



# **Guidance on the determination of grades for WJEC vocational and other general qualifications for Summer 2021**

Information for centres outside of Wales



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## About this guidance

### Introduction

On, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the UK Government announced that students in England studying vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) that are often taught alongside A/AS Levels and GCSEs on one- or two-year courses, and used for university or college places, will receive grades assessed by teachers in Summer 2021 rather than sitting exams.

We wrote to centres in early March to confirm the [grading arrangements for our range of Vocational and Technical Qualifications](#).

Since that time, we have worked collaboratively with the qualification regulators and other vocational awarding organisations to develop our arrangements for awarding vocational qualifications this summer. Where appropriate we have aligned the arrangements for our vocational qualifications that are most like general qualifications to the processes that have been put in place for A/AS Levels and GCSEs in England. Where this has not been possible, we have sought to ensure that the alternative arrangements put in place for our vocational qualifications minimise burden for centres whilst meeting our regulatory conditions.

JCQ has produced detailed [guidance for centres](#) in respect of the process for A/AS Levels and GCSEs, from the creation and submission of a Centre Policy, through the determination of grades, requirements for internal quality assurance procedures, submission of grades to awarding organisations, the external quality assurance process, the issue of results and the appeals process for students.

This document sets out the processes that apply to the following vocational and other general (non-GCSE/GCE) qualifications in Summer 2021:

- Level 3 Applied Certificates and Diplomas
- Level 1/2 Vocational Awards
- Entry Level Certificates
- Latin Certificates
- Additional Maths

Where arrangements are aligned to the JCQ process, we have indicated this at the start of the section and summarised any amendments to the text. Where arrangements for our vocational qualifications differ from A/AS Levels and GCSEs, we have provided detailed guidance in this document.

**This guidance applies to all exam centres outside of Wales offering qualifications regulated by Ofqual and/or CCEA Regulation.**

Centres in Wales should refer to the document *Guidance on the determination of grades for WJEC vocational and other general qualifications for Summer 2021: Information for exam centres in Wales*.

### Other essential documentation

While this guidance lays out the processes, information and support available to centres from WJEC, you they must also read and consider the following Ofqual regulations including:

- [Guidance: Information for heads of centre, heads of department and teachers on the submission of teacher assessed grades: summer 2021](#), Ofqual, 24 March 2021
- [Guidance: Information for centres about making objective judgements in relation to awarding qualifications in 2021](#), Ofqual February 2021 (Ofqual/21/6749/4)
- [Guidance for centres: awarding of vocational, technical and other general qualifications in summer 2021](#), Ofqual 20 May 2021 (Ofqual/21/6787)

These documents provide information about how to determine grades, the evidence that should be considered in doing so, and objectivity in grading judgements. These documents must be read alongside this document and the arrangements put in place for determining students' grades at each centre must be consistent with the expectations in them.

## Terminology

For clarity the terminology used in this guidance document has been standardised with the terminology used in the JCQ guidance. The terminology used is as follows:

- **Awarding organisations:** this encompasses, 'exam boards' and 'awarding bodies'.
- **Centres:** these are exam centres approved in the National Centre Number register (NCNR).
- **Centre Policy:** the policy sets out the processes centres will follow for determining grades, in an appropriate, consistent and fair way – only one will needed to be submitted for all awarding organisations.
- **Centre Policy Summary (Form):** this is an online webform to be completed on the JCQ Centre Admin Portal (CAP) summarising Centre Policy, which should also be uploaded when the form is completed – this needs to be completed only once for all awarding organisations unless information is missing or needs to be clarified.
- **Private Candidates:** are students who have not studied with the exam centre that makes their entry.
- **SENCOs:** (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators) this encompasses SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) leads in colleges and other relevant experts and assessors.
- **Students:** this means students entered for qualifications in 2021 within the scope of this guidance as outlined above and encompasses 'candidates' and 'students'.
- **Support materials:** to assist in the determination and submission of grades, for example guidance, training, exemplar responses, performance data and grade descriptors.

## What will WJEC do?

We will provide centres with a package of support materials to assist in the determination and submission of grades, provide contacts and answer queries. This will include past papers, mark schemes and exemplar materials and grade descriptors, where these are not already provided in published Specifications.

After the submission of grades, we will conduct a quality assurance exercise that will have elements of both targeted and random sampling of evidence and rationale for TAGs awarded for some candidates at some centres. Further information can be found in the quality assurance process (see section the quality assurance process below).

We may have further contact with our centres if, following any sampled quality assurance activity, we have concerns in relation to the teacher assessed grades submitted.

We are responsible for determining final grades and awarding qualifications. We will also manage the second stage of appeals.

### What will centres do?

Centres will create and submit a Centre Policy – a pre-populated template option is available [here](#).

**Please note: The qualifications covered by this guidance will be covered by the Centre Policies to be produced by centres for General Qualifications. You do not need to complete a separate Centre Policy for the qualifications covered by this guidance (see section centre policy guidance below).** The Centre Policy will:

- outline the roles and responsibilities of individuals in the centre;
- detail what training and support will be provided to centre staff involved with the process, including any training around bias and objectivity in assessment and grading decisions;
- confirm the approach to be taken when determining teacher assessed grades, including consideration of evidence and how that evidence informs students' grades;
- detail the internal quality assurance processes that are in place;
- detail any provision for Private Candidates, if applicable.

Centres will collaborate with us if any concerns are raised following the submission of a Centre Policy. This may include participating in a virtual visit.

Centres will review grades determined by teachers in line with the Centre Policy.

Centres should ensure that students are aware of the evidence used to determine their grade. **Although teachers may share results associated with individual pieces of evidence, they must not share with students the grades submitted to us before results are released.**

Centres must submit teacher assessed grades to us with a Head of Centre Declaration that confirms that the centre complied with its Centre Policy. The declaration form will be submitted through our grade submission portal. Guidance on using the grade submission portal will be provided separately.

Centres will collaborate with us where external quality assurance sampling is required, which may include participating in a virtual visit.

Centres will release results to students for qualifications as required by the Department for Education on 10 August for Level 3 qualifications and 12 August for Level 1 and 2 qualifications.

Centres will, on request, conduct the first stage of the appeals process, to check if an administrative or procedural error has occurred. Centres will also be required to submit second stage appeals to us on a student's behalf, if the student continues to believe that an error persists or the grade awarded was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement.

