

# **Summer 2019 Data Exchange Procedures**

GCE (AS/A level), GCSE and Project  
Qualifications

**ofqual**

# Summer 2019 Data Exchange Procedures

The following procedures outline the data that must be provided by awarding organisations during the summer 2019 data exchange for each qualification forming part of the data exchange process.

The requirements in this document apply to pre and post-reform GCE and pre and post-reform GCSE qualifications and to Project Qualifications at Level 3.

This is a **Regulatory Document** under **Condition B7** of the General Conditions of Recognition<sup>1</sup> (March 2019): Compliance with Regulatory Documents.

In addition–

- a) in relation to post-reform GCE qualifications, this document sets requirements under Condition GCE3.1 and GCE9.1 of the GCE Qualification Level Conditions<sup>2</sup>;
- b) in relation to post-reform GCSE qualifications, this document sets requirements under Condition GCSE3.1 and GCSE9.1 of the GCSE Qualification Level Conditions<sup>3</sup>;
- c) Paragraph 5(a) of the 'Requirements in relation to the specified levels of attainment to be used for GCSE Qualifications'<sup>4</sup>, set under Condition GCSE3.1, states that in the first year in which a GCSE Qualification is awarded each awarding organisation must comply with any specific requirements that Ofqual may set. Section 3.5 and Appendix 3 set those specific requirements;
- d) In relation to Project Qualifications, this document sets requirements under Condition Project3.1 and Project3.2

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gce-qualification-level-conditions-and-requirements>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-9-to-1-qualification-level-conditions>

<sup>4</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/796650/GCSE\\_conditions.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/796650/GCSE_conditions.pdf)

# 1 GCE A level<sup>5</sup>

## 1.1 Predictions for unreformed A level (subjects where there are no new specifications being awarded in 2019)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 18-year-old matched cash-in learners<sup>6</sup>. The prediction must be based on the average of the national relationship between:

1. A level outcomes in that subject for 18-year-old learners in 2010 and the GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2008
2. A level outcomes in that subject for 18-year-old learners in 2011 and the GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2009

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

## 1.2 Predictions for legacy A levels (outgoing specifications in subjects where there are also new specifications being awarded for the first time in 2019 and in subjects which are not being reformed and are ending)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 19-year-old matched cash-in learners. The prediction must be based on the national relationship between A level outcomes in that subject for re-sitting 19-year-old learners in 2018 and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2015.

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

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<sup>5</sup> GCSE outcomes that are used in A level predictions combine A\* to G grades and 9 to 1 grades onto a common scale.

<sup>6</sup> 'Learner' is defined in the General Conditions as, 'A person who is registered to take a qualification and to be assessed as part of that qualification.'

## 1.3 Predictions for legacy A level mathematics

For **mathematics**, each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 19-year-old matched cash-in learners, excluding learners that are also certificating A level further mathematics in the same series. The prediction must be based on the national relationship between A level outcomes in mathematics for re-sitting 19-year-old learners in 2018 excluding learners that also certificated A level further mathematics in the same series and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2015.

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

## 1.4 Predictions for reformed A level in England (phase 1 – new specifications first awarded in 2017)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 18-year-old matched learners. The prediction must be based on the average of the national relationship between:

1. A level outcomes in that subject for 18-year-old learners in 2017 and the GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2015
2. A level outcomes in that subject for 18-year-old learners in 2018 and the GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2016

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

## 1.5 Predictions for reformed A level in England (phase 2 – new specifications first awarded in 2018)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 18-year-old matched learners. The prediction must be based on the national relationship between A level outcomes in that subject for 18-year-old learners in 2018 and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2016.

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

## 1.6 Predictions for reformed A level in England (phase 3 – new specifications being awarded for the first time in 2019)

For **all subjects** (except **mathematics**), each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 18-year-old matched learners. The prediction must be based on the average of the national relationship between:

1. A level outcomes in that subject for 18-year-old learners in 2010 and the GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2008
2. A level outcomes in that subject for 18-year-old learners in 2011 and the GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2009

## 1.7 Predictions for reformed A level mathematics in England (phase 3 – new specification first awarded in 2018)

For **mathematics**, each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 18-year-old matched learners, excluding learners that are also certificating A level further mathematics in the same series. The prediction must be based on the average of the national relationship between:

1. A level outcomes in that subject for 18-year-old learners in 2010 and the GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2008, excluding learners that also certificated A level further mathematics in 2010
2. A level outcomes in that subject for 18-year-old learners in 2011 and the GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2009, excluding learners that also certificated A level further mathematics in 2011

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

## 1.8 GCE A level reporting

### Legacy, unreformed and phase 1 reformed A level: specifications in sections 1.1 – 1.4

For **all subjects** (except **biology, chemistry and physics**), wherever actual and predicted outcomes differ for grade A beyond a given reporting tolerance (depending on matched entry size), the relevant awarding organisation must inform the regulators and other awarding organisations of the details. The reporting tolerances for GCE A level are given in the following table.

