



General Qualifications Alternative Awarding Framework for Wales

JUNE 2021



Version

This document (General Qualifications Alternative Awarding Framework for Wales – GQAAFV) was first published on 22 June 2021.

Our GQAAFV includes a relatively small number of key Conditions which set the high-level framework for awarding GQ Qualifications this summer. Further detail of the steps WJEC must take before results are issued is set out in our requirements.

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Introduction

This document is part of a suite of documents which set out our regulatory requirements for awarding bodies offering affected GQ Qualifications in summer 2021. This extraordinary regulatory framework is known as the General Qualifications Alternative Awarding Framework for Wales (GQAAFW).

Our GQAAFW includes a relatively small number of key Conditions which set the high-level framework for awarding GQ Qualifications this summer. Further detail of the steps WJEC must take before results are issued is set out in our requirements.

The affected GQ Qualifications in respect of which the GQAAFW Conditions apply are:

- Approved GCSE qualifications;
- Approved GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) qualifications;
- Approved GCE A level qualifications;
- Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC), and
- Legacy GCSE, GCE AS and GCE A level qualifications which are only available to learners in Wales¹.

This Regulatory Document came into effect on 22 June 2021 for all of the affected GQ Qualifications. With respect to all GQ Qualifications to which the Conditions set out in this document apply, save to the extent set out in those Conditions, WJEC must also comply with:

- our Standard Conditions of Recognition² which apply to all awarding bodies and qualifications;
- Qualification Level Conditions;
- Approval Criteria, and
- any other relevant Regulatory Documents³.

¹ WJEC Level 1/Level 2 GCSE in Information and Communication Technology, WJEC Level 1/Level 2 GCSE in Information and Communication Technology (Short Course), WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Applied ICT, WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in ICT, WJEC Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Applied ICT, WJEC Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in ICT, WJEC Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Health and Social Care and WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Health and Social Care

² <https://www.qualificationswales.org/english/publications/standard-conditions-of-recognition/>

³ <https://www.qualificationswales.org/english/publications/regulatory-documents-list/>

Condition GQAAFW1 - Application, Interpretation and definitions

Application

GQAAFW1.1 The GQAAFW Conditions apply –

- (a) to all GQ Qualifications,
- (b) until such date as is specified in, or determined under, any notice in writing published by Qualifications Wales under Condition GQAAFW1.

GQAAFW1.2 Any such notice published by Qualifications Wales may –

- (a) be issued in respect of one or more –
 - (i) GQ Qualifications,
 - (ii) GQAAFW Conditions,
- (b) be varied or withdrawn by Qualifications Wales at any time prior to the date specified in or determined under it, and
- (c) contain any transitional and saving provisions that Qualifications Wales considers appropriate.

GQAAFW1.3 WJEC must comply with the requirements of any transitional and saving provisions contained in a notice published by Qualifications Wales under Condition GQAAFW1.2.

Interpretation and definitions

GQAAFW1.4 Unless alternative provision has been made in Condition GQAAFW1.7, the following shall apply to the GQAAFW Conditions –

- (a) the rules of interpretation and definitions outlined in Standard Condition J1,
- (b) the definitions outlined in the Qualification Level Conditions (Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE/GCE Qualifications and Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate).

GQAAFW1.5 Except in the circumstances described in Condition GQAAFW1.6, the requirements imposed by the GQAAFW Conditions apply in addition to the requirements imposed by the Standard Conditions of Recognition, Qualification Level Conditions, Approval Criteria and any other relevant Regulatory Document.

GQAAFW1.6 To the extent that there is any inconsistency between –

- (a) a requirement of a GQAAFV Condition, and
- (b) a requirement of a Standard Condition of Recognition, a Qualification Level Condition, Approval Criteria or any other Regulatory Document,

such that WJEC could not comply with both such requirements, WJEC must comply with the requirement of the GQAAFV Condition and is not obliged to comply with the requirement of the relevant Standard Condition of Recognition, Qualification Level Condition, Approval Criteria or other Regulatory Document.

GQAAFV1.7 In these Conditions the following words shall have the meaning given to them below (and cognate expressions should be construed accordingly) –

Qualification Level Conditions

Qualification Level Conditions which have been published by Qualifications Wales in accordance with Schedule 3, Paragraph 2 (3)(b) of the Qualifications Wales Act 2015.

GQ Qualification

A qualification which is any of the following –

- (a) Approved GCSE qualifications;
- (b) Approved GCE AS qualifications;
- (c) Approved GCE A level qualifications;
- (d) Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications; or
- (e) Legacy GCSE, GCE AS and GCE A level qualifications which are only available to Learners in Wales.

