

The background of the page is a photograph of two young women with dark hair, smiling and looking at a laptop screen. The woman on the left is a Black woman with short, curly hair, and the woman on the right is a woman of South Asian descent with long, wavy hair. They are both wearing casual clothing. The setting appears to be a bright, modern interior, possibly a library or a study area, with a window in the background.

BTEC qualifications

# Guidance 2021/2022

Guidance for learners who were 'mid-flight' in 2020/21 or are topping up/dropping down in 2021/22 and all learners completing assessments in 2021/22

BTEC Nationals, Firsts, Technicals and Tech Awards

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## Version control

Page and Change	Date of Change
Page 6 – New: The ‘Z flag + grade’ input functionality now available	19.10.2021
Page 8 – Now includes ‘screen grabs’ of the Edexcel Online screens	19.10.2021
Page 9 – Now includes information relating to External Assessment U-TAG submission via spreadsheet	19.10.2021
Page 14 – Now includes a link to a short support video for Streamlined Assessment	19.10.2021
Page 15 – Dates confirmed as functionality went live on 19 October, clarification that U-TAG judgements can be shared with learners in advance of results day	19.10.2021
Page 16 – Key dates confirmed and reference to Appeals information added	19.10.2021
Page 19 - Reference to process ‘before 30 September’ removed	19.10.2021
Page 22 – Appeals section added	19.10.2021
Page 20 – Quality Assurance section added	03.11.2021
Page 24 – Reporting streamlined assessments	19.11.2021
Page 8 – bulk grade reporting tool	19.11.2021

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## Introduction

This guide is relevant to most qualifications within the below qualification suites:

- Level 1/2 Tech Awards and Firsts
- Level 2 Technicals
- Level 3 Nationals

*This guide also applies to the BTEC Specialist qualifications in engineering, they are listed in the Streamlined Internal Assessment 2021/2022 document on page 23 (see [here](#)).*

It has been created to support you and explains the processes (both internally assessed units and externally assessed units) for the following scenarios:

1. What to do for **learners who were 'mid-flight' in 2020/21** (i.e. could not use the Q-TAG process) and will be certificating between September 2021 and August 2022.
2. What to do for **learners 'topping up'** onto larger qualifications in 2021/22 (i.e. learners who certificated on smaller qualifications in 2020/21 using the Q-TAG process).
3. What to do for **learners who now need to drop down** to smaller qualifications (i.e. learners who were mid-flight in 2020/21 and could not use the Q-TAG process, but are now choosing to end their study, and therefore may be eligible for the Q-TAG process retrospectively).
4. When adaptations are required; what to do for **learners (which could be those in second year or new in 2021/22) who are using Streamlined assessment** in 2021/22.

You can find more information, including sector guidance, on [our Teaching, Learning and Assessment 2021/22 page](#) and by using the guidance documents listed below.

Guidance documents:

[Streamlined Assessment for Nationals, Firsts and Level 2 Skills](#)

[Tech Awards Adaptations](#)

[U-TAG Teacher Guidance](#)

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## Background

During 2020/21, we looked to align BTEC qualifications processes as closely as possible with General Qualifications processes for enabling learners to progress, namely our Qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grade (Q-TAG) process, for our qualifications that were most similar.

We worked closely with you to ensure all learners that were expecting to complete their qualifications in 2020/21 received their results in line with the published results day(s).

We were permitted to do this, under the Ofqual regulations (VCRF), which were updated to include the period of time 1 August 2020 – 31 August 2021.

We [wrote to you](#) on 25 August 2021 outlining what the joint Ofqual and DfE [consultation](#) on the VCRF for 2021/22 meant in relation to what we are permitted to do for learners. **As part of this communication, we informed you that Q-TAGs are not currently permitted in 2021/22.**

We explained that in light of this, we needed to ensure that 'mid-flight' learners were not disadvantaged, and highlighted the need to ensure that those learners who were 'mid-flight' in 2020/21 were able to carry forward unit-grades (either completed assessment, or with 'Unit-level' Teacher Assessed Grades (U-TAG) for assessment that was due, but not able to be completed, during the eligibility period of 1 August 2020 - 31 August 2021).

This guidance draws together all the relevant information that will enable all eligible learners to 'bank' unit-level results from 2020/21, in order for their qualification level results to be aggregated in the 'normal' way via our systems in 2021/22. We have created a [video](#) that will help to explain this process in further detail.

This process **will include external assessment** that was due to be completed (where an entry has been made) but did not take place due to examination cancellations or absenteeism due to the pandemic. These examination entries will be in the system and have been marked as 'Absent' by Pearson.

We are required to Quality Assure these U-TAGs. Therefore, you will need to complete a declaration confirming that you have made judgements in line with our guidance.

**We appreciate your continued support** whilst we navigate this new academic year and focus again on enabling learners to progress onto the next stage of their life.

