

## GENERATING CENTRE ASSESSED GRADES FOR GCSE, AS, A-LEVEL, EPQ AND AEA QUALIFICATIONS; VOCATIONAL, TECHNICAL AND OTHER GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS (Stage 1)

This document explains the school-based process for generating centre assessed grades and draws on advice from ASCL, SSAT and other recognised education organisations and professional bodies.

### Stage 1: Preparation and data entry

- Subject Leaders: This week, - recommend the best evidence to subject teams for estimating student performance; consider unfinished units and where similar skills or learning processes are seen in other aspects of your course.
- Teachers: This week - make estimates of student performance in course components using raw marks from last year's marking scheme.
- 11th May – 22nd May: Teachers enter data into SIMS:

### Stage 2: Checking and verification of data entry by Subject Leaders and the school

### Stage 3: Upload of centre assessed grades and process sign-off by the Head of Centre (MBR)

#### 1 - Background

*"We are asking schools and colleges to use their professional experience to make a fair and objective judgement of the grade they believe a student would have achieved had they sat their exams this year."* Ofqual, 3.4.20. "GUIDANCE Summer 2020 grades for GCSE, AS and A level, Extended Project Qualification and Advanced Extension Award in maths. Guidance for teachers, students, parents and carers"

#### 2 – The process for generating centre assessed grades

Teachers have to provide both a **rank order** and an **estimated grade**. Grades may be moderated up or down by awarding organisations but the rank order supplied by schools will not be changed. This information will be clarified when the consultation outcomes are published.

##### a) The rank order

For each subject, students have to be ranked within each grade from the most secure to least secure; effectively creating one rank for all students entered for that subject. Ofqual has previously stated that where schools have mixed cohorts of Year 11, Year 10 and Year 9 students, or Year 12 resits, for example, they should just submit one 'single list' of all candidates for that subject. The 'single list' will be confirmed in the Ofqual consultation outcomes. Subject Leaders will want to pay particular attention to the candidates rank at the top and bottom of each grade, as these are the ones most likely to have the centre assessed grade changed through the standardisation process operated by the awarding bodies.

##### b) The estimated grade

- The best word is 'estimation'. This is not about what a student deserves to get. This is not about a target grade. This is not the moment or the method to put right inequalities in the exam system. It is **the most plausible grades your students would have obtained if they had actually taken the subject examination.**

### *c) The school process*

- Step 1: Review the evidence of students' current achievement in your examination course. Subject Leaders will recommend the most useful subject-based evidence to use but the Spring Progress Update data is a good starting point because it records teachers' most recent estimate of student achievement. You might also consider February 'Review Week' data; PPE results across the year group; Non-examined assessment; Specific task or significant work completed throughout the course; moderated performances, timed essays, etc. Different subjects will use different evidence.

- Step 2: Consider how much more progress students would have made, had the usual teaching and learning, targeted support and additional revision taken place.

Data in your SIMS mark sheets will offer guidance on the final grade that *might* have been achieved: FFT estimates provided at the beginning of Year 10; ALPS targets; the most recent Pixl estimate; previously banked BTEC marks and a provisional rank order for your teaching group to help you get started. The intention is *not* to match teacher's estimated grades to these data sets. Consider how your students learn at the moment and their performance in revision, practice papers, classroom tests *had these activities carried on*.

- Step 3: Decide the raw marks for students in each component of your course, *had they sat their exams this year*

Based on your professional judgement in Step 1 and Step 2, decide students' achievement in each component of your course, using the raw marks in last year's published examination board marking scheme. You must keep a record of these marks.

- Step 4: Data entry into Progress Update mark sheets

Add up the component raw marks. Enter an overall raw mark into SIMS. This will generate an estimated grade and the rank order for each student for you to check. The overall raw marks are a lever to help you 'fine tune' the estimated grade and the rank order. They are not submitted.

### *Keep the focus of the task in mind*

- Knowing what you know, all of it, your job is **to estimate the most plausible grades your students would have obtained if they had actually taken the subject examination.**
- What you have to do is unprecedented.
- It requires integrity, professional wisdom, courage and ethics. You will also have to set aside some of your instincts to do the task you have been given.
- Leaders in Blackfen School have faith in every teaching colleague to do this job, in the way it needs to be done. Teachers are fully capable of undertaking this task.

### **3- Specific subject information for some qualifications**

**Tiers of entry:** Ofqual has stated “In the case of tiered GCSE subjects, schools and colleges should only provide centre assessment grades which reflect the tier of entry of the individual student (9 to 3 for higher tier; 5 to 1 for foundation tier).” This information will be clarified when the consultation outcomes are published.

**Estimated grades in MFL:** Should French estimated grades take into account the grading adjustment proposed by Ofqual when making their grading decisions? Ofqual has stated: “The adjustment in GCSE MFL is intended to align grading standards in French and German more closely with GCSE Spanish. As this adjustment is purely statistical, it will be made at a national level by the exam boards with guidance from Ofqual. Therefore, schools and colleges should not try to take account of this adjustment when making judgements about centre assessment grades for students this summer, but should work on the basis that the standard is the same as 2019. The adjustment will be factored into the statistical standardisation exercise and reflected in students’ final results.”

