



Private candidate policy statement



June 2020

Background

When we published our Information for Heads of Centre¹ on 3 April, we said that we were exploring alternatives for learners entered as private candidates.

In our information for centres, we set out that a calculated grade would be provided for learners where a centre assessment grade and rank order were submitted. We also explained that where centres have accepted entries from private candidates, those learners should be included where the Head of Centre is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of the learner's achievement to make an objective judgment.

Exam boards have set out further guidance² for centres where the Head of Centre is willing to provide a centre assessment grade for a private candidate but wishes to consider additional sources of evidence before doing so. This includes the process centres would need to follow to make judgements about learners' evidence of attainment, so that a centre assessment grade and rank order position can be submitted to the exam board.

We have been working with WJEC to consider carefully how to protect the interests of private candidates, who may not have an existing association with an exam centre that is able to make centre-assessment judgements.

Consultation Decisions

In particular we have considered whether there are methods by which it may be possible to award grades to private candidates who have sat some of the qualification in earlier series, but for whom their entering centre is not willing, or confident enough, to enter a centre assessment grade and rank order this summer.

We have concluded that we should allow grades to be calculated for those private candidates who have sat some of the qualification in an earlier series. A similar method to that used when learners are unable to sit all exams due to illness or other exceptional reasons will be used.

¹ <https://qualificationswales.org/media/5973/information-for-centres-on-the-submission-of-centre-assessment-grades-version-2-18-may-2020.pdf>

² <https://www.jcq.org.uk/jcq-publishes-supplementary-information-on-validation-of-evidence-by-centres-for-private-candidates/>

Adopting this method would maximise the award of grades to private candidates and may enable those who do receive a grade to progress to careers or further education where they might otherwise have not been able to. This is an exceptional process and will not be used where a centre assessment grade and rank order are available.

However, there will still be some private candidates who will not be eligible for this method and who therefore will not receive a calculated grade this summer. Although we wish to see as many learners as possible receive a grade, it is vital all grades are determined using a robust process so that everyone can have confidence in them.

Private candidates eligible for this method

The method will only apply to private candidates who meet the criteria below.

In respect of approved GCSE and AS qualifications:

- they have completed at least 25% of the total assessment in previous series; and
- an approved GCSE or AS qualification entry with WJEC was made on or before 21 February 2020, and as per Condition GQCov3.1³; and
- they are clearly identifiable as a private candidate entry; and
- no centre assessment data has been submitted for them.

In respect of approved A level qualifications:

- they have completed all approved AS units in a previous series; and
- an approved A level qualification entry with WJEC was made on or before 21 February 2020, and as per Condition GQCov3.1; and
- they are clearly identifiable as a private candidate entry; and
- no centre assessment data has been submitted for them.

In respect of Key Stage 4 and Advanced Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications:

- they have completed at least 25% of the total assessment in previous series; and
- a Skills Challenge Certificate entry with WJEC was made on or before 21 February 2020, and as per Condition GQCov3.1; and
- they are clearly identifiable as a private candidate entry; and
- no centre assessment data has been submitted for them.

³ Condition GQCov 3.1 of the Extraordinary Regulatory Framework: General Qualifications - COVID-19 Conditions and Requirements

Overview of the method

JCQ awarding bodies use an 'enhanced grading' procedure when a missing mark is estimated for a learner who is absent (for an acceptable reason) from a unit in a specification which uses uniform marks.

The procedure uses a learner's relative performance in the unit(s) they have already completed (minimum 25%) as a basis to estimate their performance in the units they have not completed in calculating an overall qualification grade.

We consider that this procedure is fair and consistent.

The exceptional method for calculating grades for eligible private candidates will be based on a similar approach.

Details of how the method will be used for different scenarios

Further details will be made available once aspects of the statistical model have been confirmed