## Key dates

Key dates to be aware of are:

- 22 March to 22 April: Entry amendments window open for centres
- **19 April:** Additional support and training materials available from WJEC Secure Site
- **12 April to 30 April:** Window for Centre Policy submission via proforma on CAP (Centre Admin Portal)
- **19 April to 11 June:** Awarding organisations review Centre Policies and conduct virtual visits where needed
- **26 April:** Entry deadline for Private Candidates
- **26 May to 18 June:** Window for Teacher Assessed Grades submission open
- **18 June to 16 July:** WJEC conduct sample checks of evidence (\* in exceptional circumstances, sample checks may take place until 23rd July)
- **20 July:** Entry deadline for unit entries for mid-flight learners
- **10 August:** Level 3 results day
- **12 August:** Level 2 results day
- **10 August to 7 September:** priority appeals window
- **10 August to 16 August:** student requests centre review
- **10 August to 20 August:** centre conducts centre review
- **11 August to 23 August:** centre submits appeal to WJEC
  - **10 August to end October:** majority of non-priority appeals take place
    - **10 August to 3 September:** student requests centre review
    - **10 August to 10 September:** centre conducts centre review
    - **11 August to 17 September:** centre submits appeal to WJEC
- **12 July:** Window opens for submission of Unit TAGs for mid-flight learners
- **17 September:** Submission deadline for Unit TAGs for mid-flight learners
- **5 November:** Date by which unit outcomes will be reported to centres

## Where to get further information support and guidance

Please visit our Summer 2021 webpage on the WJEC website and the Vocational Qualifications area on the Secure Site for further information support and guidance:

- [Assessments 2021: Get the support you need \(wjec.co.uk\)](https://www.wjec.co.uk/assessments-2021)
- [WJEC Secure Website \(wjecservices.co.uk\)](https://www.wjecservices.co.uk)

## Arrangements for learners part way through a Vocational Award or Applied Diploma qualification (non-certificating/'mid-flight' learners)

Where your learners are part way through their course (e.g. Years 10 and 12) and would have been taking unit assessments this summer, you are able to submit **unit level teacher assessed grades** for the units that they would have completed.

We will be asking you to submit unit level teacher assessed grades for your non-certificating learners by **17 September 2021** so that teachers have some flexibility and time to focus on the grades for certificating learners. This also means teaching and learning for your Year 10 and 12 learners can carry on as long as possible up to the end of the summer term.

If you haven't currently made entries for these learners, and you wish to submit unit teacher assessed grades in the Autumn term, **you will need to enter them by 20 July 2021** to avoid paying late fees and so that we know to request the grades from you.

### Frequently asked questions relating to learners' part-way through a Vocational Award

*"We teach a Vocational Award over two years. We timetable internal assessments for some of the moderated units at the end of Year 10 but we don't submit them for moderation until the following year. Can my Year 10 learners be given teacher assessed grades for these units?"*

Yes. You can give your learners teacher assessed grades for those units because you had planned that your learners would have been generating the evidence for the assessments before the **31 August 2021**, even if you would not have planned to mark it or submit for moderation until later.

**You will need to make unit entries for these learners.** If your learners are not currently entered for the units this summer, you will need to enter them so that we know that you want to give them a teacher assessed grade. If you have not yet made unit entries for these learners, please do so by **20 July 2021**.

*"We teach Vocational Awards over two years. We teach all the course content first and then learners sit the assessments for all units at the end of the course, in Year 11. Can my Year 10 learners be given teacher assessed grades?"*

As your learners wouldn't have been completing assessments this academic year, they are **not** eligible for unit level teacher assessed grades this summer or in the autumn. We understand that their learning has also been disrupted and we are currently discussing arrangements for 2021/2022 with Ofqual and the DfE so learners are not disadvantaged.

*"My learners took assessments in January 2021. The Vocational Contingency Regulatory Framework confirms that they may be given teacher assessed grades for those units, if they think the disruption impacted their performance. They are certificating in June 2022. How will this work?"*

You will need to provide unit teacher assessed grades for these learners this autumn alongside the unit level teacher assessed grades for non-certificating candidates from the June 2021 series. If you have not already done so, **you will need to enter these learners by 20 July 2021** so that we know to contact you to request a teacher assessed grade.

We will then ask you to submit the unit level teacher assessed grades for these units in the autumn term (when unit level teacher assessed grades are submitted for non-certificating candidates from the June 2021 series).

*“My learners were due to take units in January 2021 but they couldn’t because of Covid. The Vocational Contingency Regulatory Framework confirms that they may be given teacher assessed grades for those units. They are certificating in June 2022. How will this work?”*

You will need to provide unit teacher assessed grades for these learners this autumn alongside the unit level teacher assessed grades for non-certificating candidates from the June 2021 series. If you have not already done so, **you will need to enter these learners by 20 July 2021** so that we know to contact you to request a teacher assessed grade.

We will then ask you to submit the unit level teacher assessed grades for these units in the autumn term (when unit level teacher assessed grades are submitted for non-certificating candidates from the June 2021 series).

Frequently asked questions relating to learners’ part way through an Applied Diploma qualification

*“We teach an Applied Diploma over two years. We timetable internal assessments for some of the moderated units at the end of Year 12 but we don’t submit them for moderation until the following year. Can my Year 12 learners be given teacher assessed grades for these units?”*

Yes. You can give your learners teacher assessed grades for those units because you had planned that your learners would have been generating the evidence for the assessments before the 31 August 2021, even if you would not have planned to mark it or submit for moderation until later.

You will need to make unit entries for these learners. If your learners are not currently entered for the units this summer, you will need to enter them so that we know that you want to give them a teacher assessed grade. If you have not yet made unit entries for these learners, please do by 20 July 2021.

*“We complete the Applied Certificate in the first year and then we ‘top up’ to the Applied Diploma in Year 13. What do these arrangements mean for my learners?”*

Students completing an Applied Certificate this summer and then progressing to the Applied Diploma next year are considered ‘certificating’ learners for the Applied Certificate and ‘mid-flight’ learners for the Applied Diploma.

If you want your learners to receive a grade for the Applied Certificate, you will need to submit a qualification teacher assessed grade by 18 June 2021 so that they can be awarded their qualification grade in the summer.

We will then ask you to also submit unit level teacher assessed grades for the Applied Certificate units in September (when unit level teacher assessed grades are submitted for other non-certificating learners). This will enable us to issue unit level grades which can be used towards the Applied Diploma in 2022. As for all the unit level teacher assessed grades submitted in the autumn, grades must only be based on work that learners completed up to 31 August 2021.

