

# Understanding how we calculated **Functional Skills results** for summer 2020

Underpinning principles for Level 1/2  
Functional Skills External Assessments  
and Essential Skills Northern Ireland



- ✓ We have been working with Ofqual and the other exam boards, as part of a technical group since late March 2020. All exam boards worked to principles set by Ofqual, which underpin the approach set out **here**.
- ✓ We checked and validated Centre Assessment Grades at an individual centre level.
- ✓ We used the historical data for the past three calendar years.
- ✓ We broke this into three-month periods to create data points to reflect the on-demand nature of these qualifications, establishing an average achievement rate for each quarter.
- ✓ We reviewed the pass rate against the highest achieved historically, which formed the basis of our expectations. Other factors, such as the changes in the size of the cohort, were also taken into consideration.

### Scenario 1: pass rate is in line with historical performance

- ✓ If the pass rate put forward by your centre was in line with historical performance, the Centre Assessment Grades were accepted.

### Scenario 2: pass rate is higher than historical performance and the centre **can** provide evidence to justify

- ✓ If the pass rate put forward by your centre was higher than historical performance (exceeding historical outcomes), we reviewed the evidence and historical data first to understand why. For example, this may have been due to a centre only submitting Centre Assessment Grades for learners they believed would have passed (even though we requested for CAG for all learners, pass and fail alike).
- ✓ If the pass rate could not be explained by the data we hold, we contacted your centre to understand why it is higher than historically and may have asked for further evidence.
- ✓ If we received sufficient robust evidence to justify the pass rate, we would have accepted the grades put forward.

### Scenario 3: pass rate is higher than historical performance and the centre **can't** provide evidence to justify

- ✓ In this scenario, if we did not receive sufficient evidence, we are not able to release results. In that situation, your learners will be able to take the test under standard JCQ conditions, whilst observing social distancing requirements.
- ✓ We only released results for centres where we have been able to quality check the Centre Assessment Grades and have sufficient evidence (from your centre and on our systems).
- ✓ Ofqual monitored the process across all exam boards.

### Scenario 4: the centre is new - where there is no or limited historical evidence available

- ✓ In this scenario, we compared your pass rate against the average for centres with your characteristics. Given our size, we hold information on many different centres across the UK. We were able to identify ones which share characteristics to your centre (in terms of entry size etc).
- ✓ The average pass rate of centres with your characteristics helped inform our expectations. If the pass rate put forward by your centre was in line with expectations (the same as or below this average), we accepted the Centre Assessment Grades put forward.
- ✓ If they are higher than our expectations, we reviewed data to understand the reasons for that and contacted you if we required further information and evidence.

**We can confirm** that the vast majority of centres came under scenario 1 (**over 2,600 centres**) or scenario 2 (**over 1,600 centres**).

## How we calculate results for Speaking and Listening (all levels), ESOL and ELFS

The process for calculating results is similar and followed the same principles as above. Instead of pass rates, we had claim rates to compare against. We also had Standards Verification records to refer back to as a source of evidence.

Also, in the event the claim rates were too high, we placed a temporary block on your centre, until you justified or evidenced why to a Principal Examiner. Once we have sufficient evidence, we are able to release results.

## Additional qualitative checks

In addition to the above, we conducted numerous qualitative checks before releasing results. This included:

- ✓ ensuring that entries/registrations are legitimate through desktop reviews (e.g. identifying anomalies) and asking centres for additional information/evidence to support entries/registrations
- ✓ conducting additional checks on centres with historical quality assurance difficulties.

We also **reserved the right to ask centres for evidence of their Centre Assessment Grades**, requesting you retain the evidence for at least six months in the event further checks are required.

This process has allowed us issue results with confidence for summer 2020.

