

Centre Assessment Grades – Frequently Asked Questions



Introduction

On March 18 2020, the Minister for Education in Wales [announced](#) that schools would close and that the summer 2020 exam series would be cancelled.

On March 20, we issued a [statement](#) outlining the approach to awarding grades for GCSE and A level qualifications this summer. Learners entered for GCSE and A level qualifications this summer will be awarded a calculated grade based on a range of evidence. We followed this with a [blog](#)¹ outlining our approach.

On March 27, we issued a [statement](#) regarding those due to sit their AS levels and Year 10 learners who would have taken unit assessments in Wales this summer. AS learners will receive a calculated grade based on a range of evidence. Year 10 learners who were entered for units will not receive a calculated unit grade. For both AS learners and learners entered for units in Year 10 as part of a GCSE qualification, compensation will be made in summer 2021 when they sit their A levels and full GCSEs respectively.

To gather the best available evidence, we are asking schools, colleges and other exam centres to submit centre assessment grades, together with a rank order of learners to enable the award of GCSE, AS, A level and Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) qualifications.

The following FAQs aim to provide students, parents, carers and teachers with answers to some common questions about centre assessment grades. We will be working to add to these over the coming weeks, with updates published online.

Which qualifications are covered?

This information is relevant to all exam centres in Wales using the following approved qualifications regulated by us and offered by WJEC.

- GCSEs
- AS levels
- A levels
- Skills Challenge Certificates (SCC) – part of the Welsh Baccalaureate

The following designated qualifications are also covered by this information: GCSE Health and Social Care (single award), GCSE Health and Social Care (double award), GCSE Information and Communication Technology (full course), GCSE Information and Communication Technology (short course), GCSE in Home Economics, Child Development GCE Information and Communication Technology (AS and A level), GCE Applied Information and Communication Technology (AS and A level).

Does this process apply to vocational and technical qualifications too?

This process applies only to GCSE, AS, A levels and the SCC. We will provide further guidance on vocational and technical qualifications as soon as we can. Meanwhile we have published a [blog](#) outlining our approach to these qualifications.

How will centre assessment grades work?

We are asking centres to use their professional expertise. They will submit grades to WJEC which must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely grade a learner would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment. It is important that teachers use holistic professional judgement, balancing a full range of evidence when they grade learners - including non-exam assessment; the results of any homework assignments or mock exams; and any other records of performance over the course of study. We are also asking centres to provide a rank order of learners within each grade.

We have provided [clear guidance](#) to centres on the grading and rank ordering process to make sure that teachers in different centres take a common approach to assessing their students.

When and how will centre assessment grades be submitted to WJEC?

WJEC will provide detailed instructions to centres on when and how to submit centre assessment grades and the rank order after Easter. The closing date for submission of data will not be before 29 May 2020. In the meantime, we are asking centres to begin the work to generate their centre assessment grades and rank orders.

Should centres continue to gather evidence of student performance?

Centres have been asked to give their judgement of the grade they believe a learner would have been most likely to achieve if they had been able to sit their exams. In making this judgement, teachers should draw on a range of existing evidence of learner performance over the course of study. There is no requirement for teachers to set new work or collect further evidence from learners at this point for the purposes of determining a centre assessment grade. Some centres may want to continue to set work to ensure that all teaching and learning has been completed, but this should not be done to assist grading.

What does this mean for non-exam assessment?

In some subjects learners will have completed, or nearly completed, non-exam assessment. This will be helpful as part of the evidence available to centres in deciding each learner's centre assessment grade and rank order. Centres do not need to ask learners to complete any unfinished non-exam assessment work. WJEC has also issued [guidance](#) on this.

Do centres need to submit the evidence they have used?

No, centres do not need to submit any supporting evidence, such as learner work, to WJEC, but they should retain records of the grades and rank order submitted, in case WJEC has any queries about the data.

When submitting their grade and rank order, centres will be giving their professional assurance that they have taken into account the full range of evidence required. Heads of Centre will be accountable for the accuracy of the data submitted.

How will this work for tiered subjects?

In the case of tiered GCSE subjects, centres should only provide centre assessment grades which reflect the tier of entry of the individual learner.

Can NQTs undertake this grading work?

Yes, Newly Qualified Teachers can contribute to the production of centre assessment grades for their learners and should be supported by their Head of Department to complete this. The submission of the centre assessment grades and rank order must be from the Head of Centre who is required to sign a declaration.

Will centre assessment grades be accurate?

School, college and teacher assessment already has an important role in many GCSEs, AS, A levels and the SCC. In an unprecedented situation such as this, teachers are well placed to judge the likely performance of their learners at the end of the course.

There is evidence to show that teachers can rank order learners with a high degree of accuracy. Moreover, all centre assessment grades submitted by teachers will be externally standardised across Wales to better ensure that grades are comparable between centres.

How will centre assessment grades be standardised?

To make sure that grades are fair between centres, WJEC will put all centre assessment grades through a process of standardisation. It will look at evidence such as the expected national outcomes for this year's learners, the prior attainment of learners at each school and college, and the results of the school or college in recent years. If grading judgements in some centres appear to be more severe or generous

than others, WJEC will adjust the grades of some or all of those learners upwards or downwards accordingly.

Will learners see their centre assessment grades based on their teacher estimates?