## The quality assurance process

### Introduction

For the qualifications covered by this guidance, we will be adopting Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the external quality assurance processes set out in the document [JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs in Summer 2021](#).

**Centres are not required to complete a separate Centre Policy for our vocational qualifications but should ensure that the policy submitted for A/AS Level and GCSE qualifications is applicable to our vocational qualifications as appropriate.**

Arrangements for Stage 3 External sampling of teacher assessed grades will differ from those in place for A/AS Levels and GCSEs and are summarised below. We are working with Ofqual and other JCQ vocational awarding organisations to align the process for Stage 3 where possible. Further information will be provided soon.

The quality assurance process will support centres to construct appropriate processes to underpin the determination of grades. There are internal and external elements to the process.

The starting point of the process is the Centre Policy. This sets out the processes centres will follow for determining grades, in an appropriate, consistent and fair way. The policy should reference all of the relevant external advice and guidance provided by Ofqual, the JCQ and by the awarding organisations. A [template for a Centre Policy](#) is available on the [JCQ website](#), and centres can adopt and adapt this document. Each Head of Centre will then need to produce a summary of the policy which will be submitted to the awarding organisations for review. The [Centre Policy Summary Form](#) can also be previewed online on the JCQ website [‘Summer 2021 Arrangements’](#).

### Internal quality assurance process

Every centre must produce a Centre Policy; this can simply be done by choosing to adopt or adapt the pre-populated template. Centres will only be expected to produce one full Centre Policy document and complete one Centre Policy Summary Form, even if they have entries with more than one awarding organisation. The Centre Policy Summary Form must be uploaded to the Centre Administration Portal (CAP) by 30th April 2021 and must be signed by the Head of Centre. The full Centre Policy is to be uploaded to the CAP as an attachment. Awarding organisations will contact centres that haven't returned these documents by 30th April 2021, or if they have missing/incomplete information.

The Centre Policy will:

- Outline the roles and responsibilities of individuals in the centre.
- Detail the training and support provided for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and training around objectivity in decision making.
- Set out the approach for the determination of grades including how evidence will be used.
- Describe the process that will be adopted where a potential conflict of interest has been identified, such as where a teacher's relative is a student.

- Outline the internal quality assurance processes in place including arrangements to standardise judgements and consider teacher assessed grades against results from previous years when exams have taken place (2017 to 2019)
- Detail any provision for Private Candidates, if applicable.

Further guidance to support centres in creating a Centre Policy can be found in the document [JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs in Summer 2021.](#)

Exams officers will be provided with further details regarding submission of the policy summary, although the process will be similar to that used in usual exam years for the submission of requests for Reasonable Adjustments through Access Arrangements Online.

## External quality assurance process

### Stage 1 – Centre Policy review

Following submission one of the JCQ GQ awarding organisations will carry out a review of all Centre Policy Summary Forms. This is to ensure the arrangements each centre has in place are appropriate. The awarding organisation may contact centres where they have questions or concerns. At this point, centres will only be contacted by one awarding organisation. It is possible a centre may be contacted by an awarding organisation with which they do not have any entries.

All centres will receive email confirmation that their Centre Policy has been received. Centres do not need to wait for approval before beginning their grading processes. Centres will then receive an email confirming that their policy has been 'Accepted' or that there is a need for follow-up contact. Centres may be contacted by an awarding organisation where there are gaps in the policy or if any clarification is required. An update to the Centre Policy may be requested at this time.

Some centres may not receive any further follow up from awarding organisations. However, quality checks of the full Centre Policy may still be performed at random.

### Stage 2 – Virtual centre visits

Where the Centre Policy suggests that further support and guidance may be required, centres will be contacted to arrange a virtual centre visit by the awarding organisation. These visits will take place in May and June.

Virtual centre visits are to be supportive with the aim of assisting centres to provide valid teacher assessed grades and to ensure the best possible systems are in place. The visits will be conducted virtually. They are likely to be held via Microsoft Teams or Zoom, and details will be confirmed at a later date. Awarding organisations will work with centres to find an alternative if the use of these platforms is not suitable.

Visits will be attended by trained representatives from awarding organisations and senior leaders at centres. Awarding organisations will work with centres to find a suitable time and

date. Visits will take the form of a professional conversation and will focus on the process of providing teacher assessed grades.

Normally, centres will participate in one visit with a single awarding organisation. The purpose of this is to have a single point of contact and to ease the burden on centres. This may mean a centre's visit is hosted by an awarding organisation with which they do not have summer 2021 entries.

If an awarding organisation has significant concerns about a specific element of evidence the centre may be asked to remove the evidence and reconsider the grade.

In rare cases, where it is not possible to resolve issues arising from a virtual centre visit, results may be withheld pending further investigation.

### Stage 3 – External sampling of teacher assessed grades

After your centre has submitted the teacher assessed grades for your students, WJEC will conduct some further quality assurance in the form of sampling of evidence for some students from some centres.

This will allow us to check that centres have implemented the approach that they outlined in their submitted centre policies. This stage of checking will also allow us to take a closer look at a sample of candidate evidence and the rationale for grades for any centres where the teacher assessed grades look very different from what we might expect based on historic entries and outcomes for the centre.

We will ask to see the evidence and record of decision making for a sample of candidates from the range of grades awarded. This will allow us to check evidence from across the grade range.

We will be providing further information soon about how to submit the evidence and will also tell you what you need to do if you experience any difficulties with this.

Our specialists will then review the evidence. In most cases, we will then contact you to say that we don't need to see anything further. If our specialists do have any concerns we will contact you to let you know that we need to undertake a further review or to arrange a professional conversation so that we can ask about the approach and rationale for the teacher assessed grades and can work with you to resolve any remaining issues.

In very rare cases, where it is not possible to resolve issues arising, we may need to withhold results pending further investigation.

We will give you more detailed information about timelines and how to submit evidence for sampling soon.

## Guidance on grading for teachers

### Introduction

For your students who are due to complete (cash in) their qualification in summer 2021, you will make a holistic judgement based on the evidence you have of each student's performance in the subject to determine a teacher assessed grade (TAG) for the qualification. You should assign a TAG using the normal grading scale for the qualification, informed by the grade descriptors and other exemplar materials. There are no constraints on the minimum number of units or percentage of the qualification which a student must have been taught, as long as the grade is based on evidence of their performance. You should make sure that you have taught as much content as you need to make a judgement about a grade.