Centre-assessed Private Candidate

A Learner in relation to whom there is no Relevant Centre, but they have an established relationship with a Centre that has already agreed to enter them for a qualification and carry out the necessary assessment of their work.

Centre-hosted Private Candidate

A Learner in relation to whom there is no Relevant Centre, and who does not have an established relationship with a Centre.

Relevant Centre

In relation to a Learner, a Centre which –

- (a) has purchased the GQ Qualification on behalf of the Learner, and

(b) materially contributed to the preparation of the Learner for the assessment (whether through teaching or instruction provided by Teachers employed by it or otherwise).

Condition GQAAFW2 - Assessments under the GQAAFW Framework

GQAAFW2.1

During the time period when this Condition is in force –

- (a) WJEC must ensure that no Learner in Wales takes an assessment by examination for a GQ Qualification which it makes available, and
- (b) WJEC must not Moderate an assessment for a GQ Qualification.

Condition GQAAFW3 - Results for GQ Qualifications

- GQAAFW3.1 WJEC –
- (a) must issue a result to each Learner registered, on or before 2 July 2021, to take a GQ Qualification in 2021 which it makes available, and
 - (b) may issue a result to a Learner who –
 - (i) could reasonably have been expected by WJEC to be registered to take a GQ Qualification in 2021 which it makes available, and
 - (ii) was not so registered.

GQAAFW3.2 In respect of each result it issues under Condition GQAAFW3.1, WJEC must –

- (a) ensure that it determines that result –
 - (i) in compliance with any requirements, and
 - (ii) having regard to any guidance,

which may be published by Qualifications Wales, or otherwise specified to WJEC by Qualifications Wales, and revised from time to time, and

- (b) take all reasonable steps to issue that result in line with any date or timescale published in respect of that qualification under Standard Condition H6.1(b) which falls within August 2021.

GQAAFW3.3 WJEC must –

- (a) provide effective guidance to Centres in relation to the matters specified in the requirements set under Condition GQAAFW3.2(a)(i),
- (b) provide that guidance (including in draft where it has not been finalised) to Qualifications Wales upon request, and subsequently have regard to any comments provided by Qualifications Wales on that guidance, and
- (c) provide clear and effective arrangements through which the Centre can liaise with WJEC in relation to the matters specified in the requirements set under Condition GQAAFW3.2(a)(i).

Quality assurance

GQAAFW3.4 WJEC must not issue any result under Condition GQAAFW3.1 –

- (a) in respect of a Learner for whom it has not received a declaration from the head of Centre which meets the requirements published by Qualifications Wales under Condition GQAAFW3.2(a)(i), except for Centre-Hosted Private Candidates assessed by WJEC, or
- (b) where quality assurance undertaken in line with the requirements set out under Condition GQAAFW3.2(a)(i) has identified issues that remain to be resolved to WJEC's satisfaction.

Condition GQAAF4 – Stage 1 - Centre Review of provisional Centre Determined Grade

- GQAAF4.1 WJEC must take reasonable steps to ensure that, prior to the issue of provisional Centre Determined Grades by the Centre to WJEC, the Centre has in place effective arrangements for its Learners (including Centre-assessed Private Candidates), to request a review of the provisional Centre Determined Grade on the basis that the Centre made an error in the determination of the provisional Centre Determined Grade.
- GQAAF4.2 WJEC must ensure that, prior to its issue of provisional Centre Determined Grades to Centre-hosted Private Candidates, it has effective arrangements in place to allow those Learners to request a review of the provisional Centre Determined Grade on the basis that WJEC made an error in the determination of the provisional Centre Determined Grade.
- GQAAF4.3 For the purposes of Condition GQAAF4.1 and 4.2, the arrangements must ensure that:
- (a) any relevant requirements issued pursuant to GQAAF3.2(a) are complied with;
 - (b) any guidance issued pursuant to GQAAF3.2(a) has been given due regard;
 - (c) each Learner is issued with the provisional Centre Determined Grade for each GQ Qualification taken by that Learner, so as to allow a reasonable time period for the Learner to consider whether to request a review of the provisional Centre Determined Grade;
 - (d) if a Learner considers that an error has been made in determining their grade, they may request copies of relevant materials in order to assist them to determine whether to request a review of the provisional Centre Determined Grade;
 - (e) on such a request from a Learner, copies of any relevant materials which the Learner may reasonably require to enable them to consider whether to request a review of the provisional Centre Determined Grade are made available;

- (f) the arrangements in place for the review of the provisional Centre Determined Grade provide that all such reviews will be overseen by persons who have no personal interest in the outcome of the review being carried out;
- (g) the review is overseen by persons who were not previously involved in the determination of the provisional Centre Determined Grade;
- (h) the arrangements in place for the review of the provisional Centre Determined Grade require the Learner to be notified of the outcome of the review, of the reasons for the outcome which has been determined and of any change in grade, and
- (i) the arrangements in place for the Learner to request a review of the provisional Centre Determined Grade require any such review to be completed so as to meet the WJEC's requirements in relation to the time by which provisional Centre Determined Grades must be provided to it.

