

# [Direction issued to the Chief Regulator of Ofqual](#)

Published 3 April 2020

Last updated 22 October 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

## 1. 22 October 2020

Added 'Direction to the Chief Regulator of Ofqual about appeals for summer 2020 GCSEs, AS and A levels'.

## 2. 9 April 2020

Added 'Direction to the Chief Regulator of Ofqual about vocational and technical qualifications, and other general qualifications'.

## 3. 3 April 2020

First published.

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# [Last chance to 'wave goodbye' to Mercury mission](#)

The manoeuvre will slow down the BepiColombo spacecraft and bend its trajectory towards the centre of the Solar System as the spacecraft approaches Earth at 12,700 km, allowing scientists to test some of the instruments onboard.

The flyby at 5.25 am (BST) on 10 April is the first of nine gravity assist manoeuvres awaiting BepiColombo during its 7-year journey to Mercury, although this is the last time we will see the spacecraft from Earth.

Rosemary Young, Science Programme Manager at the UK Space Agency, said:

The UK built X-ray spectrometer instrument onboard BepiColombo will eventually tell us so much more about the planet's chemical composition but before then the spacecraft must undertake a complex orbit manoeuvre to get there. It will be passing the Earth on Friday before gravity slings it towards Venus and onwards to Mercury.

This distance to Earth is so close that it will be possible to see it through telescopes and even binoculars from southern Europe. It's a final chance to wave BepiColombo goodbye!

The European Space Agency's (ESA) mission control centre in Germany is preparing for the gravity-assist flyby which will be performed with limited personnel and enforcing all social distancing rules in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

### [BepiColombo's journey to Mercury](#)

Launched on 20 October 2018, BepiColombo is the first ESA mission to Mercury, the least explored planet in the inner Solar System, and will provide new insight into how the planet closest to the Sun formed and evolved. The spacecraft will travel 9 billion km and is designed to survive extreme temperatures, from +450 to -180 degrees.

In October, the spacecraft will perform the first of two flybys at Venus. The final six orbit-tightening manoeuvres will use the gravity of BepiColombo's destination, Mercury, to arrive in late 2025. Much of the spacecraft was built right here in the UK by our growing space sector, which employs more than 40,000 people across the country. The mission is an outstanding example of international collaboration between the European and Japanese space agencies. The UK's involvement is managed and funded by the UK Space Agency.

The UK's contribution to the mission:

- The UK Space Agency funded, and University of Leicester designed and built the Mercury Imaging X-ray Spectrometer (MIXS). This instrument will use novel X-ray optics to determine small-scale features on Mercury and find out what the planet's surface is made of.
- Airbus Defence and Space provided spacecraft structures, electrical and chemical propulsion systems and the systems which will separate the spacecraft modules on arrival at Mercury.
- QinetiQ supplied the innovative electric propulsion system. A beam of charged particles are expelled from the spacecraft to propel it forward. Ion propulsion produces low levels of thrust very efficiently compared with conventional chemical rockets.
- Thales Alenia Space UK supplied the Remote Interface Units that acquire sensor data and telemetry as well as driving the thrusters that control the spacecraft.
- UK teams also provided a hardware contribution to the Finnish led Solar Intensity X-ray & particle spectrometer (SIXS).

The UK continues to be a leading member of ESA, which is independent of the EU, having committed a record investment of £374 million per year in November 2019. The UK space sector employs 42,000 people and generates an income of £14.8 billion each year, while supporting £300 billion of wider economic activity through other industries with satellite services such as navigation, communications and Earth observation.

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# UK Statement for the Virtual Informal Conversation with the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Madam President, High Commissioner,

First of all, thank you for taking this initiative and for arranging today's informal briefing.

I want to take this opportunity to express my condolences and sympathies to friends and colleagues in Geneva whose countries have been so seriously affected – and to express my thanks for the expressions of support following the hospitalisation of our Prime Minister.

With your permission, I want to make three points this morning.

First, I want to reiterate the UK's support to the UN, its Funds, Programmes and Agencies, in their effort to tackle these enormous health and humanitarian challenges. The world has never been faced with such a comprehensive and collective challenge as this global pandemic, and we will only get through it together, and by supporting and reinforcing the international institutions that have stepped up to deal with it. The United Kingdom has already provided \$900 million to the UN to fight COVID-19, and we will provide more.

Second, while States are rightly focused on doing everything necessary to bring this pandemic under control in their own countries, in line with WHO guidance, we need to be alive to the wider consequences of our actions, and the need to minimize the long-term damage to our economies, societies and politics. We are already facing the prospect of the worst global recession of our lifetimes, as a result of the measures we are taking, with all of the consequences for people's lives around the world, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable.

Which brings me to my third point. We should all seek to ensure that the measures we take are necessary, proportionate, time-abound and transparent, and regularly reviewed. Scrutiny of our actions as governments and international agencies has never been more important than it is now, given the unprecedented actions we are taking, and we need to ensure that our parliaments, media and civil society are all able to play their role.

In that context, High Commissioner, I would like to thank you and your office for the role you are playing in ensuring that we do not lose sight of the international human rights frameworks and considerations that we need to take into account as we respond to this crisis. Your independent voice, at the apex of the UN human rights system, will be vital in helping to ensure that,

as we battle this common enemy, we don't inadvertently take a step backwards on human rights, and the hard won progress we have all made in recent decades.

Thank you.

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## **Called-in decision: land bounded by Wandsworth Road, Parry Street, Bondway and Vauxhall Bus Station (ref: 3229531 – 9 April 2020)**

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

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## **Recovered appeal: land to the east of the A1301, south of the A505 near Hinxton and west of the A1301, north of the A505 near Whittlesford, Hinxton (ref: 3210008 – 9 April 2020)**

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.