The evidence you use:

- can be of different types.
- can come from across the course of study.
- can vary between your students on the same course, depending on what they managed to achieve.

The following steps may be helpful when making grading decisions.

### Step 1: Consider what has been taught

Look at the specification that have been teaching, consider:

- what content has been taught?
- has what you have taught been covered deeply or superficially because of the impact of the pandemic?
- which topics have you taught in depth and which did you intend to revisit?
- which topics have you not been able to teach to your students because of the impact of the pandemic?

The evidence used to make judgements must only include the appropriate assessment of content that has been taught.

### Step 2: Collect the evidence

Consider what evidence of student performance you may have collected over the course of study. This evidence can include:

- Student work produced in response to assessment materials we have provided, including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers.
- Banked units (i.e. external exams or moderated assessments that we have graded)
- Internal assessments that have been completed but not moderated by us, or that have been partially completed.
- Student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflects the specification, follows the same format as our material and has been marked in a way that reflects our mark schemes. This can include:
  - Homework or classwork where the student practises a task

- Project work
  - Recordings (e.g. of practical performance).
- Evidence from work experience where relevant to the qualification.
- Tracker of achievement and attainment over the course. This cannot be used in isolation, as by itself it would not support the external quality assurance process/appeal review.
- Witness testimonies or teacher observation records in a form which would normally be submitted for moderation.

### Retention of evidence

You need to retain a copy of the student work you have used as evidence. Where this isn't possible (for example because it was from earlier in the course and evidence was not retained at that point), then a record of the mark can still be used in determining the final grade. If a student decides to appeal their result, copies of the evidence that is available can be considered by WJEC.

You must retain the evidence which is used to support a Teacher Assessed Grade until 6 months after the date of the issue of the result, or the conclusion of any appeal in relation to that result, whichever is later.

### Extra factors for you to consider when you are collecting evidence

Private candidates, or students who have moved schools, are likely to have evidence produced with a tutor or other educational provider. You can use any evidence that is available from these sources that you are able to authenticate as the student's own work.

The evidence you collect **must** relate to the qualification and specification being assessed.

You don't need to assess all areas of the specification to arrive at a grade. You should aim to include evidence that assesses the student's ability across a reasonable range of subject content over as much as they have been taught, reflecting, where possible and appropriate:

- recall, select and use knowledge and understanding.
- present information, using terminology.
- apply knowledge, understanding and skills (to complete an activity/task)
- review evidence (self-generated or from materials provided) and make judgements.

There is no requirement for any units to have been fully taught or assessed.

There are no additional restrictions on the number of pieces of evidence, or number of different types of evidence.

You should use evidence which demonstrates students' achievements fully, to make sure that their grade represents their performance.

Part of the evidence of student work that you collect **must** be in a tangible form that can be reviewed by others, such as written work or audio/visual recordings. This is so that sampling

(which is part of the external quality assurance process) and review (which is as part of the potential appeals process) could take place if required in exceptional cases.

Consider whether the evidence available is sufficient to support your judgement. If not, what additional assessment evidence might be needed? You could use the assessment materials (past papers) provided by WJEC to supplement or help to confirm performance of previous assessments.

If you provide additional opportunities for individual students to produce evidence, then you should consider whether you should make these assessment opportunities available for the whole cohort.

You will need to communicate the details of what evidence you use to make your judgement/grading decision to each student so they know what evidence you will use. Informing students about what evidence is going to be used will help them to understand the process.

### Step 3: How can I evaluate the quality of the evidence?

To check the quality of the evidence, you should consider:

- Coverage of knowledge, skills and understanding – What is covered?
- Authenticity – How confident are you that it is the student's own work?
- Level of control – Was it taken in timed conditions? Was there an opportunity for redrafting? Was it supervised?
- Marking – How much support was available to help you in applying the mark scheme? What internal standardisation processes have been applied?
- Were students able to demonstrate their achievements fully, showing the full range of their performance?

There is no ranking of evidence by type. Evidence that you believe is an authentic representation of the student's performance will give you confidence in your overall holistic judgement. In most cases, more recent evidence is likely to be more representative of student performance, although there may be exceptions.

### Step 4: Is the range of evidence appropriate for all my students?

You should normally aim to gather the same range of evidence for all students in a class or cohort. However, the range of evidence that you collect may not be the same for all your students because there may be some variability due to the impact of the pandemic on teaching, learning and assessment. For example, some students may have missed a section of teaching due to illness. If this is the case, you should choose the most appropriate evidence for each student and make sure that your choice does not advantage or disadvantage any students because they have been affected differently by the pandemic.

You can only grade each student on their performance based on the subject content they have been taught. Before finalising your decisions, check that each student has been taught the content for the evidence you plan to use. If there are any differences between a student and the rest of their cohort in what has been taught, this should become apparent before decisions are finalised.

## Step 5: How do I assign a grade?

Grades should be based on a holistic judgement based on a range of appropriate evidence of the student's performance on the knowledge, skills and understanding they have been taught for the qualification. To help you reach a final grade:

- Look at the qualities of the work you have collected and use the sources of support available. This will include your professional experience of the assessment materials used as well as the grade descriptors and exemplification that we have also provided to support your decision making.
- Your grade must be based on your student's performance in the evidence you have collected, and what the student has been taught, not on the student's potential. For example, if all the evidence collected is of Pass and Merit standard, you should not consider awarding that student a Distinction grade. It should be no easier or more difficult for a student to achieve a grade based on their performance than in previous years when exams were taken.
- If a student has 'banked' some units, the grade which they received for those units should not be a cap on the final grade you give them if there is other evidence of stronger achievement. For example, if a unit were taken early in a course of study, a student may have improved their performance during their course. You should include a rationale for how you have used banked evidence.
- It is appropriate to award a U grade if a student does not have evidence of achievement at a Pass grade.
- You must record your decision-making process about the evidence you have included and the grade that you have reached, in accordance with the school's quality assurance processes.

## Equality and avoiding discrimination

Your judgements about your students' grades should be objective and avoid unconscious bias. We have produced guidance and training materials to support centres in Wales; this is accessible through our Secure website ([www.wjecservices.co.uk](http://www.wjecservices.co.uk)).

Grades may then be adjusted as part of the school's or college's quality assurance processes, including internal standardisation arrangements.

