

Herefordshire, Ludlow & North Shropshire College

CENTRE POLICY FOR AWARDING A/AS LEVELS & GCSE GRADES FOR
SUMMER 2021

Centre Policy for determining teacher assessed grades in Summer 2021

Background

In accordance with the guidance from JCQ and Ofqual, HLNSC has created this Centre Policy that reflects this year's awarding expectations due to the Covid19 pandemic.

This policy has taken account guidance provided in the documents/guidance:

JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs for summer 2021

Ofqual: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/submission-of-teacher-assessed-grades-summer-2021-info-for-teachers/information-for-heads-of-centre-heads-of-department-and-teachers-on-the-submission-of-teacher-assessed-grades-summer-2021-html>

As well as specific awarding organisation guidance, for example:

AQA

Pearson

OCR

OCN

CBAC/WJEC

Centre Policy for determining teacher assessed grades – summer 2021: Herefordshire, Ludlow & North Shropshire College

Statement of intent

This section outlines the purpose of this document in relation to our centre.

Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy, in line with current College policies, is to ensure:

- *teacher assessed grades (TAGs) are determined fairly, consistently, free from bias across teams/departments*
- *operation of effective processes with clear guidelines and support for staff*
- *staff involved in the processes clearly understand their roles and responsibilities*
- *teachers are supported to take evidence-based decisions in line with Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and awarding organisation guidance*
- *consideration of historical centre data in the process, and the appropriate decision making in respect of, teacher assessed grades*
- *internal quality assurance is carried out in the allocation of teacher assessed grades*
- *our centre in meeting its obligations in relation to equality legislation is in line with the HLNSC Single Equality Scheme*
- *HLNSC meets all requirements set out by the Department of Education, Ofqual, the JCQ and awarding organisations for Summer 2021 qualifications.*
- *Students are clearly informed of the evidence we intend to use to determine teacher assessed grades that will be awarded grades summer 2021*
- *we will share with students in 2021 the actual evidence that has been used to determine their grade and will confirm that internal quality assurance processes have been completed*

Roles and responsibilities

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the personnel in our centre who have specific roles and responsibilities in the process of determining teacher assessed grades this year.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff roles and responsibilities within our centre:

Head of Centre

- *Our Head of Centre is the Principal, David Williams*

Our Head of Centre will:

- *be responsible for approving this policy for determining teacher assessed grades and has overall responsibility for Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College as an examinations centre and will ensure that clear roles and responsibilities of all staff are defined*
- *confirm that teacher assessed grade decisions represent the academic judgement made by teachers and that the checks in place ensure these align with the guidance on standards provided by awarding organisations*
- *ensure a robust internal quality assurance process has been produced and signed-off in advance of results being submitted*

College Management Team and Curriculum Team Leaders/Head of Campuses

Our CMT and CTLs/HoCs will:

- *provide training and support staff involved with teacher assessed grade decisions*
- *support the Head of Centre in the quality assurance of the final teacher assessed grades*
- *be responsible for ensuring staff have a clear understanding of the internal and external quality assurance processes and their role within it*
- *ensure judgements about student evidence in deriving a grade are objective, consistent and fair*
- *ensure all assessments are conducted under the appropriate levels of control with reference to guidance provided by the JCQ and awarding organisation guidance*
- *complete a Head of Department Checklist for each qualification submitted*

Teachers

Our teachers will ensure:

- *assessments are conducted under our centre's appropriate levels of control and sufficient evidence, in line with this Centre Policy and guidance from the JCQ, is available to provide teacher assessed grades for each student entered for a qualification*
- *that teacher assessed grades assigned to each student is fair, valid and reliable reflection of the assessed evidence available for each student*
- *judgements are based on what each student has been taught and what they have been assessed on, as outlined in the section on grading in the main JCQ guidance*
- *assessment records for each subject cohort is presented at the Assessment Board that includes:*
 - *the type of assessment evidence used*

- *the level of control for assessments considered*
- *other evidence that explains how the final teacher assessed grades were determined*
- *variations for individual students will also be recorded*
- *evidence will be kept and securely stored, to support the assessment decisions and be available upon request*

Examinations Manager

Our Examinations Manager will be responsible for:

- *the administration of final teacher assessed grades*
- *managing the post-results services*

Training, support and guidance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the training, support and guidance that our centre will provide to those determining teacher assessed grades this year.

