

Summer 2021



GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements Technical Questions and Answers



Revised Version 2.0: 31 March 2021

Introduction

This document, which sits alongside *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre*, sets out a range of technical questions about Summer 2021 awarding that principals have asked us in recent weeks. We have provided answers based on the information available to us up to Wednesday 31 March 2021.

Along with responses provided in Version 1.0 of the document, this version (Version 2.0) provides further responses to questions on evidence and use of the CCEA assessment resources. Following an update to the Process for Heads of Centre on 16 March, we have also included a question on expectations around use of the Candidate Assessment Record. All new or amended questions are denoted by the inclusion of a green marker in the left margin.

In addition to this document, we have provided further frequently asked questions on our website that are less technical in nature and aimed more at students and parents.

We hope the answers below support and further explain the information provided in the *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre* document issued on Friday 5 March 2021 and updated on Tuesday 16 March 2021.

1. Will outcomes at subject level still align with 2020 outcomes, as previously stated?

Yes – in his statement on 2 February 2021, the Minister of Education stated that ‘Each school and college will determine outcomes for its students based on the evidenced standard at which the student is performing. It is likely, however, that, across our system, overall grade outcomes in 2021 will be broadly similar to those awarded by centres in 2020.’

2. Will teacher judgement be the key determinant of the Centre Determined Grade?

Yes – each Centre Determined Grade is a judgement of the final grade for a student in each qualification. It must be a holistic review of a student’s performance based on assessment evidence, gathered and retained at centre level. In the interests of fairness within and across centres, it is imperative that each Centre Determined Grade is a realistic, evidence-based judgement of the standard at which a student is performing, i.e. their demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills in the content of the specification they have covered.

3. What concessions will be made for current Year 11 candidates in 2021–22?

CCEA has been considering the implications of school closures in this academic year for those candidates hoping to achieve a qualification grade in 2022. In his statement on 2 February 2021, the Minister of Education committed to ‘provide clarity by the end of March, or as soon as possible thereafter, concerning the arrangements for awarding GCSEs and A levels in 2022.’ As such, we will work with the Department of Education and other relevant stakeholders to agree appropriate arrangements for awarding qualifications in 2021–22.

4. Can a Year 11 student (or below) be awarded a grade at unit or qualification level for any GCSE qualification in Summer 2021?

The Minister of Education confirmed that candidates in Year 11 cannot be entered for or awarded GCSE qualifications in Summer 2021. The Minister did, however, set out two exceptions to this, where awarding a GCSE grade early may facilitate access to extended learning in the same area. The exceptions are for:

- GCSE Mathematics students who will be entering GCSE Further Mathematics in 2022; and/or
- GCSE Irish students who may progress to GCSE Gaeilge or require it for progression to other courses delivered in Irish. This decision is in line with the statutory duty to encourage and facilitate Irish-medium education.

Entries

5. What is the final date that I can make an entry amendment with CCEA?

CCEA's entry system will close on 16 April 2021, and CCEA will be unable to accept any entry amendments after this date.

6. Can I amend the tier of unit entry for my candidates after the close of entry date – 21 February 2021?

CCEA will accept entry amendment files, including change of tier, up until the entry system closes on 16 April 2021. CCEA will be unable to accept entry amendment files after this date.

7. Will the tier of unit entry restrict the overall Centre Determined Grade available to my students?

The Centre Determined Grade should not be higher than the maximum grade allowable through the combination of Foundation and Higher Tier units selected.

8. It was the intention for some Year 14 students to resit their AS qualification this year. How should I make my entries for this AS resit?

If your students wish to achieve a new AS qualification outcome in 2021, you will need to make an AS cash-in entry, as well as the necessary AS unit entries, to ensure eligibility. Please note that Summer 2020 unit entries will not contribute towards eligibility. If you have any queries about which units require entry, please refer to CCEA's [Summary of Entry Requirements – Summer 2021](#).

9. For those Year 14 students who had hoped to resit one or more AS qualifications in Summer 2021, do we manage evidence gathering and awarding separately from A2?

Year 14 students can be awarded a GCE A level grade on the basis of the standard at which they are working at A2 only. However, if they do wish to receive an AS grade, you should enter them for the relevant AS units and cash in, and ensure that they generate the evidence required to allow you to make a judgement on the standard at which they are working at AS level.

10. I have a number of students in Year 13 who are completing GCE Mathematics in one year. Normally, these students wouldn't cash in their qualification until Year 14. Should the students cash in this year?

Arrangements for Summer 2022 have yet to be confirmed, but ultimately this is a decision for you and your students. It is important to note, however, that candidates will not achieve an A2 qualification grade in Mathematics in 2021 unless they cash in this year.

If you have any queries about this scenario, please contact our entries department at entries@ccea.org.uk

11. My Year 13 students normally cash in their AS qualification at the end of Year 14. This year, should we cash in these students at the end of Year 13 instead?

Arrangements for Summer 2022 have yet to be confirmed, but ultimately this is a decision for you and your students. It is important to note, however, that candidates will not achieve an AS qualification grade in 2021 unless they cash in this year.