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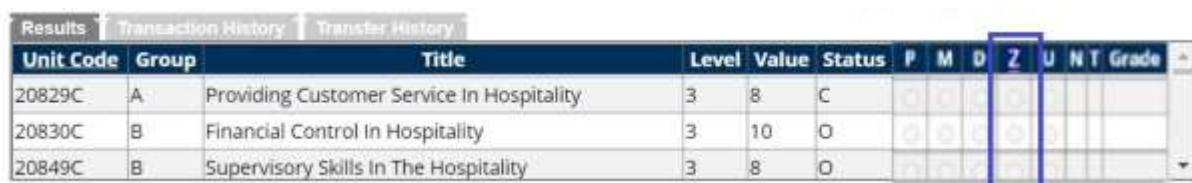
## Mid-flight learners, completing between September 2021 and August 2022

'Mid-flight' refers to a learner that is part way through their studies and is not intending to certificate in that academic year. Guidance for learners who were 'mid-flight' in 2020/21 meant that they were not eligible for Q-TAGs. As these learners are now in their final year of the qualification, there are some steps to follow to ensure they can certificate at the end of their course, as we return to the normal eligibility process of using unit grades.

### For Internally Assessed units:

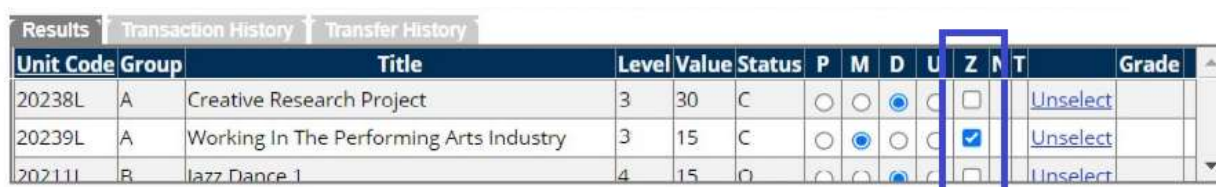
**NEW:** The 'Z flag + grade' input functionality now available

[Our guidance](#) indicated that by 31 August 2021, you should have reported any internally assessed units that were due, but were not assessed, using a 'Z grade' on Edexcel Online:



Unit Code	Group	Title	Level	Value	Status	P	M	D	Z	U	N	T	Grade
20829C	A	Providing Customer Service In Hospitality	3	8	C								
20830C	B	Financial Control In Hospitality	3	10	O								
20849C	B	Supervisory Skills In The Hospitality	3	8	O								

We will shortly be amending this functionality to be a Z flag on Edexcel Online (to enable the U-TAG to be added):



Unit Code	Group	Title	Level	Value	Status	P	M	D	U	Z	N	T	Grade
20238L	A	Creative Research Project	3	30	C	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Unselect
20239L	A	Working In The Performing Arts Industry	3	15	C	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Unselect
20211L	B	Jazz Dance 1	4	15	O	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			Unselect

The flag allows us to identify the units which have not been assessed in full in 2020/21 (under the [VCRE](#), this is specifically between 1 August 2020 – 31 August 2021), and are therefore eligible for a U-TAG. This should be evidenced as part of your BTEC Assessment Plan. By entering a U-TAG, this will allow the eligibility process to take place, and for the Notification of Performance (NoP) (unit-level results) to be issued.

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**IMPORTANT:** Under the Quality Assurance (QA) process this year, we may ask to see the records and evidence for any units reported in this way. If your centre is asked to provide this information, we will contact you directly and give you time to prepare these documents and files. All learner work and records collated for the U-TAGs must be retained by the centre for a minimum of 12 weeks following certification of the learner. You must retain records of assessment and internal verification for a minimum period of three years following certification of the learner (in line with our normal guidance).

Please note the 'Z flag + grade' functionality will only be available for a limited period of time, to enable QA checks to take place. This will be until **10 November 2021**, therefore it is important that you follow the steps below before this date:

- Ensure that the **completion date** for these learners is accurate. Guidance on amending a completion date can be found [here](#).
- **For eligible internally assessed units** – Where a unit was previously reported as a Z grade, we have moved this across to show as a Z flag (tick), meaning all of your eligible units should be shown, ready for input of your U-TAG judgements. It is not possible to submit a Z flag only, a grade must be entered at the same time. At this stage, you can also add any unit grades for completed assessment. If you have identified that not all eligible units are shown, you can also at this stage add a 'tick' in the Z column and the U-TAG for any missing units that are eligible. We will be monitoring the use of this flag functionality and *you must maintain evidence that supports any U-TAGs claimed*.
- On [Edexcel Online](#), submit the above as an **Interim claim** (where the learner is not yet ready to certificate).

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The Edexcel Online claims screen will look like this:

**Claim Type**  
 Full Award  Interim  Fallback [Unselect](#)

**Programme/Unit Details**  
**Programme:**  
**Eligibility Formulae** [Help](#)  
The eligibility formula displayed is for your guidance. Please refer to the qualification specification for the complete and authoritative eligibility rules  
Please ensure that all grades are correctly recorded before clicking on "save". If the wrong grade has been claimed for a unit, you may amend the grade until the learner's certification is issued. If a unit has been claimed in error and the grade needs to be removed for the unit, please email [ExamsOfficers@pearson.com](mailto:ExamsOfficers@pearson.com) immediately, quoting the unit code.