Training and Support

The college will provide training, support and guidance for staff who are involved in determining teacher assessed grades by:

- *ensuring JCQ and the awarding organisations guidance is communicated with Teachers involved in determining grades*
- *centre-based training is provided to help achieve consistency and fairness in awarding teacher assessed grades*
- *teachers will be supported to engage with all training and support that has been provided*
- *training will be monitored, recorded and attendance logged on internal CPD records*

Support for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) and teachers less familiar with assessment

In line with current college policies, internal reviews will be risk rated to support staff to are NQT or are less experienced with assessment.

We will ensure:

- *in line with the HLNSC Internal Quality Assurance and Appeals Policy, internal quality assurance reviews will be conducted*
- *IQA will be risk based and, where applicable, additional internal reviews will be conducted and countersigned, in accordance with awarding organisation published procedures*
- *NQTs are mentored by experienced teachers and support would be provided*
- *teachers less familiar with assessment are supported by their CTL/HoC, staff training/development and Teaching & Learning Mentors*
- *CTLs monitor their staff and will identify additional support where needed*

Determining teacher assessed grades and evidence used

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to awarding teacher assessed grades and how our centre will give regard to the JCQ 'Guidance on grading for teachers'.

Awarding teacher assessed grades based on evidence
<p>Teachers making judgements will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>have regard to the Ofqual Head of Centre guidance on recommended evidence, JCQ guidance and any further guidance provided by awarding organisations</i> • <i>determine grades based on evidence commensurate with the standard at which each student is performing to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills across the content they have been taught</i> • <i>record how the evidence was used to arrive at a fair and objective grade, which is free from bias.</i> • <i>produce an Assessment Record for each subject cohort and will share this with their Curriculum Team Leader and present it to the Assessment Board. This will include individual student variations</i> • <i>share with students the evidence they intend to use to determine their teacher assessed grades</i>
<p>Use of evidence will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>consider what has been taught, to what depth content has been taught and will include the appropriate assessment evidence of that content</i> • <i>collect evidence of student performance over the course of study to make holistic judgements of each student's performance to ensure sufficient content has been taught/learned to form the basis for a grade</i> • <i>candidate evidence and associated documentation will be retained and made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals</i> • <i>evaluate the quality of evidence to consider, coverage of assessment objectives, content, authenticity, level of control and marking</i> • <i>ensure the appropriateness of the evidence supports all students</i>
<p>Sources of evidence may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>student work produced in response to awarding organisation assessment materials, for example including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers</i> • <i>coursework (non-exam assessment work), even if this has not been fully completed</i> • <i>student work produced for centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that follow the same format as awarding organisation materials, and have been marked in a way that reflects awarding organisation mark schemes</i> • <i>substantial class or homework (including work that took place during remote learning)</i> • <i>internal tests and/or mock exams taken by students</i> • <i>records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects</i>

- *Additional Assessment Materials (AAMs) may be used to:*
 - *give students the opportunity to show what they know, understand or can do in an area of content that has been taught but not yet assessed*
 - *give students an opportunity to show improvement, for example, to validate or replace an existing piece of evidence*
 - *support consistency of judgement between teachers or classes by giving everyone the same task to complete*
 - *to ensure elements of questions/assessments are not focussing on elements of qualification specifications which have not been taught*

We will ensure appropriateness and balance of evidence by:

- *selecting different types of evidence to show a holistic view of each student's performance which demonstrates their full depth/breadth of understanding, and which takes in to account the skills assessed*
- *ensuring assessment evidence reflects the content they have been taught, in line with the qualification specification and assessment objectives*
- *using consistent evidence across cohort where possible*
- *selecting additional evidence when special consideration or access arrangements are in place*
- *considering the level of control under which an assessment was completed, for example, supervised/controlled or remotely*
- *ensuring student work is authenticated as the student's own work*
- *consider the limitations of assessing a student's performance when using assessments that have been completed more than once*

Internal quality assurance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to ensure internal standardisation of teacher assessed grades, to ensure consistency, fairness and objectivity of decisions.