12. Is there a published deadline for submission of Centre Determined Grades in Summer 2021?

The deadlines for submission of Centre Determined Grades are as follows:

- GCE AS and A level and Certificate of Personal Effectiveness to be submitted by Friday 21 May; and
- GCSE, Occupational Studies, Vocationally Related Qualifications, Entry Level and OLA to be submitted by Friday 4 June.

13. When will the Centre Determined Grades application be made available?

Our intention is that the Centre Determined Grades application will be made available to centres no later than Tuesday 4 May 2021. CCEA will communicate the release date with centres as soon as it is confirmed. Guidance on the use of the application will also be available in advance.

14. What information will I have to input into the Centre Determined Grades application?

As a result of the positive feedback from the Summer 2020 centre assessment grades application, the Centre Determined Grades application will have the same look and feel as the application used in Summer 2020. At this stage, we anticipate that centres will only have to submit the Centre Determined Grades for each candidate cashing in at qualification level and indicate which candidates are private candidates. A user guide to support you with the Centre Determined Grades application will be made available before its release date.

15. What do I do if I am unable to award a Centre Determined Grade for a student in Summer 2021?

Entries should only be made for those students for whom you can submit a Centre Determined Grade. Please note that to ensure centres can provide a grade for students, all grades in the grade range should be considered. If there is insufficient evidence, a 'U' grade should be awarded unless the student is withdrawn.

16. Do I need to re-enter my January 2021 series unit and cash-in entries in Summer 2021?

The Department of Education has confirmed that there will be no separate centre awarding process for those candidates who had expected to take examinations and cash in GCSE English Language and Mathematics in January 2021. Instead, cash-in entries in those subjects will carry forward to Summer 2021 and a Centre Determined Grade will be awarded. A new entry will need to be made for Summer 2021 for these candidates, and CCEA can confirm that there will be no late charges for these entries.

Please note that candidates with unit entries only in January 2021, i.e. they were not planning to cash in, should only be entered if they wish to achieve a qualification grade in Summer 2021.

17. We are part of an area learning community (ALC) and have a consortium arrangement in place with another school. A student of ours is taught GCE Software Systems Development through the other school, but we do not agree with the Centre Determined Grade they are proposing. What should I do?

We recommend that you, as the centre making the entry, consult with the teaching centre and compare evidence on student performance in both centres to determine an agreed grade; for example, you may wish to compare the Centre Determined Grade suggested by the teaching centre and consider this in the context of evidence held within your school. However, it is you as the home centre that has final responsibility for submitting a Centre Determined Grade.

To support you in your final determination and in preparation for the sampling process, you must have access to the student's evidence, as this may be requested by CCEA. It will also be the responsibility of the centre making the entry to manage any post-result review requests forthcoming.

Support

18. What support will CCEA provide at subject level?

Subject-specific guidance and subject-specific webinars will be provided to support centres. The subject guidance and webinars will detail information such as unit omissions, assessment objectives associated with each qualification and grade descriptors. CCEA will also supply assessment resources to your centre. These will be quality assured question papers and mark schemes for **all** units/components that normally have examinations. Guidance on the conduct of the assessment resources will be included in the subject guidance, and advice on how to apply the mark schemes will also be included.

Centres can also avail of existing support such as past papers, mark schemes, grade boundaries, Chief Examiner's reports, Principal Moderator's reports, agreement trials, exemplification of examination performance, CCEA Analytics and specimen assessment materials.

You can also request centre-specific historical performance data from CCEA for GCSE, AS and A level qualifications. This data will show the grade distribution at every grade in each subject at qualification level for the previous four years, and you may wish to consider this data before finalising your Centre Determined Grade submissions.

You can request this data by emailing research@ccea.org.uk. In your email, please indicate which qualification level you wish to receive data for.

19. The approach to awarding grades this year places an onus on the school to ensure additional policies and procedures are in place. What support will CCEA provide to assist schools with this?

Schools will be required to have a Centre Determined Grades policy in place, which should set out the school's approach to awarding grades, taking account of areas such as overview of the process, roles and responsibilities, appropriate evidence and internal standardisation.

To support you in this work, we have included a Centre Determined Grades policy template and checklists for teachers and Heads of Department in *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre*.

Use of the Assessment Resources

20. What controls should be in place for delivery of any assessment CCEA provides?

CCEA will not stipulate the controls to be in place for the delivery of assessments; it is up to centres to decide on how they are used. This will vary depending on the context and circumstances of individual centres.

21. I have concerns about allowing a student to complete the assessment resource off site. How can I assure myself the work they have produced is their own, thus allowing me to authenticate it?

As a result of the disruption caused by COVID-19, there may be instances when teachers have no choice but to allow students to complete the CCEA assessment resources off site. To ensure you can authenticate this work with confidence, we recommend the following:

- agree a suitable time with the student when the assessment should be completed – this should be in line with the requirements of the assessment resource;
- ensure you are sufficiently familiar with the student's standard of work; and
- where appropriate, have a discussion with them on the work that has been produced.

