



SUMMER 2021

Guidance on alternative arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and A levels

17 May 2021 – Version 4.0

Contents

	Page
1. Purpose	2
2. Introduction	2
3. What will Centre Determined Grades measure in summer 2021 and how are they used?	3
4. How should Centre Determined Grade judgements be made?	3-4
5. Decision making records	5
6. Quality assurance processes	6-7
7. Head of Centre declaration	7-8
8. Centre review of Centre Determined Grades and appeals processes	8-9
9. Private candidates	9
10. Information and support for learners	10
11. Equalities	10-11
12. Data processing and data protection	11
13. Monitoring and reporting of alternative arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and A levels summer 2021	12
14. Summary of information and guidance to be provided to centres	12-13
14.1. Qualification assessment frameworks	
14.2. Professional learning support	
14.3. Other Guidance	
15. Appendix 1	14-15
16. Appendix 2	16-19

Summer 2021: Guidance on alternative arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and A levels¹

17 May 2021- version 4.0

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This version of the guidance sets out updated high level information for centres² on the requirements for producing Centre Determined Grades (CDG) in summer 2021. It is intended to set out policy positions and to signpost more detailed operational guidance and support which will be provided by WJEC. All processes have been developed in discussion with WJEC, the Design and Delivery Advisory Group and other stakeholders.
- 1.2. This document provides information in relation to a range of issues linked to summer 2021 arrangements. It is supported by various guidance documents that provide more detail, which have almost all been published by WJEC. Key dates, indicative dates for centres and key dates for learners are included in timelines in Appendix 1.
- 1.3. The information in this document has been developed in conjunction with the Design and Delivery Advisory Group. This group of headteachers and college leaders has considered the design of processes carefully to ensure that they are as fair as possible for learners and balance this with the demands this extraordinary series places on centres.
- 1.4. For ease of reference, additions or updated sections in version 4 are identified by a vertical bar in the left hand margin.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. In the absence of an exam series, and ongoing disruption to teaching and learning, centres will be determining the GCSE, AS or A level grades awarded to learners in summer 2021.
- 2.2. This guidance gives an overview of what decisions teachers need to make, how they should make those decisions and what types of evidence should be used to support those decisions. This will support WJEC's Qualification Assessment Frameworks and be supplemented by further guidance. Whilst flexibility is required, it is important that there is also some consistency in approaches across Wales this summer.
- 2.3. Enabling learners to progress to their next stage of learning and employment is a priority, so centres should aim to integrate assessments within their teaching and learning plans.

¹Alternative arrangements for the Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications have been communicated separately:

<https://www.qualificationswales.org/english/news/welsh-baccalaureate-skills-challenge-certificates---awarding-in-summer-2021>

² Centre(s) is the term used throughout the document to refer to schools, colleges and other exam centres.

3. What will Centre Determined Grades measure in summer 2021 and how are they used?

- 3.1. Summer 2021 Centre Determined Grades must be awarded on the basis of demonstrated attainment in areas of the qualification content that a learner has covered.
- 3.2. Whilst the approach to producing the Centre Determined Grades will be holistic in its nature, it needs to be underpinned by sufficient evidence of demonstrated attainment across key themes and skills. It may also be appropriate to take into account any special considerations as part of this.
- 3.3. The standard expected for any particular grade is no lower than previous years but the volume of work completed in the specification will inevitably be lower for many learners. This means that learners will be awarded the same grades having covered different proportions of the specification.
- 3.4. Summer 2021 Centre Determined Grades must not attempt to indicate potential in a subject since, after such loss of learning, this would be entirely subjective and difficult to evidence. Centres must provide a sound rationale and evidence base for the award of all Centre Determined Grades so that they can be sure that they have determined the correct grade for a learner and can justify the grade awarded should there be a request for a review of the grade or an appeal.