GQAAF4.4 Where a Centre considers that a Learner's provisional Centre Determined Grade should be changed following a review under Condition GQAAF4.1, it must submit its revised provisional Centre Determined Grade to WJEC in line with specified timescales, and WJEC must change that grade.

GQAAF4.5 In respect of Centre-hosted Private Candidates, where WJEC considers that a Learner's provisional Centre Determined Grade should be changed following a review under Condition GQAAF4.2, it must change that Grade.

Condition GQAAF5 – Stage 2 – Appeal to WJEC

- GQAAF5.1 In respect of each result that it issues under Condition GQAAF3.1, WJEC must –
- (a) establish, maintain and comply with an appeals process which provides for an appeal to WJEC, following the conclusion of a review by the Centre, on the basis that –
 - (i) the Centre did not follow its procedure properly and consistently in arriving at the Learner's result (including any failure of quality assurance) or in conducting its review;
 - (ii) the result reflects an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement on the part of the Centre, and/or
 - (iii) the Centre or WJEC made an administrative error in relation to the result.
- GQAAF5.2 WJEC must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Centre makes Learners aware of the arrangements it has in place prior to the issue of results under Condition GQAAF3.1.
- GQAAF5.3 Where WJEC finds that a Learner's result should be changed following an appeal under Condition GQAAF5.1, it –
- (a) must provide its reasons for that decision to the Centre;
 - (b) may seek the views of the Centre as to the appropriate revised result, and
 - (c) must issue a revised result to the Learner (which may or may not be in line with the Centre's views) where it considers it appropriate under Condition GQAAF5.8.
- GQAAF5.4 The appeals process which WJEC has established under Condition GQAAF5.1(a) must –
- (a) provide that any request for an appeal in respect of a Learner is made –
 - (i) on the Learner's behalf by the Centre that carried out the relevant review under Condition GQAAF4.1(a), and
 - (ii) with the consent of the Learner, and

- (b) require that a Centre that has carried out a review under Condition GQAAFW4.1, requests an appeal under Condition GQAAFW5.1(a) on behalf of any Learner that wishes to do so.

- GQAAFW5.5 The appeals process pursuant to Condition GQAAFW5.1 may –
- (a) provide that WJEC shall only conduct an appeal on payment of a fee,
 - (b) specify other reasonable requirements for the making of a request for an appeal, and
 - (c) specify a time period during which an appeal must be requested.
- GQAAFW5.6 Where that appeal process specifies a time period during which an appeal must be requested, the time period must –
- (a) be reasonable, and
 - (b) comply with any requirements which may be published by Qualifications Wales and revised from time to time.
- GQAAFW5.7 That appeals process must provide for –
- (a) all appeal decisions to be taken by persons who have appropriate competence and who have no personal interest in the decision being appealed, and
 - (b) WJEC to report the outcome of an appeal to the Centre that requested the appeal on the Learner's behalf, detailing the reasons for that outcome.
- GQAAFW5.8 Where WJEC discovers through its appeals process established under this Condition that any result which it has issued is incorrect it must –
- (a) consider whether it is appropriate to correct that result having regard to the guidance issued by Qualifications Wales, and
 - (b) correct that result where it considers it appropriate to do so.
- GQAAFW5.9 WJEC must publish guidance on the review and appeal processes established under Conditions GQAAFW4 and GQAAFW5, including on –
- (a) Learners' rights to reviews and appeals, including the grounds on which they may be brought as set out in Conditions GQAAFW4.1 and GQAAFW5.1;
 - (b) Centres' responsibilities for carrying out reviews and supporting appeals, including applications to Qualifications Wales's Exam Procedure Review Service (EPRS);

- (c) the evidence that will be considered by WJEC in an appeal, and
- (d) that a Learner's result may go up or down following a review or an appeal.

GQAAF5.10

WJEC must take all reasonable steps to ensure that Centres inform Learners of:

- (a) the availability of Qualifications Wales's Exam Procedure Review Service;
- (b) the purpose of Qualifications Wales's Exam Procedure Review Service, and
- (c) timescales for submitting such an application to Qualifications Wales at the conclusion of WJEC's appeals process (Stage 2).

