

Centre Policy – determining centre assessed grades

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1. Policy Statement

On 4th January 2021, the government announced that it was no longer fair for the Summer 2021 examination series to take place. The government set out its policy that centres will be submitting students' grades in a letter dated 25 February 2021. This guidance sets out how:

- GCSEs, AS and A levels should be awarded this year using teacher assessed grades based on a range of evidence.
- Vocational and technical qualifications will be split into 3 categories, each with a different approach to awarding
- other general qualifications will be awarded through alternative arrangements

JCQ and the awarding organisations have been working together to prepare guidance and information to support the provision of grades to students this summer by centres.

This policy provides information in respect of the process, from the creation and submission of a Centre Policy, through the determination of grades, requirements for internal quality assurance procedures, submission of grades to awarding organisations, the external quality assurance process, the issuing of results and the appeals process for students.

2. Policy Aims & Objectives

The Centre Policy for determining centre assessed grades aims to:

1. Outline the process for determining centre assessed grades
2. To ensure that centre assessed grades are determined fairly, consistently, free from bias and effectively within and across departments.
3. To ensure the operation of effective processes with clear guidelines and support for staff.
4. To ensure that all staff involved in the processes clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.
5. To support academic staff to take evidence-based decisions in line with Joint Council for Qualifications guidance.
6. To ensure the consideration of historical centre data in the process, and the appropriate decision making in respect of, centre assessed grades.
7. To support a high standard of internal quality assurance in the allocation of centre assessed grades.
8. To support our centre in meeting its obligations in relation to equality legislation.
9. To ensure our centre meets all requirements set out by the Department of Education, Ofqual, the Joint Council for Qualifications and awarding organisations for Summer 2021 qualifications.
10. To ensure the process for communicating to candidates and their parents/carers how they will be assessed is clear, in order to give confidence.

3. Definitions

Awarding Organisation – This is an organisation that develops and awards qualifications to meet the needs of students, employers and other stakeholders.

Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) – This is the regulatory body which sets rules and regulations for examinations.

The Centre – is the establishment approved by an awarding body to conduct examinations, such as the school or college.

Head of Centre – is the accountable person for the conduct of Centre staff e.g. the Principal

Academic Staff – is the members of staff associated in the delivery of a specific qualification or award.

SENCOs – (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators) this encompasses SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) leads and assessors in the college.

Heads of Department/Subject – Is the person with responsibility for that subject or subject area within the Centre.

Students – this means students entered for qualifications in 2021 within the scope of this guidance as outlined above and encompasses ‘candidates’ and ‘students’.

Access Arrangements – Specific arrangements which allow students with particular requirements to perform to their best ability in an examination.

Special Considerations – This is given to candidates who were not able to perform at their best during an examination or assessment due to exceptional circumstances.

Course Work – This is a specific project and course related work that contributes to an overall qualification result and is required to be completed by a specific date.

Additional assessment materials – qualification-specific sets of questions covering key knowledge, understanding and skills, provided with mark schemes and mapping grids.

Support materials – to assist in the determination and submission of grades, for example guidance, training, exemplar responses, performance data and grade descriptors.

Private Candidates – are students who are not currently enrolled with the exam centre.

MIS – Management Information System. The computerised system in which student & institution data is stored and utilised.

Centre Assessed Grades – is a formal judgement of student attainment against the requirements of a given assessment, offered by a centre where it has not been possible for a student to complete the assessment that would usually be required. This also referred to as a TAG (Teacher Assessed Grade)

Ofqual – The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

4. Scope

This policy applies to the awarding of Centre Assessed Grades for qualification regulated by Ofqual for which the awarding organisation has categorised the qualification or elements of the qualification require a centre assessed grade.

While this policy lays out the process for determining centre assessed grades in should be read in conjunction and alongside the relevant JCQ, Ofqual, Awarding Organisation regulations. This should also be read in conjunction with internal such as Examination Arrangements Procedure and Assessment Appeals Procedure in Further Education.

5. Legal requirements

Joint Council for Qualification (JCQ) governs academic qualifications in England and sets rules and regulations for centres to follow.