Internal quality assurance

No teacher assessed grades will be made in isolation and will be subject to internal standardisation which will include:

- *ensuring teachers involved in teacher assessed grades are aware/understand this Centre Policy document and the wider college policies relating to this process*
- *centre based training to support teachers determining assessed grades*
- *JCQ objectivity and awarding training*
- *awarding organisation training/information events*
- *Internal quality assurance, to include additional internal reviews for NQT, or staff not as familiar with making assessment decisions, will be conducted*
- *standardisation activities to ensure consistency of grade boundaries, descriptors used etc*
- *Assessment Boards to agree the awarding of teacher assessed grades and will consider the grades awarded to different groups of students, including those with protected characteristics. We will review the teacher assessed grades in line with previous cohort performance*
- *consider the range of evidence for students of different protected characteristics*

Comparison of Teacher Assessed Grades to results for previous cohorts

Internal Assessment Boards will:

- *will bring together data to quality assure the intended grades for 2021 awarding*
- *compare previous teacher assessed grades against previous cohort performance*
- *compile information on the grades awarded to students in the last series in which exams took place, for example November 2020*
- *take into consideration the size of each cohort from series to series*
- *consider any variation in outcomes flagged during the internal quality assurance process*
- *provide a short narrative on the outcomes of the performance review against historic data to explain variations that arise and this narrative to be available for external quality assurance review*
- *change teacher assessed grades if felt the grade(s) are overly lenient or harsh and this will be included in the narrative*

Access Arrangements and Special Considerations

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to provide students with appropriate access arrangements and take into account mitigating circumstances in particular instances.

Reasonable adjustments and mitigating circumstances (special consideration)

Our approach will be in line with our current college policy:

- *students who have agreed access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, we will ensure, where possible, these arrangements are in place when assessments are being taken*
- *if an assessment has taken place without an agreed reasonable adjustment or access arrangement, we may remove that assessment from the basket of evidence if it had or reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on the student's ability to demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in that assessment. If assessment is removed the student will be informed.*
- *students are asked to raise any mitigating circumstances eg temporary illness, temporary injury or another event outside of the student's control, that they believe has affected their performance at the time of any of the assessments*
- *a second opportunity has also been given to students to outline any mitigating circumstances that they believe warrant special consideration, along with accompanying evidence in an application that needs to be submitted by Friday 21st May 2021.*
- *application for Special Consideration will be in accordance with - [JCC – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020](#)*
- *The college must be satisfied that the issue or event has had, or reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a student's ability to demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.*
- *where possible, the college will select evidence completed by students where they were unaffected by adverse circumstances. If this is the case, the student will be informed. If an alternative piece of evidence cannot be identified the teachers will apply their holistic academic judgement*
- *special consideration will not be applied for lost teaching and learning*
- *the Assessment Board will record where special consideration has been applied*

Addressing disruption/differential lost learning (DLL)

Addressing Disruption/Differentiated Lost Learning (DLL)

- *special consideration will not be applied for lost teaching and learning*
- *students will only be assessed on content that has been delivered to them.*
- *students have the opportunity apply for special consideration where they feel their performance may have been affected by an event outside of their control.*

Objectivity

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the arrangements in place to ensure objectivity of decisions made.

Objectivity

The internal quality assurance processes will ensure objectivity in awarding teacher assessed grades by:

- *ensuring there no conflicts of interest in line with section 4 of our 'Academic Misconduct Policy'*
- *ensuring staff are trained/supported to objectively award teacher assessed grades without bias*
- *taking in to account of existing records and available evidence of a student's knowledge and abilities in relation to the subject*
- *taking in to account Ofqual's published information for centres about making affective judgements*
- *internal standardisation to ensure consistency and ensure unconscious bias has not taken place*
- *subject Assessment Boards that review the awarding of teacher assessed grades, objectivity and will consider the grades awarded to different groups of students, including protected characteristics, gender and disadvantage etc*
- *reviewing performance to previous cohorts*

- *grading decisions only being made on available/existing recorded evidence*
- *new evidence (up to 21st May 2021) that demonstrates students knowledge and ability, in line with guidance*

Recording decisions and retention of evidence and data

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our arrangements to recording decisions and to retaining evidence and data.