Requirements in relation to the determination of results

Condition GQAAFW3.2(a) allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to the determination of results to be issued for GQ Qualifications under the GQAAFW Framework.

We set out our requirements for the purposes of Condition GQAAFW3.2(a)(i) below. Additional requirements may be imposed by Qualifications Wales at any time and those set out in this Regulatory Document may also be amended. Any such additions or amendments will be communicated to WJEC.

Introduction

Results for GQ Qualifications issued under the GQAAFW Framework must be determined by WJEC on the basis of judgements by Centres in respect of their Learners.

WJEC must issue results for a GQ Qualification which it makes available in line with the requirements set out below.

Centre Determined Grades

WJEC must request a Centre to provide a specified level of attainment (provisional Centre Determined Grade) in respect of:

- (a) each Learner at the Centre, and
- (b) a Centre-assessed Private Candidate,

to whom WJEC is required to issue a result under Condition GQAAFW3.1 (the 'Centre Determined Grade').

For the purposes of this GQAAFW Framework, results issued under Condition GQAAFW3.1 to Centre-hosted Private Candidates will also be referred to as the 'Centre Determined Grade'.

WJEC must play a direct role in the assessment arrangements for Centre-hosted Private Candidates. This includes:

- setting the assessment requirements and informing the Centre of the assessments to be taken;
- marking and assessing the Learner's work to produce a provisional Centre Determined Grade.
- basing their judgements on the same guidance as that used by Centres, including the published grade descriptors.
- handling the Stage 1 review of provisional Centre Determined Grade process. This review will consider the judgement made on the evidence as well as the process, consistent with Stage 1 for other Learners.
- allowing the Learner to request a Stage 2 appeal after results have been issued under Condition GQAAFW3.1, and

- ensuring that the Stage 2 appeal is completed by a person who is independent of the reviewer involved in the Stage 1 review, and in accordance with all other requirements set out in Condition GQAAFW5.

WJEC must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Centre Determined Grade for a Learner is based only on the subject content which that Learner has been taught.

WJEC must take all reasonable steps to ensure that in generating Centre Determined Grades its Centres have regard to the Qualifications Wales document Summer 2021: Guidance on alternative arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and A levels (the Centre Guidance).⁴

As part of the guidance provided under Condition GQAAFW3.3(a), WJEC must provide guidance for Centres on determining Centre Determined Grades in order to supplement Qualifications Wales's Centre Guidance.

Support materials

In order to assist Centres make their judgements, WJEC must provide qualification assessment frameworks, adapted past papers and support for centres to devise their own assessments ('Support Materials').

Where a Centre chooses to use adapted past papers, WJEC must not specify when they are used or impose conditions under which any assessment taken using them is undertaken.

WJEC must make its Support Materials available to Centres by 26 March 2021.

Internal quality assurance by Centres

WJEC must take all reasonable steps to ensure that a Centre has in place, and complies with, effective arrangements to quality assure the judgements that it makes in relation to its Centre Determined Grades before submitting them to WJEC.

WJEC must take all reasonable steps to ensure in implementing their internal quality assurance processes for summer 2021 that Centres have regard to the Qualifications Wales document Summer 2021: Guidance on alternative arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and A levels (the Centre Guidance)

As part of the guidance provided under Condition GQAAFW3.3(a), WJEC must provide guidance for Centres on internal quality assurance.

External quality assurance by WJEC

WJEC must ensure that it has in place, and complies with, effective arrangements that allow it to undertake quality assurance of provisional Centre Determined Grades.

⁴ <https://www.qualificationswales.org/english/awarding-2021/guidance-documents/>

WJEC must ensure that those arrangements include provision for –

- (a) as far as reasonably practicable, WJEC to check the internal quality assurance arrangements of every Centre that will submit grades to it under the GQAAFV Framework,
- (b) WJEC to check a sample of decision making records for every Centre, and
- (c) WJEC to carry out more detailed checks where Centre Determined Grades appear to be atypical (Centres with unexpected entry patterns, Centres where the internal quality assurance check highlighted concerns, and Centres in relation to which WJEC has received relevant complaints or information from whistleblowers).

WJEC may request evidence on which the Centre Determined Grades are based from any Centre that does not satisfy the WJEC checks.

Under Condition GQAAFV3.4(b), WJEC must not issue a result where any issues identified as part of its quality assurance have not been resolved to the WJEC's satisfaction.