Unit Code	Group	Title	Level	Value	Status	P	M	D	U	Z	T	Grade
20209L	A	The Performing Arts Industry	4	15	C	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unselect
20210L	A	Professional Development	4	15	C	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unselect
20238L	A	Creative Research Project	5	30	C	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unselect
20239L	A	Working In The Performing Arts Industry	5	15	C	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unselect
20211L	B	Jazz Dance 1	4	15	D	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unselect

\* P - Pass, M - Merit, D - Distinction, U - Unclassified, T - Transfer, N - NearPass  
Unit results are provisional until certificated by Edexcel. The unit certificate is the official confirmation of unit results.

**Award Date:** (mm/yy)  
**Overall Result:**

Where a Z grade was previously reported you will see the grade now shows as Reduced.

Unit Code	Group	Title	Level	Value	Status	P	M	D	U	Z	T	Grade
31549H	C	Technical And Tactical Demands Of Sport	3	6	D	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified
31526H	B	Prof. Development In The Sports Industry	3	6	M	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reduced
31541H	C	Work Experience In Active Leisure	3	6	D	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reduced

You can now change these to U-TAGs. Don't forget to tick the box in the Z column so we know that the unit was not assessed (or not assessed in full) and the permitted mitigation was used between 1 August 2020 – 31 August 2021.

31549H	C	Of Sport	3	6	D	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unclassified
31526H	B	Prof. Development In The Sports Industry	3	6	M	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reduced
31541H	C	Work Experience In Active Leisure	3	6	D	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reduced

## Bulk Grade Reporting Tool

You are able to submit your U-TAG grades for your internally assessed units using the bulk grade reporting tool.

Here is a step-by-step video for Teachers on how to process the spreadsheet:

[Bulk Grade Reporting Tool on Edexcel Online Step 1: Teachers](#)



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Here is a step-by-step video for Exams Officers on how to process the spreadsheet:

[Bulk Grade Reporting Tool on Edexcel Online Step 2: Exams Officers](#)

When you submit your spreadsheet, please ensure it follows the format below and ensure no columns are added or removed otherwise it won't upload to our systems.

- Column C can only contain the available grades which are shown here in cell F5.
- If a unit needs to be flagged as reduced assessment or streamlined, please enter a Y into either column D (for reduced assessment) or column E (for streamlined). You do not need to amend the alternative column.
- It is not possible to report reduced assessment and streamlined for the same unit.
- Valid claim types for column F are: **A** (full award), **I** (interim claim) and **F** (fallback).
- A valid award date needs to be entered for the claim to process.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Centre	30000					
2	Session	2020/21 (N Registrations)					
3	Programme						
4	Units Selected	Unit Title	Level	Value	Group	Available Grades	
5	21138K	Exploring Engineering Sectors	1	5.6	A	F/W/U	
6							
7	Eligibility Formula	12(12A)					
8							
9			Units Selected				
10	Learner Name	Registration Number	21138K	21138K (Reduced)	21138K (Streamlined)	Claim Type	Award Date
11		Exploring Engineering Sectors	Reduced Assessment Flag(Y)	Streamlined Flag(Y)	Full(A)/Interim(I)/Fallback(F)	MM/YYYY	
12	Learner Name	Reg Number	P	Y	<Streamlined Flag>		Nov-21
13	Learner Name	Reg Number	M	Y	<Streamlined Flag>		Nov-21
14	Learner Name	Reg Number	O	Y	<Streamlined Flag>		Nov-21
15	Learner Name	Reg Number	P	Y	<Streamlined Flag>		Nov-21
16	Learner Name	Reg Number	M	Y	<Streamlined Flag>		Nov-21
17	Learner Name	Reg Number	O	Y	<Streamlined Flag>		Nov-21
18							
19							

This is a 2-step process, please ensure you upload and submit your spreadsheets to finalise the submission process.

Once you have submitted your spreadsheet, please check your Edexcel Online mailbox to view any errors which will need correcting before submitting again.

### For Externally Assessed units:

Where a learner was entered in any timetabled session or on-demand during 1 August 2020 – 31 August 2021 and an assessment did not take place, due to exams being cancelled or the learner being absent due to the impact of the pandemic, the entry would have been marked as 'Absent'.

For eligible learners, you will provide a U-TAG judgement to enable these learners to progress their qualifications claims in the normal way.

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Please check your EOL mailbox: We have now sent spreadsheets to the named Point of Contact, for externally assessed units. This contains the relevant learners with *absent* results during 1 August 2020 – 31 August 2021, where an entry was made but assessment did not take place, and you will need to add the U-TAG judgements and ensure you return it to [resultsresolution@pearson.com](mailto:resultsresolution@pearson.com) by **10 November 2021** with the subject heading "BTEC - External Assessment U-TAG". The spreadsheet also contains the Head of Centre Declaration.

Please note, *you must maintain evidence that supports any U-TAGs claimed* as we may ask to see it as part of our QA checks.

*Please check with colleagues if you haven't received this or contact our customer services team if you need this re-sent. Please note that some spreadsheets have been resent so please check your EOL mailbox and use the latest sheet. We issued you with some additional information in regards to the spreadsheets, please do refer to [our email](#) sent on Friday 15 October*

### Late examination entries

[Guidance](#) was provided to centres to ensure that examination entries reflected whether assessment was due for learners in 2020/21. Therefore, we do not expect any late entries to be required.