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

Awarding Organisations set rules and regulations for centres to follow

General Data Protection Regulations

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Equality Act 2010

6. Roles and Responsibilities

This section lists the responsibilities of the relevant roles in the process of determining centre assessed grades for this academic year

Head of Centre

- The Head of Centre, will be responsible for approving our policy for determining centre assessed grades.
- The Head of Centre has overall responsibility for the [school/college] as an examinations centre and will ensure that clear roles and responsibilities of all staff are defined.
- The Head of Centre will confirm that centre assessed grade decisions represent the academic judgement made by academic staff and that the checks in place ensure these align with the guidance on standards provided by awarding organisations.
- The Head of Centre will ensure a robust internal quality assurance process has been produced and signed-off in advance of results being submitted.

Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Area

- Provide training and support to our other staff.
- support the Head of Centre in the quality assurance of the final centre assessed grades.
- Ensure an effective approach within and across departments and authenticating the preliminary outcome from single teacher subjects.
- Responsible for ensuring staff have a clear understanding of the internal and external quality assurance processes and their role within it.
- Ensure that all academic staff within their department make consistent judgements about student evidence in deriving a grade.

- Ensure all staff conduct assessments under the appropriate levels of control with reference to guidance provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications.
- Ensure academic staff have the information required to make accurate and fair judgments.
- Ensure that the appropriate awarding organization paperwork and checklist is completed for each qualification that they are submitting.

Academic Staff / SENCo

- Ensure they conduct assessments under our centre's appropriate levels of control and have sufficient evidence, in line with centre policies and guidance from the Joint Council for Qualifications and the relevant awarding organisation, to provide centre assessed grades for each student they have entered for a qualification.
- Ensure that the centre assessed grade they assign to each student is a fair, valid and reliable reflection of the assessed evidence available for each student.
- Make judgements based on what each student has been taught and what they have been assessed on, as outlined in the section on grading in the main JCQ and awarding organisation guidance.
- Produce an Assessment Record for each subject cohort, that includes the nature of the assessment evidence being used, the level of control for assessments considered, and any other evidence that explains the determination of the final centre assessed grades. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be recorded.
- Ensure evidence securely stored and be able to retrieve sufficient evidence upon request.

Examinations Officer

- Communicating information and guidance to relevant parties
- Ensuring enquiries are logged, acknowledged, communicated and responded to in a timely in line with JCQ and awarding organisation guidance
- Responsible for the administration of the final centre assessed grades and submission to the relevant awarding organisation.
- Coordinating the centre post-results services in line with centre guidelines and policies.

7. Training, support and Guidance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the training, support and guidance that our centre will provide to those determining centre assessed grades this year.

Training

- Staff involved in determining grades will attend any centre-based training to help achieve consistency and fairness to all students.
- Staff will engage fully with all training and support that has been provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications and the awarding organisations relevant to determining centre assessed grades.
- Academic staff not familiar with particular subject assessment will have access to mentoring from experienced colleagues
- Additional internal reviews, training and monitoring will be put in place as appropriate

8. Use of Evidence

This section gives details of the use of evidence and additional assessment material in determining centre assessed grades this year.

- Academic staff making judgements will have regard to the Ofqual Head of Centre guidance on recommended evidence, and further guidance provided by awarding organisations.
- All candidate evidence used to determine centre assessed grades, and associated documentation, will be retained and made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals.
- We will be using student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by our awarding organisation(s), including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers.
- We may use non-exam assessment work (often referred to as coursework), even if this has not been fully completed.
- We may use student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that follow the same format as awarding organisation materials, and have been marked in a way that reflects awarding organisation mark schemes.
- We will use substantial class or homework (including work that took place during remote learning).
- We will use internal tests taken by students.
- We will use mock exams taken over the course of study.
- We will use records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects.
- We will use additional assessment materials to give students the opportunity to show what they know, understand or can do in an area of content that has been taught but not yet assessed.
- We will use additional assessment materials to give students an opportunity to show improvement, for example, to validate or replace an existing piece of evidence.
- We will use additional assessment materials to support consistency of judgement between academic staff or classes by giving everyone the same task to complete.
- We will combine and/or remove elements of questions where, for example, a multi-part question includes a part which focuses on an element of the specification that hasn't been taught.

