



SUMMER 2021

Guidance for centres entering private candidates

17 May 2021 – Version 3.0

Private Candidates – summer 2021

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1. Background

Alternative arrangements are in place for awarding approved GCSE, AS and A level and Skills Challenge Certificate grades in summer 2021. These arrangements require centres to carry out sufficient assessment of learners' skills, knowledge and understanding to be able to produce a Centre Determined Grade. This grade must be based on demonstrated attainment and the process used to produce these grades will be quality assured internally by each centre and externally by WJEC.

We have provided high-level guidance on this in our overarching [Guidance on the alternative assessment arrangements for summer 2021 \(v4\)](#). This guidance provides a high-level outline of the arrangements for private candidates, which are intended to ensure that all learners have access to qualifications in summer 2021, and provides an overview of roles and responsibilities. It is not intended to provide detailed operational procedures. WJEC will provide more details for centres.

2. Private candidates

Private candidates are candidates who have not studied with the exam centre¹ which makes their entry. Included in this group are, for example:

- School age learners who have been home educated
- Adults who have studied independently
- Learners who have studied with a distance learning provider that does not offer exam entry.

Private candidates represent a diverse group of learners and their individual needs vary significantly. This guidance also applies to learners at school or college who have studied additional subjects outside the school or college.

The approaches outlined apply to approved GCSEs, AS and A levels, and Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications offered by WJEC. Separate arrangements are in place for learners taking GCSEs, AS and A levels offered by Eduqas, AQA, OCR, and Pearson that have been developed to conform with policies developed in England.

3. Agreed routes for private candidates in summer 2021 – for approved GCSE, AS and A level qualifications

There are two routes to the assessment of private candidates in summer 2021.

¹ School or college, or other educational establishments

A. Centre-assessed route

Where private candidates have an established relationship² with a centre that has already agreed to enter them for a qualification and carry out the necessary assessment of their work, these arrangements can continue as planned. These centres will undertake assessment activities using the same route as for their own learners, produce the Centre Determined Grades and will fulfil requests for a centre review of grades. The centre will need to comply with the Qualifications Wales guidance and WJEC's requirements in order to generate a Centre Determined Grade.

B. Centre-hosted route

For private candidates that do not have an established relationship with a centre³, we are working with Welsh Government and local authorities to identify centres willing to accept private candidates across regions of Wales. Welsh Government will provide funding to support centres' delivery costs, if they accept new private candidates.

WJEC will play a direct role in the assessment arrangements for these learners. WJEC will set the assessment requirements, once information is provided by the learner to the centre, and inform the centre of the assessments to be taken. Private candidates will attend the site to complete some of the required assessments and submit a portfolio of work which may include work already completed. WJEC's examiners will mark and assess the learner's work to produce a grade. WJEC will base their judgements on the same guidance as that used by centres, including the published grade descriptors.

WJEC will also handle the Stage 1 review of grade processes. This review will consider the judgement made on the evidence as well as the process, as per Stage 1 for other learners. A private candidate can request a Stage 2 appeal after results days. The Stage 2 appeal will be completed by a person who is independent of the reviewer involved in the Stage 1 review.

Some centres may be in a position where they will operate both routes A and B. For example, a centre may have accepted entries from a small number of private candidates for certain qualifications and will continue to assess them, as planned, via route A. These centres may also accept new private candidates, who should then be assessed via route B. If a centre had committed to an entry for a learner who is on their roll for a qualification they do not offer, then the assessment will need to take place via route B this year.

We believe these two routes will provide a process through which private candidates will have access to Wales-only approved qualification grades this summer.

There are some differences between the approach for learners enrolled at a centre and those who will be entered as private candidates through the 'centre-hosted' route. However, we

² For example, the learner is already known to the centre or entries have already been provisionally accepted

³ Distance learning providers that normally work with learners who are new and/or unknown to them should contact WJEC for advice directly.

believe there are enough similarities to provide parity in approach for all learners. The key issue is equality of access to qualifications.

Private candidate entries for non-approved qualifications

In addition to learners who wish to enter for approved qualifications as private candidates, there are also learners who wish to enter non-approved⁴ qualifications. Ofqual and DfE are agreeing the approaches to be taken to enable these learners to be assessed and awarded grades in these qualifications. We have raised awareness of the needs of private candidates in Wales who may also need to access these qualifications and continue to explore what further guidance we can provide/signpost for these learners.

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has published [Interim Guidance for Private Candidate Centres](#) on its website.

4. Accepting new candidate entries

Where a learner has already been entered for a qualification, whether as a private candidate or not, then they should not change to being entered as a private candidate or swap centres to be entered as a private candidate with a new centre.

