

Summer 2022: Guidance on contingency assessment arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and A levels



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Summer 2022: Guidance on contingency assessment arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and A levels¹

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Foreword

This document gives centres an overview of what the requirements will be if a decision is made by Welsh Government to cancel the summer 2022 exam series. The information in this document is not intended to detract from the current policy position for exams to go ahead in summer 2022.

Centres should prepare for the possible implementation of the contingency arrangements by planning what assessments they will use to inform centre determined grades, should they be needed, so that the collection of assessment evidence can start as soon as possible and as appropriate for each centre. For this to be manageable alongside preparation for the exam series in summer 2022, centres should aim to integrate these assessments into usual teaching and learning and existing assessment plans.

Assessments should be marked and feedback provided to learners to support preparation for the exam series in summer 2022 and to allow their use as evidence for a centre determined grade, if this becomes necessary. Centres must inform learners which assessments will be used to gather evidence as part of the contingency arrangements if exams are cancelled. Should that happen, the assessments will be used to support a holistic judgement of a centre determined qualification grade.

Key points for centres:

1. If exams are cancelled, then centres will be asked to determine centre qualification grades for their learners.
2. Centre determined grades are overall qualification grades that are produced through a holistic judgment that is underpinned by a number of pieces of evidence of demonstrated attainment.
3. You should not determine qualification grades yet, and more guidance will be published if exams are cancelled.
4. You need to consider what assessment evidence will be used to support decisions about qualification grades if exams are cancelled.
5. You need to tell learners which assessments will be used to determine qualification grades so that they can prepare and, if necessary, you need to update any data processing notices.
6. You need to mark all assessments consistently so that the evidence can be used if needed.
7. You can provide feedback to learners on each assessment, as you would normally.
8. Learners must not be allowed to re-take the same assessment for the purpose of improving their grade if exams are cancelled.

¹Alternative arrangements for the Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications will be communicated separately.

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This guidance sets out high level information for centres² relating to the **contingency assessment arrangements** for summer 2022, which will apply if the exam series is cancelled.
- 1.2. We continue to work together with WJEC and other stakeholders on aspects of the process not needed at this point. To allow centres to focus on the planned exam series, these will only be communicated to centres if exams are cancelled.
- 1.3. If the exam series is cancelled, we will reissue this guidance with additional detail. For example, more information will be provided on external quality assurance processes.
- 1.4. The high-level information in this guidance is not intended to support the award of centre determined grades at this stage. Overall centre determined grading decisions should only be made if exams are cancelled and only once the appropriate supporting information has been provided for centres to be able to do this as effectively as possible.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. In March 2021, we [announced](#) that there would be exams in summer 2022, and that the assessment requirements for WJEC GCSE, AS and A level qualifications would be adapted to reduce the impact of disruption to face-to-face teaching and learning time during the pandemic.
- 2.2. The expectation is that qualifications will be assessed by exams and/or non-examination assessments (NEA) with adaptations; however, we must plan for a contingency should changes in the public health situation lead to the cancellation of the exam series.
- 2.3. If exams are cancelled, centres will be asked to award centre determined grades to learners. The centre determined grade approach would be similar to that used in 2021, but with some changes to take account of lessons learned. Therefore, this guidance is **not** identical to the guidance produced last year.

3. Equalities

- 3.1. Centres are required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)³ at all times, including in the production of centre determined grades. There are also specific duties for Wales which set out the steps that must be taken to demonstrate due regard for the general duty⁴. This means that centres need to communicate with learners, and parents/carers in a clear, transparent, and accessible way, and take into consideration the needs of those who share protected characteristics.
- 3.2. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) produced guidance on complying with the PSED for summer 2021 which was made available on [Hwb](#)⁵. WJEC and Diverse Cymru also provided training on avoiding unconscious bias. This guidance and training is relevant for summer 2022 if the contingency assessment arrangements are implemented.

² Centre(s) is the term used throughout the document to refer to schools, colleges and other exam centres.

