

# Summer 2020 grades for GCSEs, AS and A levels, and Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC)

Information for Centres on the submission  
of Centre Assessment Grades



This information applies to schools, colleges and other exam centres<sup>1</sup> using approved Wales-only GCSE, AS, A Levels and Skills Challenge Certificates<sup>2</sup> offered by WJEC and regulated by Qualifications Wales. Additional information about other qualifications will be shared as soon as approaches have been agreed.

This information is provided in the context of the most up-to-date advice for educational settings provided by the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales<sup>3</sup>. If that advice changes, Heads of Centre should consider this information in the light of any updated guidance.

Following the ministerial decision on 18 March 2020 to close schools<sup>4</sup> and the consequential decision to cancel the summer 2020 exam series<sup>5</sup>, progression of learners to sixth form, college, higher education, training or employment must be facilitated. Schools, colleges and other exam centres will be asked 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. This document provides information for Heads of Centre and teachers about how to generate these grades and the evidence that should be considered. As far as was practical in the current circumstances, we have engaged with a variety of stakeholders and education leaders across the sector as we developed this approach.

This is not data that is usually collected and therefore WJEC is adapting IT systems to collect this. WJEC will provide detailed instructions as soon as possible on the submission process. We recognise that this is not a process that centres have planned for, and so the information provided in this document is to enable centres to begin the work necessary to generate the data. The deadline **for submission** of the data will be **no earlier than 29 May 2020**, and the actual date for submission will be communicated by WJEC as part of the detailed instructions they will issue.

The centre assessment grades submitted to WJEC 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**.

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<sup>1</sup> Centre(s) is the term used throughout the document to refer to schools, colleges and other exam centres

<sup>2</sup> 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), GCE Information and Communication Technology (AS and A level), GCE Applied Information and Communication Technology (AS and A level), GCSE in Home Economics: Child Development

<sup>3</sup> <https://gov.wales/guidance-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

<sup>4</sup> <https://gov.wales/statement-minster-education-kirsty-williams-school-closures-wales>

<sup>5</sup> <https://gov.wales/written-statement-written-statement-summer-examinations-2020>

In the interests of fairness for learners, judgements made by centres across Wales should be consistent. However, it is unreasonable to expect that teachers in different centres across the country will make judgements that are precisely consistent with one another. So that the final grades awarded are as fair as possible, WJEC will standardise the centre judgements once they have been submitted, using a method developed in conjunction with Qualifications Wales.

Welsh Government has confirmed that centres will not be held to account for their performance on the basis of these grades and will expect Estyn, local authorities and regional consortia to adopt a similar approach. Key Stage 4 and post-16 school performance measures will not be calculated for the 2019/20 academic year.

The same information is being required of centres in England for GCSEs, AS and A Levels regulated by Ofqual.

### What information will be needed?

For every GCSE, AS, A level and Skills Challenge Certificate qualification, each centre will be required to submit:

- A **centre assessment grade** for each learner – the professional judgement of the subject teachers, including the Head of Department<sup>6</sup>, about the grade that each learner is most likely to have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer
- The **rank order** of learners within each grade – for example, for all those learners with a B grade in GCSE Mathematics, a rank order where 1 is the learner at the top of that grade (and so closest to the grade above), and so on.

Centres should make sure that the data submitted is accurate.

### Centre assessment grades

Producing centre assessment grades for each learner should be a holistic professional judgement, balancing the different sources of evidence. Teachers, Heads of Department and senior leaders will have a good understanding of their learners' abilities and how they compare to other learners taking the qualification this year, and in previous years. We want centres to consider each learner's performance over the course of study and make a realistic judgement of the grade each learner would have been most likely to get if they had taken their exam(s) in a subject, along with any non-exam assessment this summer.

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<sup>6</sup> The term Head of Department is used throughout, but titles of the equivalent leadership positions may vary in different centres.

In coming to this judgement, teachers should assume that it is no easier or harder for a learner to achieve a particular grade this year, compared to previous years.