Graded entry (matched 18-year-olds <sup>7</sup> )	Reporting tolerance for grade A
500 or less	None
501–1,000	3%
1,001–3,000	2%
3,001 or more	1%

For A\*, for **legacy and unreformed** qualifications where there are more than 500 matched entries and more than 100 of the matched entries obtain grade A cumulative overall, the allowable tolerance between predicted and actual outcomes is  $\pm 2\%$ . The agreed rules for setting and moving the A\* conversion point are included in this document (appendix 1A).

For A\*, for **phase 1 reformed** qualifications (except **biology, chemistry and physics**) the agreed rules for setting the A\*/A boundary are included in this document (Appendix 1B).

For **biology, chemistry and physics**, the expectation is that the matched outcomes should be above prediction at grades A and A\*. Otherwise, the same rules for setting the A\*/A boundary apply (Appendix 1B).

### Phase 2 and 3 reformed A level: specifications in sections 1.5 – 1.7

The agreed rules for setting the A\*/A boundary are included in this document (Appendix 1B).

### All A level: specifications in sections 1.1 – 1.7

All awarding organisations must provide Ofqual with a schedule of dates (Tuesdays and Thursdays) to show when they expect to submit A level award outcomes and

<sup>7</sup> 19-year-olds for legacy A levels.

provide this to Ofqual by **Monday 10 June 2019**. Submission should normally be on the first Tuesday or Thursday which is two days after the provisional sign-off of the award (for example, if the provisional sign-off takes place on a Monday the outcomes should be submitted on the following Thursday), but there may be exceptions, for example when the outcomes for a suite of specifications need to be reviewed together before the awards are finalised.

Where matched outcomes for a **legacy or unreformed** specification are outside the reporting tolerance (measured to one decimal place) at grade A\* or A, awarding organisations must report outcomes for matched learners against predictions at grades A\*, A and E together with a full technical explanation (making reference to Ofqual's 'Reviewing GCE (AS/A level), GCSE and Project outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2019'), **using Template A** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

**In subjects other than biology, chemistry and physics**, where matched outcomes for a **phase 1 reformed** specification are outside the reporting tolerance (measured to one decimal place) at grade A, or a subject level boundary is chosen that does not result in matched outcomes that are as close to prediction as possible at grade A\* and there are more than 500 matched entries and more than 100 of the matched entries obtain grade A cumulative overall, awarding organisations must report outcomes for matched learners against predictions at grades A\*, A and E together with a full technical explanation (making reference to Ofqual's 'Reviewing GCE (AS/A level), GCSE and Project outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2019'), **using Template AR** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

**In biology, chemistry and physics**, where the matched outcome is outside the reporting tolerance (measured to one decimal place) at grade A, or a subject level boundary is chosen that does not result in a matched outcome that most closely meets but still exceeds prediction at grade A\* and there are more than 500 matched entries and more than 100 of the matched entries obtain grade A cumulative overall, awarding organisations must report outcomes for matched learners against predictions at grades A\*, A and E together with a full technical explanation (making reference to Ofqual's 'Reviewing GCE (AS/A level), GCSE and Project outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2019'), **using Template AR** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

**In subjects other than French, German and Spanish**, where a subject level boundary for a **phase 2 or phase 3 reformed** specification in England is chosen that does not result in matched outcomes that are as close to prediction as possible at grade A\*, A or E, and there are more than 500 matched learners, awarding organisations must report outcomes for matched learners against predictions at grades A\*, A and E together with a full technical explanation (making reference to Ofqual's 'Reviewing GCE (AS/ A level), GCSE and Project outcome data received

from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2019'), **using Template AR** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

For A level **French, German and Spanish**, where a subject level boundary is chosen that does not result in a matched outcome that most closely meets but still exceeds prediction at grades A\* or A, or is not as close as possible to prediction at grade E, and there are more than 500 matched learners, awarding organisations must report outcomes for matched learners against predictions at grades A\*, A and E together with a full technical explanation (making reference to Ofqual's 'Reviewing GCE (AS/A level), GCSE and Project outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2019'), **using Template AR** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

**Templates B, BR, BW and BRW** must be updated each Tuesday and Thursday, according to the schedule provided to Ofqual, to show interim A level results to date.

All GCE A level outcomes must be reported, **using Templates B, BW, BR and BRW**, by **12 noon, Wednesday 31 July 2019**.

For **unreformed and legacy specialist mathematics subjects (further mathematics, pure mathematics and statistics)**, data for matched learners against predictions does not have to be reported, but awarding organisations must report outcomes for all learners using **Template B and BW**.

For **GCE A level art and design**, the outcomes from the suite of options must be reported as a whole.

Awarding organisations do not have to report **applied GCE A level** outcomes.

In a few cases awarding organisations may need to carry out further analyses post-award in order to establish the security of the outcomes. If there is to be a delay in submission, awarding organisations must notify Ofqual via the data exchange mailbox [dataexchange@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:dataexchange@ofqual.gov.uk) as soon as possible and certainly by the date shown on the schedule.