4. How should Centre Determined Grade judgements be made?

- 4.1. WJEC has provided Qualification Assessment Frameworks which set out the requirements to support production of Centre Determined Grades for each qualification.
- 4.2. Centres should communicate their assessment approach with their learners and parents/carers, so that there is transparency and confidence in the approach to be adopted. WJEC has provided detailed advice to centres about the requirements for assessment policies in their Guide to centre policy document (on their secure website).
- 4.3. Centres should not provide specific details of the past papers, if applicable, or assessment questions that will be used. It is important that the assessments used to support judgements provide a true and authentic representation of the learner's level of attainment. This will be distorted if the learner has prior knowledge of the questions that will be asked.
- 4.4. Assessment evidence must come from work completed by the learner, on **adapted specification content**, during the course of study for the qualification. Evidence may include practical evidence where appropriate. Assessed work may be completed in the school environment or at home but centres need to be assured that it is the learner's own work.
- 4.5. The number of pieces and type of evidence required to support judgements will not be prescribed, since this will vary by qualification and how key themes and skills are organised in assessments. It would also not provide the flexibility required to allow for variation in context between centres. The requirement for evidence needs to support the sound, impartial determination of the correct grade for a learner. It may be that relatively few pieces of clear evidence would

be sufficient to demonstrate attainment across overarching key themes for many qualifications.

- 4.6. WJEC will provide past papers for centres to use when determining which tasks learners will complete that contribute to their overall Centre Determined Grade. Where necessary, these papers will be adjusted to take account of the adaptations already in place. Contributing assessment evidence could come from a range of activities that could include mock exams, other past papers provided by WJEC, NEA and other assessed work. WJEC assessment materials are advised, where appropriate, since they are quality assured, accessible, equitable assessments with tried and tested mark schemes.
- 4.7. Weightings of content or skills will not be prescribed in WJEC's Qualification Assessment Frameworks since this would not provide centres with enough flexibility.
- 4.8. Evidence for individual learners may vary, depending on circumstances and any special considerations that might have been taken into account. Centres should ensure a rationale for any significant differences in evidence between learners and document this clearly in their decision making records.
- 4.9. Once evidence has been considered, teachers and lecturers should make holistic, best-fit judgements that are compensatory.
- 4.10. GCSEs, AS and A levels are compensatory in normal times. In relation to best-fit grading judgements this means:
 - Learners do not have to demonstrate all aspects of the descriptor to receive that grade.
 - Whilst there is no specific content that a learner must have demonstrated knowledge and understanding of to achieve a grade, it is important that there is evidence of attainment across sufficient breadth of content.
 - Learners can achieve the same grade by demonstrating different combinations of knowledge, skills and understanding. Strengths in some areas may balance shortcomings in other areas.
- 4.11. WJEC's Qualification Assessment Frameworks will include grade descriptors that will support this process, to 'anchor' judgements across the grade range.
- 4.12. Centres will apply their professional judgement and will decide whether the knowledge and skills demonstrated meets the usual standard expected for the grade.
- 4.13. The award of a Centre Determined Grade of a U is appropriate where there isn't enough evidence of demonstrated attainment to award a best-fit grade to a G (at GCSE) or E (AS or A level) or where evidence suggests attainment is below that required for the lowest grade.
- 4.14. Centre Determined Grades must be accompanied with a clear and unambiguous rationale as to why and how evidence was selected and how a judgement was formed. Guidance on the decision making record will be provided by WJEC on 24 March.

5. Decision making records – WJEC will provide further guidance

- 5.1. Centres must have processes in place to consistently document the rationale for grade decisions for each learner, including any access arrangements and special considerations applied. Decision making records need to provide clarity for learners and parents/carers. WJEC will provide support by making decision making record templates available to centres.
- 5.2. Part of this process needs to ensure that the centre is compliant with its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)³. There are also specific duties for Wales which sets out the steps that must be taken to demonstrate due regard to the general duty⁴. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has prepared guidance for centres on meeting the PSED. This will be available from their website in the future and we are sending a copy of it to all centres alongside this guidance.
- 5.3. Centres must consider other reasonable adjustments which learners are entitled to. WJEC's Grading guidance includes separate guidance on Access Arrangements to support this. Centres should also implement processes to ensure grade judgements are as objective and fair as possible, so that they are assured that they have fulfilled their duties to promote equality and avoid discrimination. Guidance is available in the following: What equality law means for you as an education provider in Wales: Schools⁵. Separate guidance and training on avoiding unconscious bias is available to centres to support this. (This is part of WJEC's programme of professional learning and includes a collaborative session with Diverse Cymru.)
- 5.4. These processes will support centres in considering any review of Centre Determined Grades and in any appeal.
- 5.5. Centres will also need to ensure they are compliant with data protection and data processing regulations. More information is provided on this later in this guidance.
- 5.6. On submission of provisional Centre Determined Grades to WJEC, centres will be required to make an overall declaration in relation to the processes that have been carried out. Centres will also need to submit an explanation of the overall pattern of the centre's results, at an aggregate level, for GCSEs, AS and A levels, at the point of submission of the Centre Determined Grades to WJEC. This explanation does not need to be extensive in nature but does need to be sufficient to describe any overall changes in the pattern of results for a centre. More information about WJEC's monitoring of results patterns is in section 6.
- 5.7. It must be made clear to learners that results are provisional until formally issued by WJEC on results days. Higher Education organisations will not use provisional grades for admissions processes.