Access arrangements should have been in place when evidence was generated. Where they were not, you should take that into account when coming to your judgement. This could include input from appropriate specialist teachers and other professionals.

If a student is unable to take an assessment or suffers a traumatic event that might affect their performance, Special Consideration will not apply this summer because students will not be taking their exams. However, where illness or other personal circumstances might have temporarily affected performance, for example in mock exams, you should bear that in mind when making your judgement. You may wish to give a student another opportunity to generate the evidence.

## Guidance for your students who are not certificating in summer 2021

Please note that for students who are part-way through their Vocational Award or Applied Diploma qualification you should determine a teacher assessed grade for the units which they were due to take in summer 2021. These apply to the units where you had planned that students would be working on the assessment by the end of the summer term in 2021. You can still submit a TAG where this is the case, even if you would not have planned to submit those assessments to us for moderation until the next academic year. You will need to make unit entries for these students.

Overall, the process for determining a unit level TAG for your non-certificating students is very similar to qualification level TAGs:

- Students receiving unit level TAGs should not be advantaged or disadvantaged compared to students who received a qualification level TAG.
- The grade should be based on evidence.
- Your starting point should be evidence which relates directly to that unit. However, if there is evidence of higher achievement from other units, then this may be used as well.

## Using grade descriptors

This section explains how to use grade descriptors when you are making student performance judgements.

You should use the Grade descriptors to make **holistic** judgements about student performance.

## The grade descriptors

Grade descriptors are general statements that give a high-level reflection of student performance characteristics.

The descriptors will help you place student performance relative to the performance standards set for Summer 2021. The performance standards for Summer 2021 are the same as previous years where an examination series took place. You should also use these grade descriptors for non-certificating students. **Please note that we will not ask you to submit unit level TAGs until the autumn.**

## What grade descriptors exist?

Grade descriptors have been created for all qualifications covered by this guidance. For the majority of our qualifications the grade descriptors are already published in the Qualification Specification. In a small number of qualifications, for example our Entry Level Certificates, the grade descriptors will be available from the Summer 2021 area on our secure site from 19 April 2021.

They describe **mid-grade** performance.

- For **Entry Level Certificates**, there are grade descriptors for E1, E2 and E3
- For **Vocational Awards**: there are grade descriptors for P1, P2 and D2

- For **Applied Certificates** and **Applied Diplomas**: there are grade descriptors for A, C and E

## Using the descriptors

Grade descriptors will help you to identify:

- The performance characteristics within a piece of evidence
- A potential grade band for a collection of evidence

You should be familiar with the evidence from your students before using grade descriptors.

You should use the **grade descriptor** to support decision making.

## The process

These grade descriptors do not highlight performance characteristics for all grades. You are free to award teacher assessed grades from the whole range of grades available. For example, if a student's performance is stronger than the grade descriptors for a Pass grade but do not fully meet the grade descriptors for a Distinction, then you should consider awarding a Merit.

Review your evidence. Read through the grade descriptors. Match the evidence to the suitable statements within the grade descriptors.

You may find that evidence covers more than one grade descriptor. You should make a **holistic** grade judgement which may be a 'best fit' approach.

For example, if you have evidence for a student that contains:

- Many characteristics of a Merit response
- A few characteristics of a Pass response
- A single characteristic of a Distinction response.

Choosing either a Merit or a Pass will be most suitable for this set of evidence. As there are more Merit characteristics, settling on a Merit is likely to be the most appropriate.

Remember that grades should be based on a holistic judgement. You should judge grades based on the subject content which your students have been taught.

Your final decisions will rely on your professional judgement and experience.

## Using data to support the grading process

This section is consistent with the [JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs in Summer 2021](#). The use of the term 'exams' has been replaced with assessments and examples have been amended to reflect our vocational and other general qualifications

### Introduction

Used appropriately, data on historical student and centre performance can help support the internal quality assurance process for assigning grades. The purpose of reviewing data on past performance is **not** to attempt to determine a student or a centre's outcomes this summer, but as one source of evidence from an assessment series which operated as normal, that can inform teachers' professional judgement on the level of attainment achieved by their students.

Accordingly, centres are advised to consider the profile of their results in previous years **in which assessments have taken place**, as outlined in Ofqual's *Information for heads of centre, heads of department and teachers on the submission of teacher assessed grades: summer 2021*. Centres can use this to undertake a high-level check once grades have been assigned to students, to ensure that they have applied a consistent standard in their assessment of the 2021 cohort compared to previous years in which assessments took place.

Centres must ensure that grade judgements have been recorded for students in the current assessments before considering historical records of mark data and grade distributions for students in previous assessments at the centre.

New centres will not have any historical data, so will need to focus attention on other aspects of quality assurance. If a centre has changed status, merged, or split in recent years, it will need to be taken into account when considering what data to collate.

### The use of data in reviewing overall centre outcomes

Centres should be aware of the distribution of grades awarded to students in previous June series where assessments have taken place. However, grading judgements should not be driven by this data. Historical grade data should only be considered after grading judgements have been made.

### What data needs to be considered?

Centres are advised to compile information on the grades awarded to students in past June series in which assessments took place (2017 to 2019), where they can be confident that a consistent national standard was applied. The usefulness of this information will depend on the following:

- The size of the centre's cohort from year to year – the larger the cohort, the more useful the data could be.
- The stability of the centre's overall grade outcomes from year to year – the more stable the outcomes are, the more confident the centre can be that variation would likely be low in 2021, had assessments taken place.

This information should be compiled for each grade, for each subject/qualification and for each centre as a whole, as it is important to consider both subject and centre level variation during the internal quality assurance review. It is likely that the size of the cohort and the stability of the outcomes will be higher for all subjects combined than for a single subject.

When collating the information, centres should compile and review data across multiple years even if a centre changed awarding organisation in a subject. Centres may also wish to bring together other data sources that may help quality assure the grades determined in 2021.

When aggregating outcomes across all subjects, centres should consider omitting subjects that are no longer offered from the historical data, to provide a more valid comparison with the grades derived in 2021. Where centres have taken on private candidates in previous series, and/or in the current series, they should generally be excluded from this data.

Looking at centre's outcomes over a three-year period in which assessments took place (2017 to 2019), at subject and at centre level, may be a good approach to benchmarking outcomes for 2021. This will help when considering year-on-year fluctuations in outcomes. In instances where there are fewer years of historical data, however, this is still likely to be useful.

