

ASSESSMENT APPROACH FOR QUALIFICATIONS IN 2021

Version 4: 05.03.21

This version of the guidance sets out the school's approach to centre determined grades, as the information is available. Further versions will be published as more information is shared by the examination board; regulator and/or Welsh Government.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This 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.
- 1.2 This plan only applies to those qualifications GCSE, AS and A level, which are regulated in Wales. For the very few qualifications outside of this remit, and regulated by Ofqual, the school will apply the relevant guidance once it is published.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.

2. Centre Determined Grades

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 While the standard expected for any particular grade will not be lowered in 2021, the use of Centre Determined Grades acknowledges that the volume of work completed by a student will be less than in previous years, owing to the ongoing impact of the global health crisis. Therefore, the use of Centre Determined Grades seeks to ensure students are not unfairly disadvantaged by the process. At the same time, they are designed to enable all students to progress to their next stage of learning and/or employment.

3. How Centre Determined Grades will be made at the school

- 3.1 For each qualification, WJEC will provide subject staff with a Qualification Assessment Framework, which will set out the requirements to support the evidence to inform a Centre Determined Grade. These frameworks, which will be released to schools and colleges by the end of February 2021, provide a degree of flexibility to support the school's local context. However, they will ensure there is a degree of consistency to maintain public confidence in the qualification system, and approach taken in Wales in 2021.

- 3.2 The Centre Determined Grade will be generated using evidence of work completed by a student, using the adapted specification content.
- 3.3 In determining a grade, the following types of evidence will be used in each qualification
- 3.3.1 **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.
 - 3.3.2 **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.
 - 3.3.3 **Other contributing evidence**
 - 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.
- 3.4 The number of pieces of evidence required to determine a grade will vary per qualification. Teachers will ensure there is sufficient opportunity for students to provide clear evidence to demonstrate competency against the key themes and skills, as specified in each WJEC Qualification Assessment Framework. It may be that relatively few pieces of clear evidence would be sufficient to demonstrate attainment across overarching key themes for many qualifications. Teachers will ensure that the generation of evidence does not create unnecessary duplication of work.
- 3.5 The evidence generated will not be completed in the form of an examination. However, students will produce work within a specified timeframe, to reflect the volume of work. It is anticipated that the time to produce evidence would not exceed the length of the unseen examination in the qualification. However, unlike an unseen examination, evidence would be produced over a series of not more than three lessons.
- 3.6 Work will be completed independently by students, under similar 'control levels' to existing arrangements, which are supervised by teachers, for non-examination assessment. This is to ensure evidence produced is the student's own. Wherever possible, this work will be completed in class in place of standard work, which is then assessed. Where external factors prevent this from happening, such as national lockdowns etc, then work will need to be completed at home. However, where this is the case, the school will introduce mechanisms to support authenticity of student's work by ensuring the student's camera is switched on during the live session; and work is immediately submitted at the end of the set timeframe. In addition, the school will consider work produced against previously assessed work to verify authenticity, where the evidence submitted is atypical of the usual standard by the student.
- 3.7 Subject leaders will develop individual assessment plans for the qualifications they are responsible for, which will be shared and approved by the Executive Headteacher, as Head of Centre. These plans will identify which specific pieces of evidence will be used against 3.3.1; 3.3.2; and 3.3.3; the quality assurance measures undertaken to authenticate the work of students; and measures to ensure any and all appropriate needs are met.

- 3.8 To ensure students understand how grades are determined and which work will be used as evidence, the school will publish a schedule that indicates when the production of evidence will take place. This also ensures the production of work is evenly distributed over the set timescale.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The specific roles and responsibilities of staff, at a range of levels, in terms of qualifications remain largely unchanged from other examination series. However, for awards in 2021, the following roles and responsibilities apply in terms of the determination of grades