Teachers should draw on existing records and available evidence (as far as possible, in the context of current public health advice). It is important that the judgements are objective, and they should only take account of evidence about learner performance. This is likely to include the following, where it is available:

- records of each learner's performance over the course of study, including for example ongoing assessments for formative purposes, classwork and/or participation in performances in subjects such as music, drama and PE
- performance on any formal class or homework assessments and mock exams taken over the course of study

performance on any non-exam assessment (NEA), even if this has not been completed. Centres should not ask learners to complete their NEA work now. But teachers will need to bear in mind that many learners perform better on their NEA than in their exams, so should not base the judgement on the NEA alone. Teachers should balance it with a judgement about the likely performance in the written paper(s). As you are aware, WJEC has written to all centres to confirm that NEA does not need to be submitted and will not be moderated<sup>7</sup>

- tier of entry in tiered qualifications – centre assessment grades must reflect the tier of entry
- for re-sitting learners, information about previous grades achieved and a realistic assessment of the improvement made since the qualification was last sat
- for GCSE learners, the results of any GCSE units already taken
- for A level learners who took AS in 2019, their AS results in that subject
- any other relevant information

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. Special consideration requests, in the event that a student 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

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.wjec.co.uk/en/articles/nea-update-for-centres-in-wales-march-2020/>

have affected performance in mock exams, teachers should bear that in mind when making their judgements.

Given the timing of the announcement, we recognise that exam centres will have incomplete evidence, and that the range and amount of evidence will vary between different qualifications. Judgements should be made on the evidence that is available.

There is **no requirement** for centres to set additional mock exams or homework tasks. It is advised that work completed after 20 March, when schools closed, should not be considered when making judgements on centre assessment grades. This is because where that later work suggests substantially better or worse achievement, this may reflect the circumstances and context in which the work is done, rather than providing evidence for a higher or lower grade than work completed before 20 March would suggest.

There will be **no requirement** for centres to send any learner work or other evidence to WJEC, but centres should retain it in case of queries.

It is important that judgements are objective, and so you should only take account of evidence about learner performance (as outlined above).

Heads of Centre should also bear in mind the following, when advising their staff and when reviewing these judgements.

- Previous results in your school or college in this subject
- The performance of this year's learners compared to those in previous years

Please note that these **centre assessment grades** are **not** the same as:

- Age related grades (usually defined as the grade a learner would receive if they took the GCSE, AS or A level now)
- Working at grades (the grade a learner is currently working at)
- Target or aspirational grades (often set a little higher than likely, to motivate learners)
- Predicted grades provided to UCAS in support of university applications.

### **A rank order within each grade, for each qualification**

The statistical model requires a more granular scale than grades alone. For this reason, we need centres to provide a rank order of learners within each grade. For example, if you have 15 learners for GCSE Mathematics for whom you have given a

centre assessment grade of B, you should then rank them from 1 to 15, where 1 is the best performing learner, 2 is the next and so on.

### **How to make sure the rank order of learners is as accurate as possible**

Once centre assessment grades have been submitted, WJEC will carry out a process, being developed with Qualifications Wales, to standardise grades between centres. For this to be fair, it is important that the rank order of learners is as accurate as possible.

Where there is more than one subject teacher, they will need to agree one rank order for all learners within grades, within the centre, taking that qualification.

Every possible effort should be made to produce a single rank order for each grade. However, if two or more learners are almost indistinguishable in terms of their subject performance (and are therefore judged to get the same grade) then it may be very difficult to put them into a rank order. In recognition of this, limited ties (i.e. two or more learners having the same position in the rank order) may be allowed, and further information will be provided by WJEC.

We recognise that this will be challenging where a centre has a large entry for a subject, with many different teachers.

### **Statistical standardisation**

WJEC will use a statistical model to standardise grades across centres in each qualification. We are working with technical experts within WJEC and in other organisations to develop this model, which will combine a range of evidence which may include: expected grade distributions at national level, results in previous years at individual centre level, and the prior attainment profile of learners at individual centre level, where available.

If it appears that your judgements are more severe than other centres, then learners' grades might be adjusted upwards. On the other hand, if it appears that your judgments are more generous than other centres, then learners' grades might be adjusted down. This will be done to align the judgements across schools and colleges, so that, as far as possible, learners are not unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged this summer.

This means that the centre assessment grades you submit and the final calculated grade that learners receive might be different. It is also likely that overall national results for summer 2020 will look a little different from those in previous years.

## Which learners should be included?

This will be required for all learners entered for the qualification. 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 urgently exploring whether there are alternative options for those students who do not have an existing relationship with a centre and who need results this summer for progression purposes. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to be possible for all private candidates, some of whom may instead need to take exams in the November 2020 exam series for GCSEs in English Language, Mathematics, Mathematics-Numeracy and Welsh Language, or summer 2021 exam series for all qualifications. We appreciate that this is a matter of real concern to private candidates and we will provide an update as soon as possible.