Where a private candidate has already been entered for an exam as a private candidate prior to 19 March 2021, and their original centre has confirmed it is still willing to proceed with their assessment, then that can continue.

Where a private candidate has not yet been entered, then an entry can be made for them in WJEC's extended entry window up to 26 April 2021. Beyond this date, entries will not be accepted for candidates following route B. Candidates following route A may be accepted at the discretion of the centre if there is sufficient time for the assessments to be completed. A late entry fee will apply. This process will be open to learners who would otherwise be disadvantaged if they were not awarded a grade in Summer 2021, for example because it would prevent them from progressing to the next stage of their studies or into employment.

The results of private candidates will not be included in consideration of the overall centre results in summer 2021, nor included as part of centre's published results.

⁴ Non-approved qualifications are those GCSEs, AS and A levels offered by Eduqas, AQA, OCR, and Pearson that have been developed to conform with policies developed in England

5. Summary of expectations/responsibilities of centres agreeing to enter private candidates in a centre-assessed route

Centres that have already agreed to enter private candidates known to them will:

- Communicate the route to assessment to be taken with the private candidate, as per on-roll learners.
- Arrange for assessment of the private candidates that is in-line with details in WJEC's Qualification Assessment Frameworks and Guidance on grading. This will ideally be an approach that is very similar to the assessment of its on-roll learners.
- Submit entries to WJEC **by 26 April 2021**.
- Collect payment for the entry fees from the private candidate. WJEC will invoice centres for entry fees⁵.
- Identify and confirm any entitlement to access arrangements. This could require assessment at the centre, ahead of an application for access arrangements to WJEC. Support may also be available on a local basis via local authorities. WJEC could confirm if the learner has a current, live approved access arrangement and the nature of the arrangement, with the learner's permission.
- Arrange when the private candidate will visit the site to complete any necessary on-site assessments, and submit a portfolio of work, and liaise with the tutor/education provider (which may be the parent/carer) about its authentication. This could be any time up to 11 June 2021.
- Administer/supervise the completion of assessment tasks on-site, ensuring access arrangements are in place as necessary.
- Arrange on-site assessment so that it complies with current public health advice.
- Implement overall approaches that are in line with the centre's Assessment Policy in relation to areas such as: coverage of the specification, choice of assessments, provision of access arrangements, authentication of learner work, storage of evidence, application of special consideration if applicable, documenting a rationale for the decision on the Centre Determined Grade.
- Complete a Decision Making Record for each private candidate.
- Fulfil the requirements of the review of grade process and Stage 2 appeals process, if requested by the private candidate, as for on-roll learners.

See the table in Appendix 1.

6. Expectations/responsibilities of centres agreeing to enter private candidates in a centre-hosted route and WJEC.

Centres agreeing to host private candidates⁶ will:

⁵ Minor amendment to the information published in version 1.

⁶ As outlined in section 2, a centre may have private candidates entered through routes A and B.

- Agree to be on a list of available centres willing to accept new entries for approved qualifications from private candidates. This list of centres will be published and shared.
- Accept requests from private candidates for entries for approved qualifications.
- Communicate high level information about the general assessment approach that will be provided by WJEC (to include general requirements about the assessments, evidence to be included, submission of portfolio work and authenticating the work).
- Provide the private candidate with an assessment profile form, which they will need to return to the centre, for sharing with WJEC.
- Arrange on-site assessment opportunities, as specified by WJEC, and any further discussions needed.
- Submit entries to WJEC **by 26 April 2021** and 'flag' private candidate as such when the entry is made to WJEC⁷⁸.
- Arrange for payment of the entry fees by the private candidate.
- Identify and confirm any entitlement to access arrangements. This could require assessment at the centre, ahead of an application for access arrangements to WJEC. Support may also be available on a local basis via local authorities. WJEC could confirm if the learner has a current approved access arrangement and the nature of the arrangement, with the learner's permission.
- Arrange when the private candidate will visit the site to complete any necessary on-site assessments, as well as the need to submit a portfolio of work and liaise with the tutor/education provider (which may be the parent/carer) about its authentication. This could be any time up to 11 June 2021.
- Administer/supervise the completion of assessment tasks on-site, as agreed with WJEC, ensuring access arrangements are in place as necessary. (If an on-site visit is not possible, then remote supervision could be required).
- Arrange on-site assessment so that it complies with current public health advice.
- If the learner is unable to take the assessment(s) on the agreed day(s), then an alternative time will need to be arranged.
- If the learner needs to have special considerations taken into account, the centre will need to inform WJEC.
- Securely store the assessment evidence and make this available as directed by WJEC.
- If the private candidate requests a review of the grade, and/or a Stage 2 appeal, then inform WJEC of this request.
- Inform the private candidate of the outcome of any review of grade, and/or Stage 2 appeal, by WJEC.