# How to arrive at a U-TAG judgement

You may have established record keeping processes in place, but we have also created an optional [form](#) to help you record the evidence used and grades for these U-TAGs.

Further detailed guidance for Teachers on arriving at a U-TAG is available [here](#).

**Evidence used to inform the U-TAG must only be from the period 1 August 2020 - 31 August 2021. You cannot use work produced after 31 August 2021, as this is outside of the period of eligibility for TAGs and could advantage learners.**

The starting point should be evidence which relates directly to the unit. However, we acknowledge that there may be limited or no evidence available, and in these cases, evidence from other units can be used.

Once you have submitted your U-TAGs on the system, you are permitted to give these to your learners. However, please ensure that you make it clear that the grades are subject to Pearson Quality Assurance and may change. This is a different process to the process used in summer 2021 as we believe it would be beneficial for your learners to understand their progress earlier in the academic year, to inform any resit choices. We have also looked to align with other VTQ Awarding Organisations to ensure consistency for your centre.

For eligible learners, you should determine a U-TAG for the units which learners were due to take (but did not) between 1 August 2020 – 31 August 2021. These will have been flagged as a Z for the internal assessment units and an absent entry for the summer 2021 external assessment.

Overall, the process for determining a U-TAG for eligible learners is very similar to determining a Q-TAG. **The guidance and principles issued for Q-TAGs, found on our website [here](#), should be used and the centre policy adhered to** (please see page 44 of the guidance document)

The key underpinning principles for a U-TAG are:

- The grade should be based on evidence\* produced between 1 August 2020 – 31 August 2021.
- That learners receiving a U-TAG are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged to learners who received a Q-TAG.
- That the judgments are objective (please refer to Ofqual's guidance for centres on making Objective Judgments [here](#)).

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\* Evidence that reflects a learner's performance which can be used to inform the U-TAG includes:

- completed or partially completed assessments for the unit
- completed assessments for a similar unit i.e. knowledge and understanding or skills/practical-based activities
- mock or practice external assessments
- non-assessed work such as classwork, homework, group learning activities
- relevant extra-curricular activities.

## Conversion of grades to points scores

The U-TAG will be converted into a point score. For some qualifications, this will be different to the normal process. You should consider the way this may impact on qualification grades before making your U-TAG judgements.

BTECs are modular, with units assessed throughout the course, with (in most cases) a mix of internal and external assessment. Each completed unit has its own individual grade that can be carried from one year to the next. An individual unit grade is awarded a 'point score' as described in the specification for each of the relevant BTEC qualifications on our [website](#).

Pearson's approach for mid-flight learners in 2020/21 is for centres to provide letter<sup>1</sup> grades for each unit assessment (internal or external) a learner was due to, but did not, complete during the period 1 August 2020 - 31 August 2021<sup>2</sup>, due to the ongoing pandemic and cancellation of examinations. **Internally assessed units that were assessed as normal can be claimed in the normal way (i.e. no 'flag' is needed).**

The U-TAG will be converted into a point score as described in the specification for the qualification, to enable qualification grade aggregation to take place in the 'normal' way.

For many of the BTEC units<sup>3</sup> the conversion of a grade to a point score is on a fixed scale i.e. there is no interval, and it is a linear relationship. For external assessments, in the BTEC Nationals (RQF) and Level 1/2 Tech Awards, **a single**

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<sup>1</sup> The letter grade would be from the grade set available for that unit. For example for L3 Nationals RQF external assessment it is D, M, P, N or U.

<sup>2</sup> Centres were asked to indicate for mid-flight learners internal assessments that they should have completed by making a Z flag on EOL and have made an entry for any external assessments that should have been sat.

<sup>3</sup> All internal assessments and external assessments for BTEC Firsts (NQF) and L2 Technicals have a fixed-point scale.

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notional point score will need to be awarded for all learners that achieve the same grade, as there is no 'mark' available.

### BTEC Nationals (RQF) and L1/L2 Tech Awards external assessment U-TAGs

For the U-TAG judgements for BTEC Nationals (RQF) and Level 1/2 Tech Award external assessments, a single notional point score will be awarded to learners on the same grade.

Learners getting the same U-TAG grade on a unit will all get the same point score. In the absence of the raw mark detail, it is considered fairest for the midpoint of the point score range for each grade to be awarded as the point score for learners awarded with a U-TAG. Where the midpoint is not a whole number, then the notional number of points will be rounded up to the nearest whole number above, e.g., where the midpoint is 9.5 the notional number of points will be 10. We have also looked to align with other VTQ Awarding Organisations to ensure consistency for your centre.