³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2011/1064/contents/made>

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

⁵ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/what-equality-law-means-you-education-provider-wales>

6. Quality assurance processes

- 6.1. Centres will be required by WJEC to implement internal quality assurance processes to promote consistency in grade decisions across the centre (within subjects and across subjects). WJEC has provided guidance on what these processes must include within their Guide to centre policy document (on their secure website).
- 6.2. WJEC will implement a programme of external centre quality assurance processes. WJEC has published details on the external process it will undertake with centres.
- 6.3. Before submission of grades to WJEC, centres will be supported to discuss their process, application of process, and outcomes, with other centres across Wales. This falls outside of WJEC's quality assurance processes and outside of Qualifications Wales' regulatory framework but will form part of the overall process to produce Centre Determined Grades. Further details will be provided by Welsh Government.
- 6.4. Whilst there will be no external moderation of Centre Determined Grade outcomes, once results are finally submitted to WJEC, grade profiles will be reviewed and any atypical profiles discussed with the centre.

Discussion of atypical results – WJEC will provide further guidance

- 6.5. As outlined in the Minister for Education's policy direction, once grades are submitted to WJEC, overall centre profiles will be considered, and atypical grade profiles will be discussed with the centres. The intention is that this provides a final step to safeguard the validity and credibility of results for learners in Wales in summer 2021. This builds on other parts of the quality assurance arrangements that have been developed to establish some consistency in approaches taken in summer 2021. WJEC will not act to change results, which this year rely upon the exercise of professional judgement within centres.
- 6.6. In this extraordinary series, there is no simple, ideal way to identify what outcomes might be considered to be atypical. An approach has been developed to guide and provide transparency for centres and to inform WJEC's identification of centres where further discussion about the overall pattern of results may be needed.
- 6.7. All centres will be expected to produce a rationale for their **overall** centre results for each qualification type (i.e. by GCSEs overall, by AS level overall and by A level overall). The overall/aggregate results should be for approved qualifications offered by WJEC and not include other GCSEs, AS and A levels or other qualifications like BTECs. The centre rationale will not need to be explained by subject, though centres could choose to include reference to individual subjects in the rationale for the overall results. The centre rationale must explain the pattern of overall results presented by the centre this summer. It might refer to: substantial changes in prior attainment data of the cohort, changes in cohort sizes, changes to school structures (e.g. school mergers, changes to single/mixed sex, phase changes etc) and contextual information related to new centres.
- 6.8. Tolerances will be used to guide the level of rationale and whether it should be

submitted to WJEC. The tolerances will be applied to the best year's results of the overall centre results from the 2017, 2018 and 2019⁶ outcomes for each qualification type (GCSE, AS or A level).

- The tolerances do not set a cap on the centre's results, nor do they set targets to aim for, they have been established to provide transparency for centres about results that will trigger different levels of scrutiny of the pattern of results at a centre level.
- The tolerance scale will be based on +3 percentage points to +7 percentage point differences at key grades⁷ for the best year's results of the overall centre outcomes from 2017, 2018 and 2019. The tolerances do not relate to Welsh Government performance point measures.
- For example, if a centre's overall outcomes are no more than 3 percentage points above their best result in those years, then only a very high level rationale is needed and it doesn't need to be submitted to WJEC.
- If a centre's overall outcomes are 7 percentage points or more above the best of the overall centre outcomes from 2017, 2018 and 2019, then a more detailed rationale would be needed and should be submitted to WJEC.

6.9. Further Examples:

Centre A – overall outcomes in approved GCSEs at A*-C were 67% in 2017, 62% in 2018 and 64% in 2019. That means that the best overall GCSE A*-C outcomes were in 2017 (67%). If the centre's A*-C is 78% this year, then it is more than 7 percentage points above the previous best, so a full rationale that allows a sound understanding of the reasons behind the unusually large increase in higher grades should be provided to WJEC.