22. When is the assessment window?

The assessments will be available from Monday 29 March 2021. These can be completed at any point from their release until the submission of grades.

23. Is CCEA standardising these assessments?

The assessments have been through a rigorous process of quality assurance; however, CCEA will not standardise marking in the usual way, as the assessments are provided as a support tool, not as a formal, standardised assessment. However, additional guidance will be provided on how teachers should apply the mark schemes for the assessment resources to ensure consistent application as far as possible.

24. If using CCEA assessments, do we have to use the entire paper or can we use sections/questions?

While we do recommend the use of a CCEA assessment resource, these are not mandatory. It is therefore up to centres to decide on how they are used, either in their entirety or in sections. In all instances, students should only be assessed in the content that has been covered.

25. Will we know before April the number of assessments being made available in each subject? For example, will GCSE Mathematics have one paper for each module?

We are providing question papers and mark schemes for **all** units/components that normally have examinations. Where tiers exist, Foundation and Higher Tier assessments will also be released.

26. Is use of the CCEA assessment resources mandatory?

No – the assessments are not mandatory, and it is up to centres to decide on how they are used. We would, however, encourage centres to use at least one of the assessment resources where it is safe to do so. An assessment conducted with a high level of control will have greater value.

However, CCEA understands the difficult public health context in which schools have been working since March 2020, which has included two extended periods of remote learning. Schools may, therefore, need to utilise evidence generated within more limited levels of control.

27. Why can the CCEA assessment resources not be made available earlier?

In his statement on 2 February 2021 and in his Formal Ministerial Direction, the Minister of Education committed to the release of the assessment resources at the beginning of April, and we at CCEA are working to this date.

We have committed to the release of the assessment resources from the week beginning 29 March, with the mark schemes for each following soon after. Final checks are being completed alongside modified and translated versions of the papers, and we want to make the suite available at the same time to ensure equality of access to all students.

28. Do you foresee schools using the assessment resources at different times to suit their own needs? Is there a risk that schools using them at different times will advantage some students and disadvantage others?

Schools may use the assessments when and how they see fit. The conditions under which the assessments are completed will not be standardised across centres; therefore, student experiences of them may also differ. If centres choose to use the assessment, it will normally be part of a range of evidence; therefore, students will be able to demonstrate their ability through various sources, not just the assessment.

29. The GCSE Unit 1 History CCEA assessment resource consists of two sections: Section A and Section B. Can I use the responses to Section A as one piece of evidence and responses to Section B as another?

Use of a CCEA assessment resource is entirely optional, and it can be used either in full or in part. If the assessment resource is divided into individual parts, such as in the example above, the parts should still only be considered as one piece of evidence. This is confirmed in the Ministerial Direction to CCEA which states that ‘In providing guidance on the evidence gathering process, including the use of assessment resources, the emphasis should be on the [CCEA] assessment as one piece of evidence within a range of evidence.’

30. What flexibilities can we avail of with the assessment resource?

Use of the CCEA assessment resources is optional, and some schools may decide not to use them at all. If a school does decide to use an assessment resource, it is important to highlight that they are adaptable. For example, on page 7 of the *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre* we make it clear that ‘as certain content may not have been covered ... the assessment resources may be adapted accordingly.’ As such, you may wish to:

- use only questions drawn from taught content;
- use only part of the assessment resource;
- complete it over more than one session; or
- combine elements of the assessment resource with questions from other sources to create your own assessment. For example, if we take GCSE History Unit 1, which we referred to in the previous question, you may wish to take Section A from the CCEA assessment resource and use questions from other sources to create your own new assessment.

If you do decide to amend the assessment resource, please ensure you do so in such a way that allows your students to fully demonstrate what they know, understand and can do and to access the full range of grades; for example, include questions where they can demonstrate they meet the requirements set out in the grade description for grade ‘A’ in the subject.

Evidence

31. How many pieces of evidence do I need to provide for each student?

In line with Section 12 of *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre*, the intention would be that no more than three good pieces of evidence per student are to be provided; however, this will be a decision for the school.

Schools may decide that two good pieces will be enough. If a student doesn’t have one of those two pieces available, it will be important you can identify a strong contingency piece.

32. Is there a minimum weighting of assessment that should be taken to allow any judgements to be arrived at?

No – we do not wish to be prescriptive on the weighting of assessment that should be taken. Instead, we would rather place emphasis on the validity and reliability of the evidence. A piece of evidence that covers specification components with a higher weighting may give a better indication of a student's standard of performance than a piece with a lower weighting. Evidence does not need to cover the entire specification content, but the more content that is covered, the more useful it may be.

33. Do different pieces of evidence attract a different weighting?

Each Centre Determined Grade is a judgement of the final grade for a qualification. It must be based on a holistic review of a student's performance as indicated by assessment evidence, gathered and retained at centre level. There is no prescribed weighting of evidence but an emphasis on the validity and reliability of the evidence. Evidence does not need to cover the entire specification content, but the more content that is covered, the more useful it may be.