The notional points score that we will use for the L3 BTEC Nationals (RQF) and Level 1/2 Tech Awards external assessment units are shown in the tables below:

BTEC Nationals		
	Points June 2021	
Grade	90 GLH	120 GLH
D	24	32
M	19	26
P	12	16
N	7	10
U	0	0

BTEC Tech Awards	
Grade	Points June 2021
L2 D	45
L2 M	39
L2 P	33
L1D	27
L1M	21
L1P	15
U	0

*How are the points different when awarded through a unit teacher assessed grade (U-TAG) and when awarded when assessments have taken place?*

When an external assessment for the above suites is sat in a normal exam series, the total mark achieved by the learner is known as the 'raw' mark. This raw mark would be converted into a point score. This is to make sure that any series-on-series differences in the difficulty of the assessment materials, which have been identified and compensated for by the grade boundaries set in the awarding process for the unit, are taken into account before a learner's total points are aggregated to give the qualification grade.

When assessments are replaced with a U-TAG, it is still necessary to assign a notional single point score to that lettered grade so that the unit result can be used

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to determine the qualification grade. These points will be the fixed notional points score shown in the table above.

In a normal exam series, where a learner can sit the assessment, a range of points would be awarded for the unit, depending on the raw mark achieved by the learner. A student with a raw mark just above the raw mark grade M boundary would get a point score just above the grade M points boundary, and a learner with a raw mark just below the raw mark grade D boundary would get a point score just below the grade D points boundary. These learners would have the same grade (M) for the unit, but different points scores.

Grade D (Distinction) on the BTEC Nationals is an exception as all learners receive the maximum number of points available for the unit. This same maximum number of points will be used as the number of notional points for grade D in the U-TAG process.

When external assessments are replaced with teacher assessed grades, the raw mark mapping cannot happen as there are no raw marks due to the examination not taking place. Instead, a U-TAG is submitted as a lettered grade, which converts to a fixed number of notional points (see table above) for that lettered grade. **The points score is a single notional mark for all learners who achieve the same grade on each external unit.**

Note that on the external assessment units, a grade of N (Near Pass) or above for the Nationals, or Level 1 Pass (L1P) or above for the Tech Awards, **must be achieved in order to pass the qualification** and therefore no notional points will be awarded for a U (Unclassified) grade.

**PLEASE NOTE: You are permitted to share U-TAG judgements with your learners in advance of results day.** However, please ensure you make it clear that the grades are subject to Pearson Quality Assurance and may change. This is a different process to that followed in summer 2021 as we feel it would be beneficial for your learners to understand their progress earlier in the academic year, to inform any resit choices. We have also looked to align with other VTQ Awarding Organisations to ensure consistency for your centre.

### Reporting unit grades via EOL - overview

	Type				
	Z Grade (Radio button in EOL)	Z Flag (Tick in EOL)	Streamlined Assessment for BTEC Nationals, Firsts and Level 3 Skills in 2021/22	Adaptations for BTEC Tech Awards in 2021/22	Normal Assessments – business as usual
Available from	1 August 2020 to the 31 August 2021	19 October 2021	19 November 2021	N/A	Available as usual
To be reported by	No longer available	10 November 2021	31 August 2022	Unit grades to be reported as normal	As Assessments have been completed
Appears on Edexcel Online as:	A grade, alongside P, M, D and U, as 'Z'	Tick box in 'Z' column	Tick box in new 'Streamlined' column	N/A	Available as usual Interim Claim

# Timelines for U-TAG Key Activities

Timeline for Key Administration Activities			
From	Complete by	Activity	Information
September	10 November 2021	Prepare and determine U-TAGs for eligible internally and externally assessed units	<a href="#">U-TAG Guidance</a>
19 October 2021	10 November 2021	Submit via EOL as explained in this Guidance (for internally assessed units)	Use information within this guidance
11 October 2021	10 November 2021	Submit U-TAGs for eligible absent entries from 2021 (series based and on-demand)	Using the spreadsheet and guidance sent via Edexcel Online mailbox
11 October 2021	10 November 2021	Head of Centre Declaration (HOCD) needs to be submitted, it covers <i>all</i> submitted U-TAGs	A HOCD is included in the spreadsheet sent via EOL mailbox – <b><i>by returning the spreadsheet you will agree to the Declaration</i></b>
November 2021	December 2021	Pearson completes QA checks	Further details below
4 January 2022	13 January 2022	Pearson confirms grades have been accepted	
13 January 2022	14 February 2022	Appeal window	Further details below



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## Top Ups

For learners whose certification was claimed via a Q-TAG in summer 2021, the same principles will apply as for mid-flight learners. Centres will need to convert their holistic Q-TAG into individual unit grades for each of the units that were scheduled to be taught and assessed in 2020/21. This will allow these learners to receive a Notification of Performance (NoP) detailing their awarded grades when they certificate on the top-up qualification.

We appreciate that many centres may have tracked unit-level achievement to some extent and used this to inform their Q-TAGs. Where there are gaps in evidence or 'Z grades', you should follow the guidance provided above for mid-flight learners to provide a U-TAG.

It is our expectation that these unit grades would aggregate to the same overall qualification-level grade for that size qualification as the previously awarded Q-TAG, which will ensure that learners are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in respect of their peers.

