



SUMMER 2021

Guidance on alternative arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and A levels

9 February 2021 – Version 1.0

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. This version of the guidance sets out high level information for centres¹ on the requirements for producing Centre Determined Grades (CDG) in summer 2021. Further work is required in relation to the details of some of the processes and we continue to work together with WJEC, as well as the Design and Delivery Advisory Group and other stakeholders to consider the options and develop approaches.
- 1.2. Further versions will be published as more information becomes available. For example, more information will be provided on: decision making records, quality assurance processes and review of results and appeals.
- 1.3. By the end of February WJEC will provide Qualification Assessment Frameworks that will set out the requirements for each qualification. This document is intended to give information, ahead of the WJEC Qualification Assessment Frameworks, so that centres have an overview of what the requirements will be.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. In the absence of an exam series, and ongoing disruption to teaching and learning, centres will be determining the GCSE, AS or A level grades awarded to learners in summer 2021.
- 2.2. This guidance gives an overview of what decisions teachers need to make, how they should make those decisions and what types of evidence should be used to support those decisions. This will support WJEC's Qualification Assessment Frameworks and be supplemented by further guidance. Whilst flexibility is required, it is important that there is also some consistency in approaches across Wales this summer.
- 2.3. Enabling learners to progress to their next stage of learning and employment is a priority, so centres should aim to integrate assessments within their teaching and learning plans.

3. What will qualification Centre Determined Grades measure in summer 2021 and how are they used?

- 3.1. Summer 2021 Centre Determined Grades must be awarded on the basis of demonstrated attainment in areas of the qualification content that a learner has covered.
- 3.2. Whilst the approach to producing the Centre Determined Grades will be holistic in its nature, it needs to be underpinned by sufficient evidence of demonstrated

¹ Centre(s) is the term used throughout the document to refer to schools, colleges and other exam centres.

attainment across key themes and skills. It may also be appropriate to take into account any special considerations as part of this.

- 3.3. The standard expected for any particular grade is no lower than previous years but the volume of work completed in the specification will inevitably be lower for many learners. This means that learners will be awarded the same grades having covered different proportions of the specification.
- 3.4. Summer 2021 Centre Determined Grades must not attempt to indicate potential in a subject since, after such loss of learning, this would be entirely subjective and difficult to evidence. Centres must provide a sound rationale and evidence base for the award of all Centre Determined Grades so that they can be sure that they have determined the correct grade for a learner and can justify the grade awarded should there be a request for a review of the grade or an appeal.

4. How should Centre Determined Grade judgements be made?

- 4.1. WJEC will provide Qualification Assessment Frameworks which set out the requirements to support production of Centre Determined Grades for each qualification.
- 4.2. Centres should communicate their assessment approach with their learners and parents/carers, so that there is transparency and confidence in the approach to be adopted.
- 4.3. Assessment evidence must come from work completed by the learner, on adapted specification content, during the course of study for the qualification. Evidence may include practical evidence where appropriate. Assessed work may be completed in the school environment or at home but centres need to be assured that it is the learner's own work.
- 4.4. The number of pieces and type of evidence required to support judgements will not be prescribed, since this will vary by qualification and how key themes and skills are organised in assessments. It would also not provide the flexibility required to allow for variation in context between centres. The requirement for evidence needs to support the sound, impartial determination of the correct grade for a learner. It may be that relatively few pieces of clear evidence would be sufficient to demonstrate attainment across overarching key themes for many qualifications.
- 4.5. WJEC will provide past papers for centres to use when determining which tasks learners will complete that will contribute to their overall Centre Determined Grade. Where necessary, these papers will be adjusted to take account of the adaptations already in place. Whilst these are not mandatory, we advise centres to make use of these assessment materials, where appropriate, since they are quality assured, accessible, equitable assessments with tried and tested mark schemes. Other contributing assessment evidence could also come from a range of activities which could include mock exams, other past papers provided by WJEC, NEA and other assessed work.
- 4.6. Weightings of content or skills will not be prescribed in WJEC's Qualification Assessment Frameworks since this would not provide centres with enough flexibility.