**EPQ:** Ofqual has stated: “Extended Project Qualifications are assessed through non-exam assessment which is marked by centres and moderated by the exam board. Following the government’s decision to close schools and colleges exam boards have not moderated assessments for Extended Project Qualifications this summer. In view of the proposals set out earlier in this consultation, we propose that exam boards will not be permitted to moderate Extended Project Qualifications this summer.”

### **Specific information for vocational and technical qualifications**

Ofqual states: “Those vocational and technical qualifications in scope of the direction for learners receiving a calculated result this summer are quite varied in a number of respects, including: the amount of teaching time and size of the qualification; assessment structure (for example, the proportion of internal versus external assessment; or the number of pathways through); the profile of marks-based and directly graded components; the grading structures (for example Distinction, Merit, Pass; A to E etc.); the range of qualification delivery models (timetabled, sessional, on-demand).

This means that the learners due to complete qualifications this summer are likely to have very different profiles of formal assessment already completed. Therefore the framework and requirements around calculating results for learners will need to be sufficiently flexible to acknowledge these differences and allow awarding organisations to devise and implement approaches to calculating grades which are appropriate within different contexts.”

Ofqual’s proposal suggests that awarding organisations will select the evidence to be used by BTEC teachers for producing estimated grades. Teachers may be directed on which data sets and banked results to use, according to the awarding body of their course. This information will be clarified when the consultation outcomes are published. As far as possible, the school process for generating estimated grades for vocational and technical subjects will remain the same, as for all other qualifications. This means that the integrity of estimated grades for vocational and technical subjects is on a par with GCSE, AS, A-Level and EPQ estimated grades and BTEC teachers are protected by following the same school process. However, this direction may change, based on the outcomes of the vocational and technical consultation, which closes on 8.5.20.

#### **4 - Frequently Asked Questions**

##### *1) Why are we entering 'marks' first and not an estimated grade?*

Raw marks will produce an initial rank order which is 'objective and fair' because it is less likely to be prone to bias. You can justify the rank order to the head of centre (MBR) by explaining the separate component marks. It enables you to experiment with different weightings of evidence to see how the rank changes. Raw marks are transparent and explicable after the event, if you need to explain how the estimated grade and rank order were achieved.

##### *2) I didn't finish teaching my course. What do I do about course components for which I have no assessment?*

Teachers are used to predicting students' final grades before the end of their course, e.g for Pixl estimates at the beginning of Year 11 and throughout Key Stage 5. Consider the knowledge, skills and understanding in the unfinished unit: how do other components in your course show students' learning using similar skills? You have virtually finished teaching your examination course: where can you see how your students read, write and express themselves in other units? In which topics or activities have they previously expressed expertise and what does that suggest about their performance in the unfinished unit? If you were going to teach the unfinished unit, next week, how would you prepare your lessons? What would you be assuming your students could do, already, based on their prior learning and performance in the rest of the course?

##### *3) I didn't get a chance to give my students lots of timed practice*

We know that practising timed assignments helps students to think and write under timed conditions. Consider students' performance in other timed practices, in other course units, when they have had a chance to revise and prepare. How did they perform on these occasions? What do these outcomes tell you about their performance under timed conditions?

##### *4) Four of my students have got the same grade*

Look at the rank order and make sure that the student who is most secure in this grade is ranked above the other students with the same grade. The student who is least secure in the grade should be ranked below the other students.

##### *5) Why don't we just give students their highest estimated FFT grade?*

We know that students don't always achieve their FFT grades because they do better or worse than expected. The process is not about awarding the grades that we think students deserve because that is based on emotional and subjective input. The process is the application of our professional judgement about what we know about our students' performance, on an average day, on an average paper.

##### *6) What about teacher bias towards individual students?*

The process in school for generating centre assessed grades is designed to keep teachers and students safe. It focuses teachers' professional attention on the history and estimates of student performance that have been previously recorded in data reviews and reports, as well as the requirements of the examination components in their subject. By entering a raw mark for each component, you can see an evidence trail that leads to an objective overall raw mark. The process is not leading teachers to award grades based on students' personalities, behaviour, attitudes to learning or teacher-student relationships. This information,

combined with Subject Leader guidance, as well as the school-based checks that will follow teacher's data input, will support the integrity of the school's centre assessed grades.

*7) How accountable am I for my students' grades?*

You are responsible for the following elements in the process: for knowing your students' performance up until March 20th 2020 and recording it accurately in school data systems; for reviewing students' performance data and understanding what it tells you about their academic potential; for following the school process to consider students' performance in each course component and entering raw marks which are unbiased and based on professional knowledge. Teachers generate centre assessed grades – not teacher assessed grades. Examination boards use schools' data input to generate 'calculated grades'. Teachers provide estimates of student performance. They do not generate students' grades.