Centre B – overall outcomes in approved A levels at A*-A were 25% in 2017, 32% in 2018 and 34% in 2019. That means the best overall A*-A outcomes at A level were in 2019 (34%). If the centre's A*-A at A level is 37% this year, then it is only just over the previous best, so a brief rationale should be produced. However, overall outcomes in approved A levels at A* - E were 92% in 2017, 96% in 2018 and 95% in 2019. This means that the overall best results at grades A*-E were in 2018 (96%), so the rationale would make the comparison to 2018 for that grade range.

6.10 WJEC will provide data packs available via their secure website to support schools and colleges in this analysis. These data packs will show the overall/aggregate outcomes by each qualification type (not by subject) for the years 2017, 2018 and 2019. Centres will be able to use these packs to support their analysis if they wish.

6.11 WJEC will identify centres that are eligible for further discussion. WJEC may need to prioritise centres for professional discussions given the timescales available for

⁶ Summer 2020 results will not be part of the average result since processes in summer 2020 were unique, not evidence based and led to a substantial level of variation between centres. Outcomes in 2017, 2018 and 2019 were subject to established awarding processes and outcomes in 2021 are subject to quality assurance processes.

⁷ For the purposes of this process, key grades will be defined as follows: GCSE: A*, A*-A, A*-C, A*-F, AS: A, A-C and A-E, A Level: A*, A*-A, A*-C and A*-E

the process. WJEC will **not intervene to alter overall centre outcomes** but may ask centres to revisit their results if the pattern of results is not justified by the rationale presented.

7. Head of Centre declaration

7.1. When a centre submits its Centre Determined Grades each Head of Centre must also submit a declaration which confirms that the grades have been determined by the centre appropriately. This will include reference to the following aspects of the summer2021 process, to provide WJEC with assurance that:

- Communications have been provided to all learners of assessment evidence requirements and the grading process
- Decision making records for all learners have been completed
- Internal quality assurance processes have been completed in compliance with the centre's policy and WJEC's requirements
- The overall outcome profile of the centre has been reviewed
- All learners have had an opportunity to request centre reviews of their grades
- Assessment evidence is securely stored and available for review if required
- Equalities issues have been considered, including by protected characteristics, and the centre is compliant with the PSED
- Data protection processes have been completed (e.g. data protection impact assessment and reviews of privacy notices).

8. Centre review of Centre Determined Grades and appeals processes – *final guidance and details will follow*

8.1. As set out in the Minister for Education's announcement on 20 January 2021, the appeals process will have three stages:

Stage 1 – a centre review of the provisional Centre Determined Grade on the grounds that there has been an error in the determination of the grade.

Stage 2 – 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.

Stage 3 – a request to Qualifications Wales for an Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) to review whether WJEC has followed the required procedures.

8.2. Stage 1 – the centre review stage will allow learners to request a review of the centre determined grade. This can be completed before or after the submission of Centre Determined Grades to WJEC. Centres will need to provide an effective mechanism for learners to request a centre review of their provisional grade. This process will be similar to the process required in a normal year when a learner can appeal any centre NEA marks at a centre level before marks are submitted to WJEC. Learners need to be clearly informed that a grade review could result in their grade going up, their grade not changing or their grade going down. If completed after the initial

submission of grades to WJEC, the centre will need to inform WJEC of any necessary amendments by 20 July.

- 8.3. **The Centre Determined Grade is provisional until qualification grades are issued by WJEC on results days. Higher Education organisations will not use provisional grades for admissions processes.**
- 8.4. WJEC will provide guidance on the centre review process including documentation to support consistency and manageability across centres. Heads of centres will need to ensure processes are in place to facilitate the internal review of grades which could include:
 - Identification of a suitable person to oversee reviews, who was not involved in the original determination of the grade. (This does not prevent the original decision maker from being part of the review process. There is no expectation that the centre should source an independent subject expert as part of the process.)
 - How it will inform learners about the grade decisions made and the evidence on which the decision was based, for example, the decision making record.
 - Effective arrangements to support learners should they wish to submit a stage 2 appeal to WJEC.
- 8.5. Stage 2 – appeals to WJEC will allow learners to appeal on the grounds that the academic judgement that the centre has made is unreasonable and/or a procedural error has been made. This process will be carried out once results have formally been released on the relevant results days. It needs to be made clear that an appeal could result in a grade going up, not changing or going down.
- 8.6. Stage 3 - Qualifications Wales will implement an Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) to allow learners to request a review on the grounds that WJEC has not followed its stated process.
- 8.7. WJEC has released guidance on the Stage 1 and Stage 2 appeals processes and final, detailed guidance will be available from 17 May.