34. Is the evidence prescribed or can centres choose?

The evidence used must be at the level of the qualification being graded and may include assessment evidence other than the assessment resources provided by CCEA. Please refer to page 9 of the *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre* for a list of possible types of evidence and some considerations of their use. Centres should be clear in their policy what types of evidence will be used in determining the grade. You should consider all the key evidence you have for each student and reflect on how much it tells you about the student's standard of performance, as measured against the requirements of the relevant specification.

35. What level of detail am I expected to provide on the evidence that our school will use to arrive at Centre Determined Grades?

Schools are expected to set out in their Centre Determined Grades policy the different types of evidence that will be used to arrive at grades. Schools are also advised to clearly set out any subject-specific differences in evidence used and commit to ensuring candidates are made aware of this before any decisions on Centre Determined Grades are made. This information does not need to be very specific or detailed; an example is below:

Our key evidence will comprise the half-term tracking assessment, the winter mock and the CCEA assessment resource.

For GCSE Digital Technology, we will use the Unit 3 controlled assessment instead of the half-term tracking assessment.

For GCSE Music, we will use the composition instead of the half-term tracking assessment.

In addition, our contingency arrangements – should these key pieces of evidence not be available due to absence – will be a monthly class assessment.

The information on evidence included in the school's Centre Determined Grades policy should align with the information set out in the Departmental Assessment Evidence Grid that will be provided at sampling stage. If it does not align, a clear justification for this must be included at the bottom of the Departmental Assessment Evidence Grid.

Where there is variance for a particular student, for example as a result of absence, the actual evidence used and the rationale for the variance should be recorded in the Candidate Assessment Record which will be provided to CCEA as part of the sampling process at the Centre Review stage.

36. Does each student's portfolio have to contain the same material?

No – we realise that evidence available will vary across individual students and subjects; however, adopting a more consistent approach will help centres arrive at more secure decisions across the cohort.

37. If controlled assessment is recommended to be completed, will this definitely form part of the evidence?

This will be decided by the centre. Each centre and subject department will decide which assessment(s) are most appropriate for assessing the level of performance of their students in line with the centre policy.

38. The controlled assessment in my subject is made up of a number of tasks. Can each task be considered a single piece of evidence?

There are many examples across a range of subjects where the controlled/internal assessment is made up of a number of tasks and assesses more than one assessment objective. This was the intention when the tasks were developed, and they have been accredited by the qualifications regulator on that basis. As such, each completed or partially completed controlled assessment will be considered as one piece of evidence.

39. Can a controlled/internal assessment task act as the sole piece of evidence?

There are a small number of instances where the controlled/internal assessment can be the sole piece of evidence used to support a judgement as this aligns with previous policy decisions, for example A2 2 Digital Technology, AS and A2 Software Systems Development, and AS and A2 Sports Science and the Active Leisure Industry. However, in most cases, using only evidence from controlled/internal assessments – particularly those with relatively low assessment weightings and limited specification coverage – may prove restrictive for teachers. This is acknowledged on page 5 of the *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre*, where it advises, 'A piece of evidence that covers a greater breadth of the specification content, knowledge, understanding and skills from a unit (or units) with a higher weighting may give a better indication of a student's standard of performance than a piece with lesser breadth or with a lower weighting.'

40. We are currently identifying what evidence we will use to support judgements in Double Award Science. The GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre document suggests no more than three pieces of evidence for moderation. Should it therefore be six pieces for double award subjects?

No – for double award as well as single award subjects, the intention is that no more than three pieces of evidence will be provided for moderation. Internally, however, you may wish to ensure you have selected evidence drawn from a sufficiently broad range of content or specialisms within the subject that allows you to confidently arrive at a Centre Determined Grade for each student. For example, in Double Award Science evidence from the three disciplines – Chemistry, Physics and Biology - would support a more holistic judgement; however, we realise there will be instances where this has not been possible.

41. As Head of Irish, I have marks recorded for speaking tests conducted in December; however, I have no evidence to support them. Can I still use the marks as part of my overall deliberations?

Yes, you can. The marks awarded for speaking tests can be used and these, supplemented with other pieces of evidence you have available, can contribute to a Centre Determined Grade for your students. This applies to all subjects where units of assessment do not necessarily generate hard copy evidence or have an element of performance, for example Music, Drama, Languages, Performing Arts, PE, and Motor Vehicle and Road User Studies.

42. My GCSE English Language Head of Department is proposing that they use the following evidence to arrive at their Centre Determined Grades: an assessment resource, a controlled assessment task, and an extended writing piece completed by students at home during lockdown. What advice should I give on how to 'weight' the evidence?

Centre Determined Grades should be holistic and based on teacher professional judgement, following an assessment of each piece of evidence generated by students. It is not a case of applying a weighting to each piece of evidence that a teacher may hold, but of considering its value, both as an individual piece and as part of a collection, to arrive at an overall judgement for each student. Evidence can be drawn from a number of sources and produced under different conditions, and if a teacher can authenticate the work and is confident that it reflects a realistic standard at which the student is working, it can be used to arrive at their Centre Determined Grade.

43. My students completed a lengthy piece of work for me during lockdown, meaning it was completed at home. Can I use this to support my judgements on Centre Determined Grades?