*8) What happens if teachers inflate students' grades?*

- Awarding organisations (examination boards) and Ofqual will take steps to ensure grades match performance in previous years.
- Inflating grades devalues current Year 11 and Year 13 achievements and disadvantages other cohorts. Teachers know how to assess student performance accurately, based on their professional skill and experience of assessing students in a range of examination contexts.
- Some believe that GCSEs at age 16 should be scrapped, so the profession needs to show that it is capable of doing this exercise well, so that our influence and input into professional decisions in the future is recognised.
- Heads of Centre need to sign off the whole process; inflated grades make this process a risk and put the Head of Centre (MBR) in a difficult position.

*9) Can parents make Subject Access requests to find out their child's centre assessed grade and rank that the school provided?*

A subject access request (SAR) is a written request made by or on behalf of an individual for the information which he or she is entitled to ask for under section 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, request, if the child attends a maintained school, the parent or carer has a right to access the child's educational records and information about the child. The educational record can include information about the pupil's academic achievements, correspondence from teachers and major disciplinary incidents. The legislative context in relation to educational records can be found in The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005. The General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) grants data subjects the right to access any personal data an organisation holds on them. This is known as a DSAR (data subject access request). In the UK, the GDPR is supplemented by the DPA (Data Protection Act) 2018.

Ofqual has stated: "Moreover, to secure the maintenance of standards in the exceptional circumstances of this summer it is important that teachers' professional judgements, about individual students' position in the centre's rank order, and the centre assessment grades, are as objective, and candid, as possible. To secure this objectivity, it is important that teachers and Heads of Centre are free to make objective judgements and not subject to any external influence, for example from students or their parents and carers. We therefore consider that centre assessment grades, rank order information, and the judgements on which these are founded, should be confidential until after results have been issued."

The school process directs teachers to decide estimated marks for each component of the examination course and to keep a record of their estimates. This starting point sets up a process which is less likely to be biased, can be checked for accuracy and can be explained to the Head of Centre (MBR). Teachers input overall marks, first, to ensure a rank order which is objective and fair. The checks made by the school when teachers' data entry finishes operate at student, subject and centre-level, so that anomalies in rank order and estimated grades are highly visible, easily identified and will be addressed.

*10) What about private candidates in my subject?*

Teachers and Subject Leaders who have private candidates on their entry lists will work with Faculty Leaders, FMI and MBR to judge the reliability and integrity of the information about these students' levels of achievement. This judgement will be made on a case-by-case basis and some private students may not receive a calculated grade for Summer examinations in 2020. Instead, they will be offered entry for the next scheduled examination in their subject. Ofqual has stated: "Where centres have accepted entries from private candidates (students who they have not taught themselves, because they have been home-schooled, following distance-learning programmes or studying independently) those students should be included where the Head of Centre (MBR) is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement."

*11) How will the school check students' estimated grades and rank order in each subject?*

We propose to carry out the same kind of checking process as the awarding organisations, so that teachers' estimates of student outcomes across subjects are robust, fair and objective. We will work out the rank order where there are clusters of students who have been given the same overall raw mark and ask Subject Leaders to check the final rank for their subject. The process is led by teachers' professional judgements, so we have the benefit of being able to contact teachers if queries arise. Data entry deadlines must be met, so that checking processes can be applied.

*12) What happens to our estimated grades and rank order when we send them to the awarding bodies?*

The awarding bodies will apply a standardisation process and produce the 'calculated grades' that will be published to students. Schools will not know the grades achieved by their students until results are published, as usual, in August.

*13) How will awarding organisations standardise grades?*

- Ofqual use a methodology called 'comparable outcomes'.
- All things being equal, we should expect GCSE results to be broadly similar year on year, based on prior attainment at Key Stage 2.
- Ofqual and the awarding organisations already know, nationally, what grade distributions to expect in each subject.
- Awarding organisations also have a detailed understanding of how individual centres have performed in each subject, over time.

*14) How will Ofqual judge this school's estimated grades and rank order against the national picture?*

Ofqual has stated: "We are working with technical experts within exam boards and others to develop this model, which will combine a range of evidence including:

- expected grade distributions at national level
- results in previous years at individual centre level
- the prior attainment profile of students at centre level "

## **5 - Other important points**

- There will be no performance tables in 2020. You do not need to worry about the school's performance.
- Estimated grades are not part of any discussion regarding performance management or Appraisal targets.
- You **must not** discuss estimated grades or rank order with parents, carers and students at any point. These are centre assessed grades and they are confidential until 'after results have been issued'. Ofqual is considering if breach of confidentiality will result in a formal charge of malpractice against individual teachers.
- Some students will get a U or Grade 9 or Grade A\*: either because this is the most plausible grade they would have obtained, based on evidence and professional judgement or as a result of the standardisation process applied by awarding bodies.

## **Contacts for help and support**

Please do not hesitate to contact your LT line manager and FMI for further advice at any stage of the process. We will move heaven and earth to support you. Faculty and Subject Leaders will be able to book into virtual meetings with FMI throughout the process.

Emails enquiries about data entry should be sent to LSQ + FMI.

Email enquiries about examination entries should be sent to KAL + JOC + FMI.