



Pearson

BTEC International
qualifications

Awarding Results in 2021

Guidance for certificating
and non-certificating
learners.



Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Arrangements for awarding results in 2021.....	6
3. Qualifications covered in this guidance	7
4. Qualifications not covered in this guidance	8
5. Arrangements for awarding results	8
6. Qualification-Level Teacher Assessed Grade for certificating learners.....	10
7. An overview of the administrative steps you will take for certificating learners for August 2021	17
8. Equalities and Objectivity.....	19
9. Bias	20
10. Sharing Q-TAGs before results day	20
11. Consideration for Appeals.....	21
12. Quality Assurance Activities in 2021	21
13. An overview of the administrative steps you will take for 'mid-flight' learners	24
Appendix A - Glossary of Terms	26

1. Introduction

In early March, [we wrote to all centres](#) that offer BTEC and other Pearson vocational qualifications to confirm the broad approaches that we would be using to issue grades this summer for learners expecting to complete one of our vocational qualifications. Our response has been determined by actions taken in the UK for regulated qualifications and from our intention to ensure fairness and equity in our response across our global certification.

We confirmed that while teaching and learning should continue to be delivered, in recognition of the cancellation of exams and the impact on internal assessment, centres will use evidence across the breadth of the course to inform a Qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grade ('Q-TAG').

We promised to provide more information as soon as we could about how this will work for you and your learners. This document sets out initial guidance on the process teachers and centres will need to follow to submit these Q-TAGs to Pearson for certification. **A deadline of 18th June 2021 is in place for those seeking to make university applications for 2021 entry**, so that learners expecting to complete their BTEC this summer can receive a final grade in August. Outlined below are details of the process we have set out for determining a Q-TAG for each eligible learner, and for building and submitting the evidence to support this as part of the Quality Assurance process.

We are also providing more detail on the following topics:

- List of qualifications within scope of this year's arrangements for awarding
- Guidance for license-linked qualifications within these suites
- Mitigations for learners not due to certificate this summer ('mid-flight' learners)

This guidance will be updated when more detailed information is confirmed, and we are committed to giving you as much information as we can as soon as we are able to. **Learners not certificating in August 2021 should continue to follow the [adaptations guidance](#).**

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

Pearson is working to ensure that learners receive their results and progress with confidence this year. In doing so, we have been mindful to make the process as simple as possible and give you guidance as soon as possible.

We are committed to supporting you and your learners through what we know is an unsettling and difficult time. Please contact [us](#) if you need additional support or have questions about the alternative arrangements this year.

Cindy Rampersaud

Senior Vice President

Summary

We have worked very closely with stakeholders to ensure we can award results this year, that learners are not disadvantaged and that they can progress. What is of utmost importance to us is that we continue to work closely with you, to make sure the process is as seamless as possible over the coming months.

In England, Ofqual has introduced a new regulatory framework, called the [VTQ Contingency Regulatory Framework \(VCRF\)](#). The VCRF will permit Awarding Organisations to issue results based on alternative evidence including teachers' judgements of learners' performance when exams do not take place and/or when learners cannot complete all internal assessment. In the interests of fairness and equity across our qualifications, Pearson will follow these principles for International qualifications.

A summary of our decisions is listed below and what this means for International BTECs will be outlined in this guidance document.

