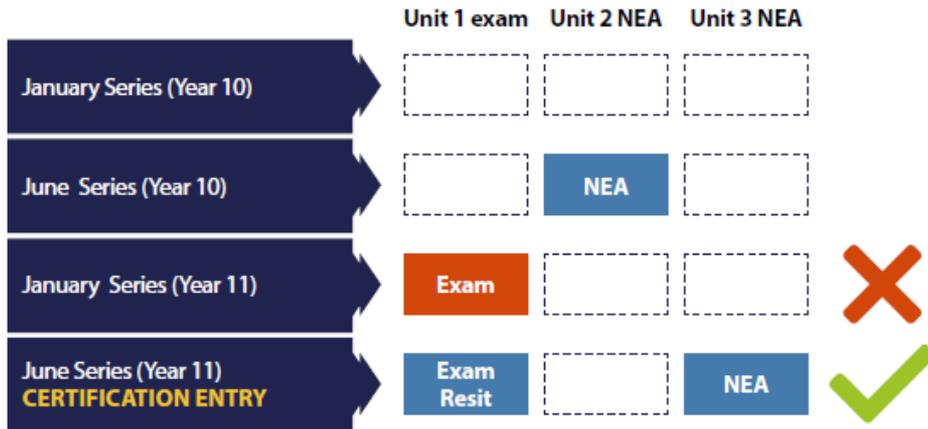
Examined unit resit rules before certification

- Students can take the examined unit multiple times. If the exam is taken before the final series, it will be considered a practice and will not contribute to the final qualification grade
- The student must take the exam again in their final series. The result achieved in the exam taken in the final series will be used towards the final grade, **even if the result is lower than a previous attempt**
- Students must resit the examined unit if they are submitting or resubmitting a non-examined assessment (NEA) unit in a series after the exam has been taken as this is now the final assessment series



Example 5

- Exam resit taken in June of Year 11
- Last NEA submitted June of Year 11
- Certification entry made in June of Year 11



Key

 = Valid

 = Not valid

 = Result is not used

- If a student takes the exam in a series before both NEA units have been submitted, this does not meet the terminal rule and will be considered a 'practice' attempt
- In this example, it is the result from June that will contribute to the final qualification grade, **even if this is lower than the January result**

Non-examined assessment (NEA) resit rules before certification



- Students can take the NEA units multiple times – but to meet the terminal rule they need to be submitted either before or in the same series as the exam
- Where a student has taken NEA units multiple times, the best result is used towards the final grade
- **IMPORTANT:** New assignments are released each year for all units apart from Sport Studies unit R185 and Enterprise and Marketing unit R069. This means there is only one resubmission opportunity for assignments

Example 6

- Exam taken in June of Year 11
- Last NEA re-submitted June of Year 11
- Certification entry in June of Year 11



- The best result for each NEA unit is used towards the final grade

	Unit 1 exam	Unit 2 NEA	Unit 3 NEA
January Series (Year 10)			
June Series (Year 10)		NEA	
January Series (Year 11)			NEA (Best)
June Series (Year 11) CERTIFICATION ENTRY	Exam	NEA Resit (Best)	NEA Resit

Key

 	= Valid
 	= Not valid
 	= Result is not used
!	= Exam must be taken

Example 7

- Exam taken in January of Year 11
- Last NEA re-submitted June of Year 11
- Certification entry in June of Year 11



- By resitting the NEA in the June series, the final assessment series has changed
- The exam must be taken again in the June series of Year 11 and that exam result will contribute to the final qualification grade

	Unit 1 exam	Unit 2 NEA	Unit 3 NEA
January Series (Year 10)			
June Series (Year 10)		NEA	
January Series (Year 11)	Exam		NEA
June Series (Year 11) CERTIFICATION ENTRY	!	NEA Resit	