In order to facilitate the Appeals process this year (for qualifications awarded via a Q-TAG), certificates were not printed until mid-September. All certificates will be in centres by 7 November 2021 following the completion of the Appeals process. If you are intending to top-up learners who certificated under the Q-TAG process, onto a larger sized qualification, we can confirm that you can top up your learners now. As certificates have now been issued, you can top-up learners through Edexcel Online as in previous years.

If you have learners who certificated prior to summer 2021, you can complete the top-ups at any time through Edexcel Online. Guidance for this can be found [here](#).

To report U-TAGs for your top-up your learners please follow the steps below:

1. Log onto Edexcel Online and top-up the registration. Guidance for this can be found [here](#).
2. Against the new registration – claim an interim award and report the grades for the internally assessed units using the guidance [above](#).
3. Report U-TAGs for externally assessed units by using the spreadsheet provided.
4. If an exam entry for externally assessed units was not made for the previous series due to the Q-TAG process, please contact Customer Services via our Support Portal and provide the following details:

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- Learner registration number
- First name and Surname
- Programme code
- Programme title
- Unit code
- Unit title
- Assessment plans (identifying that the learner was due to be assessed)
- Explanation as to why the entry was not made
- In some circumstances where the learner would have been entered for a resit, a fee may apply. [Guidance](#) was provided to centres to ensure that examination entries reflected whether assessment was due for learners in 2020/21

These requests will be reviewed, and an outcome will usually be provided within 48 hours.

Late Entry requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than **15 October 2021**.

### Deadlines

For this academic year only, **all top-ups need to be completed by 1 November 2021**. If you need to make an entry for the January and February 2022 session, which has a deadline of 18 October, please complete the top-up and make the entry before this deadline. Please check [our Entries and Information Manual](#) for any other deadlines.

After this date, our systems will revert to business as usual, and any learners topped up will need to complete all units for the qualification.

The top-up deadline is in place as the learner becomes mid-flight once they have been topped-up and we are giving your centre time to fill in the blanks. A topped-up learner will need all units reported, any Z flags will need to be reported as a unit grade, including externally assessed units.

For Qualifications that are expiring on the 31 August 2021, there is a different procedure due to the end date. If you offer this qualification, we have communicated with your Examinations Office and Quality Nominee separately.

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## Drop Downs

If you identify a learner who needs to drop-down from a larger qualification please follow the steps below, this will allow you to claim a Q-TAG for these learners so they are not disadvantaged:

1. Log onto Edexcel Online and transfer them to the smaller sized qualification.
2. Amend their estimated completion date to August 2021.
3. Please raise a case on the customer portal.
4. As part of your request, please complete a [Grade Amendment form](#) and [evidence record sheet](#) and submit this with your case. Guidance on arriving at your Q-TAG can be found [here](#).
5. The case will be processed through our QA process and checks. Please note you may be asked to provide evidence for the learner to support the Q-TAG.
6. We will confirm within 42 days the outcome of the request.
7. A certificate will be printed within 42 days. Please note a NoP will not be printed for this learner as they are being awarded a Q-TAG grade.

**Q: What if a learner wishes to Appeal their Q-TAG grade for a drop-down?**

A: Please contact us via [customer service](#) and we will confirm the process as this depends at what point the learners appeal as to which process is needed.

## Learners transferring to another centre

As per our normal processes, a learner may transfer to, or top-up at, another centre. The topping up of the BTEC registration at the new centre will be possible following the completion of the Appeals process (after 17 September). If a learner is transferring mid-way through their programme, all learner work and associated assessment documentation needs to be provided to the new centre. However, if a learner is topping-up after certificating with a Q-TAG, the original centre will need to provide the new centre with the unit grades (as above for top-up learners) for entry onto Edexcel Online. This is necessary to ensure that the learner is eligible for certification at the end of the topped-up programme in their new centre, and that their grades on the Notification of Performance are an accurate representation of their achievement in 2020/21.

# Quality Assurance of U-TAG process

In this section you will find detail in relation to the arrangements for the 'Post U-TAG submission Quality Assurance' step of our Quality Assurance activities this year. The use of U-TAGs as a mitigation for the disruption faced in 2020/21 and, in line with Ofqual VCRF, Pearson must ensure that Quality Assurance is undertaken for these Teacher Assessed Grades.

This step is separate to our Standards Verification activity which is due to start in January 2022. Standards Verification will look at the unit-level assessment against the national standards and the specific assessment criteria and guidance of the specification. However, the U-TAG quality assurance step will help us to confirm overall that submitted U-TAGs are sufficiently valid and reliable, based on evidence, and have been determined in line with Pearson guidance.

As previously communicated, the U-TAG QA will run from U-TAG submission through to mid-December 2021.

During this time, and if your centre is selected for this QA activity, we will review a sample of evidence to confirm your centre has implemented the U-TAG process set out by Pearson, in line with BTEC centre policies, and that your submitted grades are therefore sufficiently valid and reliable. This sampling process will also provide reassurance that unit grades awarded this year can be used confidently to aggregate the final qualification level result at the point of certification.

Centres will be informed if they have been selected from 15 November 2021.

Centres will be selected for sampling on a range of factors including:

- A plausibility check on unit-level grade submissions, for instance, where topping up, this will be against previously submitted Q-TAGs
- A random selection to include the full range of centre types, qualifications and geographical locations.

