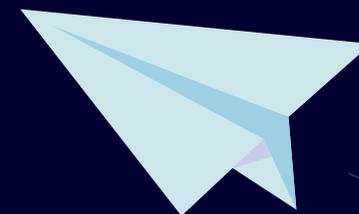




2021 qualifications

All you need to know



This is a learner resource that provides information on assessment arrangements in summer 2021

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1 Working together to protect learners



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government oversees the education system in Wales.

It provides direction and guidance and makes decisions on a wide range of education and skills policies.

In November 2020, the Minister for Education announced that external exams for summer 2021 would be cancelled, and that grades would be determined by schools and colleges.



Qualifications Wales is the independent body that regulates GCSE, AS, A Level and vocational qualifications in Wales, to make sure they are fit for purpose.

Its work includes setting the policies and regulations that exam boards operating in Wales must work within.

Following the Minister's announcement on the cancellation of exams for summer 2021, Qualifications Wales announced that schools and colleges will award Centre Determined Grades for GCSE, AS or A level grades based on pieces of work that learners have completed over the course of study – so learners will only be assessed on what they have been taught.



WJEC is the exam board in Wales.

WJEC's role is to provide approved qualifications, assessments, support, training, and resources to schools and colleges across Wales.

For summer 2021, WJEC is supporting schools and colleges by setting out the framework within which they will determine the grades for their learners. WJEC will check schools or colleges' plans to determine grades. Once provisional grades are submitted, WJEC will carry out some checks to make sure that centres have followed the plans they had put in place. If there are any issues, these will be discussed with schools and colleges. WJEC will issue final grades and certificates.

2 Introduction

Your school or college (what we refer to as your ‘centre’) will award your GCSE, AS and A level grades based on their judgement of your attainment in a subject. These are called Centre Determined Grades.

This means you should be able to move on to your next stage of learning or employment.

Our guidance for centres, alongside detailed guidance from WJEC, has all the information schools and colleges need. It confirms which decisions teachers need to make, how they should make those decisions and what types of evidence they can use when they award grades for each qualification.

Centre determined grades are for Wales only approved qualifications, there are different arrangements for GCSE and A levels offered in England that are also taken by some learners in Wales. You can find out more about these on [Ofqual’s website](#).



3 Key dates for learners

Your school or college will tell you what assessment evidence will be used to determine your grade. This might include evidence from assessments already completed or evidence collected through new assessments.

In June

You will receive your **provisional** Centre Determined Grades and you will have the chance to ask for your grades to be reviewed, if you believe there has been an error. Your school or college will explain how they'll do this and tell you the outcome of any review.

By 2 July

Your school or college will submit **provisional** Centre Determined Grades to WJEC. These grades are still provisional at this stage as WJEC will need to undertake some additional checks with your centre.

10 Aug

AS and A level Results Day.

12 Aug

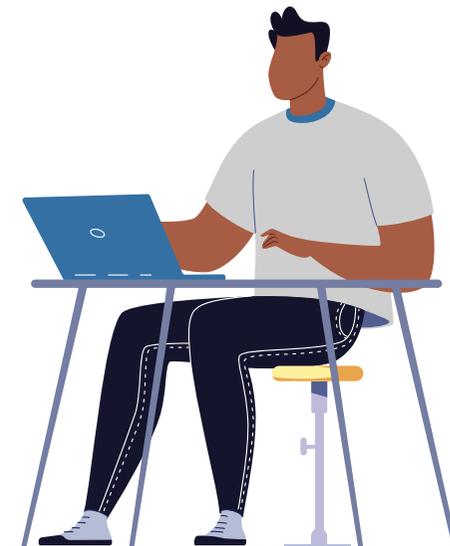
GCSE Results Day.

10 Aug – 17 Sept

The window for Stage 2 appeals on AS/A level results with WJEC.

24 Aug – 21 Sept

The window for Stage 2 appeals on GCSE results with WJEC.



4 What are Centre Determined Grades?

The way your grades will be awarded in 2021 is different from last year. Centre Determined Grades are not predicted grades.

Your grades will be based on a range of evidence from assessments you've completed while you have been studying for your qualification.

Centres have been given guidance but have a great deal of flexibility and can choose the evidence that they use to determine grades. This might be from assessments you've already completed or from new assessments. What is important is that your centre needs to be confident that the evidence will support the correct grade being awarded.

We know that many learners will have completed less work this year because of the disruption to learning. However, as the organisation that regulates qualifications for Wales, we don't expect it to be any easier or harder to achieve a grade this year, than in other years.



5 How will schools and colleges determine a grade?

Schools and colleges will need to collect evidence so that they can make sound, objective judgements about the grades you are awarded.