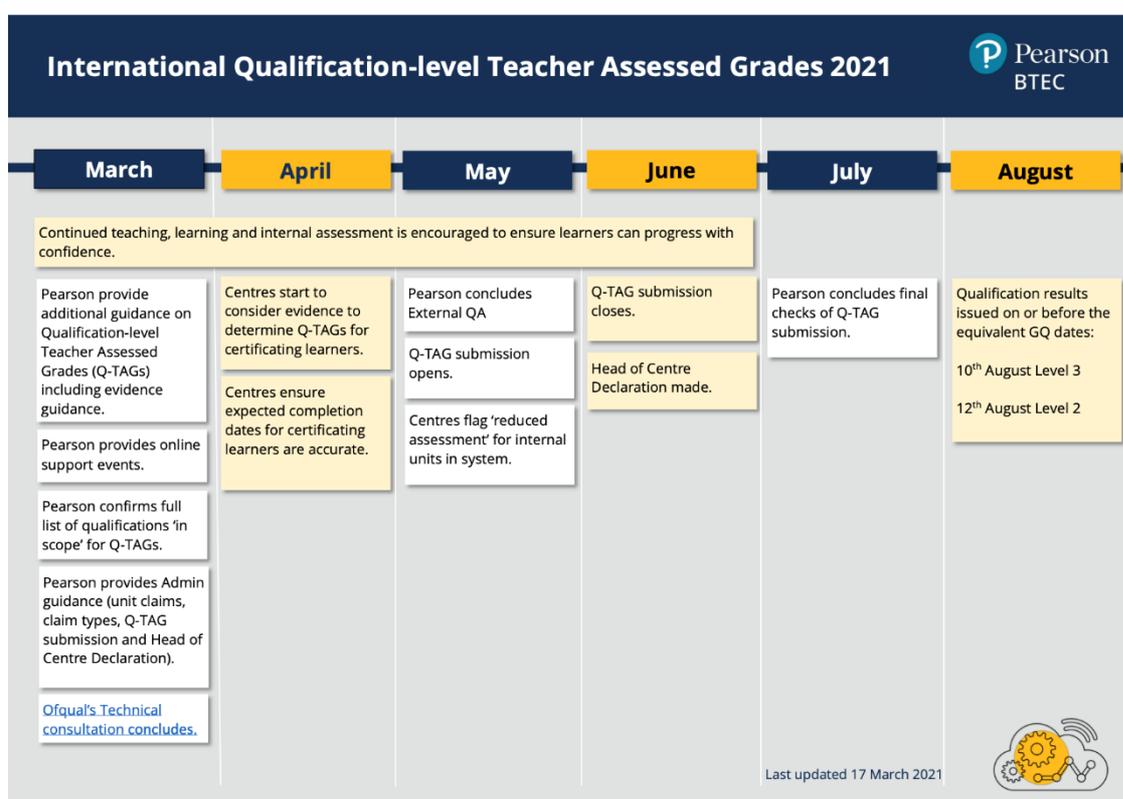
- **Internal assessment should continue where possible** as it is important in supporting continued learning, as well as providing evidence to inform results awarded through alternative arrangements. However, we recognise that the disruption to learning means that, like external exams, internal assessment will have been, and will continue to be, affected, and learners are not expected to complete all unit assessments.
- The performance standard for vocational qualifications should be **broadly the same as in previous years**.
- Learners' vocational qualification **results will be issued on or before 10 August for level 3 and 12 August for level 2** for the majority of learners where

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

Qtags have been submitted by 18th June, other results will be on rolling programme as in previous years.

- For mid-flight learners certificating in 2022, the previously issued rules on adaptation should be maintained.

Timeline for the Q-TAG process for learners certificating in August 2021



2. Arrangements for awarding results in 2021

Terminology

A grade issued based on the judgement of teachers, based on various sources of evidence, will be referred to as a 'Teacher Assessed Grade' (TAG), for Vocational Qualifications. We recognise that, in determining a 'TAG', there will be more than one individual teacher involved in doing this, and furthermore that senior leadership within a school or college will need to review these judgements to ensure they reflect the available alternative evidence.

Learner eligibility

- For certificating learners only, you will submit a Qualification-level 'Teacher Assessed Grade' (Q-TAG) to enable qualification results to be issued for learners completing relevant BTEC qualifications this year.
- For certificating learners, **the Q-TAG replaces previous guidance on 'reduced assessment'** where previously we had acknowledged that not all assessment may be completed.
- Sufficient evidence will need to be available for centres to put forward a Q-TAG. We outline in this guidance a definition of sufficient evidence.
- Learners due/ready for assessment between 1 August 2020 and 31 August 2021 and who need to certificate in August 2021 are eligible for the relevant arrangements.

For non-certificating learners ('mid-flight' learners) the Q-TAG process cannot be used. Instead, the 'reduced assessment' mitigation continues. Please find guidance for 'mid-flight' learners (learners who are not due to certificate in August 2021), in section 13.

Standardisation and Quality Assurance

In releasing this guidance our aim is to ensure centres can take forward a standardised approach to determining grades, based on available sources of evidence. As you will expect, we undertake Quality Assurance (QA) activities, to ensure that learners, centres, and stakeholders can have confidence in the results awarded this year. More information on the QA processes is in section 11.