## 2 GCE AS<sup>8</sup>

### 2.1 Predictions for reformed AS in England (phase 1 – new specifications first awarded in 2016)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 17-year-old matched learners. The prediction must be based on the average of the national relationship between:

1. AS outcomes in that subject for 17-year-old learners in 2016 and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2015
2. AS outcomes in that subject for 17-year-old learners in 2017 and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2016

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

### 2.2 Predictions for reformed AS in England (phase 2 – new specifications first awarded in 2017)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 17-year-old matched learners. The prediction must be based on the national relationship between:

1. AS outcomes in that subject for 17-year-old learners in 2017 and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2016
2. AS outcomes in that subject for 17-year-old learners in 2018 and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2017

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

### 2.3 Predictions for reformed AS in England (phase 3 – new specifications first awarded in 2018)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 17-year-old matched learners. The prediction must be based on

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<sup>8</sup> GCSE outcomes that are used in AS predictions combine A\* to G grades and 9 to 1 grades onto a common scale.

the national relationship between AS outcomes in that subject for 17-year-old learners in 2018 and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2017.

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

## 2.4 GCE AS reporting

### Phase 1 and phase 2 reformed AS in England: specifications in sections 2.1 – 2.2

Wherever actual and predicted outcomes differ for grade A beyond a given reporting tolerance (depending on matched entry size), the relevant awarding organisation must inform the regulators and other awarding organisations of the details. The reporting tolerances for GCE AS are given in the following table.

Graded entry (matched 17-year-olds)	Reporting tolerance for grade A
500 or less	None
501–1,000	3%
1,001–3,000	2%
3,001 or more	1%

### All AS: specifications in sections 2.1 – 2.3

All awarding organisations must provide Ofqual with a schedule of dates (Tuesdays and Thursdays) to show when they expect to submit AS award outcomes and provide this to Ofqual by **Monday 10 June 2019**. Submission should normally be on the first Tuesday or Thursday which is two days after the provisional sign-off of the award (for example, if the provisional sign-off takes place on a Monday the outcomes should be submitted on the following Thursday), but there may be exceptions, for example when the outcomes for a suite of specifications need to be reviewed together before the awards are finalised.

Where matched outcomes for a **phase 1 or phase 2 reformed** specification in England are outside the reporting tolerance (measured to one decimal place) in the table above at grade A, awarding organisations must report outcomes for matched learners against predictions at grades A and E together with a full technical explanation (making reference to Ofqual's 'Reviewing GCE (AS/A level), GCSE and Project outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2019'), **using Template DR** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

Where a subject level boundary for a **phase 3 reformed** specification in England is chosen that does not result in matched outcomes that are as close to prediction as possible at grade A or E, and there are more than 500 matched learners, awarding organisations must report outcomes for matched learners against predictions at grades A and E, together with a full technical explanation (making reference to Ofqual's 'Reviewing GCE (AS/A level), GCSE and Project outcome data received

from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2019'), **using Template DR** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

**Templates C, CR, CW and CRW** must be updated each Tuesday and Thursday, according to the schedule provided to Ofqual, to show interim AS results to date.

All GCE AS outcomes must be reported, **using Templates C, CR, CW and CRW**, by **12 noon, Wednesday 31 July 2019**.

For **GCE AS art and design**, the outcomes from the suite of options must be reported as a whole.

Awarding organisations do not need to report **applied GCE AS** outcomes.

In a few cases awarding organisations may need to carry out further analyses post-award in order to establish the security of the outcomes. If there is to be a delay in submission, awarding organisations must notify Ofqual via the data exchange mailbox [dataexchange@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:dataexchange@ofqual.gov.uk) as soon as possible and certainly by the date shown on the schedule.

## 3 GCSE<sup>9</sup>

### 3.1 Predictions for unreformed GCSE (subjects where there are no new specifications being awarded in 2019)

#### GCSE specifications that first certificated in summer 2011

OCR must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 16-year-old matched cash-in learners. The prediction must be based on the average of the national relationship between:

1. GCSE outcomes in that subject for 16-year-old learners in 2011 and key stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2006
2. GCSE outcomes in that subject for 16-year-old learners in 2012 and key stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2007<sup>10</sup>

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

### 3.2 Predictions for reformed GCSE qualifications in England (phase 1 – new specifications first awarded in 2017)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 16-year-old matched learners. Predictions must be based on the average of the national relationship between:

1. GCSE outcomes in that subject for 16-year-old learners in 2017 and key stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2012
2. GCSE outcomes in that subject for 16-year-old learners in 2018 and key stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2013

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

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<sup>9</sup> For reformed GCSE double award, references in this document to grades 9, 7, 5, 4 and 1 refer to grades 9-9, 7-7, 5-5, 4-4 and 1-1, respectively.

<sup>10</sup> Any exceptions to the basis of the predictions must be reported to Ofqual on **Template F** underneath the final row of data in the table.

An awarding organisation must adjust its prediction for a relevant qualification in line with any requirements specified by Ofqual to reflect the results of the National Reference Tests. Where Ofqual specifies such requirements these will be set out in Annex A.

