



# **Conditions and Requirements Alternative Awarding Framework: General Qualifications Summer 2021**

## Introduction

This document sets out our regulatory requirements for CCEA awarding organisation (hereafter referred to as CCEA AO) offering general qualifications under the alternative arrangements for the summer 2021 series.

This document sets out GQ Covid-19 Conditions. These Conditions come into effect for GQ Qualifications as defined in Condition GQAA1.7:

- GCE (AS or A level) qualifications
- GCSE qualifications

With respect to all qualifications to which the Conditions set out in this document apply, save to the extent set out in those Conditions, CCEA AO must also comply with our General Conditions of Recognition<sup>1</sup>, save that, in the extraordinary circumstances of Summer 2021, Condition I1.2(d) will not apply, as well as the Qualification Level Conditions<sup>2</sup> and any Subject Criteria and Requirements<sup>3</sup> which apply to specific qualifications. The document also includes principles for awarding as issued by CCEA Regulation.

It also sets out our requirements in respect of the information which CCEA AO must request from Centres as part of the process of collecting centre determined grades this summer.

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<sup>1</sup> [CCEA Regulation General Conditions of Recognition](#)

<sup>2</sup> [CCEA Regulation Qualification Level Conditions](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CCEA Regulation Subject Criteria and Requirements GCSE Digital Technology](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CCEA Regulation Subject Criteria and Requirements GCSE English Language](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CCEA Regulation Subject Criteria and Requirements GCSE Gaelge](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CCEA Regulation Subject Criteria and Requirements GCSE Mathematics](#)

## Conditions

### Condition GQAA1: Application, Interpretation and Definitions

#### Application

- GQAA1.1** The GQAA Conditions apply –
- (a) to all GQ Qualifications,
  - (b) until such date as is specified in, or determined under, any notice in writing published by CCEA Regulation under this Condition.
- GQAA1.2** Any such notice published by CCEA Regulation may –
- (a) be issued in respect of one or more:
    - (i) GQ Qualifications;
    - (ii) GQAA Conditions.
  - (b) be varied or withdrawn by CCEA Regulation at any time prior to the date specified in or determined under it, and
  - (c) contain any transitional and saving provisions that CCEA Regulation considers appropriate.
- GQAA1.3** CCEA AO must comply with the requirements of any transitional and saving provisions contained in a notice published by CCEA Regulation under Condition GQAA1.2.

#### Interpretations and Definitions

- GQAA1.4** Unless alternative provision has been made in Condition GQAA1.7, the following shall apply to the GQAA Conditions –
- (a) the rules of interpretation and definitions outlined in General Condition J1;
  - (b) the definitions outlined in the Qualification Level Conditions; where reference is made to marks this should read as grades.
  - (c) any subject specific criteria or requirements
- GQAA1.5** Except in the circumstances described in Condition GQAA1.6, the requirements imposed by the GQAA Conditions apply in addition to the requirements imposed by the General Conditions of Recognition and any relevant Qualification Level Conditions and any subject specific criteria or requirements.
- GQAA1.6** To the extent that there is any inconsistency between –
- (a) a requirement of a GQAA Condition, and
  - (b) a requirement of a General Condition of Recognition, a Qualification Level Condition
  - (c) any subject specific criteria or requirements such that CCEA AO could not comply with both such requirements, CCEA AO must comply with the requirement of the

GQAA Condition and is not obliged to comply with the requirement of the other Condition.

**GQAA1.7** In these Conditions the following words shall have the meaning given to them below (and cognate expressions should be construed accordingly).

**Qualification Level Conditions**

Any Qualification Level Condition that applies to a GQ Qualification.

**GQ Qualification**

A qualification which is any of the following –

- (a) a GCE qualification, or
- (b) a GCSE qualification.

**Private Candidate**

A Learner in relation to whom there is no Relevant Centre.