9. Private candidates

- 9.1. Options to ensure access to qualification grades for learners who are not on a centre's roll and who would normally enter these qualifications as private candidates are being finalised.
- 9.2. Where centres have an established relationship⁸ with learners who were due to enter one or more approved qualifications as private candidates, then arrangements can continue as planned.
- 9.3. For learners who have no established relationship with a centre the following will apply:
 - Welsh Government will work with local authorities to ensure there are centres willing to accept private candidates, and that these are available and accessible

⁸ A learner who is already known to the centre (may be a past student, or one who has already approached the centre about an entry)

in enough areas of Wales. Welsh Government will provide funding to support the delivery costs of accepting private candidates.

- Welsh Government will publish a list of centres by 12 April that are willing to accept private candidates and can be approached about an entry for approved GCSE, AS or A level qualifications. Welsh Government will publish this list of centres on its website along with further information for centres and private candidates. A link to this information will also be available on Qualifications Wales and WJEC websites and shared through relevant networks.

- 9.4. These centres will host private candidates and WJEC will arrange suitable assessment. WJEC will mark work required as part of the evidence to make a judgement on a grade and determine the grade (this will follow the same process as a Centre Determined Grade). WJEC will also ensure a process is in place to allow private candidates to request a review of grades on the basis that an error has been made in the determination of the grade. We will publish a Guide for centres entering private candidates and send it to all centres, so it is clear what the overall approach will be. This will also be available on our website.
- 9.5. WJEC's entries deadline is later this year, which will enable private candidate entries to be made.
- 9.6. We will produce a document for learners that details the approach, which will be available mid-April. We will work with Welsh Government's Elective Home Education Officers, local authorities and other relevant stakeholder groups to ensure communication is as wide as possible so that learners who enter for qualifications as private candidates know what the process will be.

10. Information and Support for Learners

- 10.1 Throughout this guidance there is reference to the need for the approach to assessment in summer 2021 to be explained to learners. Learners need to understand how they will be assessed this summer and know what evidence will be used as part of the overall judgement of their grade for each qualification (see section 4). The decision making record for each qualification may support this process (section 5).
- 10.2 Learners who feel disappointed or unhappy about their grade should be supported through pastoral and wellbeing support, and this should include how learners can access counselling services that are available in the setting.
- 10.3 It is also important that learners understand what they can do if they believe one of their Centre Determined Grades is not accurate. This is covered in guidance on the centre review of grade and appeals process in section 8. Some learners may need support to access centre review of grade and appeals processes. We will work with other relevant organisations to support this and further guidance will be available from us in the summer.
- 10.4 This summer learners will know their provisional grades for each qualification. For Year 13 learners, this means that they will be aware of whether they have achieved the grades required to be admitted into their chosen university. We realise this could be a worrying time for these learners.
- 10.5 Given the time between learners knowing what their provisional Centre Determined Grades are and final results being issued on A level results day, it would be useful if centres identified all their Year 13 learners who have not met the conditions of their university offers and proactively offer them support. Universities will make admissions decisions using final results and it is possible that a learner will be offered a place even if they have not met all of the requirements of their offer. Therefore, it is important that learners are supported. This could include:
- Pastoral support, including offers of wider support services, such as school counselling, as for GCSE and AS learners.
 - Guidance and clear information about what usually happens with university clearing processes. It would also be useful to make information available to parents and carers.
- 10.6 Qualifications Wales has written to learners with key features of the alternative approaches to assessment in the summer as details have been developed. We will also publish a learner pack in April. This will set out the full approach being taken and signpost various other organisations that can provide support for learners.

11. Equalities

- 11.1. Centres are required to comply with the PSED. This means that:
- Centres will need to communicate with learners, and parents/carers in a clear, transparent, and accessible way, and take into consideration the needs of those who share protected characteristics.
 - During the decision making process, which should include the selection of evidence and making holistic, best-fit grading judgements, centres are required to ensure grade judgements are as objective and fair as possible

and avoid bias.