Centres should submit centre assessment grades for all learners for whom they are confident that they can make a judgement. This will be a decision for the Head of Centre. The Head of Centre should communicate their decision to any private candidates and take advice from WJEC where cases are not straightforward.

It will be important for centres to make sure that their entries are complete and accurate as grades will only be issued for those learners who have been entered for the qualification. **WJEC will share dates for entries to be finalised with the data submission details.**

## How (and when) to submit this information to WJEC

Further information will follow once WJEC has completed the work to adapt their IT systems. The deadline for submission to WJEC will also be shared as soon as possible. **It will not be earlier than 29 May 2020** and centres will have a window of at least two weeks in which to submit the data. Further information will follow from WJEC after Easter. Please **do not** try to submit data until WJEC has issued instructions.

## Sharing data with learners, parents and carers

Learners, parents and carers will want to know that the process of generating centre assessment grades is rigorous, objective and fair. We have published a [message](#) for learners, parents and carer that Heads of Centre may wish to circulate.

Data subjects (learners) are able to request their personal data under article 15 of the General Data Protection Regulations 2016 (GDPR). However, in this case, the exemption under paragraph 25(2) and (3), of schedule 2 to the Data Protection Act 2018 is applicable to information being processed for the purposes of determining the results to be awarded this year. This allows Data Controllers (in this case centres) to delay disclosure of such information until after results have been issued.

**Centres must not, under any circumstances, share the centre assessment grades nor the rank order of learners 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.

### Arrangements for appeals

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 learners.

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 application of the process.

### Internal sign off within the school/college/exam centre

#### Department sign off

Each set of centre assessment grades for a qualification should be signed off by at least two teachers in that subject, where possible, one of whom should be the Head of Department, or by the Head of Centre if there is only one teacher available. Where a staff member might have a personal interest in a candidate (for example as a relative), Heads of Centre should make sure that additional controls are put in place, as required.

#### Head of Centre sign-off

The Head of Centre will be required to confirm that the centre assessment grades and the rank order of learners are a true representation of authentic learner performance. If the Head of Centre is unavailable to do this, it may be delegated to a Deputy or to another member of the Senior Leadership Team. In reviewing these centre assessment grades, the Head of Centre should consider:



- how the distribution of centre assessment grades compares with grades achieved by the centre in previous years
- how the distribution of centre assessment grades compares with the ability of the current cohort compared to the previous 2 or 3 cohorts within the centre.

The Head of Centre will be required to submit the following declaration when the data is submitted:

*I confirm that these centre assessment grades, and the rank order of learners are accurate and represent the professional judgements made by my staff, and that entries were appropriate for each candidate. Having reviewed the relevant processes and data, I am confident that they honestly and fairly represent the grades that these learners would have been most likely to achieve if they had sat their exams as planned, and that they have not been disclosed to either the learner, parent or carer. I understand that WJEC will conduct a statistical standardisation exercise, using a model developed with Qualifications Wales and that, if the profile of grades submitted is substantially different from what might be expected based on my centre's historic results and the prior attainment of this year's learners, the grades for my centre will be adjusted to bring them into line with national standards.*

**Centre results (final learner grades) will not be calculated without the data and declaration being submitted.**

**WJEC may investigate any attempts to undermine this system which might be regarded as malpractice.**

### **Next steps**

Heads of Centre should now make arrangements to:

1. Check entries for the exams are complete and correct.
2. Contact any private candidates to confirm whether the centre will be able to submit a centre assessment grade and include them in the rank order.
3. Begin the work to generate a centre assessment grade and an overall rank order in each qualification.
4. Ensure all staff understand that the grade and rank order should not be shared with learners, parents and carers.

**WJEC will provide detailed information after Easter about how to submit the data.**

Qualifications Wales will consider a number of changes to regulations that allow this year's results to be delivered in the changed circumstances, including:

- The principles underpinning the technical model for the statistical standardisation process
- Arrangements for private candidates
- Arrangements for appeals

An integrated impact assessment, taking into account the impact of our decisions and policies on protected groups will be produced.

### **Further advice and guidance**

If you need further advice, please take a look at our [frequently asked questions](#).

Please do not contact WJEC at this time to ask about the specifics of submitting data. Details will be provided as soon as possible.