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2011/1064/contents/made>

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

⁵ [hwb is the digital platform for learning and teaching in Wales https://hwb.gov.wales](#)

- 3.3. Centres should implement processes to fulfil their duties to promote equality and avoid discrimination. Guidance is available in 'What equality law means for you as an education provider in Wales: Schools⁶'.
- 3.4. If exams are cancelled, some flexibility may be required in the use of evidence of attainment in certain circumstances, to avoid indirect discrimination e.g. if a learner misses teaching of content that is assessed, then an alternative assessment might be required.
- 3.5. If exams are cancelled, centres will be required by WJEC to implement internal quality assurance processes to promote consistency of the centre determined grade approach across the centre (within subjects and across subjects).

4. What will centre determined grades measure in summer 2022?

- 4.1. If exams are cancelled, summer 2022 centre determined grades will be awarded on the basis of demonstrated attainment in areas of the qualification content that a learner has covered. Centre determined grades are **not** the same as target or predicted grades as they will not be awarded on the basis of potential attainment.
- 4.2. The assessment evidence collected must cover all assessment objectives and represent sufficient coverage of breadth of **adapted specification content** requirements.

5. What assessment evidence should be collected?

- 5.1. WJEC will provide Qualification Assessment Frameworks which set out the high-level requirements for assessment evidence in each qualification. WJEC will also provide Assessment Creation Guidance.
- 5.2. Centres must inform learners about the evidence that could be used in determining the overall qualification grades of learners in the event of the cancellation of exams, in advance of the assessments taking place. For this reason, centres are advised to document their assessment plans for each subject. Subject assessment plans are not needed by WJEC unless the contingency approach is triggered, however development of plans will support transparency and communication with learners. Assessment plans for each subject may be high level, concise and align with existing subject level assessment plans.
- 5.3. Centres may find it useful to communicate their contingency assessment approach with their learners and parents/carers as soon as possible, to provide transparency and confidence in the approach.
- 5.4. Centres must not provide learners with specific details of assessment questions or past papers that will be used. It is important that the assessments used to support judgements provide a true and authentic representation of the learner's level of attainment. This will be distorted if the learner has prior knowledge of the questions that will be asked.
- 5.5. Assessment evidence must come from work completed by the learner, on adapted specification content, during the course of study for the qualification. Evidence must include written and practical work as appropriate to the specific qualification specification.
- 5.6. Centres must consider reasonable adjustments that learners are entitled to and apply

⁶ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/what-equality-law-means-you-education-provider-wales>

them for all assessments.

- 5.7. The number of pieces and type of evidence required will not be prescribed, since this will vary by qualification and how key themes and skills are organised in assessments. However, WJEC will provide an example of a possible assessment approach in each subject, as part of the Qualification Assessment Frameworks for each qualification.
- 5.8. Undertaking assessments for the potential contingency assessment arrangements should not detract from preparation for the summer 2022 exam series. Therefore, a few pieces of substantial, high-quality, authentic evidence will be sufficient to demonstrate attainment. As a guide, time spent on assessments to inform a centre determined grade for each subject should not exceed the total assessment time learners would complete in a standard exam series for that subject.
- 5.9. Centres will need to retain assessment evidence for learners which may be required as part of the quality assurance process if the contingency arrangements are triggered.
- 5.10. WJEC will provide guidance on making overall qualification grade judgements, grade descriptors and quality assurance guidance only if the contingency is triggered.

6. Record keeping

- 6.1. Records will be needed to document grading decisions, should this become necessary, but are not required unless exams are cancelled. Centres should consider the information that they will need to record and ensure that it is retained appropriately. For example, recording that a learner's access arrangements were put in place when assessments were taken.
- 6.2. Centres should retain information relating to any special considerations that some learners may be entitled to if they were affected by an event, such as bereavement or family illness, at the time of an assessment.
- 6.3. Centres will need to ensure they are compliant with their obligations as a data controller pursuant to data protection legislation and should review data protection impact assessments and privacy notices from 2021 prior to any data processing for the 2022 contingency commencing.