The June 2020 series should not be used for benchmarking purposes, as the last consistent set of national standards was set in 2019. The centre assessment grades used as a basis for final outcomes in June 2020 were based on a different consideration to that for the current series. In June 2020, centres were asked to provide the grade that they considered the student would most likely have achieved had assessments taken place. In 2021, grades must be based on the evidence produced by students. Therefore centres should consider how 2020 outcomes related to the centre's historical outcomes before referring to them as part of the internal review.

### Internal quality assurance: using the data to inform the overall review of outcomes

After all grading decisions have been made, centres should review the aggregate cumulative grade distribution for each subject, and qualification type (e.g., Vocational Award, Applied Diploma). If outcomes are much higher than in previous years, or much lower, the reasons for it should be considered. Identify evidence for any recurring trends in the profile of performance at the centre over previous years, such as strong results for some subjects or specific student groups. Comparisons should be contextualised with other information at centre level, for example data that suggests the cohort in a particular subject, or overall, is more or less able than in previous years (where assessments have taken place) – for example, tracking data, prior assessment data, or a change in the profile of the cohort.

Also consider the grades awarded to different groups of students, including those with protected characteristics, as well as considering gender and disadvantage. Is each group's grade profile different from previous years, or compared with other groups? If so, why is that the case? Take particular care when assessing patterns of grades for small groups, where a single candidate may have a large effect.

It is recommended that a centre makes a record of these comparisons and the rationale for any variations as part of the internal quality assurance process, in order that it can be discussed with the awarding organisation during any external quality assurance checks.

It is possible that, following this review, centres may need to reflect on the grading standard that your teachers have applied in one or more subjects. Do not, however, apply any historical insights inconsistently to students within a subject. If an issue is identified which cuts across several or most subjects, a review across all subjects may be needed. **At all times, however, remember that it is the evidence of students' work that must form the basis for each student's grade.** For example, the fact that no student at a centre might have achieved an A\* in an Applied Diploma, or a Level 1 Pass in a Vocational Award, in previous years is not a valid barrier to awarding these grades to a student who has demonstrated attainment to that level.

### Once the review is complete

If a centre is selected for a quality assurance visit, they may be asked to provide a statement explaining the rationale of the outcomes by subject and/or qualification type level. This must include details of how they compare in previous years in which exams were sat, and an explanation for this – for example, if the centre's cohort were known to be particularly strong or weak relative to previous years; any changes at the centre that might have contributed to the level of attainment achieved by students in particular subjects; or the size of the cohort means that comparisons between years are considered unreliable.

## Reasonable adjustments, access arrangements and special consideration

*This section has been adapted from the information in the [JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs in Summer 2021](#). Adaptations have been made to reflect the arrangements for our vocational and other general qualifications.*

### Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs), SEND leaders and assessors have previously been advised to continue to process online applications as if examinations were taking place this summer. This will formalise the arrangements for the student's assessments and will ensure consistency with the Equality Act 2010.

An online application may be processed after 31 March 2021 provided the student meets the published criteria for the arrangement and the full supporting evidence is available for inspection.

Every effort must be made to ensure that students' approved access arrangements and/or reasonable adjustments are put in place for any assessments used to determine teacher assessed grades. This applies regardless of whether the access arrangement/reasonable adjustment was approved online or delegated to centres. This includes such things as the use of a reader or supervised rest breaks.

The use of access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be discussed with specialist teachers (where appropriate), students and parents/carers in advance of any additional evidence being gathered. This will ensure that all parties are aware of the arrangements the centre is making to ensure accessibility of the assessments.

Teachers will be required to confirm whether the approved access arrangement/reasonable adjustment was in place for assessments which will be used to determine the student's grade. This must be recorded on the Assessment Record. It is better not to use evidence if access arrangements were not in place when they were meant to be.

Centres must securely hold on file all evidence used to determine the teacher assessed grades including access arrangements/reasonable adjustments provided, until the published deadline for appeals has passed. However, if a student's result is subject to an on-going appeal, malpractice investigation or other results enquiry after the published deadline for appeals, then the evidence must be retained until this has been completed.

If the access arrangement/reasonable adjustment was not in place, the teacher must record the reason for this and be able demonstrate that this was taken into account when making their final judgement.

The range of evidence is flexible and can be tailored to an individual student according to coverage of the specification.

Centres are encouraged to share all access arrangements evidence where a student is transitioning between centres. The entering centre must check the paperwork and ensure that the arrangement is still appropriate, practicable and reasonable.

The JCQ publication [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#)<sup>1</sup> provides further detailed information.

## Special consideration

The usual process of centres submitting special consideration applications to WJEC for vocational and other general qualifications will not apply this summer.

As the range of evidence is flexible and can be tailored to an individual student according to coverage of the specification, then instances of special consideration should be limited. Centres should be able to select work completed by a student where they were unaffected by adverse circumstances.

Where this is not possible and a temporary illness, a temporary injury or some other event outside of the student's control may have affected their performance in assessments which will be used to determine a grade, teachers should take this into account and document how they have done so. Special consideration cannot be applied due to lost teaching and learning. This can be addressed through the flexibility of the range of evidence centres may use to determine students' grades. Students should only be assessed on the content of the specification covered.

Centres must be satisfied that the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a student's ability to demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.

Centres must record how they determined the impact of the misfortune.

Students must be reminded to raise any mitigating circumstances which warrant special consideration. It is important that students raise these issues as soon as possible, ideally **at the time of the assessment and prior to the submission of the teacher assessed grade.**

## Guidance for centres on modifying assessment materials

Centres should use past papers where possible to access previously modified materials. WJEC past modified question papers can be accessed at: [www.wjecservices.co.uk](http://www.wjecservices.co.uk) – Past papers may be found within 'Resources', then 'Past Papers and Marking Schemes'.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/AA\\_regs\\_20-21\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/AA_regs_20-21_FINAL.pdf)

## Appropriate adjustments for students with visual impairments

Centres will need to ensure that they meet their obligations as per the Equality Act 2010. Appropriate reasonable adjustments should be made to any additional assessment materials used in centres such as centre devised tasks. To ensure this, SENCOs should continue to liaise with teaching and other centre staff to ensure the most suitable arrangements for students with visual impairments. Appropriate adjustments might include:

- the use of a computer reader for tests which are predominately text based
- the use of a reader
- enlarging assessment material on screen
- the use of a 'colour namer', particularly in a subject such as Geography where there are maps.