**Relevant Centre**

In relation to a Learner, a Centre which –

- (a) has purchased the GQ Qualification on behalf of the Learner, and
- (b) materially contributed to the preparation of the Learner for the assessment (whether through teaching or instruction provided by Teachers employed by it or otherwise).
- (c) any subject specific criteria or requirements

**Condition GQAA2: Assessment under the GQAA Framework**

**GQAA2.1** During the time period when this condition is in force, and pertaining to the normal examinations and assessment series which has been cancelled –

- (a) CCEA AO must ensure that no Learner takes examinations for a GQ Qualification which it makes available, and
- (b) CCEA AO must not moderate an assessment for a GQ Qualification.

### **Condition GQAA3: Results in 2021**

- GQAA3.1** CCEA AO –
- (a) must issue a result to each Learner registered on or before 21 February 2021, and who remains registered, to take a GQ Qualification which it makes available, and
  - (b) may issue a result to a Learner who
    - (i) could reasonably have been expected by CCEA AO to be registered to take a GQ Qualification which it makes available during the summer 2021 assessment series, and
    - (ii) was not so registered.

- GQAA3.2** In respect of each result it issues under Condition GQAA3.1, CCEA AO must ensure that it –
- (a) determines that result –
    - (i) is in compliance with the requirements of the minister’s direction, and
    - (ii) has regard to any requirements and guidance, which may be published by CCEA Regulation, or otherwise specified to the awarding organisation by CCEA Regulation and revised from time to time, and
  - (b) takes all necessary steps to issue that result in line with any date or timescale published in respect of that qualification under Condition H6.1 (b) which falls within August 2021.

- GQAA3.3** CCEA AO must –
- (a) provide effective guidance to Centres in relation to matters specified in the requirements set under Condition GQAA3.2(a) (1);
  - (b) provide that guidance (including in draft where it has not been finalised) to CCEA Regulation upon request, and subsequently have regard to any comments provided by CCEA Regulation on that guidance, and
  - (c) provide clear and effective arrangements through which the Centre can liaise with CCEA AO if it encounters difficulties in relation to those matters.

### **Quality Assurance**

- GQAA3.4** CCEA AO must not issue any result under Condition GQAA3.1 –
- (a) In respect of a Learner for whom it has not received a declaration from the Head of Centre which meets the requirements published by CCEA AO under Condition GQAA3.2(a)(1), or

- (b) where quality assurance undertaken in line with the requirements set out under Condition GQAA3.2 (a)(1) has identified issues that remain to be resolved to the awarding organisation's satisfaction.

**Confidentiality of information provided by Centres**

**GQAA3.5** CCEA AO must –

- (a) take reasonable steps to ensure that, prior to its issue of results under condition GQAA3.1, the proposed results provided to it by Centres under the requirements set under Condition GQAA3.2(a)(1) are kept confidential (including by Teachers and Centres)

## Condition GQAA4: Appeals

- GQAA4.1** In respect of each result that it issues under Condition GQAA3.1, CCEA AO must –
- (a) take all reasonable steps to ensure that a Centre has in place effective arrangements for its Learners (including Private Candidates where relevant) to request a review of that result on the basis that the Centre –
    - (i) did not follow its procedure properly and consistently in arriving at that result (including any failure of quality assurance), and/or
    - (ii) made an administrative error in relation to the result, and
  - (b) establish, maintain and comply with an appeals process which provides for an appeal to the awarding organisation, following the conclusion of a review by the Centre, on the basis that –
    - (i) the Centre did not follow its procedure properly and consistently in arriving at the Learner's result (including any failure of quality assurance) or in conducting its review,
    - (ii) the result reflects an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement on the part of the Centre, and/or
    - (iii) the awarding organisation made an administrative error in relation to the result.
- GQAA4.2** CCEA AO must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Centre –
- (a) makes Learners aware of the arrangements it has in place prior to the issue of results under Condition GQAA4.1(a), and
  - (b) provides Learners with a statement of the arrangements promptly when requested.
- GQAA4.3** For the purposes of Conditions GQAA4.1(a)(ii) and GQAA4.1(b)(iii), an 'administrative error' –
- (a) includes incorrect data entry or substituting one Learner's result for that of another Learner, and
  - (b) does not include any exercise of academic judgement by the Centre.