Resit rules after certification

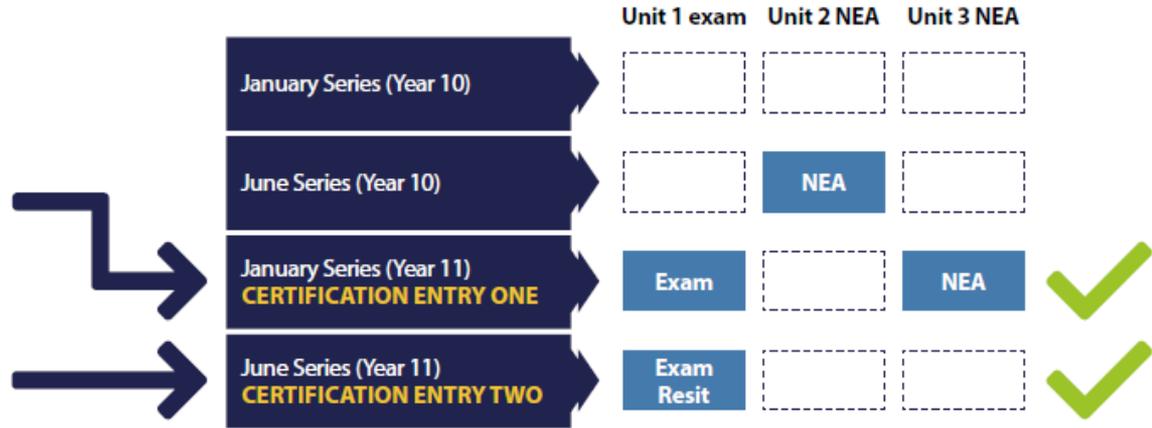
- Students can retake a qualification by:
 - resitting the exam and retaking both NEA units
 - resitting the exam and retaking one NEA unit
 - resitting the exam only
- When retaking a qualification, the student must **meet the terminal rule again** by taking the exam
- Students cannot retake a non-examined assessment (NEA) unit and certificate again without resitting the exam
- The first overall certification is used for performance tables



Example 8

In this example, the terminal rule is met both times the student certifies

- This result will count towards school performance tables
- This qualification result can be used by the student but will not count towards school performance tables



January 2025



January 2025

Students are entered for the exam in January 2025: Has the terminal rule been met?

No – the exam is a practice attempt

Actions

- Make sure students are informed and understand that their January 2025 result will not count towards the final qualification grade, and they will need to take the exam again
- Enter the students for the exam in their final series. It is this result which will be used towards the final qualification grade

No – the exam is not a practice attempt

Actions

You can:

- Retain the exam entries and use them as a 'practice' attempt
- Withdraw the entries – the withdrawal with refund deadline is **21 November**. You will need to enter the students for the exam in their final series
- If students have completed the missing NEA unit/s, you can make late entries and submit the work for moderation in January 2025

January 2025

Students are entered for the exam in January 2025 and are eligible to certificate (the terminal rule has been met): Has a certification entry been made?



No – a certification entry has not been made

You can:

- Make the certification entry now – certification entries are free and late entry fees do not apply (remember, it is the first certification which counts in the KS4 performance tables)
- Wait for the January 2025 results to be published before deciding about certification. If students are happy with their exam result you can make a late certification request by the agreed deadline of **25 April**. You cannot make late certification requests for January 2025 after the deadline
- As a contingency arrangement, if you miss the late certification deadline for January 2025 you can make a certification entry in June 2025 provided no units are entered in that series

January 2025

Students are entered for assessments in January 2025 and may want to resit in June 2025

Students can take units multiple times, but you must consider the terminal rule – see our [resit rules guidance](#)

Key date	Description	Important!
21 February	June 2025 entry deadline	If you enter students for resits before the publication of results, consider the time between receiving results and the entry withdrawals with a refund deadline
19/20 March	January 2025 results release dates	
21 March	June 2025 entry withdrawals with a refund deadline	
4 April	June 2025 resit entry deadline following issue of the January results	This applies where you're entering the same unit in June that was taken by the student in January

Resources and support



Further guidance and support



- Guidance on [our entry rules page](#)
- [Terminal rule guide](#) with common examples
- [Terminal rule FAQs](#)
- [Certification FAQs](#)
- [Blog](#) for teachers
- [Newsletters and updates](#) – [exams officer update](#) and [teacher newsletters](#)

Contact us – support@ocr.org.uk / 01223 553998