The JCQ publication [Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments](#) provides detailed information.

## Advice on providing written or verbal descriptions of images

- Before providing a written or verbal description of a picture, remember to read the question that goes with the image. This will help to describe only the necessary detail.
- Always give the context to the image. For example, "this is an article from a website about running" or "this is a photograph of snowy mountains."
- Always describe what you see in the picture. For example, "there is a picture of a woman running. She is wearing a tracksuit and trainers." Remember to keep your sentences short and name the things that are needed to answer the question.
- Always avoid interpretation or assumption. For example, say "a woman and child" rather than a "mother and daughter."

## Advice on creating sets of questions from our past papers

Centres will be able to copy and paste text and questions and then ensure the font is the correct size, bold and in Arial. It is recommended that for questions with mathematical fractions, equations, tables, graphs and images the relevant questions are printed from the past papers. Remember to have all material per question from the question paper, source booklet and diagram book.

- A4 18 point bold can be enlarged to A3 24 point bold.
- A4 24 point bold can be enlarged to A3 36 point bold.

If material is to be used with read/write text to speech technology, for text questions you will be able to copy and paste as above. For those questions with mathematical fractions, equations, tables, graphs and images, it is recommended that centres create the normal way of working for their students as they would for classroom materials.

## Submission of grades

The final date for entering grades for learners certificating this summer is **18 June 2021**. Guidance on how to input candidates' grades in the collection system is available from the Summer 2021 area of the secure website ([www.wjecservices.co.uk](http://www.wjecservices.co.uk))

When submitting grades, we will ask you to submit a grade for each candidate entered for certification (cash in). A teacher can include a 'U' (ungraded).

**Grades must be kept confidential and must not be given to students or parents/guardians.**

## Head of Centre declaration

A declaration by the Head of Centre is required to finalise the submission of grades. The Head of Centre declaration will be provided through the grade submission portal. Further information on will be provided along with details of grade submission.

## Arrangements for mid-flight learners

The final date for entering grades for **mid-flight learners** is **17 September 2021**. We are aware that some centres may be ready to submit their Unit TAGs later in the Summer term and will therefore be opening the grade collection system from 12 July 2021.

## Malpractice

This section is consistent with information in the [JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs in Summer 2021.](#)

### Introduction

WJEC greatly appreciate all of the hard work that centres will undertake in setting out and implementing their processes to determine grades. Centres are required to submit grades that have been determined in line with published guidance and their own Centre Policy.

The decision to not go ahead with exams in Summer 2021 means that the causes and drivers for malpractice will be different to those in a normal examination series. However, malpractice can still occur through genuine error or intent, particularly around the determination of grades. A minority of centre staff may fail to appropriately adhere to the guidance in determining grades and some students might attempt to gain an unfair advantage.

To support centres in these challenging times WJEC have set out below some of the circumstances in which will investigate potential malpractice concerns. Please note that the list is not intended to be exhaustive and there may be other instances of potential malpractice which will require investigation.

### Centres/centre staff

WJEC will investigate credible allegations of malpractice or issues reported from our monitoring processes that raise concerns about a failure to follow the published requirements for determining grades. Examples include:

- Grades created for students who have not been taught sufficient content to provide the basis for that grade.
- A teacher deliberately and inappropriately disregarding the centre's published policy when determining grades.
- A teacher fabricating evidence of candidate performance to support an inflated grade.
- A teacher deliberately providing inappropriate levels of support before or during an assessment, including deliberate disclosure of mark schemes and assessment materials, to support an inflated grade.
- A teacher intentionally submitting inflated grades.
- A failure to retain evidence used in the determination of grades in accordance with the JCQ Grading guidance.
- A systemic failure to follow the centre's policy in relation to the application of Access Arrangements or Special Consideration arrangements for students in relation to assessments used to determine grades.
- A failure to take reasonable steps to authenticate student work.
- A failure to appropriately manage Conflicts of Interest (COIs) within a centre.
- A Head of Centre's failure to submit the required declaration when submitting their grades.
- Grades being released to students (or their parents/carers) before the issue of results.
- Failure to cooperate with WJEC quality assurance, appeal or investigation processes.
- Failure to conduct a centre review or submit an appeal when requested to do so by a student.

Centres which identify such incidents should report them to WJEC as normal, using the [JCQ M2 form](#).

## Students

It is possible that some students may attempt to influence their teachers' judgements about their grades.

Students might attempt to gain an unfair advantage during the centre's process by, for example, submitting fabricated evidence or plagiarised work. Such incidents would constitute malpractice and centres are asked to report these to us in the normal way using the [JCQ M1 form](#).

Students, or individuals acting on behalf of a student, such as parents/carers, might also try to influence grade decisions by applying pressure to centres or their staff. We anticipate that the majority of such instances will be dealt with by the centre internally – in such cases, we ask that the centres retain clear and reliable records of the circumstances and the steps taken, and that students are made aware of the outcome. However, if a student continues to inappropriately attempt to pressure centre staff then please inform us using the [JCQ M1 form.2](#) We will contact your centre if we receive credible allegations that such pressure has been applied in order that appropriate steps can be taken.

In all the scenarios listed above, as well as any others that have not been explicitly identified here, the JCQ Suspected malpractice policies and procedures 2020-2026 continues to apply. Please be aware that, as always, all investigations into alleged malpractice remain confidential and the findings, including any sanctions imposed, are not publicly disclosed.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding malpractice, please contact the us via the contact information detailed at the end of the [JCQ Suspected malpractice policies and procedures 2020-2021.3](#)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.icq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.icq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Malpractice\\_20-21\\_v2-1.pdf](https://www.icq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Malpractice_20-21_v2-1.pdf)

## Results

Results for our vocational and other general qualifications will align with the earlier dates for the publication of GCE AS, A-level and GCSE results.

Applied Certificate and Applied Diploma, GCE AS and A-level qualifications

- Results will be released to centres on Monday **9 August 2021**.
- Students will receive their results on Tuesday **10 August 2021**.

Entry Level Certificates, Vocational Awards, Latin Certificates, Additional Mathematics and GCSE qualifications

- Results will be released to centres on Wednesday **11 August 2021**.
- Students will receive their results on Thursday **12 August 2021**.

Unit outcomes for mid-flight learners will be reported to centres by **5 November 2021**. This will enable centres to make decisions regarding any resit requirements.