As you will be aware, centres are required to sign up to a range of centre policies in relation to the operation of Quality Assurance in more normal times. Our aim is that we can utilise these existing policies, to support the alternative processes this year. We will issue more guidance on centre policies as soon as it is available.

Useful Links

- [Awarding Results in 2021](#) - our main webpage for guidance and support
- [Contact us](#)
- [Events](#) - filter for the appropriate event in the Qualification drop-down
- [Teaching support](#)

3. Qualifications covered in this guidance

This guide covers BTEC qualifications from Entry Level to Level 3 where a Q-TAG can be submitted for certificating learners. This includes:

- BTEC Level 1 Entry and Introductory Suite (from 2016)
- BTEC Specialist programmes from Entry to Level 3*
- BTEC PSD, Workskills and Skilled for Life
- International BTEC Level 2
- BTEC 2010 Level 3 Nationals
- International BTEC Level 3
- BTEC Level 3/4 Foundation Diploma Art and Design.

*Please **check the detailed list of qualifications** [to confirm](#) whether your course is 'in-scope' of the Q-TAG process. Qualifications within these suites that form part of an apprenticeship are out of scope and should continue to be assessed.

4. Qualifications not covered in this guidance

We will be releasing separate guidance that will cover:

- BTEC Qualifications Level 4-7 (including Higher Nationals)
- Level 1-7 SRF programmes and SRF Higher Nationals
- Functional Skills and ESOL
- T Levels.

5. Arrangements for awarding results

Unit-level information for certificating learners

If unit-level internal assessment has been completed, **you should ensure all evidence of these internal assessments is retained**. This is important to maintain an accurate record of the assessment that has taken place. Qualification results will be based on the Q-TAG that has been submitted, instead of any banked units.

As results for certificating learners will be issued at qualification-level, you will need to make a holistic judgement, based on the available evidence. This means you will make judgements based on banked assessment evidence, as well as alternative evidence, where exams do not take place and/or when learners cannot complete all internal assessment. Unit-level results will not be issued to certificating learners this year, to ensure fairness and parity with the General Qualifications process, and in recognition of the varied disruption to learners. We are working with HEIs to ensure that learners can progress based on their qualification-level result.

In terms of teaching and learning, to ensure learners can progress with confidence, **you should prioritise units that are set out by HEI admissions as essential to the offer**. You will be asked to confirm you have done this through the submission of the Q-TAG and accompanying Head of Centre Declaration (HOCD).

Unit-level grades are also important for the purposes of 'topping-up' to a larger qualification. Though we recognise not all assessment will have been completed, the learners record should be an accurate reflection of the assessment they have completed on their course. We will be providing more information on the process for 'Top-Ups' when it is finalised.

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

To recognise that, in many cases, not all of the unit-level assessment will have been completed, the Q-TAG should be based on a holistic judgement arrived at through the evaluation of evidence of actual learner performance, either through completed unit level assessments or alternative evidence. You can find out more about alternative evidence in section 6.

Recognising that not all assessment will have taken place

Throughout this academic year, we have been adapting requirements of the qualifications to support centres to focus on continued teaching and learning. This included [assessment adaptations](#), accommodating social distancing and adapting to remote delivery. Late last year we announced the 'reduced assessment' mitigation, which intended to further support the continuation of teaching and learning, by creating time.

Considering the continued disruption and the cancellation of exams, to enable certificating learners to progress, in February we announced that we would be requesting a qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grade to enable qualification results to be issued.

The principle this year is that a learner's performance should be used to determine the final qualification grade submission (Q-TAG), and whilst the sources of evidence might not be the usual sources of evidence for every learner, such as completed internally assessed units, the evidence used should be derived from actual learner work from taught course content, and not a teacher judgement on a learner's *potential*. This means that where learners might not have completed the full course, they may still be securely awarded a qualification grade by the centre because there has been **enough evidence to satisfy the centre that a learner is performing at a specific qualification grade**. This means that incomplete internal assessment may be sufficient in providing that evidence.

For certificating learners, the Q-TAG may be based on incomplete internal assessments.

A Qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grade (Q-TAG) should:

- be a holistic judgement, based on the evidence available, for the content that has been taught
- reflect the evidence that is available
- reflect the grade the learner is performing at
- be agreed by the Head of Centre before submission.

