

## JCQ Update on the Summer Series 2020

28<sup>th</sup> April 2020



In our response to Ofqual's publication of further guidance on summer awarding in 2020 we said that we would provide further details of the summer awarding after Easter.

Schools and colleges will be experiencing disruption and difficulties in these challenging times and this update is intended to provide as much information as currently possible. However, in some areas, detailed information is unavailable until Ofqual feedback on their [Consultation on exceptional arrangements for awarding GCSEs, AS, A levels, Extended Project Qualification and Advanced Extension Award in maths](#) that closes on 29 April. In the meantime, the exam boards are working closely with Ofqual to ensure that we are consistent in our approaches.

Please note that this information is relevant to those Awarding Organisations regulated by Ofqual. Timelines and GCSE grading across Regulatory jurisdictions may differ and schools and colleges should check with their local exam boards, in particular those centres in Northern Ireland and Wales.

The exam boards will issue further updated information to schools and colleges as soon as possible.

### **Preparing Centre Assessment Grades and rank orders**

Schools and colleges are encouraged to start their preparations for submitting Centre Assessment Grades and rank orders for GCSE, AS, A-level, Mathematics Advanced Extension Award and Extended Project qualifications for students who are entered for examinations in the summer of 2020.

### **When to submit Centre Assessment Grades and rank orders**

The exam boards will contact schools and colleges with further information in the coming weeks. The start date for entering Centre Assessment Grades will be from the 1<sup>st</sup> June.

The awarding bodies will provide:

- details on how to input candidates' grades and rank orders into their version of the standardisation collection system
- the final deadline for submission.

### **What to consider when submitting Centre Assessment Grades and rank orders**

The awarding bodies will ask for the following information:

- A Centre Assessment Grade for each candidate
- Rank ordering of candidates within each grade starting with the strongest candidates. This should be a single rank order for each subject, even if there are students in different year groups
- In the case of tiered GCSE subjects, schools and colleges should provide Centre Assessment Grades that reflect the grade set of the tier of entry
- Centre Assessment Grades could include a 'U' (ungraded)
- For GCSE combined science, the 9-9 to 1-1 grade scale should be used

The exam boards will collect grade decisions for the endorsements in spoken language in GCSE English Language and practical's in A-level Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics separately as normal.

The grades, rank orderings and endorsements are confidential and must not be given to students or parents/guardians.

In making their judgement, teachers will want to consider, where available, a range of evidence such as mock examinations, non-examination assessments, assignments and other records of performance. Please refer to Ofqual's [Information for Heads of Centre](#) for more details.

There is no requirement to consider work undertaken after the closure of schools and colleges on 20 March and teachers should be cautious in considering work produced after closure that shows a change in performance that could be explained by the context in which the work was undertaken.

### **Special consideration and access arrangements for summer 2020**

This year the exam boards will not be applying any adjustments for special considerations or access arrangements. Schools and colleges should submit a Centre Assessment Grade that takes these into account when considering what a candidate would have achieved had the adjustment been applied.

### **Conflicts of interest**

Heads of Centre are responsible for managing any potential conflicts of interest in relation to the submission of Centre Assessment Grades and rank order information, for example where a member of centre staff is involved in the preparation of Centre Assessment Grades for a family member.

The Head of Centre must ensure that records of a potential conflict of interest, and the steps taken to mitigate it, are retained. If the potential conflict of interest involves the Head of Centre, this should be notified to the exam board ahead of submission using the established routes for capturing centre staff declarations of interest.

### **Transferred candidates**

In cases where a student has transferred from one school or college to another part-way through their studies, the current Head of Centre may wish to consult with the previous

centre about evidence they hold and may take this into account in reaching a judgement where they are confident to do so.

### **Signing off Centre Assessment Grades and rank ordering**

All grades and rank orders must be signed off by two subject teachers and the Head of Centre before submission to the exam boards:

- Two subject teachers must sign off each set of a subject's Centre Assessment Grades and the rank ordering (or if only one teacher is available, by the Head of Department)
- The Head of Centre must sign off the Centre Assessment Grade and rank order, for each exam board, declaring the information is accurate and is a true representation of student performance. (If the Head of Centre is unavailable, they can delegate to a deputy.)
- The exam boards will provide further information on submitting this information.