7. Quality assurance processes

- 7.1. If exams are cancelled, centres will be required to implement internal quality assurance processes to promote consistency of the centre determined grade approach across the centre (within subjects and across subjects). There will be no additional internal quality assurance requirements to those required in summer 2021, though centres may choose to review and update their internal processes, as necessary. Centres will not be required to submit a Centre Assessment Policy for summer 2022.
- 7.2. If exams are cancelled, WJEC will implement a programme of external centre quality assurance processes. This will include the sampling of learner work and the corresponding grading decisions made by a centre. Therefore, centres must retain all relevant assessment evidence used.
- 7.3. WJEC will provide guidance on quality assurance processes only if the contingency is triggered.

8. Private candidates

- 8.1. Options to ensure access to qualification grades for learners who are not on a centre's roll and who would normally enter these qualifications as private candidates are being explored. We will share this information as soon as possible and by the end of the Autumn Term 2021.
- 8.2. We will produce a document for private candidates that details the approach. We will work with Welsh Government, local authorities and other relevant stakeholder groups to ensure communication is as wide as possible so that learners who enter for qualifications as private candidates know what the process will be if exams are cancelled.

9. Information and support for learners

- 9.1. For most learners, summer 2022 will be the first time they will be assessed via external exams. We realise this may be stressful for many learners. We are working with Welsh Government and other partners to put in place a package of measures to support learners' wellbeing and progression. Welsh Government will provide further information during the autumn about this additional support..
- 9.2. Learners need to be informed of assessments that might be used as evidence in the overall judgement of their centre determined grade, if exams are cancelled. This is so that data protection rules are followed.
- 9.3. Centres should share reassuring, consistent and clear messages to learners about these arrangements, such as:
 - unless exams are cancelled, you are preparing for assessment via exams, in line with the adapted qualification assessment requirements, and
 - these contingency arrangements are planned, just in case the public health situation leads to the cancellation of exams. It is a backup plan.Qualifications Wales will produce resources for you to share with learners to support the sharing of these messages. WJEC will also continue to work on learner specific resources.
- 9.4. Assessments carried out over the next few terms could be used as evidence of attainment, rather than relying more on assessments carried out in the final weeks of the course, if exams are cancelled. This helps to spread the assessments out for learners and for centre staff who will be marking assessments. It also reduces the risk linked to leaving most assessment until the end of the course and the public health situation at that time making this difficult. Some learners may feel concerned about these ongoing assessments and feel more pressure as a result. Centres should provide suitable pastoral and wellbeing support during this difficult time. For example, centres might plan for regular updates for learners in cohorts sitting exams in the summer.
- 9.5. To prepare for exams, centres will provide feedback to learners when they complete assessments, as part of the normal teaching and learning programmes. Marks and indications of performance in these tasks might be shared with learners, to motivate and guide them. It is important that this feedback is not related to centre determined grades at this stage. If exams are cancelled and centre determined grades need to be produced, then WJEC will provide further guidance about using evidence to support a holistic, overall judgement of attainment that is supported by these assessments.
- 9.6. There will be information for learners, parents and carers on our website about the contingency plans. We will work with Welsh Government, WJEC and schools and colleges to provide relevant information.

- 9.7. The Children’s Commissioner for Wales website [Coronavirus - Information Hub for Families and Children - Children’s Commissioner for Wales \(childcomwales.org.uk\)](https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/coronavirus-information-hub-for-families-and-children) includes information about support services for young people, including mental health and emotional support.

10. Information and guidance for centres

10.1. WJEC will provide the following guidance alongside this information:

- Qualification Assessment Frameworks including assessment guidance
- Assessment Creation Guidance

10.2. Other information and guidance from summer 2021 that is relevant to summer 2022 at this time:

- EHRC’s Guidance on complying with the PSED
- WJEC guidance on avoiding unconscious bias
- Data protection and data processing

10.3. If exams are cancelled, further information and guidance will be provided. This will include guidance on overall qualification grading and the appeals process.

10.4. In 2021, the Information Commissioner’s Office suggested links to guidance that might be particularly relevant. These were as follows:

- The main guide on the UK General Data Protection Regulation:
<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>
- Within this main guide, the following sections are likely to be particularly relevant:
- Guidance on Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs), including a template DPIA and checklists to help data controllers determine whether a DPIA is necessary
- Guidance on the Right to be informed, which will help all data controllers involved in the assessments process to develop and provide good quality privacy information for candidates
- Guidance on the processing of special category personal data, which includes a template policy document for that processing.