### 3.3 Predictions for reformed GCSE qualifications in England (phase 2 – new specifications first awarded in 2018)

For all subjects each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 16-year-old matched learners. Predictions must be based on the national relationship between GCSE outcomes in that subject for 16-year-old learners in 2018<sup>11</sup> and key stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2013.

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

### 3.4 Predictions for reformed GCSE short course qualifications in England (phase 2 – new specifications first awarded in 2018)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 16-year-old matched learners. Predictions must be based on the national relationship between GCSE short course outcomes in that subject for 16-year-old learners in 2018, and key stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2013.

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

### 3.5 Predictions for reformed GCSE qualifications in England (phase 3 – new specifications being awarded for the first time in 2019)

For **all subjects (except business and design and technology)** each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific

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<sup>11</sup> In tiered phase 2 reformed GCSE specifications, a grade 1 prediction based on GCSE outcomes in that subject for 16-year-old learners in 2017 and key stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2012 may be referred to as an additional source of evidence when setting the grade 1 boundary.

cohort of 16-year-old matched learners. Predictions must be based on the national relationship between GCSE outcomes in that subject for 16-year-old learners in 2018, and key stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2013.

For **business** each awarding organisation must create its own prediction for its specific cohort of 16-year-old matched learners. Predictions must be based on the average of the national relationship between GCSE outcomes in 2018 and KS2 outcomes for those learners in 2013 in the following specifications:

1. Business studies
2. Business and communication systems
3. Business and economics

For **design and technology** each awarding organisation must create its own prediction for its specific cohort of 16-year-old matched learners. Predictions must be based on the average of the national relationship between GCSE outcomes in 2018 and KS2 outcomes for those learners in 2013 in the following specifications:

1. Design and technology: electronic products
2. Design and technology: graphic products
3. Design and technology: industrial technology
4. Design and technology: product design
5. Design and technology: resistant materials technology
6. Design and technology: systems and controls technology
7. Design and technology: textiles technology

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

## 3.6 Tiered reformed GCSE specifications

Each awarding organisation must use the outcomes of test equating (chained equi-percentile or nominal weights method) to support comparability between tiers at grades 4 and 5, where there are sufficient entries on each tier. The chained equi-percentile method should be used where there are more than 250 candidates at each tier. Where there are 250 or fewer candidates at one or both tiers, the nominal weights method could be used. For specifications with very small entries, it may not be possible to use test equating.

The agreed principles for moving the higher tier grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary are included in this document (appendix 1C).



## 3.7 GCSE reporting

### Unreformed GCSE: specifications in section 3.1

Wherever actual and predicted outcomes differ for grades A or C beyond a given reporting tolerance, depending on entry size, the relevant awarding organisation must inform the regulators and other awarding organisations of the details. The reporting tolerances for GCSE full course are given in the following table (reporting tolerances do not apply to unreformed short course outcomes).

<b>Graded entry<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>Reporting tolerance for grades A &amp; C</b>
500 or less	None
501 – 1,000	3%
1,001 – 3,000	2%
3,001 or more	1%

For A\*, where there are more than 500 matched entries and more than 100 of the matched entries obtain grade A cumulative overall, the allowable tolerance between predicted and actual outcomes is  $\pm 2\%$  for full course specifications. The agreed rules for setting and moving the A\* conversion point are included in this document (Appendix 1A).

### Phase 1 reformed GCSE: specifications in section 3.2

Wherever actual and predicted outcomes differ for grades 7 or 4 beyond a given reporting tolerance, depending on entry size, the relevant awarding organisation must inform Ofqual and other awarding organisations of the details. The reporting tolerances for GCSE full course are given in the following table.

<b>Graded entry<sup>13</sup></b>	<b>Reporting tolerance for grades 7 &amp; 4</b>
500 or less	None
501 – 1,000	3%
1,001 – 3,000	2%
3,001 or more	1%

The agreed rules for setting the 9/8 boundary are included in this document (Appendix 1D).

<sup>12</sup> Matched 16-year-olds for key stage 2 predictions and 16-year-olds from common centres for common centre predictions.

<sup>13</sup> Matched 16-year-olds for key stage 2 predictions.

Where Ofqual has specified an adjustment to predictions for a relevant qualification in Annex A, an awarding organisation must report against the prediction as adjusted.

## Phase 2 and 3 reformed GCSE: specifications in sections 3.3 – 3.5

The agreed rules for setting the 9/8 boundary are included in this document (Appendix 1D).

## All GCSE: specifications in sections 3.1 – 3.5

All awarding organisations must provide Ofqual with a schedule of dates (Tuesdays and Thursdays) to show when they expect to submit GCSE award outcomes and provide this to Ofqual by **Monday 10 June 2019**. Submission should normally be on the first Tuesday or Thursday which is two days after the provisional sign-off of the award (for example, if the provisional sign-off takes place on a Monday the outcomes should be submitted on the following Thursday), but there may be exceptions, for example when the outcomes for a suite of specifications need to be reviewed together before the awards are finalised.