Once data has been completed, and the Head of Centre declaration submitted, no further entry amendments can be made.

### **Private candidates**

Ofqual's consultation proposes that Centre Assessment Grades submitted by schools and colleges can include private candidates provided the Head of Centre is confident that there is enough evidence of the candidate's achievement to make an objective judgement.

This means that private candidates must be placed in a centre's rank order along with other candidates. The same process to generate Centre Assessment Grades and rank orders must apply to **all** candidates submitted by the centre.

The Head of Centre needs to have an equal degree of confidence in the grade/rank order submitted for private candidates as they do for the others.

In some cases, private candidates may have studied with an approved centre, for example a distance learning provider, but made their entry at a different centre, such as a local school or college.

In these cases, it would be sensible for the centre which holds most evidence of the candidate's likely achievement to take responsibility for submitting their Centre Assessment Grade and rank order. In some cases, this will require the entry to be transferred from one centre to another. If that is the case, the centre intending to submit the Centre Assessment Grade should make a new entry for the candidate and request that the original centre withdraw their entry. This should only be done in consultation with the original centre and the candidate.

We are giving further consideration with Ofqual to private candidates who do not have an existing relationship with a centre or distance learning provider registered with a centre. It may, unfortunately, be necessary for some private candidates to take examinations in the

autumn or next summer to get their grades. We will provide a further update on this by 30 April.

### **Non-examination assessments (NEA)**

NEA does not need to be completed for any student this year and marks for completed NEA should not be sent to the exam boards.

Where NEA has been completed, students should not be given their marks. Equally exam boards will not be providing schools and colleges with marks from any centre moderation visits. However, schools and colleges should retain candidates' NEA work.

### **Entries**

Exam boards will let schools and colleges know their extended deadlines for the amendment and correction of entries for the summer series.

### **Malpractice**

The exam boards know that the vast majority of schools and colleges will do their very best to ensure that the Centre Assessment Grades and rank orders submitted are a fair and true reflection of the grades that candidates would have been most likely to achieve if they had sat their examinations as planned.

There may be instances where schools and colleges or teachers are put under external pressure from a candidate or their parent/guardian to influence the decision-making on a grade or rank order. Any external pressure must be reported to the exam board(s) who may investigate this as potential candidate malpractice.

Ofqual's consultation proposes that schools and colleges must not release Centre Assessment Grades, rank order information and endorsement grades for spoken language in GCSE English Language and practical's in A Level Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics to candidates or parents/guardians before results days. In line with Ofqual's proposals, the awarding bodies will investigate any breaches of confidentiality as potential malpractice or maladministration.

In addition, schools and colleges must not submit results that they know to be inaccurate or enter candidate(s) who were not originally intending to certificate in the 2020 summer series.

### **Standardisation**

In order to ensure that grades are fair across all schools and colleges and equal to previous years, a standardisation process will be undertaken by exam boards. The model is being developed with Ofqual, who are consulting on the principles. The exam boards will share further details on rank ordering and the statistical model used for standardisation once it has been finalised with Ofqual. All the exam boards offering qualifications in England will

use the same standardisation model. The model will be used at national level for each qualification subject. The model will accommodate all centres including new schools and colleges without prior attainment data or with small entries.

### **Results days**

As planned, the results in August will be issued to students from 08:00 on:

- Thursday 13 August for AS, A-level, EPQ and AEA Mathematics results
- Thursday 20 August for GCSE results

As in previous years, the exam boards will be issuing full centre results to the Head of Centre and examinations officer the day before these dates so that they can prepare their administration for releasing results to students. As usual, we will share results data with UCAS.

### **Appeals**

Ofqual is currently consulting on an appeals process for schools and colleges who feel that their awards have not followed procedures. Further information will be available as soon as possible.

This summer the standard post-results services such as Access to Scripts, reviews of marking and reviews of moderation will not apply.

### **Thank you**

The awarding process this year is unprecedented and will pose many challenges to schools and colleges. We all want to thank Heads of Centres, exam officers and teachers in advance for their professionalism, hard work and support that will make it possible to award grades to candidates so that they can progress in their lives and learning.

Schools and colleges should contact their exam boards for help if they have any concerns.