Recording Decisions and Retention of Evidence and Data

Our approach to recording decisions and retaining evidence and data is:

We will ensure:

- *Assessment Boards records show how the teacher assessed grades process operated, including the rationale for decisions in relation to individual marks/grades*
- *evidence is maintained to provide a holistic view of each student's demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills in the areas of content taught*
- *teachers provide and securely retain evidence used to make assessment decisions*
- *staff comply with data protection and GDPR legislation (in accordance with HLNSC GDP Policy)*
- *grades accurately reflect the evidence submitted and final grade decisions will be ratified by the Assessment Boards*
- *evidence is retained and, if required, will be shared with awarding organisation external quality assurers.*

Authenticating evidence

Authenticating evidence

Using our existing processes and policies, we will ensure authenticity of evidence by:

- *statements of authenticity are signed by each student*
- *teachers will, wherever possible, use supervised assessments (in class or remotely) to ensure no inappropriate levels of support have been given to students to complete the assessment*
- *ensuring all guidance provided by awarding organisations is used*
- *if teachers suspect or allegations are made of academic misconduct (cheating and plagiarism), these will be dealt with in accordance with our Academic Misconduct and Student Disciplinary Policies/procedures*

Confidentiality, malpractice and conflicts of interest

Confidentiality

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to ensure the confidentiality of the grades our centre determines, and to make students aware of the range of evidence on which those grades will be based.

Confidentiality

We will ensure confidentiality of the grades is maintained by:

- *staff involved are made aware of the need to maintain the confidentiality of teacher assessed grades*
- *teaching staff are briefed on the requirement to share details of the range of evidence on which students' grades will be based, while ensuring that details of the final grades remain confidential*
- *by communicating with students via a letter which outlines the evidence that is going to be used to determine teacher assessed grades. This also confirms with them that the college will not share with students the teacher assessed grades submitted to awarding organisations.*

Malpractice

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to prevent malpractice and other breaches of exam regulations, and to deal with such cases if they occur.

Malpractice

The following measures are in place to prevent malpractice and, where that proves impossible, to handle cases in accordance with awarding organisation requirements.

- *our Academic Misconduct Policy regarding malpractice, maladministration and conflicts of interest has been checked to ensure it addresses the specific challenges of delivery in Summer 2021*
- *staff have been made aware of the specific types of malpractice which may affect the Summer 2021 series including:*
 - *breaches of internal security;*
 - *deception;*
 - *improper assistance to students;*
 - *failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work;*
 - *over direction of students in preparation for common assessments;*
 - *allegations that centres submit grades not supported by evidence that they know to be inaccurate;*
 - *centres enter students who were not originally intending to certificate a grade in the Summer 2021 series;*

- *failure to engage as requested with awarding organisations during the External Quality Assurance and appeal stages;*
- *failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made and teacher assessed grades.*

- *If staff suspect academic misconduct they will report it in line with the Academic Misconduct Policy*
- *the consequences of malpractice or maladministration as published in the JCQ guidance: [JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures](#) and including the risk of a delay to students receiving their grades, up to, and including, removal of centre status have been outlined to all relevant staff.*

Conflicts of Interest

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to address potential conflicts of interest.

Conflicts of Interest

To protect the integrity of assessments, we will:

- *ensure all staff involved declare any conflict of interest, such as relationships with students, in line with our section 4 of our policy 'Academic Misconduct'*
- *take appropriate action to manage any conflicts of interest arising with centre staff in accordance with our policy and the JCQ documents - [General Regulations for Approved Centres, 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021](#).*

Private candidates

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to working with Private Candidates to arrive at appropriate grades.

