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Guidance

Part of

Updated 20 April 2021

### Introduction Contents Introduction Assessment evidence On 6 January 2021, the government confirmed that in summer 2021, students taking

Awarding qualifications in summer 2021

Quality assurance **Appeals** Results days

Private candidates Vocational, technical and other general qualifications Print this page

# how to award vocational, technical and other general qualifications. This guidance outlines the decisions taken to support students and teachers following

assessment by their teachers.

the consultation. It covers the arrangements for undertaking assessments, the quality assurance and appeals processes and the awarding process for vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications.

GCSE, AS and A levels regulated by Ofqual, should be awarded grades based on an

We conducted a 2-week consultation to seek views on how best to provide alternative

arrangements to this year's exams. A joint consultation was held at the same time on

Assessment evidence Teachers can use a range of evidence to make a judgement of the grade they are performing at. Students should only be assessed on what they have been taught,

ensuring sufficient coverage of the curriculum to enable progression. When determining the grade, teachers should reflect the standard at which the student is performing now, not their potential. Teachers should use the time remaining to balance continued teaching with any

assessments they want to undertake. Work done at home can be included as evidence

to support a teacher's judgement if it cannot be produced in the school or college

environment because of the pandemic, and where teachers are confident that it is a

student's own work.

Types of assessment evidence Teachers can use evidence to determine grades from across the duration of the student's course.

We recommend the following range of evidence is used, where available: • student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by the exam board, including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers • non-exam assessment (NEA) work (often referred to as coursework), even if this has not been fully completed • student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that

follow the same format as exam board materials and have been marked in a way that

• substantial class or homework (including those that took place during remote

# learning) • internal tests taken by pupils

reflects exam board mark schemes - this can include:

 mock exams taken over the course of study • records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in

Deciding how to balance different sources of evidence

More recent evidence is likely to be more representative of student performance, although there may be exceptions.

Centres should aim to use consistent sources of evidence for a class or cohort that

qualifications, centres will need to provide accessible questions and tasks for lower

Some tiered GCSEs specify content for higher tier students only, and in all

### How the evidence was produced Centres should be confident that work produced is the student's own and that the student has not been given inappropriate levels of support to complete it, either in the

Exam boards will investigate instances where it appears that evidence is not authentic.

attaining students and appropriately demanding questions and tasks for higher

the case, students should not be penalised. Teachers should use these non-exam assessments in accordance with exam board mark schemes. Depending on the content they covered, the contribution that the non-exam

assessments make to students' overall grade should in the government's view remain

Exam boards will publish guidance in March, so teachers have a clear understanding of

how to make fair and consistent judgements. Exam boards will also provide schools and

colleges with support, guidance, and training on how to minimise the risk of bias and

produced from assessments taken earlier in the course where formal reasonable adjustments were not in place, centres will be asked to take that into account in their judgement.

As far as possible, teachers should use the same types of evidence to form a judgment.

When assessing different students in their cohort for a subject, schools and colleges

should make formal reasonable adjustments for disabled students. If evidence is

**Assessment materials** The exam boards will provide assessment materials at the end of March. These will include sets of questions organised to help teachers quickly find questions in the topics they have taught.

These questions will be provided with mark schemes, exemplar responses and data on

past performance where available, to assist teachers in making fair and consistent

judgements of the standard of a student's performance.

## The head teacher or principal will submit a declaration to the exam board confirming they have met the requirements for quality assurance. Schools and colleges can decide the exact timing for when they undertake internal

processes before they submit grades.

submit grades to the exam boards on 18 June.

an investigation or malpractice is found.

check will also be triggered:

performance

# As well as the checks of schools' and colleges' quality assurance processes, exam boards will complete checks of the evidence for a sample of student grades in a sample

determined by the centre following quality assurance are a reasonable exercise of

Exam boards will not re-mark the student's evidence or give an alternative grade.

The sample of schools and colleges will take into account centre type and other

• if concerns have been raised or as a result of whistleblowing

academic judgement of the students' demonstrated performance. If they don't find this

Grades would only be changed by the board if they are not satisfied with the outcome of

characteristics of the centre and cohort. The exam boards will also check schools and

colleges where concerns are highlighted as part of the initial external process checks. A

quality assurance, provided they complete the necessary checks before the deadline to

• where there have been significant changes in early entries • where schools have previously received sanctions for malpractice or an investigation is ongoing

• if a school or college's results are out of line with expectations based on past

In cases of disagreement between the centre and the exam board, or if the student disagrees with the centre or the exam board, the case can be referred to Ofqual's Exams Procedure Review Service (EPRS). The exam board's decision on the grade following appeal will stand unless the EPRS finds that the exam board has made a procedural error.

Centres will be asked to assess candidates based on what they have been taught. They will be allowed to conduct assessment remotely if necessary. DfE will ensure that sufficient centres are available to assess private candidates and that the costs are not significantly increased compared to a normal year.

Pre-U Core Maths Advanced Extension Awards

Ofqual published its summer 2021 qualification explainer tool on 24 March, which shows what approach will be taken for individual qualifications. Students can search for their specific qualification to see how it will be assessed.