See the table in Appendix 1.

⁷ If a centre is entering an on-roll learner for a qualification not offered at the centre, this will need to be assessed via route B. This will need to be manually identified to WJEC by the centre.

⁸ Minor amendment to the information published in version 1.

WJEC will:

- Communicate assessment requirements with the private candidate, via the host centre. This may involve provision of an assessment brief outlining the areas of the specification that will be assessed.
- Inform the centre of the assessments that will be required. These are likely to be adapted past papers for the on-site assessments, as well as a portfolio of work.
- Advise on submission of assessment evidence to WJEC. This could be any time up to 11 June 2021.
- Arrange for the marking of all work and the production of a grade.
- Ensure appropriate quality assurance processes are in place to support the accuracy of those judgements within the qualification and across others.
- Produce a Decision Making Record of the judgement and provide this to the centre, for sharing with the private candidate. This needs to include a rationale for the judgement made.
- Offer the private candidate the opportunity to request a review of that grade.
- Implement processes to ensure a review of grade is overseen by a person not involved in the original decision (this does not prevent the original decision maker from being part of the review process)⁹
- Inform the centre of the outcome of the review of grade.
- Process the grade through WJEC's required systems.

7. Other organisations supporting the approach**Qualifications Wales will:**

- Provide this overarching guidance for centres accepting private candidates.
- Publish information about the routes available for private candidates, working closely with relevant stakeholder groups to ensure access to the information, including Welsh Government's Elected Home Education Officer.
- Work with WJEC to secure suitable arrangements for private candidates.

Welsh Government will:

- Work with local authorities to secure support from centres to accept private candidate entries as part of a centre-hosted route.
- Publish a list of centres willing to host private candidates.
- Provide financial support for delivery costs, that can be used flexibly depending on the local context.
- Ensure information about the routes and support available is widely shared with relevant groups, via the Elected Home Education Officer and other relevant stakeholder groups.
- Provide operational guidance regarding current public health advice.

⁹ Minor amendment to the information published in version 1 to reflect final appeals processes

Welsh Government has provided additional funding in 2020-21 to local authorities to provide support to home educating families in recognition of additional costs a home educating family will incur when providing resources and opportunities that are typically available free in school – this could include support for entry fees for qualifications.

Local authorities will:

- Work with centres to ensure a sufficient number of centres are willing to accept private candidates in a centre-hosted route.
- Work with centres to support assessment of access arrangements if necessary (e.g. through availability of qualified assessors).
- Work with other organisations, to ensure access is fair (this could involve support with transport for learners with disabilities, for instance).

Appendix 1

Task list –to support further planning

Task	For each route, this would be completed by:	
	Centre-assessed	Centre-hosted
Provide entry data to WJEC	Centres	Centres
Pay exam entry fee	Private candidates	Private candidates
Confirm and apply for access arrangements through WJEC's system. (This could involve assessment of the learner to confirm the entitlement).	Centres	Centres
Apply for access arrangements through WJEC's system	Centres	Centres
Request completion of an assessment profile record by the learner, to inform knowledge of coverage of the specification and suitable assessment planning	Centres	Centres
Choose assessment task(s) for the learner based on the content they have covered. This should include some work that can be completed away from the centre, as well as some completed on-site. NEA type work could be submitted as part of the portfolio of work, for instance.	Centres	WJEC Will include adapted past papers ¹⁰
Produce assessment tasks, other than adapted past papers provided by WJEC (if applicable)	Centres	WJEC
Ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place for on-site visits (these will be supported by Welsh Government advice)	Centres	Centres
Administer/ supervise the completion of assessment tasks on site	Centres	Centres
Mark the assessments and work submitted	Centres	WJEC examiners
Assess and validate any evidence produced outside the centre, as agreed in the assessment outline and requirements	Centres	WJEC
Use evidence to produce an initial Centre Determined Grade	Centres	WJEC
Complete the decision making record	Centres	WJEC
Internal quality assurance processes as outlined in the organisation's Assessment Policy	Centres	WJEC

¹⁰ As outlined in WJEC's Qualification Assessment Frameworks

Discuss the grade judgement with the learner once all evidence collected and assessed	Centres	Centres
Submission of grade to WJEC	Centres	WJEC
External quality assurance	WJEC	WJEC
Complete a review of grade, if requested	Centres	WJEC
Share the outcome of the review with the learner	Centres	Centres
Appeal Stage 2 - checking for admin errors and or reasonableness of judgement, if requested	WJEC	WJEC
Share the outcome of the Stage 2 appeal with the learner	Centres	Centres