- Centres need to evidence why and how assessments were selected, and how a grade decision was made, this should be documented in a decision making record. The decision making record should provide clarity for learners and parents/carers and assurance that the decision was made objectively, fairly and without bias. The decision making record should provide evidence that the centre has complied with the PSED.

11.2. Guidance on:

- Avoiding unconscious bias will be available from Diverse Cymru, and separate training on objectivity and managing bias will be available as part of WJEC's training programme. WJEC and Diverse Cymru will collaborate to provide some of this training.
- Complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is available from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Wales (WJEC will also link this in their training resources and it will be available on Hwb).

11.3. Centres will be required by WJEC to implement internal quality assurance processes to promote consistency in grade decisions across the centre (within subjects and across subjects) and these processes should also comply with the PSED. WJEC will provide guidance on what these processes should include.

11.4. Qualifications Wales has completed an Equalities Impact Assessment on the approach to assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in summer 2021, as part of its compliance with the PSED. This will be published in May.

12. Data processing and data protection

12.1. Each centre is required to comply with its own obligations as a data controller pursuant to the data protection legislation and should undertake its own data protection impact assessment and review and, if appropriate, update its privacy notices. The data protection impact assessment should be completed prior to data processing commencing.

12.2. Qualifications Wales has conducted a data protection impact assessment in relation to the approach to awarding grades in summer 2021. We believe that centre determined grading is necessary for performance of a task which is carried out in the public interest⁹ and we are therefore content that the determination of grades has a lawful basis. Our Data Protection Impact Assessment will be published in May.

12.3. Centres should carefully consider the fairness of using any particular form of evidence when establishing their assessment plans, informed by the WJEC qualification assessment frameworks. We encourage centres to be as transparent as possible with learners about the forms of evidence that will be used in determining the grades of learners, as well as the process adopted by the centre for determining grades.

⁹ Article 6(1)(e) GDPR. Article 9(2)(g) GDPR and Part 2 of Schedule 1 in DPA18 for special category personal data.

13. Monitoring and reporting of alternative arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and Alevels summer 2021

- 13.1. Qualifications Wales will be implementing a regulatory framework for approved general qualifications in summer 2021. This will be published by the end of April.
- 13.2. As part of our monitoring of WJEC's compliance against this framework and how the alternative arrangements are being implemented in centres we will monitor WJEC's processes and procedures.
- 13.3. As part of our monitoring, we will require WJEC to report key data to us ahead of, and after, results days. Some of this data is also required as part of our official statistics publications. This is likely to include:
 - entry data,
 - data on sampling processes and feedback provided as part of the quality assurance processes (e.g. on centre assessment policies),
 - data on centres identified as having atypical results and action taken, with summaries of WJEC's follow up,
 - qualification outcomes and
 - centre review of grade requests and appeals, and their outcomes.

14. Summary of information and guidance to be provided to centres

- 14.1. **Qualification assessment frameworks will be provided by WJEC and include:**
 - minimum content / skills / key themes for a qualification that might be required for progression
 - nature and quality of evidence (e.g. past paper assessments, NEA tasks, other assessments completed in class)
 - judging the evidence (holistic best-fit judgements clearly linked to grade descriptors)
 - grade descriptors
 - recording the rationale and decision

14.2. Professional learning support

WJEC has worked on a comprehensive training and guidance programme to support centres. This programme begins in early March and continues through to May. There is a mixture of resource publication, pre-recorded sessions and live Q&A events. The programme details will be published on WJEC's website and aspects are also listed in the indicative timeline in Appendix 1. The programme will include:

- Assessment to include avoiding unconscious bias
- Equalities and managing conscious and unconscious bias
- Making grade judgements.

14.3. **Other Guidance** – to summarise, guidance on these areas will follow:

- Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments – from WJEC
- Application of special consideration - from WJEC
- Internal quality assurance - from WJEC
- Avoiding unconscious bias and discrimination – from WJEC
- Meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) – from Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- Review of Centre Determined Grades and appeals – from Qualifications Wales and WJEC.
- Private Candidates – guidance for centres accepting private candidates – from Qualifications Wales.