### What happens if my centre is selected?

If your centre is selected, we will allocate a Reviewer. The Reviewer will request that you provide them with a sample of evidence that supports the grades you have submitted for a pre-selected list of units and learners.

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The sample should include:

- a summary of the approach undertaken to award U-TAG grades and the internal quality assurance processes\*
- samples of evidence used to inform the U-TAG judgement for **3-5 learners**.

*\*if your centre has used Pearson's U-TAG Evidence Record as part of the process, then this information is covered here. If you have not used these, please ensure the questions are covered in your own documentation.*

The allocation of a Reviewer will take place at programme level, in line with normal Standards Verification processes. To alleviate multiple points of contact, we expect that the Reviewer will aim to allocate that same person to your centre as a Standards Verifier for the selected sector(s) in 2022.

To ensure that the process is manageable for centres a **maximum** of three programmes will be reviewed at an individual centre.

If, having reviewed the evidence, the Reviewer has questions about how a centre has made grading decisions, they will advise the centre and further evidence may be requested.

Where the Reviewer has unresolved concerns about a centre's approach and the evidence does not support the grades submitted, centres will be asked to reconsider their grades. We may also need to discuss the grading decisions with centres; in rare cases where we are not able to satisfactorily complete Quality Assurance of the U-TAGs submitted, we will be required to withhold results until assurances can be given.

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## U-TAG Appeals

If the learner is unhappy with the U-TAG you have provided them with, there will be an Appeals process in place that will reflect the Q-TAG Appeals process.

We worked closely with centres during the Q-TAG process last academic year, and many centres completed both the SV and Q-TAG Quality Assurance activities. As unit-level judgments can be shared and explained with learners in advance of results day as well as explaining the evidence used that informed the judgement, we anticipate there will be a very limited amount of appeals. The principles of the [Appeals process from summer 2021](#) will apply:

### Grounds for Centre Review

The grounds upon which a student may request a centre review are:

- The centre did not follow its procedure properly and consistently, and/or
- The centre made an administrative error.

### Grounds for appeal - Student

The grounds upon which a **student** may appeal to Pearson (following completion of a centre review) are:

- **Pearson Error Appeal** (centre) - where the centre believes Pearson has made an error and has not issued the grade that the centre has requested. The centre must provide its reason for believing we have made an error.
- **Centre Process Appeal (Student)** - where the student believes the centre has not followed its process for determining the Unit-level Teacher Assessed Grade correctly, or it has made an admin error, or it has not followed the centre review/appeal process properly. This will also include where a student does not believe the centre has made appropriate provision for any reasonable adjustments they were entitled to or applied special considerations appropriately.
- **Centre Academic Judgement Appeal (Student) – Grade** – where a student believes the centre’s Unit-level Teacher Assessed Grade was unreasonable.
- **Centre Academic Judgement Appeal (Student) - Range of evidence** – where the student believes the centre has not been fair in its selection of evidence upon which

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it has based its Unit-level Teacher Assessed Grade determinations.

Requests for appeals on the grounds of academic judgement will only be considered by Pearson and not by centres. In these cases, an initial centre review must still be completed to ensure that the centre has not made any procedural or administrative errors.

All student appeals to Pearson must be submitted by the centre. Students are not able to submit appeals directly to us. Student consent to centre reviews and appeals will be required.

Further information on how to complete and submit appeals will be provided closer to the time, but we expect these will be submitted via email to us.

### Key dates:

- Appeals window opens: 13 January 2022
- Appeal window closes: 14 February 2022

## Assessment Adaptations in 2021/2022

Please find [here](#) a list of qualifications which indicate if streamlined/adapted assessment is available in 2021/22 and more information on our [Teaching, Learning and Assessment web page](#).

Please note the following requirements:

- All content must be taught,
- Although adaptations are available, centres should consider whether they are required to give time back to teaching and learning. Adaptations can be applied at the centre's discretion where the pandemic continues to impact learners.
- Adaptations are only available in this academic year, for assessment due to take place between 1 September 2021- 31 August 2022.

### Types of adaptations:

There are two types of adaptations for internal assessment that are available with the purpose of giving time back to teaching and learning:

1. **Streamlined unit assessment** - the number of internally assessed units that need to be assessed in full is reduced, these could be mandatory or optional, but cannot be units that are synoptic, or those units required for Higher Education

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progression. Streamlined assessment is available for many qualifications in the BTEC Nationals (QCF and RQF), BTEC Level 2 Skills and the BTEC Firsts suites.

Further information can be found in our [Streamlined Internal Assessment Guidance](#) and via a short [support video](#). Some sectors with substantial practical and/or group work may, if required, also apply in-unit adaptations as defined in the sector's teaching and learning delivery guidance.

2. **In-unit adaptation** – the amount of assessment evidence needed to meet criteria within an internally assessed unit have been reduced. We are pleased to confirm that the Tech Award adaptations agreed by Ofqual and the Department for Education for the academic year 2020/2021 will remain in place for this academic year 2021/2022. Further guidance on these can be found [here](#).