Yes – evidence to support judgements can be drawn from a number of sources and produced under different conditions, including at home. If you can authenticate the work and are confident that it reflects a realistic standard at which the student is working, it can certainly be used to arrive at their Centre Determined Grade.

In instances where you may have doubts, you should familiarise yourself with other pieces of work completed by the student to ensure you are sufficiently familiar with their standard of performance. Where appropriate, you may also wish to have a discussion with them on the work that has been produced, for example to discuss how they approached it and the process of arriving at the solution/finished piece.

44. My department has identified five pieces of evidence that could be used to arrive at Centre Determined Grades for our students. Can I choose the best three for each student to maximise their chance of being awarded a higher grade?

No – to ensure fairness to all students, schools and individual subject departments are being asked to identify early in the process the evidence they wish to use to inform grading decisions. This should then be set in the school's Centre Determined Grades policy, which should be submitted to CCEA by 23 April 2021. The policy should be shared with students so they understand the evidence that will be used and the agreed approach set out in the policy applied appropriately across each subject cohort.

Flexibilities inherent in this year's process can be used where a student's learning has been disrupted to a greater extent than that of their peers, but those flexibilities should not be used solely as a means of maximising attainment.

45. Do all departments in my school have to apply the same weighting to evidence derived from mock examinations?

We are not proposing that schools take a uniform approach across subjects to what assessment evidence is used to inform Centre Determined Grades. Different departments in different schools may decide to prioritise one piece over another based on a number of factors, such as the characteristics of different subjects and the evidence at their disposal. Any approach adopted should be outlined in your school's Centre Determined Grades policy.

46. One of the pieces of evidence that we hope to use is a mock examination; however, I am concerned that schools use these in different ways, for example as an incentive to learn or a measure of attainment. How should this be reflected?

If you are using evidence from a mock examination as the basis for a judgement, you may wish to use the Candidate Assessment Record to contextualise the approach that is used in your centre for delivery of mock examinations, for example mocks used as an incentive to learn as opposed to a measure of actual attainment. Including this in your Centre Determined Grades policy would also help to contextualise their use.

47. Can AS evidence contribute to decisions we make for students hoping to achieve a grade at A level?

Any evidence that is selected must be drawn from the level of qualification which is being awarded. For A level, AS evidence may be considered alongside A2 evidence if a centre deems this appropriate and/or necessary. However, it is important to bear in mind some of the differences between AS and A2, notably that the AS qualification is weighted at 40% of the overall A level and has different grade descriptions associated with it. There is also no A* grade at AS and the more demanding elements of A2, such as synoptic

assessment, more extended writing questions and additional evaluative tasks, are not features of AS assessment.

If AS evidence is to be used, it must be assessed against the A2 grade descriptions. The use of AS evidence at A2 should also be highlighted in the Centre Determined Grades policy and the Candidate Assessment Record and be included in evidence submitted to CCEA for sampling at the review stage.

48. Guidance to date suggests later evidence is likely to be more holistic – does this mean it is higher value? How will this change if students are not back in the classroom?

It is important to use evidence generated as close to the time at which decisions are being confirmed, if possible. This will help ensure decisions take into account the development of students' knowledge, understanding and skills over their course of study. You should consider all of the key evidence you have for each student and reflect on how much it tells you about the student's standard of performance, as measured against the requirements of the relevant specification. The evidence used must be at the level of the qualification being graded and may be taken from any point in the student's study. For example, for a GCSE qualification taken over two years, evidence completed in Year 11 may be considered. We appreciate the significant disruption schools have faced and the continuing efforts to gather evidence despite this.

49. There are many students who are vulnerable, and/or have special educational needs, who have not engaged in remote learning despite the best efforts of teachers, and I am confident they would have achieved grades far better than work evidenced. Should these students be given a grade that they could have achieved had they been in school or a grade that can be evidenced?

The Centre Determined Grades issued to students should be based on evidence of their attainment and not the grade they would likely have achieved had examinations gone ahead.

When making decisions about how to assess a student's performance, particularly during the current pandemic, it is important to consider that some students will have suffered more disruption to their learning than others. For example, this year centres can avail of unit omissions announced in Autumn 2020 and make further adaptations to assessments to ensure students are assessed on content that they have been taught, selecting evidence that best shows their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Where adaptations to assessments have been made at an individual level, these should be recorded in the Candidate Assessment Record. Where adaptations to assessments have been made at cohort level, these should be recorded in the Departmental Assessment Evidence Grid. The centre should also set out its general approach to adaptations in its Centre Determined Grades policy.

50. I have a student who attended my school in Year 11 but has been enrolled with an EOTAS centre for Year 12. The student has been entered for their GCSEs through my school, but I do not know anything about their performance in Year 12.

You should consult with the EOTAS centre to establish what evidence is available for this student. Centres should be clear in their policy what types of evidence will be used in determining the grade. You should consider all the key evidence you have for each student and reflect on how much it tells you about the student's standard of performance, as measured against the requirements of the relevant specification.

