

Sent by email to all schools and colleges in Wales

23 March 2021



Dear Head of Centre,

Today we are publishing [version 3](#) of our guidance document. We wrote to you on [16 March](#) about communicating the assessment approach with learners, as we were made aware of some concerns from centres on the level of detail to be provided to learners on the assessment evidence that would be used to determine their grade. We explained that centres can inform learners of the overall assessment plan, but should not provide **specific details** of assessment questions that will be used.

It is important that the assessments used to support your judgments 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. It is also important to remember that it is the **quality** of evidence that is used to underpin your judgements that is more important than the **quantity** of evidence.

We have received further feedback from centres around assessment evidence to be used and want to provide clarity on the requirements:

- Contributing assessment evidence could come from a range of activities that could include mock exams, past papers provided by WJEC, NEA and other assessed work.
- Historic evidence of attainment can be used as part of the evidence considered when determining a grade, but with caution, as it may not be representative of the learner's current level of attainment.
- Centres can develop their own assessments ensuring that they are valid and fair.
- WJEC past papers should only be used where you are confident that they will provide an authentic assessment that demonstrates the learner's true level of attainment. WJEC past papers can be adjusted to provide a more authentic assessment.
- Assessed work may need to be completed in the school environment or at home, but centres need to be assured that it is the learner's own work.

Version 3 of our guidance for the alternative assessment arrangements for approved GCSE, AS and A level qualifications summer 2021 has been published today. The latest

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update gives an overview of how atypical grade profiles will be identified and followed up in summer 2021 to ensure learners and their parents have confidence in the validity and credibility of the results. All centres will be expected to submit a rationale for their overall pattern of results and WJEC will identify centres for further discussion. WJEC will not act to change results, which this year rely upon the exercise of professional judgement by centres, but may ask centres to revisit their provisional Centre Determined Grades if the pattern of results is not justified by the rationale presented.

Private candidates – two agreed routes for approved GCSE, AS and A level qualifications.

The updated guidance document confirms two routes for private candidates: a centre-assessed route and a centre-hosted route. We have also sent a [separate document](#) to centres today, which provides guidance for those centres that will accept private candidates in summer 2021 – for further details, please contact your local authority. Welsh Government will publish a list of centres that will make entries for private candidates on 12 April and provide further information about financial support.

- **Centre-assessed route** - Where private candidates have an established relationship¹ with a centre that has already agreed to enter them for a qualification and carry out the necessary assessment of their work, these arrangements can continue as planned. Centres will undertake assessment activities using the same approach as for their own learners, produce the Centre Determined Grades and will fulfil requests for a centre review of grades. The centre will need to comply with the Qualifications Wales guidance and WJEC's requirements in order to generate a Centre Determined Grade.
- **Centre-hosted route** - For private candidates who do not have an established relationship with a centre, Welsh Government and Local Authorities are working to identify centres that will accept private candidates across Wales. Welsh Government will provide funding to support centres' delivery costs, if they accept new private candidates.

We are working with Ofqual, the qualifications regulator in England, on options for private candidates who will be entered for England designed qualifications.

Equalities –there is further information available on WJEC's [secure website](#) and on [Hwb](#), including an example of an equalities proforma that can be used by centres. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission in Wales has also prepared information on the Public Sector Equality Duty on [Hwb](#).

Vocational qualifications - Ofqual will be publishing an [explainer tool](#) on Wednesday that will include high-level information on the approach for all vocational qualifications, including those available to learners in Wales. More detailed information on the approaches for qualifications that will receive a Centre Determined grade will be available from the awarding bodies over the Easter period.

¹ For example, the learner is already known to the centre or entries have already been provisionally accepted

Summer 2022 – we’re announcing later today that assessment requirements will be adapted for learners studying for GCSE, AS and A levels and the Skills Challenge Certificate Qualifications in summer 2022. This is in recognition of the disruption to learning for these young people due to the pandemic. We will be updating our Requirements for Adapting assessments for GQ qualifications, which will require WJEC to make suitable adaptations. WJEC will start to consult with teachers and lecturers towards the end of April by reviewing the 2021 adaptations and will then start to publish details of the 2022 adaptations in May.

Welsh Government will be hosting webinars this Thursday 25 March from 4-6pm (Welsh followed by English) and the presentation will be posted to Hwb afterwards.

If you have any specific questions for Qualifications Wales, please contact the stakeholder engagement team or email communications@qualificationswales.org.

Yours sincerely,



Philip Blaker

Chief Executive