- 4.1.1 The Executive Headteacher, as Head of Centre, has overall responsibility for the qualifications offered at the school, as well as ensuring due care and regard is taken to account for the school's legislative and regulatory duties, as an examination centre. The Executive Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the planning and management of centre determined grades, in line with existing policies and practices, are conducted efficiently and in the best interest of all students. The Executive Headteacher, working closely with the Head of School, is responsible for ensuring that publicised processes are followed by all staff. This includes internal quality assurance processes at subject level and school level. The Executive Headteacher will ensure that appropriate training for all staff involved in the determination of grades is provided.
- 4.1.2 The Head of School will work closely with the member of the leadership team responsible for examinations, who acts as Internal Lead Verifier, to ensure that quality assurance processes at school level are robustly followed. This includes ensuring that each qualification has successfully completed internal moderation of evidence, while all decisions are recorded in line with WJEC protocols. The Head of School will also be responsible for overseeing internal processes, where a concern is raised by staff, regarding the authenticity of students' work provided and/or where a student wishes to review a Centre Determined Grade (see section 8).
- 4.1.3 The Examinations Officer is responsible for managing the administration of qualifications. This includes coordinating the collation of entries of students to the appropriate qualifications, as well as assisting subject leaders and members of the leadership team, specifically those with responsibility for examinations and Executive Headteacher and/or Head of School to ensure agreed processes are followed.
- 4.1.4 The Head of Inclusion (as ALNCo) will ensure that all staff are aware of the necessary access arrangements in place for students, including reasonable adjustments for students who are entitled to these. In addition, the Head of Inclusion will coordinate the provision of additional support to help students achieve the course aims, as they would do in normal circumstances.
- 4.1.5 Subject leaders will be responsible for ensuring processes within the department they lead meet the requirements of the publicised WJEC Qualification Assessment Framework. This includes setting tasks from WJEC past-paper materials, to enable all students within the cohort, to demonstrate what they know and understand. This is designed to enable them to have the opportunity to achieve the highest possible grade. Subject leaders will also ensure that internal moderation of work is undertaken to ensure standardisation across the team they are responsible for, which includes accurate records of internal processes. Subject leaders will also be responsible for managing the accurate recording of outcomes and associated decision-making for each qualification. Subject leaders will ensure that students entitled to access arrangements have these in place for the qualifications they are responsible for.
- 4.1.6 Teaching staff will ensure that evidence is gathered within the published schedule (see Appendix 1) and that activities set, follow the expectations set by subject leaders and relevant WJEC Qualification Assessment Frameworks. Teachers must make students aware of the nature and criteria of the task set and ensure students understand when an activity will contribute towards the determination of a grade. Teaching staff will collect and store submitted work securely. They will ensure that reasonable adjustments for identified students are met. Teachers will mark submitted work within the agreed timeframes, set by subject leaders. Teachers will not provide students with an opportunity to improve their work, once submitted. Teachers will work with relevant subject leaders to ensure that students entitled to access arrangements, within their designated classes, have these in place.

5. Quality Assurance Processes

- 5.1 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. The school will ensure training is provided to all staff to support this (see section 9).

- 5.2 Internal moderation processes are designed to verify standards and seek to ensure fairness and equity for all students. The school will apply the following approach to the assessment of evidence
- 5.2.1 The teacher will assess the students' work in red pen, using WJEC mark schemes to support the accurate award of grades. Moderation activities, to establish standardised approaches to assessments will take place as soon as is reasonable and practicable, once the evidence has been submitted.
 - 5.2.2 Subject leaders will ensure that the sample of work to be moderated covers the full spectrum of grades and all teachers who have assessed work;
 - 5.2.3 Moderation activities may involve a number of teachers. Therefore, where a piece of evidence is moderated, additional comments by a separate member of staff will be made in green pen;
 - 5.2.4 Subject Leaders will review any discrepancies, with comments made in purple pen;
 - 5.2.5 At all stages, appropriate forms (either provided by WJEC or school developed) will be retained as evidence to support the final determined grade.
- 5.3 No one member of staff will be able to both assess and verify the evidence of a student. In departments where teachers work in isolation, the school will provide an opportunity for evidence to be moderated, through another centre. Similarly, any staff who have a conflict of interest (eg. Teacher who is relative or known to a student), will need to be declared, and suitable mitigation in place to ensure the process is not compromised (eg. Teacher not involved in either assessment or verification of work).
- 5.4 The school will ensure that the work of all staff who assess evidence is moderated, as part of internal quality assurance. Where an examination cohort size is lower than 20 then the whole cohort will be moderated. For larger samples, the school will ensure that evidence is considered from a range of student profiles, from more able students to those with additional learning needs; and those students with protected characteristics. All work sampled will be marked anonymously to mitigate the risk of conscious and/or unconscious bias.
- 5.5 The school will share and review its processes of determining grades with other examination centres to ensure standardisation. This may also involve the school's regional consortia challenge advisor to provide a further degree of objectivity. This layer of quality assurance does not form part of WJEC or Qualifications Wales' regulatory framework. However, it is designed to ensure the process applied is valid, reliable and fair.
- 5.6 There will be no external moderation of Centre Determined Grades. However, grades submitted to WJEC may be reviewed and investigated where performance profiles are atypical.