Where matched outcomes for a given **full course unreformed** specification are outside the reporting tolerance (measured to one decimal place) at grade A\*, A or C, awarding organisations must report outcomes for matched learners against predictions at grades A\*, A, C and F together with a full technical explanation (making reference to Ofqual's 'Reviewing GCE (AS/A level), GCSE and Project outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2019'), **using Template G** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

Where matched outcomes for a given **full course phase 1 reformed** specification are outside the reporting tolerance (measured to one decimal place) at grade 7 or 4, or a subject level boundary is chosen that does not result in matched outcomes that are as close to prediction as possible at grade 9 and there are more than 500 matched entries and more than 100 of the matched entries obtain grade 7 cumulative overall, awarding organisations must report outcomes for matched learners against predictions at grades 9, 7, 4 and 1 together with a full technical explanation (making reference to Ofqual's 'Reviewing GCE (AS/A level), GCSE and Project outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2019'), **using Template GR** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

Where a subject level boundary for a **phase 2 or 3 full course or short course reformed** specification is chosen that does not result in matched outcomes that are as close to prediction as possible at grade 9<sup>14</sup>, 7 or 4 and there are more than 500

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<sup>14</sup> For grade 9, in the first year of each specification, 'prediction' refers to the percentage calculated by the formula in Appendix 1D.

matched learners, awarding organisations must report outcomes for matched learners against predictions at grades 9, 7, 4 and 1, together with a full technical explanation (making reference to Ofqual's 'Reviewing GCE (AS/A level), GCSE and Project outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2019'), **using Template GR** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual. Awarding organisations must report any concerns with the subject level boundary for grade 1/U using **Template J**.

All awarding organisations must update **Template F** each Tuesday and Thursday, according to the schedule provided to Ofqual, to show unreformed GCSE data based on predictions, excluding partial absences, to date.

For any specifications, inter-board screening data should be used, if consistent over two years, as a steer to be slightly positive or negative, although an adjustment should not normally take a specification out of tolerance. In exceptional cases, where a **legacy** specification is flagged as being out of tolerance at grades A or C, or a **reformed** specification is flagged as being out of tolerance at grades 7 and 4, screening data can be used as an explanation providing that the data are consistent over two years and support the out-of-tolerance outcome.

All **unreformed GCSE** outcomes (including those for short courses) at grades A\*, A, C and F, including partial absences, must be reported, **using Templates E and EW**, by **12 noon, Monday 5 August 2019** at the latest.

All awarding organisations must update **Template FR** each Tuesday and Thursday, according to the schedule provided to Ofqual, to show reformed GCSE data based on predictions, excluding partial absences, to date.

All **reformed GCSE** outcomes at grades 9, 7, 5, 4 and 1, including partial absences, must be reported, **using Templates ER and ERW** by **12 noon, Monday 5 August 2019** at the latest.

For **GCSE art and design**, the outcomes from the suite of options must be reported as a whole.

In a few cases awarding organisations may need to carry out further analyses post-award in order to establish the security of the outcomes. If there is to be a delay in submission, awarding organisations must notify Ofqual via the data exchange mailbox [dataexchange@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:dataexchange@ofqual.gov.uk) as soon as possible and certainly by the date shown on the schedule.

## 4 Project Qualifications

These requirements shall apply only to Project Qualifications at Level 3.

### 4.1 Predictions for Project Qualifications

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 18-year-old matched learners. The prediction must be based on the average of the national relationship between:

1. Project outcomes for 18-year-old learners in June 2017 and the GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2015
2. Project outcomes for 18-year-old learners in June 2018 and the GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2016

Data for *matched learners* against predictions must exclude partial absences.

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

### 4.2 Project reporting

For all applicable qualifications, wherever actual and predicted outcomes differ for grade A\* beyond a given reporting tolerance (depending on matched entry size), the relevant awarding organisation must inform Ofqual and other awarding organisations of the details. The reporting tolerances for Project qualifications are given in the following table.

Graded entry (matched 18-year-olds)	Reporting tolerance for grade A*
500 or less	None
501–1,000	3%
1,001–3,000	2%
3,001 or more	1%

All awarding organisations must provide Ofqual with the date when they expect to submit Project outcomes and provide this to Ofqual by **Monday 10 June 2019**. Submission should normally be on the first Tuesday or Thursday which is two days after the provisional sign-off of the award (for example, if the provisional sign-off

takes place on a Monday the outcomes should be submitted on the following Thursday), but there may be exceptions.

Where matched outcomes are outside the reporting tolerance (measured to one decimal place) at grade A\*, awarding organisations must report outcomes for matched learners against predictions at grades A\* and E together with a full technical explanation (making reference to Ofqual's 'Reviewing GCE (AS/A level), GCSE and Project outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2019'), **using Template K** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

**Template K** must be updated according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

Project outcomes must be reported, **using Template K**, by **12 noon, Wednesday 31 July 2019**.