- be easily explained to the learner, through the quality of the evidence used and how the evidence has been gathered to arrive at the final grade, should the learner seek to appeal their Q-TAG result
- overall, should not result in a different distribution of results at a cohort level to previous years unless there is an explanation to support this
- only be issued where there is sufficient evidence to do so – this means that centres may need to ensure additional learner assessment or alternative evidence is generated in support of the Q-TAG. We have provided further detail below on what counts as sufficient evidence.

6. Qualification-Level Teacher Assessed Grade (QTAG) for certificating learners.

Introduction

This section will set out how you will approach determining a Q-TAG for your certificating learners this year. In pulling this support together, we have worked with other TVET Awarding Organisations to align, as far as possible, our guidance for alternative evidence. It is recognised, through the VCRF, that as Awarding Organisations have a diverse portfolio of qualifications, approaches to awarding may be different, and therefore you should seek guidance for other vocational qualifications from the relevant Awarding Organisation.

This guidance will be kept updated and it will be version controlled, with changes made after initial publication, clearly signposted.

Confidence through common sources of evidence

To ensure that a Qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grade (Q-TAG) is sufficiently valid and reliable a centre should draw on a range of suitable evidence upon which to base it.

This should include a range of the following available assessment (and other) evidence that represents the breadth of underpinning knowledge, understanding and skills of the qualification, so learners can progress with confidence.

In setting out these sources of evidence, Pearson will classify these examples as 'common' meaning that all centres will be considering the same types of alternative

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

evidence. We believe this list is extensive and covers the most likely available alternative evidence, but where other forms of evidence are identified, **we will review and update this list**, so please [contact us](#) or join one of our [events](#) if you are unsure.

You should not provide a Qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grade where there is no evidence upon which to base one.

Established sources of evidence:

'Banked' marks and/or grades for completed assessments in Units to date. This includes internal assessments (quality assured by Pearson)

Common sources of alternative evidence:

Alternative evidence that reflects a learner's performance which can be used to inform the Q-TAG:

This includes:

- partially completed internal assessments
- classwork or homework assignments or assessments
- centre devised formative tests of knowledge
- informal assessments
- evidence from specialist teachers and other educational professionals such as special education needs coordinators (SENCOs) who have worked with the learner where appropriate.
- project work
- recordings (e.g. of practical performance)
- evidence from work experience (where relevant to the qualification)
- tracker of achievement and attainment over the course (provided this includes tangible evidence of achievement)
- witness testimonies or teacher observation records when used in conjunction with other forms of evidence.

Recording your Q-TAG decisions and Retention of Evidence and Data

Teachers and Heads of Department must maintain records that show how the Q-TAG process has operated, and this must include the rationale for decisions in

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

relation to individual grades. You must maintain evidence across a variety of tasks to develop a holistic view of each learner's demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills in the areas of content taught. By recording the various stages of the process, you should ensure accurate and secure retention of the evidence used to make decisions. The importance of robust processes for recording decisions and retention of evidence including data is essential in complying with data protection legislation and in anticipation of centre internal QA process, our review of the Q-TAGs submitted and potential appeals. **We will provide templates that can be used to record this evidence. We will include a link to this within this guidance as soon as it is finalised.**

As centres may be subject to Q-TAG evidence sampling it is important to make sure that the grades accurately reflect the evidence available. Evidence must be retained electronically or on paper in a secure centre-based system that can be readily shared with us.

In line with usual practice, **centres must retain all evidence supporting their judgements for a minimum of 12 weeks after certificates are issued.**

Timelines

For those certificating in August, so that we can Quality Assure and process Q-TAGs before results day, centres have until the **18th June 2021** to submit their Q-TAGs to us. This means assessment evidence and alternative evidence on which to base a teacher judgement of the learner's performance needs to be available and internally reviewed by the relevant Lead IV, senior managers and Heads of Department by this date, in order to be considered for the grade put forward.

Results based on Q-TAGs submitted after this date may not be released on the advertised results date if Pearson's QA of the Q-TAGs submitted cannot take place because of a late submission.

Determining the Q-TAG

How BTECs are usually awarded

As you will know, BTEC grades are usually awarded at unit level, where unit grades are determined by the achievement of unit criteria. The unit grades usually equate to a point score, which is then aggregated to a qualification grade. This grading

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

information is set out in each specification. This means that learners can arrive at the same qualification grade, through different combinations of unit grades. Learners can perform differently on different units, for example they may excel at one internally assessed component but perform comparatively less well in terms of the unit grade on another internal unit. You need to reflect your consideration of differentiation in your assessment this year.