- 4.7. Evidence for individual learners may vary, depending on circumstances and any special considerations that might have been taken into account. Centres should ensure a rationale for any significant differences in evidence between learners and document this clearly in their decision making records.
- 4.8. Once evidence has been considered, teachers and lecturers should make holistic, best-fit judgements that are compensatory.
- 4.9. GCSEs, AS and A levels are compensatory in normal times. In relation to best-fit grading judgements this means:
 - Learners do not have to demonstrate all aspects of the descriptor to receive that grade.
 - Whilst there is no specific content that a learner must have demonstrated knowledge and understanding of to achieve a grade, it is important that there is evidence of attainment across sufficient breadth of content.
 - Learners can achieve the same grade by demonstrating different combinations of knowledge, skills and understanding. Strengths in some areas may balance shortcomings in other areas.
- 4.10. WJEC's Qualification Assessment Frameworks will include descriptors for key grades that will support this process, to 'anchor' judgements across the grade range.
- 4.11. Centres will apply their professional judgement and will decide whether the knowledge and skills demonstrated meets the usual standard expected for the grade.
- 4.12. The award of a Centre Determined Grade of a U is appropriate where there isn't enough evidence of demonstrated attainment to award a best-fit grade to a G (at GCSE) or E (AS or A level) or where evidence suggests attainment is below that required for the lowest grade.
- 4.13. Centre Determined Grades must be accompanied with a clear and unambiguous rationale as to why and how evidence was selected and how a judgement was formed. Guidance on the decision making record will be provided by WJEC.

5. Decision making records - *guidance and details will follow*

- 5.1. Centres must have processes in place to consistently document the rationale for grade decisions for each learner, including any access arrangements and special considerations applied. Decision making records need to provide clarity for learners and parents/carers.
- 5.2. Part of this process needs to ensure that the centre is compliant with its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)². There are also specific duties for Wales which sets out the steps that must be taken to demonstrate due regard³. Centres must consider other reasonable adjustments which learners are entitled to. Separate guidance on Access Arrangements will be provided by WJEC to support this.

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2011/1064/contents/made>

³ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

- 5.3. Centres should also implement processes to ensure grade judgments are as objective and fair as possible, so that they are assured that they have fulfilled their duties to promote equality and avoid discrimination. Guidance is available in the following: What equality law means for you as an education provider in Wales: Schools⁴. Separate guidance and training on avoiding unconscious bias will be available to centres to support this.
- 5.4. These processes will support centres in considering any review of Centre Determined Grades and in any appeal.
- 5.5. Centres will also need to ensure they are compliant with data protection and data processing regulations.
- 5.6. On submission of final Centre Determined Grades centres will be required to make an overall declaration in relation to the processes that have been carried out.

6. Quality assurance processes - *guidance and details will follow*

- 6.1. Centres will be required by WJEC to implement internal quality assurance processes to promote consistency in grade decisions across the centre (within subjects and across subjects). WJEC will provide guidance on what these processes must include.
- 6.2. WJEC will implement a programme of external centre quality assurance processes. Details on the external process will follow.
- 6.3. Before submission of grades to WJEC centres will be supported to discuss their process, application of process, and outcomes, with other centres across Wales. This falls outside of WJEC's quality assurance processes and outside of Qualifications Wales' regulatory framework but will form part of the overall process to produce Centre Determined Grades.
- 6.4. Whilst there will be no moderation of Centre Determined Grade outcomes, once results are finally submitted to WJEC, grade profiles may be reviewed and any atypical profiles discussed with the centre.

7. Review of Centre Determined Grades and appeals processes – *guidance and details will follow*

- 7.1. Centres will be required to implement internal processes to allow learners to request a review of the centre's judgement of their grade and/or correct any factual errors.
- 7.2. WJEC will implement processes to allow appeals on the grounds of procedural error.
- 7.3. Qualification Wales will implement an Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS).

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 information as soon as possible.
- 8.2. WJEC's entries deadline will be later this year, which will enable entries to be made once the approach is agreed.

⁴ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/our-approach-public-sector-equality-duty-and-guidance>

9. Summary of information and guidance to be provided to centres

9.1. Qualification assessment frameworks will be provided by WJEC and include:

- minimum content / skills / key themes for a qualification that might be required for progression
- nature and quality of evidence (e.g. past paper assessments, NEA tasks, other assessments completed in class)
- judging the evidence (holistic best-fit judgements clearly linked to grade descriptors)
- key grade descriptors
- recording the rationale and decision

9.2. Other

- **Guidance** – to summarise, guidance on these areas will follow:
 - Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments
 - Application of special consideration
 - Internal quality assurance
 - Avoiding unconscious bias and discrimination and meeting PSED
 - Review of Centre Determined Grades and appeals
- **Professional learning support**
Qualifications Wales, Welsh Government and WJEC are exploring options for further guidance and training on:
 - Assessment to include avoiding unconscious bias
 - Equalities and managing conscious and unconscious bias
 - Data processing and data protection, particularly fair processing notices.