How VTQ students can appeal their results

assess them. Students will then have the opportunity to confirm the evidence is their own work and make their teachers aware of any mitigating circumstances they believe should be taken into account. If a student wishes to appeal, centres should undertake an initial process review to check all processes were followed correctly and no errors were made. If the school or

college finds an error, they can submit a revised grade to the exam board.

awarded was a reasonable exercise of academic judgement.

grade and inform the centre.

February.

or training.

grade is wrong to raise an appeal.

qualifications

education

where they:

transmission is low.

Other qualifications

functional skills in 2021.

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performance table qualifications.

• the International Baccalaureate

as much fairness to students as possible.

provided assessment materials in a suitable form.

If the student still wants to appeal, they will ask their school or college to submit a

followed its own processes and exam board requirements as well as reviewing the

evidence used to form their judgement and providing a view as to whether the grade

If the exam board finds the grade is not reasonable, they will determine the alternative

formal appeal to the exam board for them. The exam board will check the centre

Results days Students will receive their results for A/AS levels on the 10 August and GCSEs on the 12 August. Results for relevant VTQs that are linked to progression to further or higher education,

including some BTECs, will also be issued to students on or before these dates.

Awarding organisations have been confirming their approach to VTQ results since 25

Following the release of results, there will be a window for students who believe their

outcome will determine a student's ability to progress to their next stage of education

Exam boards will support schools and colleges in prioritising appeals where their

There will be a process for centres to express interest before the list is published. Following this, a list will be made available of centres willing to assess private candidates. Ofqual will work to ensure exam boards provide sufficient guidance on an assessment

approach and support materials to those centres that wish to carry out this role.

Vocational, technical and other general

This year there are 3 groups of vocational, technical and other general qualifications

qualifications, the precise arrangements will differ slightly but they will aim to provide

Since 25 February, awarding organisations have been sharing information on their

approach to awarding for VTQs with schools, colleges and other providers, as well as

publishing guidance for centres and relevant materials on teacher assessed grades.

Ofqual's revised regulatory framework, VTQ contingency regulatory framework, was

published on 24 March. It sets out the expectations on awarding organisations for

providing information at individual qualification level on their websites. They will also be

(VTQs) each with a different approach to awarding. Given the diversity of these

Extended Project Qualifications

Qualifications used to enter directly into employment

• are critical to demonstrate occupational or professional competence

Where the assessment cannot take place safely it will need to be delayed.

For smaller qualifications taken for mixed purposes, such as functional skills

• can be delivered in line with public health measures

line with public health guidance to support exams.

Approaches for each qualification

VTQs used to enter directly into employment, exams or assessments should continue

Exams and assessments can take place in a controlled environment where the risk of

Protective measures should be put in place by schools, colleges or other providers, in

It is expected that the need for teacher assessed grades will be identified on a case-bycase basis. It is not expected that eligibility for teacher assessed grades will be determined for cohorts of students.

Ofqual has published details of the different <u>assessment arrangements available for</u>

concerned.

performance-based subjects such as music, drama and PE records of each student's progress and performance over the course of study

What students were asked to do

relate closely to the specification requirements.

attaining students to support higher grades.

centre, at home or with an external tutor.

Making a judgement

broadly similar to a normal year.

malpractice.

Centres should bear in mind the following factors in deciding how to balance different sources of evidence. When the evidence was produced

Teachers should take account of the standard of any coursework undertaken by students in their overall judgement, including partially completed non-exam assessments where disrupted learning stopped them from completing it. Where this is

These materials will be available for all subjects apart from art and design. **Quality assurance** 

How schools and college will undertake quality assurance

Exam boards will publish requirements for schools' and colleges' quality assurance

processes. Exam boards will review all schools' and colleges' quality assurance

of subjects, in a sample of schools and colleges over June and July. The exam boards will determine which schools and colleges they visit, and which students' evidence they review. The exam boards will decide whether the grades

to be the case the exam boards will ask the school or college to investigate.

How exam boards will undertake quality assurance

**Appeals** Every student will have the right to appeal their grade if they so wish. Before a grade is submitted, teachers should make students aware of the evidence they are using to

Appeals are not likely to lead to adjustments in grades where the original grade is a reasonable exercise of academic judgement supported by the evidence. Grades can go up or down as the result of an appeal.

**Private candidates** Private candidates will be assessed in a similar way to other students, by a recognised

exam centre using an adapted range of evidence, which includes taking the exam board

awarding this year. Qualifications used for progression to further or higher

Exams will no longer be going ahead for VTQs most similar to GCSEs, AS and A levels

These will receive results through alternative arrangements similar to those used for

GCSEs, AS and A levels. This also includes other general qualifications such as:

that are used for progression to further or higher education. This will include many

qualifications and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Skills for Life, exams and assessment should continue in line with public health measures or remotely. Teacher assessed grades are available for those students who cannot access assessments.

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Schools, colleges and other providers wishing to appeal a VTQ result on behalf of a student should follow the process set out by the individual awarding organisation No There is something wrong with this page

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