- GQAA4.4** Where a Centre considers that a Learner's result should be changed following a review under Condition GQAA4.1(a) –
- (a) the Centre must submit its proposed revised result to the awarding organisation together with its reasons for the change, and
  - (b) the awarding organisation must consider the reasons provided by the Centre for its proposed change and either –
    - (i) confirm that no change will be made to the Learner's original result, or
    - (ii) issue a revised result (which may or may not be in line with the Centre's proposal) where it considers it appropriate under Condition GQAA4.10.
- GQAA4.5** Where an awarding organisation finds that a Learner's result should be changed following an appeal under Condition GQAA4.1(b) it –
- (a) must provide its reasons for that decision to the Centre, and
  - (b) may seek the views of the Centre as to the appropriate revised result, and
  - (c) must issue a revised result (which may or may not be in line with the Centre's views) where it considers it appropriate under Condition GQAA4.10.
- GQAA4.6** The appeals process which an awarding organisation has established under Condition GQAA4.1(b) must –
- (a) provide that any request for an appeal in respect of a Learner is made –
    - (i) on the Learner's behalf by the Centre that carried out the relevant review under Condition GQAA4.1(a), and
    - (ii) with the consent of the Learner, and
  - (b) take all reasonable steps to ensure that a Centre that has carried out a review under Condition GQAA4.1(a) requests an appeal under Condition GQAA4.1(b) on behalf of any Learner that wishes to do so.
- GQAA4.7** That appeals process may –
- (a) provide that the awarding organisation shall conduct an appeal with no payment of a fee,
  - (b) specify other reasonable requirements for the making of a request for an appeal, and
  - (c) specify a time period during which an appeal must be requested.
- GQAA4.8** Where that appeal process specifies a time period during which an appeal must be requested, the time period must –
- (a) be reasonable, and
  - (b) comply with any requirements which may be published by CCEA Regulation and revised from time to time.

**GQAA4.9** That appeals under Condition GQAA4.1(b) process must provide for –

- (a) all appeal decisions to be taken by persons who have appropriate competence and who have no personal interest in the decision being appealed, and
- (b) the awarding organisation to report the outcome of an appeal to the Centre that requested the appeal on the Learner's behalf, detailing the reasons for that outcome.

**GQAA4.10** Where an awarding organisation discovers through the review and appeals processes established under this condition that any result which it has issued is incorrect it must –

- (a) consider whether it is appropriate to correct that result, having regard to the guidance issued by CCEA Regulation under Condition H6.3(b)(i), and
- (b) correct that result where it considers it appropriate to do so.

**GQAA4.11** CCEA AO must publish guidance on the review and appeal processes established under this condition, including on –

- (a) Learners' rights to reviews and appeals, including the grounds on which they may be brought as set out in Condition GQAA4.1,
- (b) Centres' responsibilities for carrying out reviews and supporting appeals,
- (c) the evidence that will be considered by the awarding organisation in an appeal, and
- (d) the risk that, a Learner's result may be decreased following a review or an appeal.

### **Requirements in relation to the determination of results**

Condition GQAA3.2(a) allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to the determination of results to be issued for GQ Qualifications under the GQAA Framework.

We set out our regulatory principles for the purposes of Condition GQAA3.2(a)(i) below. However, the awarding organisation must adhere in all respects to the ministerial direction in terms of the approach to awarding summer 2021.

## **Regulatory Principles for the Implementation of Alternative Awarding Arrangements for Summer 2021 Examinations (GCSE, AS and A level).**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The principles enumerated below have been drawn up to reflect:

- i. CCEA's statutory regulatory function as set out in the Education (Northern Ireland) Order, 1988.
- ii. The statement made by the Minister of Education, Peter Weir, to the Northern Ireland Assembly on Tuesday 2 February, 2021.
- iii. The Ministerial letter received 2 March setting out Ministerial direction for summer 2021 awarding (annex B).
- iv. The findings of the 'Deloitte Report': *Department of Education – Review of Exam Awarding Summer 2020*.
- v. Ofqual's *Six Principles of Good Governance*.

The principles are intended to reflect the Minister's direction for alternative awarding arrangements so that "students receive a fair and accurate grade to allow them to make the right choices in relation to progression" (as stated by the minister on 2 February).

Exceptionally, this year, the assessment of a candidate's performance should only be made on the content areas that the candidate has been taught.