In a few cases awarding organisations may need to carry out further analyses post-award in order to establish the security of the outcomes. If there is to be a delay in submission, awarding organisations must notify Ofqual via the data exchange mailbox [dataexchange@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:dataexchange@ofqual.gov.uk) as soon as possible and certainly by the date shown on the schedule.

## 5 Reporting concerns with grade boundary positions

For all **A level, AS, GCSE and relevant Project** qualifications, awarding organisations must report any concerns with unit-/component-/subject-level key grade boundary positions, including boundary positions that are significantly different from the previous series and/or summer 2018 series for on-going specifications. (A significant difference might be one that could cause concern with centres or which would be considered to be an exception to normal trends.) These must be reported as soon as possible after the award and sign-off by the Responsible Officer, together with an explanation, **using Template J**.

## 6 Sending data

Awarding organisations must confirm their data exchange contacts with Ofqual before the process begins. All data are to be uploaded to the secure collaboration area.

Where data are re-run, awarding organisations must supply the re-run data to Ofqual on each appropriate template. Awarding organisations should clearly highlight any rows where data have changed to go into or out of tolerance.

All returns are subject to the final ratification of the awards by the awarding organisation.

### **On receipt of the information required by this document, Ofqual:**

1. will review the data on the basis of its published procedure
2. may contact awarding organisations to ask for additional information or clarification, and will aim to do this within 24 hours of receipt
3. will hold twice weekly teleconferences in July (Wednesdays and Fridays at noon) with awarding organisation technical colleagues, as necessary, to review data and explore any implications
4. will upload data to the collaboration area in July (Fridays) showing each awarding organisations' award outcomes and aggregated outcomes across awarding organisations
5. will discuss outcomes with awarding organisations at the Maintenance of Standards meetings on **1 August 2019 (AS, A level and Project) and 6 August 2019 (GCSE)**

# Appendix 1A

## Rules for setting and moving the A\* conversion/boundary point (legacy and unreformed GCSE and A level qualifications)

1. In both A level and GCSE, the A\* raw mark conversion point (A level) or raw mark boundary (GCSE) is provisionally set on each unit as follows.
  - (i) Where the mark width from the grade A raw mark boundary to the maximum mark is more than twice the width from A to B, A\* is the same width above A as B is below A.
  - (ii) Where the mark width from the grade A raw mark boundary to the maximum is less than or equal to twice that from A to B, A\* is halfway between A and the maximum, rounded down where necessary to the nearest whole number below.
2. In order to maintain standards for A\* at subject level, it may be necessary to adjust the A\* conversion point/boundary on some units.
3. If adjustments are needed, the maintenance of subject standards at the judgemental grades must be the first priority.
4. For specifications where there are more than 500 matched entries and where the cumulative number of matched learners at grade A is more than 100, the tolerance between predicted and actual (matched) outcomes at grade A\* is  $\pm 2\%$ . There is no tolerance where one or both numbers do not exceed these thresholds.
5. Adjustments to the A\* conversion points/boundaries should not normally be made in series where the majority of learners are not cashing in, even if the thresholds in paragraph 4 are exceeded. Possible exceptions should be discussed in advance with the regulators and other awarding organisations.
6. Before any changes are made to an A\* conversion point/boundary, consideration should be given to moving one or more boundaries at the judgemental grades (normally grade A), in order to bring the subject outcome at grade A\* within tolerance. Subject outcomes at the judgemental grades must, of course, remain within tolerance.
7. Because of the large numbers of internally assessed units, for which boundaries are normally carried forward, tolerances are not normally used for



the judgemental grades in Applied GCEs. Therefore, the  $\pm 2\%$  tolerance is not used for grade A\* in these specifications.

8. Adjustments to the A\* boundaries/conversion points must be agreed by the Chair of Examiners but do not need to be discussed by the whole awarding committee.

## Appendix 1B

### Rules for setting the A\*/A boundary in reformed A level specifications<sup>15</sup>

1. In specifications with only one entry option, and in each entry option of specifications with multiple options, the A\* boundary (at subject level or at entry option level) is set so that the outcome for matched candidates at grade A\* is as close as possible to the predicted outcome,<sup>16</sup> provided that, in the specification or entry option:
  - (i) there are more than 500 matched candidates*and* (ii) the cumulative number of matched candidates at grade A is more than 100.<sup>17</sup>
2. If, in a specification with multiple entry options, some (but not all) options fail to meet one or both of the criteria in paragraph 1 above (ie there are some Group 1 options and some Group 2 options), the following process is followed.
  - Step 1 Calculate the weighted (by matched entry size) average of the differences between the grade A\* and grade A boundaries, for each of the Group 1 entry options.
  - Step 2 Add that average to the grade A boundary of each Group 2 entry option to obtain the grade A\* boundary for that option.<sup>18</sup>
3. If, in a specification with a single entry option, or in a specification with multiple entry options, the matched entry of every option fails to meet one or both of the criteria in paragraph 1 (ie all entry options are Group 2 options), the grade A\* boundary is set in each entry option as follows.
  - (i) Where the mark width from the grade A boundary to the maximum mark is more than twice the width from grade A to grade B, grade A\* is the same width above grade A as grade B is below grade A.