How BTECs will be awarded in August 2021

BTECs cannot be awarded in the normal way, due to the impact of the pandemic on the continuation of internal unit assessment.

Therefore, to determine a Q-TAG you will make a **holistic judgement based on the evidence you have of the learner's performance in the qualification**. The evidence you use to inform this judgement can be drawn from different sources of different types and can come from across the course of study. There is no type of evidence from those stated above that is preferred, but you might consider some pieces to be a fairer reflection of the learner's performance than others.

Internal assessment for BTEC is important in supporting continued learning, as well as providing a good source of the evidence to inform holistic judgement of the Q-TAG awarded. Therefore, our policy is that internal assessment should continue where possible and could be used as evidence for the Q-TAG.

However, we recognise that internal assessments may not have all been completed by learners, not least because of our original 'reduced assessment' mitigation. Therefore, we will award qualifications based on incomplete assessment evidence and will also work with centres to ensure sufficient evidence is used. The information below outlines what sufficient evidence means in this context.

Review the specification grading information i.e. unit-level assessment criteria and grade descriptors with the subject teaching team

You will be familiar with how your learners on programme have performed on different units and therefore how they arrived at the final aggregated qualification grade in normal years.

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

Therefore, we recommend the teaching team re-familiarises themselves with the unit criteria for internally assessed units, to get a sense of the learners' performance holistically to submit a final Q-TAG.

You will have undertaken centre assessor standardisation at the beginning of the year, using the relevant Centre Standardisation Materials. You should also now consider how alternative evidence (where the unit has not been assessed) could be used to evidence attainment, which can then contribute to the holistic judgement of the Qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grade.

For reference: Assessment decisions for BTECs are based on the specific criteria given in each unit and set at each grade level. To ensure that standards are consistent in the qualification and across the suite, the criteria for each unit have been defined according to a framework. The way in which individual units are written provides a balance of assessment of understanding, practical skills, and vocational attributes appropriate to the purpose of qualifications.

Consider what evidence you will have from the content you have taught

You should only grade each learner on their **performance in the qualification content they have been taught**. You are not required to submit a Q-TAG based on learner potential.

With learners returning to centres, you will need to consider the coverage of content taught so far and map out any mandatory (and optional) content that has not yet been covered. It is important to continue to teach learners on their programmes of study to ensure that the most complete sources of evidence are available on which to base your holistic qualification grade judgement. If the pandemic has had an impact on delivery of practical units or those requiring specialist equipment, you may want to prioritise these units on return to standard teaching to ensure learners have best preparation for progression.

You should use your delivery and assessment plans to evaluate the situation for each learner.

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

By undertaking this review, the teaching team should consider any evidence gaps for individual learners. This step forms the underpinning standardisation of centre assessors who will be involved in the process of collating evidence, then determining the Q-TAG.

1. Collect the evidence

Consider what evidence you have collected across the course of the learners' performance. This can include anything from the common sources of evidence list above.

- You should include evidence that assesses the learner's ability across a representative range of subject content and across the different learning aims.
- There are no limitations on the number of pieces of evidence, or number of different types of evidence.
- If a learner has studied with other educational providers or a tutor during the course, you can also use any evidence that is available from those sources that you are confident is authentic. **[More guidance will be provided on this when it becomes available]**
- The evidence must relate to the qualification and specification being assessed.
- Witness testimonies accompanying partially completed work
- The evidence should illustrate the level performance at the grade being submitted for the Q-TAG.

2. Evaluate the quality of the evidence

When considering how useful the evidence is in determining the grade you might consider the following factors:

- There is no set hierarchy of evidence and teachers should judge the evidence they believe to be the most representative of learners' achievements.
- Whether evidence covers content within learning aims
- Authenticity – The evidence should be the learner's own work. Where this includes group work, you must be confident about the learner's own contribution.

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

- Level of control – Was it taken in timed conditions? Was there an opportunity for redrafting? Was it supervised?
- Marking – How much support was available to help you in applying the mark scheme? What internal standardisation processes have been applied?
- More recent evidence may be more representative of learners' current performance; however, teachers will need to consider the context in which the work was created.
- Banked, externally validated evidence - It's important to consider whether a learner may have improved or not on the original banked grade (with evidence generated) for example in the case of external assessment where a resit opportunity has not been available.
- Also consider the context each piece was completed in. If you know that a learner completed an assessment when they were ill or in other challenging circumstances, you should consider whether it is a fair reflection of the performance – see below for more detail on special considerations.

