

Qualifications 2021

Centre-Assessment Approach for Qualifications in 2021

In November 2020, the Education Minister announced that there would be no summer examination series for students taking GCSEs, AS levels or A levels in 2021. In January 2021, it was confirmed that these qualifications would be awarded using Centre Determined Grades. This means that individual examination centres, such as schools and colleges, would determine the actual grades awarded for each qualification.

The Assessment Approach ("approach") is designed to outline how the school, as an examination centre, will apply the 'Guidance on Alternative Arrangements for Approved GCSEs, AS and A levels' provided by [Qualifications Wales](#), the examination regulator, to help determine grades in 2021. By sharing its approach, the school is seeking to offer clarity and confidence to students, staff and families. Furthermore, it provides an overview on the decisions teachers will make; how teachers will make these decisions; and identify the evidence teachers will be utilising to support the decision-making process. While this page is designed to provide a 'high-level' understanding of the approach, a copy will be made available to parents/carers and students.

Centre-Determined Grades

A Centre Determined Grade is the grade awarded by the school, as an examination centre, on the basis of attainment which has been demonstrated in the areas of the qualification content that a student has covered. For each qualification, teachers will make use of WJEC Assessment Frameworks which include descriptors for key grades to support the accurate distribution of awards. Each grade awarded by the school must be underpinned by robust evidence to demonstrate a student's attainment across key themes and skills. These will vary per qualification, as determined by the requirements of each WJEC Qualification Assessment Frameworks. It will not be possible or permitted for teachers, or the school, to attempt to issue a Centre Determined Grade based on professional prediction or the potential of a student. Teachers will be required to apply their professional judgement and decide whether the knowledge and skills demonstrated meets the usual standard for a specified grade.

In determining grades, the school will be required to make 'best-fit' judgements. This means that students are not required to demonstrate all aspects of a grade descriptor to be awarded the grade; students should be awarded a grade which supports evidence of attainment across sufficient breadth of content, within the specified qualification, as determined by WJEC; and may achieve the same grades by demonstrating different combinations of knowledge, skills and understanding. This ensures that strengths in some areas counterbalance shortcomings in others. As a result, the 'best-fit' grade may be awarded. Where there is insufficient evidence, or where evidence suggest attainment is below that required of the lowest grade for a

qualification (ie. G grade at GCSE; E grade at AS/A level) then a student will be awarded a Centre Determined Grade of U.

The evidence used for Centre-Determined Grades

Centre Determined Grades will be generated using evidence of work completed by a student, using the adapted specification content. In determining a grade, the following types of evidence will be used in each qualification

1. Adapted past-paper questions

The school will make use of WJEC adapted past-papers when setting tasks to help determine a grade for each qualification. There are recognised benefits of using these materials. The adapted past-papers have already been externally quality assured; are fully supported by clear mark schemes; and are familiar to both students and staff. Teachers will ensure these past-papers, which will form a key part of the evidence, will be incorporated within their delivery of teaching and learning, in replacement of other activities undertaken in lessons.

2. Non-Examination Assessment

Non-examination assessment exists in many qualifications. The weighting towards the overall grade is, in most cases, much lower than unseen elements. Where non-examination assessment remains part of an adapted qualification, teachers will use the performance of students in this element to help contribute towards the determination of a grade. However, teachers will need to consider the weighting of the element, in light of the qualification as a whole, to ensure that the grade awarded accurately reflects the overall standard. For example, in a qualification where the weighting of non-examination assessment is equivalent to 20% of the overall grade, teachers will take this into account against the other evidence provided when determining the grade.

3. Other contributing evidence

There are two other types of contributing evidence may be used to support the determination of a grade. These include

- a. Teachers may use evidence from previously completed WJEC past-paper questions, which have been externally quality assured, with a published mark scheme, and where they have been completed under controlled conditions; and
- b. Assessments undertaken prior to the publication of the centre approach eg. Mock Examinations (also known as 'Pre-Public Examinations') and/or other assessed work may only be used to help confirm a judgement. However, this evidence may not be used in isolation to determine grades since, at the time of completion, it is possible that students would not have been aware of the importance of these tasks. This is designed to ensure fairness and equity to all students.

Quality Assurance Processes

In line with usual practices, WJEC will require internal processes to be undertaken to promote consistency. The school will undertake quality assurance processes, within subjects and across subjects, to ensure the grades determined are valid, reliable, equitable and fair, while seeking to avoid discrimination.

Recording Decisions

The school will keep a record to document clearly the rationale for grade decisions. This will include clarity of explanation which students and their parents/carers will understand. Decision records will detail who assessed the evidence and when; the decision taken; identification of any reasonable adjustments or special considerations applied; and where the evidence is safely stored. On submission of a Centre Determined Grade, the school will be required to make an overall declaration in relation to the processes carried out.

Review of Centre Determined Grades and Appeals

At the time of writing, the process of reviewing centre grades and the appeals processes has not been finalised. However, it is anticipated that

1. The school will be required to submit Centre Determined Grades to WJEC by the specified date. At this point, students will be informed of the grades awarded. Where a student is satisfied with the grades determined by the school, there is no further action.
2. There will be an opportunity for students to request a review of the centre's judgement of their grade and/or correct any factual errors. The process undertaken by the school will be similar to the internal moderation process. Where a review has been requested, it will be considered by a member of staff who was not the original assessor. The Head of School will also review that the school's processes have been followed, in terms of associated decision-making records etc. New or additional evidence will not be considered as part of the review process. Where a review has been upheld, the Centre Determined Grade will be amended.

The WJEC will implement a process to permit students to appeal a Centre Determined Grade on the grounds of procedural error only, where a review of grade has been unsuccessful. Similarly, Qualifications Wales will also implement an Examination Procedures Review Service. At each stage of the review/appeal process, students will need to be aware that a centre determined grade may be improved or be lowered.

Public Sector Equality Duty and Data Processessing

In developing an approach to centre determined grades in 2021, the school has taken steps to ensure it meets its Public Sector Equality Duty. This is a legal requirement and forms part of the Equality Act (2010), which ensures due regard to the need to

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act (2010);
2. Advance equality and opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
3. Foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not.

The school will ensure it meets data protection and processing regulations. This may result in modifications to existing policies and practices. However, it is anticipated that joint examination regulators may coordinate this to provide assurances that data is handled appropriately and for the intended purpose.