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<sup>15</sup> If a reformed specification with multiple entry options is treated as unitised for the purposes of aggregation and grading, some of the provisions below will apply to *units* rather than to *entry options*. However, as for other reformed specifications with multiple entry options, the overall subject-level matched outcome at A\* must be checked against the prediction, and adjustments made if necessary. Therefore, there will be no material difference in the final outcomes where a specification is treated as unitised.

<sup>16</sup> In **biology, chemistry, French, German, physics and Spanish** specifications the expectation is that the matched outcomes at grade A\* should most closely meet but still exceed the prediction.

<sup>17</sup> Entry options meeting these two criteria will be termed Group 1 options. The entry options not meeting the criteria will be termed Group 2 options.

<sup>18</sup> Normal rounding rules apply, except that if the calculated grade A\* boundary is yy.5, it is rounded down, eg 78.5 is rounded down to 78 (but 78.51 is rounded to 79).

- (ii) Where the mark width from the grade A boundary to the maximum subject mark is less than or equal to twice that from grade A to grade B, grade A\* is halfway between grade A and the maximum, rounded down where necessary to the nearest whole number below.
4. If, in a subject with multiple entry options, the overall matched entry meets both of the criteria in paragraph 1:
- the aggregate subject-level matched outcome at grade A\* must be compared with the subject-level prediction;
  - if necessary some or all of the grade A\* boundaries, as appropriate, for the Group 1 options may be adjusted to bring the subject-level outcome closer to expectation while maintaining equitable outcomes for candidates in different options;
  - the boundaries for Group 2 options should not normally be adjusted independently (ie they should be moved only as a consequence of adjusting Group 1 boundaries);
  - if there are no Group 1 options, the grade A\* boundaries for the Group 2 options (provisionally set arithmetically, as in paragraph 3) should be adjusted consistently to bring the subject-level outcome closer to expectation.

For art & design see paragraph 5.

5. In A level art & design, some or all endorsements may have common judgemental (A and E) boundaries. The grade A\* boundary is set as follows<sup>19</sup>.
- (i) For endorsements which have common judgemental boundaries (and provided that the criteria in paragraph 1 are met for the aggregate matched entry), the grade A\* boundary is set so that the aggregate outcome for matched candidates at grade A\* is as close as possible to the predicted outcome for the aggregate of those endorsements based on whole-subject outcomes in the reference year.
  - (ii) For any de-coupled endorsement(s) (ie where one or both judgemental boundaries are unique to that endorsement), and provided that the criteria in paragraph 1 are met for that endorsement, the grade A\* boundary is set so that the outcome for matched candidates at grade

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<sup>19</sup> This procedure should also apply in any other subjects where there is an assumption that all options will share the same judgemental boundaries. This is in contrast to the situation where options *happen* to share the same judgemental boundaries but there is no *a priori* assumption that they should do so.

A\* is as close as possible to the predicted outcome for that endorsement based on whole-subject outcomes in the reference year.

- (iii) If neither the aggregate matched entry for endorsements with common boundaries nor the matched entry for any de-coupled endorsement meets the criteria in paragraph 1, the process in paragraph 3 above should be followed.
  - (iv) If, in (ii), the criteria in paragraph 1 are not met for a de-coupled endorsement (but the aggregate matched entry for endorsements with common boundaries and/or the matched entry for another de-coupled endorsement meets those criteria), the process in paragraph 2 above should be followed, with 'entry option' replaced by 'aggregate or de-coupled endorsement'.
6. In all cases, if a review of statistical and/or technical evidence suggests that a grade A\* boundary should be set at a different mark, the report on the award<sup>20</sup> must provide evidence to justify the final boundary mark recommended.
7. Where the awarding data need to be re-run post-award, and the boundary recommendations reviewed, the criteria in paragraph 1 are applied to the new data; the grade A\* boundary is re-calculated on that basis.

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<sup>20</sup> This may be a Chair's report or a technical report.

## Appendix 1C

### **Principles for moving the grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary on the higher tier of tiered reformed GCSE specifications**

1. In tiered reformed GCSE specifications, there is an allowed grade on the higher tier. For single award GCSEs there is an allowed grade 3, and for double award GCSEs there is an allowed grade 4-3.
2. As set out in the GCSE 9 to 1 qualification level conditions, the higher tier grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary is provisionally set arithmetically. For single award GCSEs, the higher tier grade 3/U boundary is provisionally set by subtracting half the mark interval between the 5/4 and 4/3 boundaries (rounding up half marks) from the 4/3 boundary. For double award GCSEs, the 4-3/U boundary is provisionally set by subtracting half the mark interval between the 5-4/4-4 and 4-4/4-3 boundaries (rounding up half marks) from the 4-4/4-3 boundary.
3. For both single and double award GCSEs, awarding organisations must consider moving the higher tier grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary where a review of the statistical and technical evidence leads the awarding organisation to judge that the grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary should be set at a different mark, and the reasons for this must be recorded.
4. The remainder of this document sets out some broad principles for exam boards to follow when the statistical and technical evidence suggests that the grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary should be set at a different mark to the arithmetically calculated position. These principles are intended to facilitate a common approach across exam boards.