### **CONTEXT**

The Minister has directed the awarding process to be used in summer 2021. Centres will award each candidate a centre determined grade in each subject for which they are entered. The role of CCEA awarding organisation (AO) under this direction is:

- to support centres in establishing procedures, including training at centre and subject level on the performance expected at each grade, which will allow for fair, accurate and consistent grading decisions;
- to review grading decisions within and across centres to maximise accuracy and consistency of grading decisions; and
- to develop an appeals process for candidates who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the awarding process.

The principles set out below reflect the Ministerial direction regarding CCEA AO's role in the awarding and appeals process. The Ministerial direction, as set out in the letter of 2 March, is the definitive reference point for all summer 2021 awarding processes and practices that CCEA AO should have in place, and should be adhered to in all respects.

## **PRINCIPLES**

### **Principles relating to CCEA Awarding Organisation's role in supporting centres in establishing procedures that allow for fair, accurate and consistent grading decisions:**

- Principle 1: The Awarding Organisation must issue instructions and guidance for centres to ensure there is clear understanding of the process to be followed, including instructions on the evidence to be used to arrive at centre determined grades.
- Principle 2: The Awarding Organisation must provide support for centres that should include clear and timely guidance on how to use a range of evidence to make fair, accurate and consistent grading decisions.
- Principle 3: The Awarding Organisation's support for centres should include, but not be limited to, grade descriptors and exemplars to support the implementation of centre based internal moderation processes and consistency across centres.
- Principle 4: The Awarding Organisation's assessment resources, for use on an optional basis, should be made available to all schools and colleges. These resources should include, but should not be limited to, repurposed summer 2021 examination papers, providing unseen questions and associated mark schemes, and should be accompanied by appropriate support.

### **Principles relating to CCEA Awarding Organisation's role in reviewing grading decisions within and across centres to maximise consistency of grading decisions:**

- Principle 5: The Awarding Organisation should have in place a process for reviewing the procedures used by every centre for determining grades. The review process should be designed to maximise:
- the accuracy of grades awarded by centres (where accuracy refers to the relationship between the quality of work evident in a candidate's portfolio and the grade awarded to that candidate).
  - the consistency of grading decisions within individual centres and across all centres.
- Principle 6: The Awarding Organisation must have in place a review process, including a sampling process designed to ensure that the evidence supports the grades determined by the centre. Decisions regarding the accuracy of grades submitted by centres should be based on evidence of candidates' work and not data. Where the grades awarded by centres do not reflect candidate attainment as demonstrated in the evidence provided, CCEA should have a process in place to rectify this.

### **Principles relating to CCEA Awarding Organisation's role in developing an appeals process for candidates who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the awarding process:**

- Principle 7: The Awarding Organisation must have in place an appeals process that enables candidates to challenge the outcome of their award. This process should be as consistent as possible with the equivalent processes used by other UK jurisdictions

and by other JCQ awarding organisations, and take into account the right to a fair hearing.

Principle 8: The awarding organisation should communicate its appeals process clearly to centres and candidates, ensuring that the communication covers how to submit an appeal, how it will be handled and information about deadlines in the process.

### **Other General Principles**

Principle 9: In designing and implementing the new arrangements, including deadlines for submission of centre determined grades, the awarding organisation should be guided by the Minister's directive that the arrangements should:

- allow as much time as possible to remain in the school year for learning and teaching;
- provide an incentive for students to remain engaged in their education;
- enable **all** students, including private candidates, who are in their final year of study and due to progress to their next stage of learning or work, to receive a grade.

Principle 10: The meaning attributed to abstract terms such as "fair", "fairness", "advantage", "disadvantage" and "accuracy" should be consistent in all documents and communications related to the alternative awarding and appeals processes.

For further information or copies of this framework, please contact:

CCEA Regulation Team  
29 Clarendon Road, Clarendon Dock  
Belfast BT1 3BG

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**COUNCIL FOR THE CURRICULUM, EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**  
29 Clarendon Road, Clarendon Dock, Belfast BT1 3BG  
Tel: +44(0)28 9026 1200  
Email: [info@ccea.org.uk](mailto:info@ccea.org.uk) Web: [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)