The Information Commissioner’s Office has suggested links to guidance that might be particularly relevant. These are as follows:

The main guide on the UK General Data Protection Regulation:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

Within that the following sections are likely to be particularly relevant:

- Guidance on Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs), including a template DPIA and checklists to help data controllers determine whether a DPIA is necessary: [Data protection impact assessments | ICO](#)
- Guidance on the Right to be informed, which will help all data controllers involved in the assessments process to develop and provide good quality privacy information for candidates: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/individual-rights/right-to-be-informed/>
- Guidance on the processing of special category personal data, which includes a template policy document for that processing: [Special category data | ICO](#)

Appendix 1

a) Timeline – Key dates

Event	Date
WJEC provides information to centres on the assessment and IQA requirements	5 March
Centres submit their assessment and Internal QA policies to WJEC	Between 19 - 25 March
WJEC provides feedback to centres on their policies	12 April
Grading decisions made in centres and Internal QA undertaken. Grades are shared with learners and centre reviews undertaken. Centres internally review and sign off outcomes	By 2 July
Submission window for CDGs	Between 14 June – 2 July
WJEC QA learner decision making records and overall outcomes	Between 21 June – 12 July
WJEC discusses atypical results with centres and issues arising from review of evidence records	13-16 July
Centres submit amended CDGs following centre review processes	20 July
AS and A level Results	10 August
AS and A level appeals window	10 August – 7 September
GCSE Results	12 August
GCSE appeals window	24 August – 21 September*

b) WJEC Timeline: Publication of Guidance and Training Events

(*provisional date)

Activity	Date
Training: Foundations and creation of assessment	5 March
Guidance on Centre policy on assessment and QA	5 March
Training: Centre approach to assessment and QA of grading decisions	w/c 8 March
Training: Live Q&A	12 March
High-level appeals process	15 March
Final Qualification Assessment Frameworks including grade descriptors	w/c 15 March
Grading Guide for centres	w/c 15 March
Assessment materials for centres	w/c 15 March
Entries deadline	19 March
Subject specific training materials	w/c 22 March
Centres submit Assessment and Internal QA policies to WJEC	19 - 25 March
Training: Unconscious bias and objectivity	22 March
Training: Live Q&A	25 March
WJEC provides feedback to centres on their policies	12 April
Online Training: Making final judgements	19 April
Entries amendment window deadline	22 April
Final appeals process	17 May
Training: Good practice in making final grading decisions and QA	26 April
Training: Live Q&A sessions	5 May
Training: Submitting CDGs	17 May
Submission window for CDGs	14 June – 2 July

c) Timeline – key dates for learners

Event	Date
Your school or college will tell you how you will be assessed and graded for your qualification	By Easter
You will receive your provisional Centre Determined Grades and you will have the opportunity to ask for your grades to be reviewed. Your school or college will explain the process they will use and tell you the outcome of any review.	In June
Your school or college will submit the provisional Centre Determined Grades to WJEC.	By 2 July
AS and A level Results Day	10 August
You will have the opportunity to appeal your AS or/and A level result to WJEC	10 August – 7 September
GCSE Results Day	12 August
You will have the opportunity to appeal your GCSE result to WJEC	24 August – 21 September *
You will have the opportunity to appeal to Qualifications Wales for an Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS)	Post results day

(*provisional date)

Appendix 2 – glossary of summer 2021 terms

NB: Many terms are further explained in WJEC guidance documents

Term used (in alphabetical order)	Definition of term in the context of the alternative arrangements for awarding centre determined grades (CDGs) in summer 2021
Access arrangements	<p>In normal years, awarding bodies ensure that a learner’s entitlement to reasonable adjustments is met via access arrangements e.g. extra time in an exam is allowed for a dyslexic learner or a visually impaired learner has a paper modified with enlarged font size.</p> <p>In the absence of exams, centres are expected to ensure that arrangements are made for all eligible learners to access the assessment, as appropriate.</p>
Adapted past papers	<p>WJEC question papers from previous exam series that have been adjusted in line with the adapted assessment requirements for each specification in summer 2021.</p>
Adapted specification content	<p>In July/August 2020, WJEC made adaptations to the assessment requirements of specification content for GCSE, AS and A level qualifications for summer 2021, as part of Qualification Wales’ requirements to mitigate lost teaching and learning time. These adaptations still apply.</p>
Appeal	<p>A learner who is not satisfied with their grade will be able to appeal their grade. The appeals process will have three stages:</p> <p>Stage 1 - a centre review of the provisional centre determined grade on the grounds of judgement and/or a procedural error has been made.</p> <p>Stage 2 – 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.</p> <p>Stage 3 – a request to Qualification Wales for an Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) to review whether WJEC has followed the required procedures.</p>
Assessment weightings	<p>Weightings of content or skills are defined in the published specification. WJEC’s Qualification Assessment Frameworks do not require these to be adhered to in summer 2021.</p>
Atypical centre profile	<p>Centres that submit unusually high or unusually low entry patterns or outcomes compared to previous years.</p>
Centre Determined Grades	<p>In the absence of an exam series, and ongoing disruption to teaching and learning, centres will be determining the GCSE, AS and A level qualification grades awarded to learners in summer 2021. Using assessment evidence produced by learners, teachers will make best-fit judgements to assign grades to learners. These grades are based on demonstrated attainment, rather than potential.</p>