3. Assign a Qualification-Level Teacher Assessed Grade (Q-TAG)

Q-TAGs should be based on a holistic judgement of the evidence of the learner's performance on the qualification content they have been taught at the point of the collection of evidence that will inform the Q-TAG. There is no set hierarchy of evidence and teachers should weight the evidence they believe to be the most representative of learners' achievements.

What would not be sufficient evidence?

- Where a learner has not been present for coverage of any of the course.
- Where there is no evidence of any of the skills above, and it is not possible to generate any evidence.

Look at the evidence you have collected and use the sources of support available to help you reach a final grade. This will include your professional experience of the assessment materials used as well as the grade descriptors and exemplification available:

- **Unit criteria** – The [specification](#) should be referred to in understanding the unit-level requirements in normal times.
- **Centre Standardisation Materials** – Internal standardisation materials that have been used as part of your internal quality assurance process can be used to ensure

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

that completed or partially completed assessment is assessed to the standards set out in the specification.

Remember that the Q-TAG must be based on the learner's performance in the evidence you have collected. **You are not required to factor in the learner's potential.** For example, if all the evidence is of grade Pass and Merit, there would be no reason to consider awarding that learner a grade D (or D*). It should be no easier or harder for a learner to achieve a grade based on their performance than in previous years.

4. Reflect on your judgement before submission

It is essential that holistic judgements are objective and in consideration of the evidence available. They should also be endorsed via an internal verification process by those on the teaching team, and senior managers. You should be mindful of policies and guidance regarding access and avoiding conscious or unconscious bias and discrimination in making awards.

The use of historical data which a centre has available is also one source of evidence which a centre may use to reflect on the grading decisions as a 'sense check'. **Further guidance on how data can be used as a check will be issued once the equivalent is confirmed for other qualifications.**

We will be releasing 'performance indicators' for the different qualification suites which we hope will support you with a holistic sense check of your Q-TAGs before submission.

Making changes to Q-TAGs

Considering these steps, Q-TAGs may then need to be adjusted as part of the centre's quality assurance processes.

7. An overview of the administrative steps you will take for certificating learners for August 2021

Preparing learner records

This year, as the focus is on Qualification-level grade information, you will need to ensure that learner records are up to date, as this information will populate

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

learners into a list that we will provide to you (through EOL) to populate with your Q-TAGs. This means that learners must have an estimated completion date of between 1 June 2021 and 31 August 2021. Please check that all learners are registered onto the correct courses, as any late registration changes will trigger a review in line with our centre management processes.

Step 1 - Provide grades for completed internally assessed units

Learners may have several completed units at this stage and final grades for these should be submitted to us. Please enter these grades as you usually would, via Edexcel Online (EOL) and EDI, as soon as possible, and by 18 June 2021. This is to ensure learner records accurately reflect any internal assessment that has been able to take place.

Step 2 – Provide Flag in system for ‘reduced assessment’ *(note this functionality is not yet available – but coming soon)*

For any Reduced Internal Assessment (taught but not assessed, under the original ‘Reduced Assessment’ mitigation), you will ‘flag’ these in the grade reporting system in EOL, so this is accurately reflected in the system to indicate these units formed part of the learner’s programme of study. This is particularly important for learners will be ‘Topping-up’ to larger sized BTEC qualifications.

Step 3 – Collate and Evaluate all Assessment evidence and alternative evidence to make a Q-TAG judgement

Considering the content taught, the assessment evidence that is banked and the common sources of alternative evidence collected for each learner, the teaching team are now able to make a teacher judgement based on the level that the learner is performing at, reviewing the evidence, and discounting any evidence that might not be reflective of the learner’s true performance because of the circumstances that certain assessments were taken under. Please see section 8 for more information on the process you should follow.

Step 4– Review and Approve

The Head of Department/Lead Internal Verifier or other relevant senior leader should review and endorse the Q-TAGs for the subject area with the relevant teachers/assessors. After approval these should be passed to the Head of Centre.

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

Centres must keep their own records of approval for each subject area which may be requested by Pearson if required.