## Appeals

This section is consistent with the [JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs in Summer 2021.](#)

### Centre reviews and appeals to WJEC

The arrangements for awarding grades to students in summer 2021 include internal and external quality assurance measures which aim to ensure that on results day students are issued with fair and consistent grades that have been objectively reached. Sharing information with students about the evidence being used as part of a centre's grade determination process is important and should help to avoid issues that may otherwise arise when results are issued.

Post results, the need for appeals should be limited as students should be confident in their grades because of the following:

- An effective Centre Policy which is adhered to by all centre staff involved in the determination of teacher assessed grades, and which has been reviewed by awarding organisations.
- A high standard of internal quality assurance both in determining teacher assessed grades based only on student evidence and ensuring that there are no administrative or procedural errors.
- Effective provision of access arrangements for all eligible students.
- Effective arrangements for students that may have been disadvantaged during an assessment that contributes to their grade either by taking the circumstances into account in determining grades or by using alternative evidence that was unaffected by the adverse circumstances.
- Effective communication with students and parents/guardians so that they understand the centre's approach to determining their grades before grades are submitted to the awarding organisations, including the evidence used and a realistic understanding of the standard at which they are performing. Centres should make students aware of the sources of evidence that will be used to determine their grade in advance of that grade being submitted to awarding organisations. This transparency should enable students to raise any errors or circumstances relating to particular pieces of evidence to be taken into account in advance of the grade submission and should reduce the number of instances in which students need to appeal.
- Accurate recording and effective checking of information on the assessment record for the student to avoid errors in submitting teacher assessed grades.
- Effective oversight and clear professional accountability from the Head of Centre who will complete the Head of Centre Declaration.

**The appeals process relies on excellent record-keeping through the assessment process. With this in mind teachers / heads of department are required to:**

- document the sources of evidence used for determining grades for the class/cohort along with a rationale for what was selected.
- document any exceptional circumstances for students, i.e., if a student's evidence is different from the subject cohort and the rationale for that; if approved access

arrangements/reasonable adjustments were in place and if not how they were taken account of when determining the grade; and how any mitigating circumstances such as illness were taken into account when determining the grade. We recommend centres document discussions with students about the range of evidence used.

- maintain records as documented in their Centre Policy.
- ensure that any evidence that is to be used to determine students' grades (e.g. student work and marks where work is not available) is stored safely and can be retrieved promptly by centre staff, if needed for a centre review or requested by us as part of an appeal.

### **Students will need certain information to help them decide whether to appeal**

If centres haven't shared the following information before results day, they will need to be prepared to do so on results day if students request it:

- The Centre Policy
- The sources of evidence used to determine their grade along with any grades/marks associated with them
- Details of any special circumstances that have been taken into account in determining their grade, e.g. access arrangements, mitigating circumstances such as illness

As previously described in this document, we will be providing assessment materials (past papers and assessments), guidance and training to support centres in making fair and consistent judgements which are without bias and will be conducting external quality assurance, including:

- reviewing Centre Policies; and
- sampling student work that has contributed to the range of evidence used in determining a grade.

Although every effort will be made to ensure that students are issued with the correct grades on results day, there will also be an appeals system as a safety net to resolve any errors not identified during the earlier parts of the process. Students who consider that an error has been made in determining their grade will have a right to appeal. We expect that there will be relatively few errors this year.

It is important that the evidence (students' work) upon which grades were determined and records are available to enable the centre review to be conducted promptly after results are issued. Centres must take note of the JCQ guidance on the [Retention of candidates' work for the summer 2021 series.4](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Retention-of-evidence.pdf)

There are two stages to the summer 2021 appeals process:

#### **Stage 1: centre review**

The first stage of the process is referred to as **a centre review**. If a student does not consider that they have been issued with the correct grade, they can ask their centre to check if an administrative or procedural error has occurred. The centre will need to ensure

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Retention-of-evidence.pdf>

the student is aware that their grade could go down, up or stay the same. If the centre finds that an error has occurred, they will be able to submit a request to us to correct the error and amend the grade without the need to make an appeal to us.

## Stage 2: appeal to WJEC

The second stage of the process is an appeal to us (submitted by the centre on the student's behalf). An appeal should be submitted if the student considers that the centre did not follow its procedure properly, we made an administrative error, or the student considers that the grade awarded was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement. The centre will need to ensure the student is aware that their grade could go down, up or stay the same.

## Grounds for appeal

In summary there are four grounds upon which a centre review or an appeal to us may be requested:

- At stage 1: The centre made an administrative error, e.g. an incorrect grade was submitted; an incorrect assessment mark was used when determining the grade.
- At stages 1 and 2: The centre did not apply a procedure correctly, such as the centre did not follow its Centre Policy, did not undertake internal quality assurance, did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances such as illness.
- At stage 2: We made an administrative error, e.g. the grade was incorrectly changed by us during the processing of grades.
- At stage 2: The student considers that the centre made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement<sup>5</sup> in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/or the determination of the grade from that evidence.

A student will first need to be informed of the outcome of the centre review. If they wish to appeal to the us, they must then submit a request to their centre to proceed. The appeal must be submitted according to our requirements.

Clear communication with students and parents/carers about the appeals process should clarify the need for student consent. Students should be made aware that we will determine the grade at appeal, that the grade could go down, up or stay the same and that the outcome will be final other than in instances of a process error by us.

The student must provide their written and recorded consent. Their grade could go down, up or remain the same at any stage in the centre review and/or appeals process.

The centre must conduct a centre view and must also submit an appeal to us if requested to do so by a student. The appeal can only be submitted to us if the first stage, centre review, has been completed and the outcome of the first stage issued to the student.

Please note that where an appeal raises significant concerns about a centre's implementation of its policy, or where appeals do not appear to have been submitted as requested by students the centre may be referred to the awarding body's malpractice

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<sup>5</sup> A reasonable judgement is one that is supported by evidence. An exercise of judgement will not be unreasonable simply because a student considers that an alternative grade should have been awarded, even if the student puts forward supporting evidence. There may be a difference of opinion without there being an unreasonable exercise of judgement. The reviewer will not remark individual assessments to make fine judgements but will take a holistic approach based on the overall evidence.

investigation team for potential review and further action. It will be possible to ask us to prioritise some appeals, e.g. those that are needed for a place at Higher Education.

We will publish a *guide to the appeals processes, June 2021 examination series* early in the summer term. This will provide guidance on conducting the centre review, our appeals process and escalation to the final regulatory appeals process.