To ensure centres can provide a grade for students, all grades in the grade range should be considered. If there is insufficient evidence, a 'U' grade should be awarded unless the student is withdrawn.

51. What if a teacher finds that a student who has covered a smaller proportion of specification content has strong evidence at grade A, but a student who has covered a larger proportion of specification content but only has evidence at grade C?

In this series, students **do not** need to have completed a specified amount of content, or demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding across every area of the specification, as they would normally. Therefore, students should not be disadvantaged as a result of lost learning. If the grade awarded reflects the evidence available, the student should be awarded that grade, irrespective of content coverage.

52. What if a student in my school has lost a key piece of evidence that I had hoped to use to make decisions about their Centre Determined Grade?

If a piece of evidence is no longer available, it should not be immediately discounted. If a mark or grade has been recorded for this evidence, it can still be considered alongside other evidence that is available.

If the evidence no longer available is the only key piece on which to base judgement, you may wish to consider another piece of evidence. Alternatively, you may wish to facilitate the student taking one of CCEA's optional assessments in the coming weeks to support your judgement. If you do need to use an alternative piece of evidence for a student or students, please ensure this is reflected in appropriate records, for example the Candidate Assessment Record.

Application of Previous Policy Decisions

53. Will the omissions policies that were announced for GCSE qualifications in October and for GCE qualifications in December still apply?

The unit omissions announced for GCSE subjects in October 2020 and for AS and A2 subjects in December 2020 will still apply. This means that evidence can be drawn from across all assessment units or can be restricted to those which align with previous policy announcements. Details of the unit omissions are detailed in the [Summary of Assessment Arrangements: GCSE, AS and A Level Qualifications Summer 2021](#), published in December 2020.

54. What units will centres be basing their judgements on?

We acknowledge the Minister of Education's decisions taken in October and December 2020, in respect of unit omissions in GCSE, AS and A level qualifications. These will still

be applicable in forming a Centre Determined Grade. Disruption to teaching and learning may mean that even in the context of these omissions, certain content will not have been covered. In such cases, the assessment resources should be adapted accordingly.

55. Are centres still expected to cover the full content of the specification?

We acknowledge that disruption to teaching and learning may mean that even in the context of unit omissions, certain content will not have been covered at the time of forming a Centre Determined Grade. Students should only be assessed on the content they have covered. However, we would encourage schools to cover as much of the specification content as possible to enable students to progress to the next stage of their education or to employment.

Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments

56. My Examinations Officer and SENCo normally look after access arrangements. What do I need to know for Summer 2021 qualifications?

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments (for example a reader or scribe or extra time) allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs or disabilities, to access assessments, meeting the needs of the individual without affecting the integrity of the assessment. They are agreed before an assessment takes place and should reflect a student's normal way of working in the centre. If required, these should have already been in place for any assessments being used as evidence to make a judgement for a student.

It is strongly advised that assessments with the appropriate access arrangements provided at the time of the assessment are used as evidence for arriving at the Centre Determined Grade.

Examples

- a) A candidate has a vision impairment. An application has been processed on the JCQ Access Arrangements System and the candidate is entitled to receive a) a reader and b) 25% extra time in assessments. This arrangement should extend to all assessments taken by that candidate within the centre.
- b) A candidate has fractured their arm. A temporary application has been processed on the JCQ Access Arrangements System and for a period of 7 weeks, the candidate is entitled to receive a) a scribe and b) 10% extra time in assessments. These arrangements should extend to all assessments taken by that candidate within the centre during that period.

57. We have a student who has only recently received a diagnosis that requires access arrangements to be put in place; however, these were not applied to internal assessments/mock examinations. What advice would you give to help us arrive at a Centre Determined Grade?

The best approach would be to ensure the candidate has taken at least one assessment with the appropriate access arrangements required to meet their needs. However, in instances where this is not possible, judgements should take account of likely

achievement with the reasonable adjustment or access arrangement in place. This will ensure that the Centre Determined Grade reflects, as accurately as possible, likely achievement with access arrangements in place.

58. Given that there will be no external examinations, should we continue to process online applications for access arrangements?

Centres should continue to process access arrangements online as usual. Access arrangements should reflect a student's normal way of working within a centre. The closing date for processing access arrangements through the online portal is 21 March 2021. Only access arrangements for temporary conditions should be processed after this date.

For further guidance, please refer to the JCQ publication [Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, with effect from 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021](#).

Special Consideration

59. I have some students who wish to apply for special consideration. What is the process for this?

The process of centres submitting special consideration applications to awarding organisations will not apply this summer.

However, if a candidate takes an internal assessment that will be used in your consideration of their Centre Determined Grade, and their performance in that assessment is affected by illness, injury or other indisposition, you should take this into account. Due to the flexibility in approaches to assessments for Summer 2021, we anticipate that special consideration requests will be limited.

The JCQ special consideration framework remains unchanged for Summer 2021 and will be helpful for teachers. The injury or event must relate to the candidate's performance(s) at the time of taking relevant assessments. These normally fall into four categories:

- temporary illness or accident/injury;
- bereavement;
- domestic crisis; and
- the centre not implementing previously approved access arrangements.

