

BTEC qualifications

# International Guidance 2021/2022

Guidance for learners who were 'mid-flight' in 2020/21 or are topping up/dropping down in 2021/22 and those using adaptations in 2021/22

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# Introduction

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

- Level 2 BTEC Internationals
- Level 3 BTEC Internationals Level 3

Level 3 BTEC Nationals (QCF) 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 Internal Assessment Guide for Level 2 and 3 International BTEC and Level 3 QCF BTEC Nationals BTEC International Covid Assessment Adaptations \(pearson.com\)](#)

[U-TAG Teacher Guidance](#)

### 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 August 25 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 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.

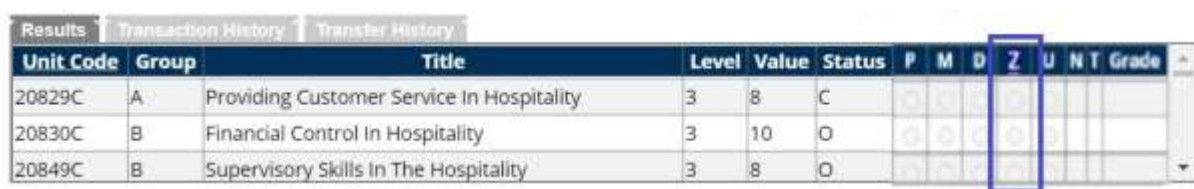
**We appreciate your continued support** whilst we navigate this new academic year and focus again on enabling learners to progress onto the next stage of their life.

# 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.

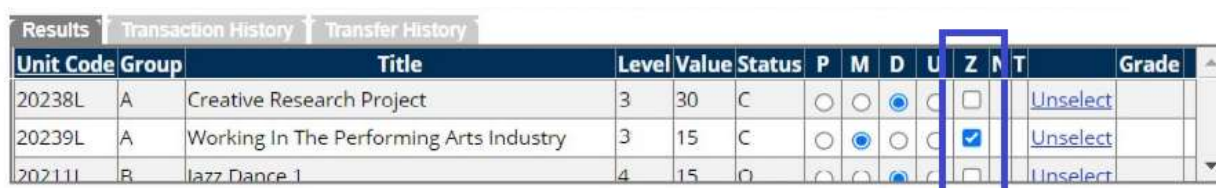
### For Internally Assessed units:

[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								Unselect
20239L	A	Working In The Performing Arts Industry	3	15	C								Unselect
202111	B	Jazz Dance 1	4	15	O								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.

Please note, the 'Z flag + grade' input functionality is not available yet. We will update you via the [International VQ Bulletin](#) when it becomes available via Edexcel Online in the next few weeks.

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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. We expect this to 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 type="radio"/>	<input checked="" 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:

## 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

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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](#)).

\* 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.



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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.

## Assessment Adaptations in 2021/2022

Please find [here](#) a list of qualifications which indicate if streamlined/adapted assessment is available in 2021/22.

**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.

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<sup>1</sup> The letter grade would be from the grade set available for that unit. For example for L3 International BTEC is D, M, P, or U.

<sup>3</sup> All internal assessments for BTEC Nationals (QCF, BTEC International Levels 2 and 3 have a fixed-point scale.

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### 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 progression. Streamlined assessment is available for many qualifications in the **BTEC Nationals (QCF), BTEC International Level 2 and Level 3 suites**. Further information can be found in our [Streamlined Internal Assessment Guidance](#). 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.

### Learner eligibility:

There are currently no plans to have streamlined assessment extended to learners who take assessments in 2022/23, regardless of when they are due to certificate. **streamlined assessment is only available in this academic year, for assessment due to take place between 1 September 2021- 31 August 2022.**

## Reporting adapted assessment via EOL

	Type			
	Z Grade (Radio button in EOL)	Z Flag (Tick in EOL)	Streamlined Assessment for BTEC Nationals (QCF) BTEC International Level 2, BTEC International Level 3	
Available from	1 August 2020 to the 31 August 2021	Functionality available from mid-October	Functionality available in early 2022.	
To be reported by	No longer available	10 November 2021	31 August 2022	

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Appears on Edexcel Online as:	A grade, alongside P, M, D and U, as 'Z'	Tick box in 'Z' column	Tick box in a new column (reference TBC)	-
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Once you have submitted your U-TAGs on the system, you are permitted to give these to your learners. 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.

### 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>
Mid October 2021	10 November 2021	Submit via EOL as explained in this Guidance (for internally assessed units)	
Mid October 2021	10 November 2021	Head of Centre Declaration	A Head of centre Declaration will be required to be submitted which will cover all submitted U-TAGs
November 2021	December 2021	Pearson completes QA checks	Pearson complete sample checks on submitted U-TAGs
4 January 2022	13 January 2022	Pearson confirms grades have been accepted	
13 January 2022	14 February 2022	Appeal window	Further details TBC

### 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 September. 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:
  - Learner registration number
  - First name and Surname

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- 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

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.

### 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:

#### After 30 September 2021:

1. Log onto Edexcel Online and transfer them to the smaller sized qualification.



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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.

## Further Support

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

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Guidance documents:

[Streamlined Assessment for BTEC Nationals \(QCF\), International BTEC Levels 2 and 3](#)

[BTEC International Covid Assessment Adaptations \(pearson.com\)](#)

[2021 BTEC Teacher Assessed Grade Guidance during COVID-19 2021 Int V1 170321\\_F2.pdf \(pearson.com\)](#)

[U-TAG Teacher Guidance](#)