Private Candidates

Our approach to providing and quality assuring grades to Private Candidates will be:

- *our process for assessing Private Candidates to arrive at appropriate grades are identical to the processes utilised for internal candidates*
- *we have communicated our assessment approach to our Private Candidates to ensure they understand the expectations and requirements for the process of awarding teacher assessed grades*
- *if it is necessary to utilise different approaches, the **JCQ Guidance on Private Candidates** will be followed and any divergences from our approach for internal candidates will be recorded on the appropriate class/student documentation*
- *we will exclude Private Candidates from our cohort when comparing teacher assessed grades against previous cohort performance*

External Quality Assurance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the arrangements in place to comply with awarding organisation arrangements for External Quality Assurance of teacher assessed grades in a timely and effective way.

External Quality Assurance

For the purposes of External Quality Assurance sampling we will ensure:

- *staff involved have been made aware of the awarding organisation requirements for External Quality Assurance as set out in the JCQ and awarding organisation guidance and will participate in remote activities as required*
- *We will respond fully and promptly to any additional requirements/reviews that may be identified as a result of the External Quality Assurance process and understand that failure to do so could result in the withholding of results*
- *Assessment Board records will be available*
- *Assessment records in relation to determining grades have been securely kept and made available for review*
- *student evidence on which decisions regarding the determination of grades has been retained and can be made available for review*

Results

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to the receipt and issue of results to students and the provision of necessary advice and guidance.

Results

Our approach to the issue of results to students and the provision of advice and guidance is:

- *all staff involved have been made aware of the specific arrangements for the issue of results in Summer 2021, including the issuing of A/AS and GCSE results in the same week*
- *appropriately staffing arrangements will be in place to ensure staff availability, including exams office and support staff, to enable the efficient receipt and release of results to students*
- *advice, guidance and support, including pastoral support, will be available to students on receipt of their results*
- *advice on the appeals process in place in 2021 will be confirmed following the published results of the Ofqual consultation. This will be communicated to students prior to and on results day*
- *staff will be available to respond promptly to any requests for information from awarding organisations, for example regarding missing or incomplete results, to enable such issues to be swiftly resolved*
- *students and parents/guardians will be made aware of arrangements for results days*

Key dates for results:

10 August 2021: AS and A Level plus Level 3 VTQ results released

12 August 2021: GCSE plus Level 2 VTQ results released

Appeals

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to Appeals, to ensure that they are handled swiftly and effectively, and in line with JCQ requirements.

Appeals

We will manage appeals, including Centre Reviews, and subsequent appeals to awarding organisations by:

- *ensuring staff involved have been made aware of the arrangements for, and the requirements of, appeals in Summer 2021, as set out in the JCQ, awarding organisation guidance and the outcomes of the Ofqual appeals consultation*
- *internal arrangements will be in place for the swift and effective handling of Centre Reviews in compliance with the requirements*
- *Communication with students and parents/guardians regarding:*
 - *sources of evidence that will be used to determine their grade (letter - 12th April 2021)*
 - *after Assessment Boards, the raw scores will be shared for each piece of evidence the college has used to determine the teacher assessed grade but will not share the teacher assessed grade submitted to the awarding organisation (letter - June 2021). This letter will include any special circumstances or reasonable adjustment that has been applied when determining their teacher assessed grade*
 - *appropriately guidance on the necessary stages of appeal*
- *arrangements will be in place for the timely submission of appeals to awarding organisations, including any priority appeals, for example those on which university places depend.*
- *arrangements will be in place to obtain the written consent of students to the initiation of appeals, and to record their awareness that grades may go down as well as up on appeal*

Key dates for appeal:

Priority appeals (University applicants):

10 August to 7 September: priority appeals window

10 August to 16 August: student requests centre review

10 August to 20 August: centre conducts centre review

11 August to 23 August: centre submits appeal to awarding organisation

Non-priority appeals:

10 August to end October: majority of non-priority appeals take place

10 August to 3 September: student requests centre review

10 August to 10 September: centre conducts centre review

11 August to 17 September: centre submits appeal to awarding organisation