Step 5 - Submit Qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grades (*note this functionality is not yet available – but coming soon*).

Please submit to us the Qualification-Level Teacher Assessed Grades by **18 June**. Submitting grades on time will enable us to contact you in good time should we need to query any of the grades put forward. Submitting grades after this date may mean you do not receive results by results day.

Step 6 – Submit the Head of Centre Declaration (*note this functionality is not yet available – but coming soon*).

The Head of Centre Declaration will form part of the Q-TAG submission process this year. **We will give more guidance on this as soon as possible.**

8. Equalities and Objectivity

It is important that when forming any judgment on a Q-TAG for a learner a centre should consider any reasonable adjustment to mitigate any adverse impact of the Q-TAG process. We are committed to ensuring that all learners are treated fairly through these mitigating measures, and we acknowledge that centres will be best placed to accommodate this within their judgements.

Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration:

Reasonable adjustments for disabled learners any access arrangements should have been in place when evidence was generated. Where they were not, centres should take that into account when coming to their judgement. Where appropriate, this should include input from appropriate specialist teachers and other professionals.

9. Bias

Centres will fulfil their duties and responsibilities in relation to relevant equality and disability legislation, guidance, and policies.

Senior Leaders should consider:

- Sources of unfairness and bias (situations/contexts, difficulty, presentation and format, language, conditions for assessment, marker pre-conceptions).
- Minimising bias (how to minimise bias in questions and marking, hidden forms of bias); and
- Bias in teacher assessed grades.

To avoid bias all staff involved in judgment of Qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grades will be aware that:

- Unconscious bias can skew judgements.
- The evidence should be valued for its own merit as an indication of performance and attainment.
- Teacher assessed grades should not be influenced by positive or challenging personal circumstances, character, behaviour, appearance, socio-economic background, or performance of their siblings.
- Unconscious bias is more likely to occur when quick opinions are formed.
- Having effective internal standardisation will help to ensure that there are different perspectives to the quality assurance process.

We are working to provide a training module on bias which can be used to support teachers in making their judgements.

10. Sharing Q-TAGs before results day

It will be important that centres are transparent about the overall approach that will be used to determine the qualification teacher assessed grades. Learners will want to understand the process and the information that will be considered.

We will provide further information shortly on the information that can be shared with learners before results day and what should be confidential until results are issued.

11. Consideration for Appeals

As in any year, we will ensure there is a clear route to appeal for each qualification suite. Where assessment has continued in the usual way (or with some adaptations) it is likely that the usual approach to appeals will be fit for purpose and can continue.

Where a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) has been used as the basis for awarding a vocational or technical qualification (VTQ) we will provide further details to clarify the arrangements for learners who wish to appeal their result.

We are currently developing our approach to appeals and considering how similar it should be across VTQs and GQs.

We anticipate the appeals process will utilise the evidence the centre used to make its Q-TAG decision for a learner. It will be important that all evidence on which a learner's Q-TAG has been based is retained safely by the centre. Centres should also retain any information relating to a learner's access arrangements, or personal circumstances affecting their performance, which has been considered during the process of determining their grade. Records of learner's evidence should be kept accessible in order that it can be easily drawn upon if they decide to appeal their grade.

12. Quality Assurance Activities in 2021

Introduction and overview

- BTEC assessment has always been underpinned by Quality Assurance processes, to support teacher-led assessment.
- As such, centres will continue to adhere to the existing BTEC policies, regarding centre-assessor standardisation and internal verification, but in the context of Q-TAGs. Our aim is that we can utilise these existing policies, to support the alternative processes this year. **We will issue more guidance on centre policies as soon as it is available.**
- 'Common' sources of evidence will be set out by Pearson.

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

- Centres will refamiliarise and restandardise themselves on the qualification learning aims and external assessment grade descriptors, establishing a shared understanding of the holistic requirements of the course and how existing evidence can be used to inform the holistic Q-TAG judgement, and where alternative evidence may be needed to support the judgements.
- Much of the evidence that will be used to inform the Q-TAG will be based on completed, or partially completed internal assessments.
- Where units are completed or partially completed, Standards Verifiers will give feedback on unit-level standards application, which we believe will support centres when they go on to make their Qualification-level TAG judgements.
- Centre assessors should take note of any feedback provided and share with the teaching team. They may deem it appropriate to restandardise.
- After Q-TAG submission, a final QA check will take place by Pearson – centres may be required to review Q-TAGs if evidence cannot be provided to support grades put forward.