When your school or college decides which assessments to use, they will consider how much of the course content you've covered, so you won't be assessed on anything you haven't been taught. This may mean that learners will be awarded the same grades having covered different content in a subject.

Schools and colleges can design their own assessment tasks and/or use WJEC assessment materials.



6 How will you be assessed?

Schools and colleges will need to make sure that their decisions are fair to all learners, that they promote equality and avoid discrimination.

Your school or college will need to explain to you and your parents/carers how your grades will be decided and the evidence that will be used to inform the grade. They will consider any access arrangements that you may need when you complete your assessments.

This will help you and parents/carers to understand the process; it will also help support the appeals process.



7 Who will check the grades?

WJEC will check your school or college's plans to determine grades.

Once provisional grades are submitted, WJEC will carry out some checks to make sure that centres have followed the plans they had put in place. If there are any issues, these will be discussed with your school or college.



8 How can a private candidate access grades?

If you are a private candidate who has a school or college willing to make entries for you, you will follow a similar process to other learners and the school or college will award a Centre Determined Grade.

Host centres have been made available across Wales for learners who do not have this established relationship.

These host centres will liaise with you to arrange assessment opportunities.

WJEC will provide suitable assessments and will mark your work and determine your grade. WJEC will also ensure a process is available for you to request a review of grades, if you think there has been an error.



9 When will results be announced?



10 Can you appeal against your grades?

The appeals process will have 3 stages.

The first stage is conducted by your school or college and will be completed before the end of the summer term.



1 Centre review

A learner can request for a centre review of the provisional Centre Determined Grade on the grounds that there has been an error in the determination of their grade.

Learners **must give a reason** why they believe there has been an error in the determination of their grade.

Grades can go up, down or remain the same as a result.

The second stage, following completion of stage 1, can be requested after results day and is run by WJEC.



2 Appeal to WJEC (following completion of Stage 1)

An appeal to WJEC on the grounds that the judgement that the centre has made is unreasonable and/or a procedural error has been made.

Learners **must give a reason** why they believe the centre has made an unreasonable judgement and/or procedural error.

Grades can go up, down or remain the same as a result.

The final stage, following completion of stage 2, is run by Qualifications Wales.



3 EPRS – Qualifications Wales (following completion of Stage 2)

A request to Qualifications Wales for an Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) to review **whether WJEC has followed the required procedures.**

11 What about vocational qualifications?

Many vocational qualifications taken in Wales are also taken by learners in England and Northern Ireland. However, some qualifications (such as Essential Skills and those in Health and Social Care, and Childcare) are only available in Wales.

Decisions have been made to make sure the approaches to awarding in 2021 are the same, regardless of where they are taken.



What are the arrangements for vocational qualifications that are similar to an A level or GCSE?

Qualifications such as BTECs, WJEC Vocational Awards and Applied Certificates and Diplomas or the new Health and Social Care: Principles and Contexts qualifications will be awarded a Centre Determined Grade based on a range of assessment information, in the same way as GCSEs and A Levels. You should receive your results no later than those learners studying for GCSEs and A levels.



What about vocational qualifications that are not similar to GCSE or A level but are used for progression to further study or employment?

Assessments for these qualifications can continue where it's safe to do so, remotely or in person. Adaptations that have been put in place will still be available. If you can't take the assessment when planned, then alternative arrangements will be available to give you every chance to progress.

This is the case for Essential Skills Wales qualifications.



What are the arrangements for vocational qualifications that require learners to demonstrate practical or occupational competency?

In subjects such as, plumbing, construction, performing arts or hairdressing, where practical skills are being assessed, these should continue as normal using adaptations and in line with Welsh Government's operational guidance. In some cases, your assessment may need to be delayed until it can be carried out safely in line with public health guidance.



12 How will this impact on my further and higher education?

Grades for GCSE and A levels will be awarded in similar ways across the UK to allow progress to higher and further education.

Higher and further education stakeholder groups have been kept up to date on the assessment arrangements in Wales for summer 2021.

Learners should not contact Universities with provisional results. Only final results received on results days will be acknowledged.



13 Further help & support

We understand that it can be an anxious time for learners and parents/carers along with everyone involved in education at this time and we want to make sure you have access to the support and assistance you need. We have a help and support section on our **website** and links to additional support below.



Welsh Government portal offering many free and confidential helplines and services.

[CLICK HERE](#)



As one of the principal mental health organisations in the country, Mind understands your needs and is there to provide confidential advice and support.

[CLICK HERE](#)



WJEC has a section on their website where you can get all the support you need – including access to wellbeing advice, and handy tips to help keep home-learning on track.

[CLICK HERE](#)

For more information visit

www.qualificationswales.org