The section gives details reference the appropriateness of evidence and balance of evidence in arriving at grades in the following ways.

- We will consider the level of control under which an assessment was completed, for example, whether the evidence was produced under high control and under supervision or at home.
- We will ensure that we are able to authenticate the work as the student's own, especially where that work was not completed within the school or college.
- We will consider the limitations of assessing a student's performance when using assessments that have been completed more than once, or drafted and redrafted, where this is not a skill being assessed.
- We will consider the specification and assessment objective coverage of the

assessment.

- We will consider the depth and breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills assessed, especially higher order skills within individual assessments.

9. Determining centre assessed grades

This section gives details of the approach and process for determining and awarding centre assessed grades based on evidence.

- Academic staff will determine grades based on evidence which is commensurate with the standard at which a student is performing, i.e. their demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills across the content of the course they have been taught.
- Academic staff will record how the evidence was used to arrive at a fair and objective grade, which is free from bias.
- Course Leaders will produce an Assessment Record for each subject cohort and will share this with their Head of Area. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be shared.

10. Internal quality assurance

This section outlines the approach the centre will take to ensure internal standardisation of centre assessed grades, to ensure consistency, fairness and objectivity of decisions.

This section also gives details of our approach to internal standardisation, within and across subject departments.

- In subjects where there is more than one teacher and/or class in the department, we will ensure that our centre carries out an internal standardisation process.
- We will ensure that all academic staff are provided with training and support to ensure they take a consistent approach to:
 - Arriving at centre assessed grades
 - Marking of evidence
 - Reaching a holistic grading decision
 - Applying the use of grading support and documentation
- We will conduct internal standardisation across all grades through internal Awards Boards.
- Awards Boards will ensure that the Assessment Record will form the basis of internal standardisation and discussions across academic staff to agree the awarding of centre assessed grades.
- Where necessary, Awards Boards will review and reflect on individual grading decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our awarding organisation(s).
- Where appropriate, Awards Boards will amend individual grade decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our awarding organisation(s).
- Where there is only one academic staff member involved in marking assessments and determining grades, then the output of this activity will be reviewed by the Head of Area and appropriate Awards Board.
- In respect of equality legislation, we will consider the range of evidence for students of different protected characteristics that are included in our internal standardisation.

11. Comparison of Centre Assessed Grades to results for previous cohorts

This section outlines the approach we will take to compare our centre assessed grades in 2021 with results from previous cohorts. This section gives details the internal process to ensure a comparison of centre assessed grades at qualification level to results for previous cohorts in our centre taking the same qualification.

- We will compile information on the grades awarded to our students in past June series in which exams took place (e.g. 2017 - 2019).
- We will consider the size of our cohort from year to year.
- We will consider the stability of our centre's overall grade outcomes from year to year.
- We will consider both subject and centre level variation in our outcomes during the internal quality assurance process.
- We will prepare a succinct narrative on the outcomes of the review against historic data which, in the event of significant divergence from the qualifications-levels profiles attained in previous examined years, which address the reasons for this divergence. This commentary will be available for subsequent review during the QA process.
- We will omit subjects that we no longer offer from the historical data.

This section gives details of the approach the centre will follow if our initial centre assessed grades for a qualification are fundamentally different compared to results in previous years.

- We will compile historical data giving appropriate regard to potential mixtures of A*-G and 9-1 grades in GCSEs. Where required, we will use the Ofqual guidance to convert legacy grades into the new 9 to 1 scale.
- We will include grades from international GCSEs (for example, in mathematics) because we have previously offered these.
- We will bring together other data sources that will help to quality assure the grades we intend to award in 2021.

12. Access Arrangements and Special Considerations

This section outlines the approach our centre will take to provide students with appropriate access arrangements and take into account mitigating circumstances in particular instances.

Reasonable adjustments and mitigating circumstances (special consideration)

- Where students have agreed access arrangements or reasonable adjustments (for example a reader or scribe) we will make every effort to ensure that these arrangements are in place when assessments are being taken.
- Where an assessment has taken place without an agreed reasonable adjustment or access arrangement, we will remove that assessment from the basket of evidence and alternative evidence obtained.
- Where illness or other personal circumstances might have affected performance in assessments used in determining a student's standard of performance, we will take account of this when making judgements.
- We will record, as part of the Assessment Record, how we have incorporated any necessary variations to take account of the impact of

illness or personal circumstances on the performance of individual students in assessments.