Centre policies to include the Q-TAG process

As you will be aware, centres are required to sign up to a range of centre policies in relation to the operation of Quality Assurance in more normal times. Our aim is that we can utilise these existing policies, to support the alternative processes this year. **We will issue more guidance on centre policies as soon as it is available.**

What will Standards Verification involve this year?

The Standards Verification process **this year has a different core purpose and is designed to support centres** and assessors in awarding grades. It will offer guidance, support, and areas where processes can be developed to shape parity across centres.

BTEC is made up of internal assessment, because of this, and in parallel to producing some more specific guidance around arriving at Q-TAG grades we have taken the decision to turn our standards verification process into a clear touch point to support you through the process.

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

We have therefore reduced the amount of material that we would like to review, and have introduced some flexibility of what that evidence looks like (could include partially completed work). It will enable us to have an earlier interaction with you on assessment judgements that you are making on a subset of the qualification to have some confidence that you are likely to be making good judgements at the point of Q-TAG submission. We intend to use the outputs of this process to inform, in part, the sampling of Q-TAGs later in the year (July).

- The process for BTEC quality assurance is well established and our approach will be to continue working with you collaboratively to support this requirement.
- To fulfil the requirements on quality assurance, Standards Verification will continue in a different format and with a different core purpose this year - to support the Q-TAG process.

What will Standards Verifiers (SVs) be able to do?

- SVs will be providing feedback on teacher unit-level assessment only.
- This feedback can be used to support centres to ascertain their accuracy in the application of unit-level criteria.
- SVs can provide both sector specific expertise relating to internal assessment, and support for centres on the application of unit-level standards.
- SVs will not be advising centres on their Qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grades, as these judgements will have to consider other forms of evidence.

Other ways in which your Standards Verifier (SV) can support you:

- Discuss any reduced assessment options and possible adaptations available for the programme
- Review assessment plans
- Share good practice in delivery and assessment activities
- Offer advice on alternative resources and approaches to content delivery
- Suggest alternative approaches when gathering assessment evidence
- Provide feedback on assignment briefs, assessment decisions and internal verification

Final Pearson QA of Q-TAGs submitted

We are finalising the process and arrangements for this step and will update you as soon as possible.

13. An overview of the administrative steps you will take for 'mid-flight' learners

A non-certificating ('mid-flight') learner, is a learner part way through a course (i.e. in year 1 of a 2-year course).

Note: If your centre uses a "top -up" model (i.e. registering learners on a smaller course, and then 'topping-up' to a larger sized qualification on completion of the smaller sized course) you must follow the guidance in the previous sections for certificating learners.

Learners that are not due to certificate in August 2021 must not be given a Q-TAG. For these mid-flight learners, decisions are still being taken as to how 2022 will operate. In the absence of decisions being final we'd like you to submit the following information to us:

- Existing published 'reduced internal assessment' mitigations
- Unit grades for internal assessment that has been completed, either in line with 'in-unit' adaptations, or with guidance in the specification, should be submitted in the normal way, using the 'interim' claim function.

Preparing learner records

You will need to ensure that learner records are up to date, and that learners are registered on the correct courses, with appropriate completion dates in 2022.

Step 1 - Provide grades for completed internally assessed units

Learners may have several completed units at this stage and final grades for these should be submitted. Please enter these grades as you usually would, via Edexcel Online (EOL) and EDI.

Guidance for certificating and non-certificating learners

Step 2 – Provide Flag in system for ‘reduced assessment’ (note this functionality is not yet available – but coming soon).

For any Reduced Internal Assessment (taught but not assessed, under the original ‘Reduced Assessment’ mitigation), you will ‘flag’ these in the grade reporting system in EOL, so this is accurately reflected in the system to indicate these units formed part of the learner’s programme of study.

Step 3 – Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Where possible, teaching, learning and assessment should continue for these learners, please following, the subject specific teaching and learning guidance and reduced assessment guidance.

Appendix A - Glossary of Terms

VTQ	Vocational and Technical Qualifications
AO	Awarding Organisation
Q-TAG	Qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grade
VCRF	VTQ Contingency Regulatory Framework
EOL	Edexcel Online
JCQ	Joint Council for Qualifications