Candidates will not be eligible for special consideration if preparation for or performance in their assessments is affected by:

- long-term illness, disability, or other difficulties, unless the illness or circumstances manifest themselves at the time of an assessment;
- bereavement occurring more than six months before the assessment, unless an anniversary has been reached at the time of the assessment or there are ongoing implications such as an inquest or court case; and/or
- consequences of disobeying the centre's internal regulations.

Special consideration is never applied due to lost teaching and learning time. Lost teaching and learning is being addressed this summer via the assessment methods and the flexibility afforded to the centre in the content that will be assessed.

For further guidance, please refer to the JCQ publication [A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from September 2020](#).

60. Can you give me an example of how a teacher may apply special consideration for an assessment held in school?

Example 1

A student's parent sadly died six weeks before they were due to sit their mock GCSE History paper. The paper had a total possible raw mark of 100, and the student scored 60/100 in the paper.

As per JCQ guidance, this circumstance would attract the maximum allowance of 5%, which will be calculated on the total raw marks available, i.e. 5% of the 100 = 5. The student's new mark will therefore be 65/100.

Example 2

A student broke their non-writing arm the day before a class assessment was due to take place. The student took the assessment but was in obvious discomfort throughout. The assessment had a total of 50 marks available, and the student scored 35/50.

As per JCQ guidance, this circumstance would attract an allowance of 3%, which will be calculated on the total raw marks available, i.e. 3% of 50 = 1.5, which is rounded up to 2 raw marks. The student's new mark will therefore be 37/50.

Special consideration **should not** be applied retrospectively if the centre has made some adjustment at the time of the mock examination/assessment, for example by giving the candidate 25% extra time to complete their assessment.

Example 3

A student's grandmother was admitted into hospital with a serious condition the night before the student's assessment. The student was very upset and worried. The assessment had a total possible raw mark of 60. The student scored 45/60 in the examination.

As per JCQ guidance, this circumstance would attract an allowance of 3%, which would be calculated on the total raw marks available, i.e. 3% of 60 = 1.8. The student's new mark will therefore be 47/60 (after rounding).

Example 4

A student suffered from severe hay fever on the day of their assessment. The assessment had a total possible raw mark of 80. The student scored 55/80 in the examination.

As per JCQ guidance, this circumstance would attract an allowance of 1%, which would be calculated on the total raw marks available, i.e. 1% of 80 = 0.8. The student's new mark will therefore be 56/80 (after rounding).

61. Can a special consideration allowance be considered for someone who has lost 10 weeks of face-to-face teaching due to having to self-isolate on more than one occasion?

No – in accordance with the JCQ arrangements, a special consideration allowance cannot be applied or considered for lost teaching and learning due to COVID-19. In any year, the JCQ guidance states that candidates will **not** be eligible for special consideration due to 'the failure of the centre to prepare candidates properly for the examination for whatever reason' (page 5, para 2.3.8) and 'the quality of teaching, staff shortages or lack of facilities' (page 5, para 2.3.9). Lost teaching and learning due to COVID-19 is managed through the omission of a component for each subject taken and the subsequent flexibility in assessments chosen by the centre to inform their academic judgements.

62. In our mock examinations, a student did not perform as well as expected because of illness. I have subsequently used this mark to inform my decisions on the student's Centre Determined Grade. Have I done the wrong thing?

In this instance, you may use the principles of special consideration to apply a tariff to the student's mark in their mock examination so that it gives a better reflection of their ability, considering the circumstances under which the assessment was taken. Considering this, you may then wish to review the Centre Determined Grade assigned to the student. Additional examples of these circumstances and the appropriate tariffs are set out in the JCQ publication [A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from September 2020](#).

63. We have a candidate who contracted COVID-19 a few days before a remote assessment was conducted. They did carry out the assessment, but we feel their performance was affected by the illness. What can we do?

In this instance, you may use the principles of special consideration to apply a tariff to the student's mark in the remote assessment so that it gives a better reflection of their ability, considering the circumstances under which the assessment was taken. It would be appropriate to award 3% of the maximum mark for the assessment in this instance.

64. A candidate contracted COVID-19 a few days before a remote assessment was conducted. The candidate had severe symptoms and was unable to take the internal assessment. Can special consideration be used to calculate a mark for this assessment?

In normal circumstances, if examinations had taken place, a missed paper calculation would have been carried out for this candidate if the minimum requirements for enhanced grading were met. As the Summer 2021 examination series has been cancelled, a special consideration tariff or missed paper calculation is not possible. Additional evidence should be considered in the awarding of the candidate's grade.

65. A vulnerable student and another student who has a statement of SEN have not engaged despite the best efforts of teachers. Under normal circumstances, they would have achieved grades far better than work evidenced. Can special consideration be used to give these students a grade that they could have achieved had they been in school?

A special consideration allowance cannot be applied or considered for lost teaching and learning for any reason.

66. A student with a statement of SEN has not been in school because of health vulnerabilities including a compromised immune system. They have engaged with all their teachers and have completed their work. However, in school the student is entitled to one-to-one support and given the current circumstances, it has not been possible to provide this. There is evidence that this has impacted on the student's attainment in assessments. Can special consideration be used here?