No, centres must not, under any circumstances, share the centre assessment grades nor the rank order with learners, or their parents or carers, or any other individuals outside the centre. This is to protect the integrity of the teachers' judgements, and to avoid teachers, Heads of Department or Heads of Centre being put under pressure by learners and parents, to submit a grade that is not supported by the evidence. Since the final grades issued to some or all learners might be different from those submitted, it also helps to manage learners' expectations.

When will results be released?

We will work hard to issue results as soon as possible and no later than the published dates of 13 August for AS and A level and 20 August for GCSE. We will confirm dates as soon as we can.

Will learners be able to progress to the next stage of education or employment with these grades?

Yes, this approach will enable learners to move onto the next stage of their education or employment in the autumn as planned. We have discussed our approach with Welsh Government and a range of relevant senior stakeholders and education leaders, who are supportive under these extraordinary circumstances. Higher Education representatives have confirmed that they expect universities and colleges to be flexible to ensure the progression of learners with a centre assessment grade.

Will grades issued in 2020 carry the same weight as grades issued in previous or future years?

The grades awarded this year will have equal status to the grades awarded in other years and should be treated in this way by universities, colleges and employers. On the results slips and certificates, grades will be reported in the same way as in previous years.

The process of standardising grades will mean that grades issued this summer will be comparable with grades in previous years, so that this year's learners are not systematically advantaged or disadvantaged by the use of centre assessment grades.

Can learners appeal these grades?

Under the circumstances, the normal arrangements for reviews of marking and appeals will not apply. We are considering what arrangements might be put in place to allow an effective appeal, whilst keeping numbers and complexity of appeals manageable so as to avoid delay and uncertainty for students.

More information will be made available to teachers, learners, parents and carers at the time final results are issued, to facilitate any appeals against the process.

How will this affect external (private) candidates and home educated learners?

We know that external candidates – such as those entering privately for re-sits, or learners who are home schooled - are anxious to know how these arrangements might be applied to them. Where centres have accepted entries from 'private candidates' (learners who might be home-schooled, following distance-learning programmes or studying independently) those learners should be included where the Head of Centre is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of the learners' achievement to make an objective judgment. We are currently exploring whether there are options for those learners for whom this is not possible and who need results for progression purposes. We will provide an update as soon as possible.

How will this affect early entrants?

Year 10 learners who were due to sit exams that would have led to a whole GCSE qualification this summer will be issued a grade following the same process as Year 11 learners.

What about learners who have an agreed reasonable adjustment or access arrangement?

Centres should make a judgement on the grade that these learners would most likely have achieved if they had been able to sit their examinations with the intended reasonable adjustment or access arrangement.

Where disabled learners have an agreed access arrangement (for example a reader or scribe), or where other learners have an agreed access arrangement, the judgement should take account of likely achievement with the adjustment/access arrangement in place.

Will special consideration apply this year?

Special consideration requests, which usually apply to situations which mean that a learner is unable to take an assessment or suffers a traumatic event that might affect their performance, will not apply this summer. Instead judgements should reflect how the learners would have performed under ordinary circumstances. Where illness might have affected performance in mock exams, teachers should bear that in mind when making their judgements.

When will learners have the next opportunity to sit exams?

For learners who choose to sit exams they have missed this year, there will be an opportunity to sit GCSEs in English Language, Mathematics, Mathematics-Numeracy

and Welsh Language in November 2020. Other qualifications will be available as part of the summer 2021 series.

I want to carry on with the A level but can I re-sit my AS because I am not happy with the grade I got given?

You will have two options in summer 2021.

Option 1: You can choose to sit both the AS units and the A2 units for the A level. The full A level grade will be calculated on how you do on all units in the full A level.

Option 2: You can sit just the A2 units and your performance in these will be used to calculate a result for the AS units. The combined marks will then be used to produce the A level grade.

If you choose to follow option 1, WJEC will still check what your grade would have been with option 2. If option 2 gives a higher grade, then you will get the higher grade.

I am in Year 10 and I was due to sit a GCSE unit this summer, as part of my GCSE. I don't want to have to do all my exams when I am in Year 11. What happens?

You will have 2 options in summer 2021.

Option 1: You can choose to sit the units you would have done anyway in Year 11 (exams and NEA, if applicable). Your overall grade will be worked out on the basis of those units.

Option 2: You can choose to sit the units you were due to complete in Year 10, as well as sitting the units due to be sat in Year 11 anyway. Your overall grade will then be worked out on the basis of the performance in all the units. However, if your grade from option 1 would be higher, then you would get the higher grade.

What are the main differences between Wales and England?

Because education is a devolved area, Wales and England have some differences across qualifications. We are working closely with our fellow regulators across England and Northern Ireland to apply the same principles to our approaches this summer. The main differences are:

- In Wales, there will be no additional exam series this year, but the usual exam series will take place in November for GCSEs in English Language, Mathematics, Mathematics-Numeracy and Welsh Language. In England, there are plans to run an additional exam series in the autumn.
- In Wales, AS levels contribute to A level results, whereas in England they do not. [Our approach](#) to AS levels in Wales reflects this.

- In Wales, Year 10 learners entered for full GCSEs this summer will receive a grade. In England, Ofqual is consulting on issuing grades for learners in Year 10 and below.