### Learner eligibility:

There are currently no plans to have these adaptations extend to learners who take assessments in 2022/23, regardless of when they are due to certificate.

Adaptations are only available in this academic year, for assessment due to take place between 1 September 2021- 31 August 2022.

## Reporting Streamlined units

You will need to report any streamlined units to us so that a full audit trail is available if required. This will also allow triangulation with the Standards Verification activity and the work made available for that process.

You are now able to report unit grades for your streamlined assessments on Edexcel Online and the bulk grade reporting tool.

The Edexcel Online claims screen will look like this:



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Claim type  
 Full Award  Interim  Fallback [Unselect](#)

Programme/Unit Details  
Programme:  
Eligibility Formulae [Help](#)  
The eligibility formula displayed is for your guidance. Please refer to the qualification specification for the complete and authoritative eligibility rules  
Please ensure that all grades are correctly recorded before clicking on "save". If the wrong grade has been claimed for a unit, you may amend the grade until the learner's certification is issued. If a unit has been claimed in error and the grade needs to be removed for the unit, please email [ExamsOfficers@pearson.com](mailto:ExamsOfficers@pearson.com) immediately, quoting the unit code.  
Units shown in brown cannot be graded from this screen.

Code	Group	Title	Level	Value	Status	P	M	D	U	N	T	Z	Streamlined	Grade
21153K	A	Create A Media Product In Response To Brief	2	4.8	M								<input type="checkbox"/>	
21154K	A	Create A Media Product In Response To Brief	1	4.8	M								<input type="checkbox"/>	
21149K	A	Exploring Media Products	2	3.6	M	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<a href="#">Unselect</a>

\* P - Pass, M - Merit, D - Distinction, U - Unclassified, T - Transfer, N - NearPass  
Unit results are provisional until certificated by Edexcel. The unit certificate is the official confirmation of unit results.  
Award Date: (mm/yy)  
Overall Result:

Add Unit  
Unit Code:

Withdraw/Reinstate Candidate  
 (Tick to withdraw candidate, untick to reinstate candidate)

For this learner, they have achieved a Distinction and the Streamlined Assessment column has been ticked for them.

Please note it is not possible to report only a Streamlined unit without the grade.

If you need to add the Streamlined Assessment tick to a record once a grade has been saved please contact Customer Services who will add this on your behalf.

If a Z-flag + grade has been reported previously and a Streamlined Assessment unit now needs to be reported, please complete this [form](#).

## Bulk grade reporting tool

You are able to submit your streamlined assessment grades for your internally assessed units using the bulk grade reporting tool.

Here is a step-by-step video for Teachers on how to process the spreadsheet:

[Bulk Grade Reporting Tool on Edexcel Online Step 1: Teachers](#)

Here is a step-by-step video for Exams Officers on how to process the spreadsheet:

[Bulk Grade Reporting Tool on Edexcel Online Step 2: Exams Officers](#)

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When you submit your spreadsheet, please ensure it follows the format below and ensure no columns are added or removed otherwise it won't upload to our systems.

- Column C can only contain the available grades which are shown here in cell F5.
- If a unit needs to be flagged as reduced assessment or streamlined, please enter a Y into either column D (for reduced assessment) or column E (for streamlined). You do not need to amend the alternative column.
- It is not possible to report reduced assessment and streamlined for the same unit.
- Valid claim types for column F are: **A** (full award), **I** (interim claim) and **F** (fallback).
- A valid award date needs to be entered for the claim to process.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Centre	29999					
2	Session	2020/21 (N Registrations)					
3	Programme						
4	Units Selected	Unit Title	Level	Value	Group	Available Grades	
5	21138K	Exploring Engineering Sectors	L	5.0	A	Y/N/A	
6							
7	Eligibility Formula	{=13A}					
8							
9			Units Selected				
10	Learner Name	Registration Number	21138K	21138K (Reduced)	21138K (Streamlined)	Claim Type	Award Date
11			Exploring Engineering Sectors	Reduced Assessment Flag(Y)	Streamlined Flag(Y)	Full(A)/Interim(I)/Fallback(F)	MM/YYYY
12	Learner Name	Reg Number	P	Y	<Streamlined Flag>	I	Nov-21
13	Learner Name	Reg Number	M	Y	<Streamlined Flag>	I	Nov-21
14	Learner Name	Reg Number	D	Y	<Streamlined Flag>	I	Nov-21
15	Learner Name	Reg Number	P	Y	<Streamlined Flag>	I	Nov-21
16	Learner Name	Reg Number	M	Y	<Streamlined Flag>	I	Nov-21
17	Learner Name	Reg Number	D	Y	<Streamlined Flag>	I	Nov-21
18							
19							

This is a 2-step process, please ensure you upload and submit your spreadsheets to finalise the submission process.

Once you have submitted your spreadsheet, please check your Edexcel Online mailbox to view any errors which will need correcting before submitting again.

## Further Support

You can find more information on our Teaching, Learning and Assessment 2021/2022 page, including sector guidance, [here](#).

Guidance documents:

[Streamlined Assessment for Nationals, Firsts and Level 2 Skills](#)

[Tech Awards Adaptations](#)

[U-TAG Teacher Guidance](#)