Special consideration may be used where access arrangements that reflect a student's normal way of working have not been provided for any reason. As per JCQ guidance, this circumstance would attract an allowance of 2%, which would be calculated on the total raw marks available for each assessment where the access arrangement could not be provided. No other adjustment should be made.

67. One of our classes has missed a lot of teaching and learning because their teacher has been absent due to COVID-19. Can we apply special consideration to the assessments carried out by this class?

No – in accordance with the JCQ arrangements, a special consideration allowance cannot be applied or considered for lost teaching and learning due to COVID-19. In any year, the JCQ guidance states that candidates will **not** be eligible for special consideration due to 'the failure of the centre to prepare candidates properly for the examination for whatever reason' (page 5, para 2.3.8) and 'the quality of teaching, staff shortages or lack of facilities' (page 5, para 2.3.9). Lost teaching and learning due to COVID-19 is managed through the omission of a component for each subject taken and the subsequent flexibility in assessments chosen by the centre to inform their academic judgements.

Private Candidates

68. Can I still enter a private candidate after the close of entry deadline – 21 February 2021?

Yes – CCEA will continue to accept entries for private candidates until our entry system closes on 16 April 2021. CCEA will request that all private candidates are flagged on our Centre Determined Grades application when grades are submitted.

69. Will CCEA be collecting data on private candidates?

The CCEA Centre Determined Grades application will allow you to identify any private candidates in your cohort.

70. How can I provide a Centre Determined Grade for a private candidate with the same level of confidence as students who are enrolled at our school?

While you should have the same level of confidence in the grade you submit for private candidates as you do for other students, this does not mean that you need to use the same evidence to make your judgement. The evidence you do have should be both sufficient and reliable to allow you to make a holistic professional judgement, even if this is arrived at differently than with the other students in your school. You should ensure that private candidates can be facilitated to take any necessary assessments to ensure there is sufficient evidence on which to determine a grade. This includes the CCEA assessment resources. You may also wish to supplement this with additional evidence. If so, you must determine whether this is reliable and get an insight into the conditions under which it was taken. If you are unsure, you may decide that it is necessary to supervise additional assignments or mock assessments.

Further details on support for private candidates will be published in due course.

71. What should I do if, having followed the available guidance, I still do not feel confident enough to provide a Centre Determined Grade for a private candidate?

Private candidates should not be withdrawn unless in agreement with the candidate. Deciding not to enter or to withdraw a private candidate should only be done in exceptional circumstances. To ensure centres can provide a grade for private candidates, all grades in the grade range, including grade 'U', should be considered.

If you have followed all of the guidance provided and confidence still remains low, you should contact the CCEA helpline, helpline@ccea.org.uk, with your concerns.

72. How long do I have to make decisions on Centre Determined Grades for private candidates?

Centres have up until 21 May 2021 to submit Centre Determined Grades for GCE subjects and up until 4 June 2021 to submit Centre Determined Grades for GCSE, Occupational Studies, Entry Level and Vocationally Related Qualifications.

Moderation

73. What is meant by moderation?

Moderation refers to the process of reviewing the Centre Determined Grades assigned to each candidate in the centre, within and across subjects and at overall centre level, to ensure fairness to all students and to ensure standards have been applied consistently.

Once Centre Determined Grades have been submitted CCEA, we will begin a quality assurance process to ensure fairness to all students within and across individual centres. All centres will be asked to provide evidence for a minimum of one student at each grade within one subject at one qualification level.

74. How will you decide which particular schools you will want evidence from to justify and standardise grades?

All centres will be asked to provide evidence for a minimum of one student at each grade within one subject at one qualification level. These will be selected by CCEA and the school informed. Key evidence used to arrive at the Centre Determined Grade that best reflects the student's performance should be submitted.

75. Do we have to fill out one Candidate Assessment Record for each student in each subject?

The Candidate Assessment Record was designed to support you through the process of arriving at a Centre Determined Grade for each student in each subject you have entries for in Summer 2021. While it is not mandatory to complete a CCEA Candidate Assessment Record for each student, we do expect schools to hold the information in some form that you use to arrive at your decisions. Please note, a CCEA Candidate Assessment Record will be required for any candidate sampled by CCEA and for any student that wishes to avail of post-results services following issue of results.

Results and Post-Award Review Service

76. When will the results be issued to candidates for Summer 2021?

The issue of results dates will be as follows:

- GCE AS and A level qualifications – 10 August 2021; and
- GCSE qualifications – 12 August 2021.

77. Can you provide an indication of what the appeals process will look like for Summer 2021?

The appeals process is currently being developed, and we await further direction from the regulator. More information will be communicated in due course.

Summary of Changes since First Issue

(Most recent changes are indicated by a green line on the latest version.)

Revision History Number	Date of Change	Page Number/s	Change Made
Version 1.0 Published 9 March 2021	N/A	N/A	First Issue
Version 2.0 Published 31 March 2021	31 March 2021	1, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 21	Text additions



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