Centre review of grade	If a learner considers that an error has been made in determining their grade, they must be given the opportunity to request a centre review of their grade. This is stage1 of the appeals processes.
Centre roll	Learners enrolled with a centre are on the centre roll, as opposed to private candidates who are not.
Centre to centre discussions	A mechanism for schools to hold supportive discussion with each other and share best practice.
Compensatory (scheme of assessment)	The assessment model used by GCSE, AS and A level qualifications, where strengths in performance in some areas may balance shortcomings elsewhere.
Decision making record	A record of the processes followed to produce each learner's grade for each qualification with a rationale to explain how evidence was used to support the judgement.
Demonstrated attainment	Learner attainment for which there is clear assessment evidence.
Design Delivery Advisory Group (DDAG)	The Design and Delivery Advisory Group (DDAG) was established to develop workable proposals which could deliver the Minister for Education's policy on qualifications in 2021. The group was retained to provide stakeholder support for WJEC and QW's work to develop the details of the approach from January 2021. Terms of reference: Design and Delivery Advisory Group GOV.WALES
Equitable assessments	Assessments that have been designed to be fair for all learners, including those who share protected characteristics.
Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS)	The Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) (Covid-19) is the final stage of the appeals process. Qualifications Wales checks whether the awarding body has complied with regulatory requirements and followed its own procedures.
External centre quality assurance processes	WJEC will implement a programme to quality assure each centre's processes. Once results are finally submitted to WJEC, grade profiles may be reviewed and any atypical profiles discussed with the centre.
Grade descriptors	Grade descriptors give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by learners awarded the following grades: GCSE – A, C, E and G AS – A, C, E A level – A, C, E Descriptors will require a best-fit judgement based on professional expertise and the attainment demonstrated.
Head of Centre Declaration	Heads of centre will need to submit a declaration to WJEC assuring WJEC that all the relevant processes have taken place in production of the centre's CDGs.

Internal quality assurance processes	WJEC will require centres to implement processes to ensure that centre determined grades are produced via suitable procedures to ensure they are as accurate and fair as possible prior to submission to WJEC. WJEC will provide guidance on what these processes must include.
Objective judgement	In the context of grading decisions, this means impartial decisions based on evidence of demonstrated attainment that are not influenced by factors that are irrelevant to grades.
Performance standard	The performance standard for summer 21 is the same as in previous years, though the volume of work completed by the learner may be lower. It should be no harder or easier for a learner to attain the relevant grade than in previous years.
Private candidate	A learner who is not enrolled at a centre and needs a centre to agree to enter them for a qualification, so that they can complete the necessary external assessments (in normal years this would be any NEA associated with the qualification and exams). The learner is not taught by staff at the centre as part of the centre's normal provision. ¹⁰
Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)	The public sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Review of public sector Equality Duty - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Qualification Assessment Frameworks	WJEC documents that set out the subject specific assessment guidance for relevant qualifications in summer 2021.
Reasonable adjustments	Adjustments made to an exam or assessment to enable candidates with disabilities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding so that the disability does not put the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a candidate who is not disabled. For summer 21, centres are required to facilitate reasonable adjustments for eligible learners where appropriate.
Special considerations	Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the candidate's control at the time of the assessment, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment. For summer 2021, teachers should take into account individual learner circumstances that affected the learner

¹⁰ A Learner in relation to whom there is no Relevant Centre that has purchased the GQ Qualification on behalf of the Learner, and materially contributed to the preparation of the Learner for the assessment (whether through teaching or instruction provided by Teachers employed by it or otherwise).

	at the time of assessment when making their professional judgements and producing CDGs.
Unconscious bias	Unconscious biases are the views and opinions that we are unaware of. They affect our everyday behaviour and decision making. Our unconscious biases are influenced by our background, culture and personal experiences.