6. Recording Decisions

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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;
- 6.3 Records will also be kept from internal moderation to standardise work, and verify performance, as described in section 5.
- 6.4 The school will record the reviews requested by students and the outcome of these, along with reasons for the decision.
- 6.5 On submission of a Centre Determined Grade, the school will be required to make an overall declaration in relation to the processes carried out.

7. Public Sector Equality Duty and Data Protection

- 7.1 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

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

- 7.2 The evidence gathered by the school to support the determination of grades will make use of standardised materials, produced by WJEC. This includes the use of adapted past-paper questions, and mark schemes. These materials have already been through a robust process of equality impact assessment, as part of their own process of quality assurance, to ensure they meet the needs of the general equality duty. This approach, and individual subject assessment plans, ensure that arrangements for those students entitled to concessions are met. Moderation activities will ensure that a broad range of students, which include those from protected characteristics, are included. This is to enable the school to ensure that its approach contributes to the equality of opportunity.
- 7.3 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.

8. Review of Centre Determined Grades and Appeals Processes

- 8.1 At the time of writing, the process of reviewing centre grades and the appeals processes has not been finalised. However, it is anticipated that 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 provisional grades awarded. Where a student is satisfied with the grades determined by the school, there is no further action.
- 8.2 A student who is not satisfied with their grade will be able to appeal their grade. The appeals process will have three stages
- 8.2.1 Stage 1 involves a centre review of the provisional centre determined grade on the grounds of judgement and/or a procedural error has been made;
 - 8.2.2 Stage 2 will involve 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; and
 - 8.2.3 Stage 3 involves a request to Qualification Wales for an Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) to review whether WJEC has followed the required procedures.

9. Professional Learning

- 9.1 Working with Welsh Government, Qualifications Wales and WJEC, the school will ensure that appropriate training is provided to staff at all levels in order to ensure that the assessment plan, and associated processes, are implemented fully.
- 9.2 In addition to providing training on the assessment plan and associated actions for staff at all levels, the school will revise its existing training programme to help manage staff workload. Specific training on avoiding unconscious bias when assessing work will be provided for all staff involved in the marking of evidence.
- 9.3 Identified staff will also attend specific training on equalities issues, including public sector duties; managing conscious and unconscious bias; data processing and data protection, with particular reference to fair processing notices.

10. Private Candidates

- 10.1 Occasionally, the school has a very small number of students who sit examinations as private candidates. These individuals attend unseen examinations, which are assessed by the examination board.
- 10.2 Staff at the school are unlikely to be able to authenticate the work of private candidates. Therefore, on this basis, the school will not be accepting private candidates for summer series 2021. Private candidates will be able to apply to the local authority for arrangements to undertake assessments in summer 2021.

11. Application of special consideration

- 11.1 The school will apply the WJEC published special considerations document to those students who meet the specified criteria.
- 11.2 As is standard, the school may require evidence to demonstrate that the student meets the criteria.

APPENDIX 1: ADAPTED PAST-PAPER EVIDENCE SCHEDULE

The following evidence schedule is designed to indicate when the evidence from adapted past-paper tasks will be generated, which will then be used to help determine grades. However, evidence to form the basis of 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 may be generated earlier.

The schedule has been developed in line with the release of materials by WJEC and, as a result, may be subject to change. Given the nature of the evidence gathered to support Centre Determined Grades, it is not possible to publish a detailed timetable. Furthermore, as students will not be sitting examinations, it is likely that students may be completing activities at different stages to peers within designated year groups. The use of a schedule is designed to ensure the model is deliverable to both students and staff, ensuring workload is managed insofar as possible. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where it may not be possible for students within individual classes to undertake activities within the scheduled window.