- To ensure consistency in the application of Special Consideration, we will ensure all academic staff have read and understood the document: JCQ – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020

Addressing Disruption/Differentiated Lost Learning (DLL)

This section gives details of our approach to address disruption or differentiated lost teaching.

- Centre assessed grades will be determined based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed for each student.

13. Objectivity

This section gives a summary of the arrangements in place in relation to objectivity.

- All staff involved in the processes related to determining centre assessed grades will fulfil their duties and responsibilities in relation to relevant equality and disability legislation.

Senior Leaders, Heads of Department and Centre will consider:

- sources of unfairness and bias (situations/contexts, difficulty, presentation and format, language, conditions for assessment, marker preconceptions).
- how to minimise bias in questions and marking and hidden forms of bias); and
- bias in centre assessed grades.

To ensure objectivity, all staff involved in determining centre assessed grades will be made aware that:

- unconscious bias can skew judgements.
- the evidence presented should be valued for its own merit as an indication of performance and attainment.
- centre assessed grades should not be influenced by candidates' positive or challenging personal circumstances, character, behaviour, appearance, socio-economic background, or protected characteristics.
- unconscious bias is more likely to occur when quick opinions are formed; and

Our internal standardisation process and Awards Boards will help to ensure that there are different perspectives to the quality assurance process.

14. Recording decisions and retention of evidence and data

This section outlines our arrangements to recording decisions and to retaining evidence and data.

- We will ensure that centres and Heads of Departments maintain records that show how the centre assessed grades process operated, including the rationale for decisions in relation to individual marks/grades.
- We will ensure that evidence is maintained across a variety of tasks to develop a holistic view of each student's demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills in the areas of content taught.
- We will put in place recording requirements for the various stages of the process to ensure the accurate and secure retention of the evidence used

to make decisions.

- We will comply with our obligations regarding data protection legislation.
- We will ensure that the grades accurately reflect the evidence submitted.
- We will ensure that evidence is retained electronically or on paper in a secure centre-based system that can be readily shared with our awarding organisation(s).

15. Authenticating evidence

This section of our Centre Policy details the mechanisms in place to ensure that academic staff are confident in the authenticity of evidence, and the process for dealing with cases where evidence is not thought to be authentic.

- Robust mechanisms, which will include students quoting sources, acknowledging specific help in their assignments and signing an assignment front sheet to declare authenticated work, will be in place to ensure that academic staff are confident that work used as evidence is the students' own and that no inappropriate levels of support have been given to students to complete it, either within the centre or with external tutors.
- It is understood that awarding organisations will investigate instances where it appears evidence is not authentic. We will follow all guidance provided by awarding organisations to support these determinations of authenticity.

16. Confidentiality, malpractice, and conflicts of interest

This section outlines the measures in place to ensure the confidentiality of the grades our centre determines, and to make students aware of the range of evidence on which those grades will be based.

Confidentiality

This section details the measures in place to maintain the confidentiality of grades, while sharing information regarding the range of evidence on which the grades will be based

- All staff involved have been made aware of the need to maintain the confidentiality of centre assessed grades.
- All staff involved in the processes of determining centre assessed grades have been briefed on the requirement to share details of the range of evidence on which students' grades will be based, while ensuring that details of the final grades remain confidential.

Malpractice

This section details the measures in place to prevent malpractice and, where that proves impossible, to handle cases in accordance with awarding organisation requirements.

- The conduct of examinations policy regarding malpractice, maladministration and conflicts of interest have been reviewed to ensure they address the specific challenges of delivery in Summer 2021.
- All staff involved have been made aware of these policies and have received training in them, as necessary.
- All staff involved have been made aware of the specific types of malpractice which may affect the Summer 2021 series including:
 - breaches of internal security.
 - deception.
 - improper assistance to students.

- failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work.
 - over direction of students in preparation for common assessments.
 - allegations that centres submit grades not supported by evidence that they know to be inaccurate.
 - centres enter students who were not originally intending to certificate a grade in the Summer 2021 series.
 - failure to engage as requested with awarding organisations during the External Quality Assurance and appeal stages; and
 - failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made and centre assessed grades.
- The consequences of malpractice or maladministration as published in the JCQ guidance: JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures and including the risk of a delay to students receiving their grades, up to, and including, removal of centre status have been outlined to all relevant staff.

Conflicts of Interest

This section details the approach to addressing conflicts of interest, and how we will respond to such allegations.

- All staff involved in the determination of grades must declare any conflict of interest as per the Examinations Arrangements Policy such as relationships with students to our Head of Centre for further consideration.
- The Head of Centre will take appropriate action to manage any conflicts of interest arising with centre staff in accordance with the JCQ documents - General Regulations for Approved Centres, 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021.
- The Centre will also carefully consider the need if to separate duties and personnel to ensure fairness in later process reviews and appeals.

17. Private candidates

This section details our approach to providing and quality assuring grades to Private Candidates

- The arrangements for assessing Private Candidates to arrive at appropriate grades are identical to the approaches utilised for internal candidates.
- Where it has been necessary to utilise different approaches, the JCQ Guidance on Private Candidates has been followed and any divergences from our approach for internal candidates have been recorded on the appropriate class/student documentation.
- In undertaking the review of cohort grades in conjunction with centre results profiles from previous examined years, the grades for Private Candidates have been excluded from the analysis

18. External Quality Assurance

This section outlines the arrangements in place to ensure the relevant documentation and assessment evidence can be provided in a timely manner for the purposes of External Quality Assurance sampling, and that staff can be made available to respond to enquiries.

- All staff involved have been made aware of the awarding organisation requirements for External Quality Assurance as set out in the JCQ Guidance.
- All necessary records of decision-making in relation to determining grades

- have been properly kept and can be made available for review as required.
- All student evidence on which decisions regarding the determination of grades has been retained and can be made available for review as required.
- Instances where student evidence used to decide centre assessed grades is not available, for example where the material has previously been returned to students and cannot now be retrieved, will be clearly recorded on the appropriate documentation.
- All staff involved have been briefed on the possibility of interaction with awarding organisations during the different stages of the External Quality Assurance process and can respond promptly and fully to enquiries, including attendance at Virtual Visits should this prove necessary.
- Arrangements are in place to respond fully and promptly to any additional requirements/reviews that may be identified as a result of the External Quality Assurance process.
- Staff have been made aware that a failure to respond fully and effectively to such additional requirements may result in further action by the awarding organisations, including the withholding of results.

19. Results

This section details the approach to the issue of results to students and the provision of advice and guidance.

- All staff involved have been made aware of the specific arrangements for the issue of results in Summer 2021, including the issuing of A/AS and GCSE results in the same week.
- Arrangements will be made to ensure the necessary staffing, including exams office and support staff, to enable the efficient receipt and release of results to our students.
- Arrangements will be in place for the provision of all necessary advice, guidance and support, including pastoral support, to students on receipt of their results.
- Such guidance will include advice on the appeals process in place in 2021 (see below).
- Appropriate staff will be available to respond promptly to any requests for information from awarding organisations, for example regarding missing or incomplete results, to enable such issues to be swiftly resolved.
- Parents/guardians have been made aware of arrangements for results days.

20. Appeals

This section details our approach to managing appeals, including Centre Reviews, and subsequent appeals to awarding organisations.

- All staff involved have been made aware of the arrangements for, and the requirements of, appeals in Summer 2021, as set out in the JCQ Guidance.
- Internal arrangements will be in place for the swift and effective handling of Centre Reviews in compliance with the requirements.
- All necessary staff have been briefed on the process for, and timing of, such reviews, and will be available to ensure their prompt and efficient handling.
- Students have been appropriately guided as to the necessary stages of appeal.
- Arrangements will be in place for the timely submission of appeals to

awarding organisations, including any priority appeals, for example those on which university places depend.

- Arrangements will be in place to obtain the written consent of students to the initiation of appeals, and to record their awareness that grades may go down as well as up on appeal.
- Appropriate information on the appeals process will be provided to parents/carers.

