

Navigating the JCQ guidance on the determination of grades for summer 2021

Ten key areas to note

On Friday 26 March the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) released [comprehensive guidance on the process for deriving grades this summer](#). To help you digest this information, we've summarised it into ten key areas below.



- 1 Every centre must produce a Centre Policy; this can be done by choosing to adopt the pre-populated template.
- 2 There will be internal and external quality assurance. The external will be a 3-stage process:
 - Stage 1 – Centre Policy Review
 - Stage 2 – Virtual Centre Visit (not all centres will be subject to a virtual centre visit)
 - Stage 3 – Post-Submission Sampling (this will be both targeted and a randomised sample of centres)
- 3 It is important that grades represent a holistic, objective judgement based on evidence of each student's performance in each subject.
- 4 There should be a 5-step process to grading:
 - Step 1 – Consider what has been taught
 - Step 2 – Collect the evidence
 - Step 3 – Evaluate the quality of the evidence
 - Step 4 – Is the evidence appropriate for all students?
 - Step 5 – Assign a grade
- 5 Grade descriptors have been created for GCSE, AS and A level subjects, published 31 March. Additional support materials, including grading exemplification will be available on 19 April.
- 6 The final grade is based on performance and evidence produced by students, a grade on a predicted trajectory or target grade is not permitted.
- 7 Awarding organisations' existing assessment materials (including past papers and examiners' reports) will all be available as normal. In addition to existing materials, the following will be made available to centres:
 - by 31 March, additional assessment materials including sets of questions, mark schemes and mapping grids
 - by 12 April, additional support materials including exemplar responses and links to other information which will help with using and marking these assessment materials.
- 8 Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs), SEND leaders and assessors are advised to continue to process online applications as if examinations were taking place this summer. This will formalise the arrangements for the student's assessments and will ensure consistency with the Equality Act 2010.
- 9 The arrangements for awarding grades to students in summer 2021 include internal and external quality assurance measures which aim to ensure, that on results day, students are issued with fair and consistent grades that have been objectively reached. Sharing information with students about the evidence being used as part of a centre's grade determination process is important and should help to avoid issues that may otherwise arise when results are issued.
- 10 Students will be able to appeal their grade. First, they will need to ask their centre to check whether an administrative or procedural error had been made. Where a centre does not believe an error had been made, a student can ask the centre to appeal to the exam board on their behalf.

[**Read the full details in the JCQ document**](#)



How we are supporting schools and colleges

We're committed to providing you with the best support available. Full details can be found on our [summer 2021 support page](#).

We'll also be providing support and guidance documents via the [Pearson Professional Development Academy](#) as well as running pre-recorded and live training sessions.

[Sign up to be the first to know when training sessions become available](#).

Get in touch

If you would like to speak to us directly, you can get in touch with any questions via our [Support Portal](#), or by [calling the relevant team for your role](#).