Dates are subject to change owing to the uncertainty of national timescales. As a result, it is possible the schedule for each group may be extended by a further week. However, it is not anticipated that it will be shortened

Week Commencing	GCSE	AS/A Level
12 th April		Group 1 Applied ICT Economics Food and Nutrition French Health and Social Care Music Physical Education Psychology Religious Studies Sociology WBQ Skills Challenge Certificate Welsh
19 th April	Group 1 English Language English Literature Mathematics Mathematics: Numeracy Science (Applied) Science (Double Award) Science (Separate)	
26 th April		Group 2 Additional Mathematics Art Business Studies Computer Science Food and Nutrition French Geography Hospitality and Catering Physical Education Religious Studies Welsh (2 nd Language)
4 th May		
10 th May		Group 3 Applied Business Applied Sport Art Business Studies Chemistry English Language and Literature English Literature Further Mathematics Geography Mathematics
17 th May	Group 3 Design and Technology Drama German Health and Social Care History ICT Media Studies Music Spanish WBQ Skills Challenge Certificate	
24 th May	Year 10 English Literature Mathematics: Numeracy	
7 th June	Centre-based moderation activities	

Appendix 2: Timeline of Key Dates for Centres

Date	Event
5 th March	WJEC provides information to centres on the assessment and Internal Quality Assurance requirements
19 th – 25 th March	Centres submit their assessment and Internal Quality Assurance policies to WJEC
12 th April	WJEC provides feedback to centres on their policies
2 nd July	Grading decisions made in centres and Internal Quality Assurance undertaken. Grades are shared with students and centre reviews undertaken. Centres internally review and sign off outcomes
14 th June – 2 nd July	Submission window for Centre-Determined Grades
21 st June – 12 th July	WJEC Quality Assurance student decision making records and overall outcomes
13 th – 16 th July	WJEC discusses atypical results with centres and issues arising from review of evidence records
10 th August	AS and A level Results
10 th August – 7 th September	AS and A level appeals window (to WJEC)
12 th August	GCSE Results
24 th August – 21 st September*	GCSE appeals window

* Provisional

Appendix 3: WJEC Timeline of Guidance and Training Events

Date	Event
5 th March	Pre-recorded training: 'Foundations and creation of assessment'
5 th March	Guidance on 'Centre policy on assessment and Quality Assurance'
w/c 8 th March	Pre-recorded training: 'Centre approach to assessment and Quality Assurance of grading decisions'
12 th March	Training: Live Question & Answer
15 th March	High-level appeals process
w/c 15 th March	Final Qualification Assessment Frameworks including grade descriptors
w/c 15 th March	Grading Guide for centres
w/c 15 th March	Assessment materials for centres
19 th March	Entries deadline
w/c 22 nd March	Subject specific training materials
19 th – 25 th March	Centres submit Assessment and Internal QA policies to WJEC
22 nd March	Pre-recorded training: 'Unconscious bias and objectivity'
25 th March	Training: Live Question & Answer
12 th April	WJEC provides feedback to centres on their policies
19 th April	Pre-recorded training: Making final judgements
22 nd April	Entries amendment window deadline
w/c 26 th April	Final appeals process
26 th April	Pre-recorded training: 'Good practice in making final grading decisions and Quality Assurance'
5 th May	Training: Live Question & Answer
17 th May	Pre-recorded training: 'Submitting Centre-Determined Grades'
14 th June – 2 nd July	Submission window for Centre-Determined Grades
21 st June – 12 th July	WJEC Quality Assurance 'Student decision records and overall outcomes'

Appendix 4: Key Dates for Students

Date	Event
By Easter	The school will inform students how you will be assessed and graded for your qualification (completed on 1st March 2021)
12 th April – 28 th May	You should have face-to-face teaching and some additional assessments (See Appendix 1)
By 25 th June	You will receive your provisional Centre Determined Grades and you will have the opportunity to ask for your grades to be reviewed
14 th June – 2 nd July	The school will submit the provisional Centre Determined Grades to WJEC
10 th August	AS and A level Results Day
10 th August – 7 th September	You will have the opportunity to appeal your AS or/and A level result to WJEC
12 th August	GCSE Results Day
24 th August – 21 st September*	You will have the opportunity to appeal your GCSE result to WJEC
Post results day	You will have the opportunity to appeal to Qualifications Wales for an Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS)

* Provisional