### Principles

5. When awarding tiered reformed GCSE specifications, exam boards should provisionally set the higher tier grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary arithmetically, in accordance with the qualification level conditions. This should be the recommended grade boundary unless there is compelling statistical and technical evidence to set the boundary at a different mark.
6. There are several indicators that might suggest that the arithmetic position of the higher tier grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary should be reviewed. Examples of such indicators (though there might be others) include instances where:
  - a. There is a higher than anticipated proportion of candidates that would otherwise be ungraded on the higher tier
  - b. The position of the higher tier grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary raises concerns

7. Where there are indicators that it might be appropriate to review the position of the higher tier grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary, exam boards should investigate this further and consider the possible reasons. In doing so, consideration should be given to whether there is an issue at another grade that is impacting on the grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary or outcomes.
8. Exam boards should raise any emerging issues in relation to the higher tier grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary immediately with Ofqual for discussion at the twice weekly data exchange teleconferences with the other exam boards. If appropriate, Ofqual will schedule additional teleconferences to facilitate this. It is expected that any issue will be raised with Ofqual while the preparations for the award are taking place, rather than after any grade boundaries have been recommended.
9. Ofqual will facilitate discussions between the exam boards of any emerging issues. This might require Ofqual to collect, collate and share additional data from each exam board. It is intended that, through these discussions, a consensus on the most appropriate approach will be reached.
10. It is unlikely (though not impossible) that an issue would affect one exam board's specification in a given subject in isolation, and it would be difficult to justify different approaches being taken by exam boards for the same qualification and subject. Thus, there is an expectation that, unless there is a good reason not to, the same approach will be taken across exam boards in a given qualification and subject. However, a different approach for different subjects might be appropriate. In any instance, recommending a grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary that is lower than a full width grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary is unlikely to be appropriate.
11. Where an exam board recommends setting a grade 3/U or 4-3/U boundary that is not the arithmetically calculated half-width boundary, it must first discuss this with Ofqual before confirming the final grade boundaries. When considering these grade boundary recommendations, Ofqual will consider the consistency of the approach taken across exam boards and qualifications in the current examination series.
12. Ofqual will also consider the consistency of the approach taken for a qualification in a given subject between examination series. For example, it would be difficult to justify large differences between the boundaries for the allowed grades on higher tier, relative to the position of the grade 4/3 or 4-4/4-3 boundary, across examination series. However, in some instances, ensuring fairness to candidates might require a different approach to be taken.

# Appendix 1D

## Rules for setting the 9/8 boundary in reformed GCSE specifications

1. In specifications with only one entry option, and in each entry option of specifications with multiple options, the grade 9 boundary (at subject level or at entry option level) is set as indicated below, provided that, in the specification or entry option:

(i) there are more than 500 matched candidates

and (ii) the cumulative number of matched candidates at grade 7 is more than 100.<sup>21</sup>

### *First awards*

For matched 16-year-old learners, the percentage of those achieving at least grade 7 (in that specification or entry option) who should be awarded grade 9 =  $7\% + 0.5 \times (\text{percentage of candidates awarded grade 7 or above in that specification})$ . This is known as the tailored approach.

### *Second and subsequent awards*

For matched 16-year-old learners, the percentage achieving grade 9 should meet the prediction as closely as possible.

2. If, in a specification with multiple entry options, some (but not all) options fail to meet one or both of the criteria in paragraph 1 above (ie there are some Group 1 options and some Group 2 options), the following process is followed.

Step 1 Calculate the weighted (by matched entry size) average of the differences between the grade 9 and grade 7 boundaries, for each of the Group 1 entry options.

Step 2 Add that average to the grade 7 boundary of each Group 2 entry option to obtain the grade 9 boundary for that option.<sup>22</sup>

3. If, in a specification with a single entry option, or in a specification with multiple entry options, the matched entry of every option fails to meet one or both of the criteria in paragraph 1 (ie all entry options are Group 2 options), the grade 9 boundary is set in each entry option as follows.

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<sup>21</sup> Entry options meeting these two criteria will be termed Group 1 options. The entry options not meeting the criteria will be termed Group 2 options.

<sup>22</sup> Normal rounding rules apply, except that if the calculated grade 9 boundary is yy.5, it is rounded down, eg 78.5 is rounded down to 78 (but 78.51 is rounded to 79).

- (i) Where the mark width from the grade 7 boundary to the maximum mark is more than three times the width from grade 7 to grade 6, grade 8 is set so that it is the same width above grade 7 as grade 6 is below grade 7 and grade 9 is set so that it is twice the width above grade 7 as grade 6 is below grade 7.
  - (ii) Where the mark width from the grade 7 boundary to the maximum mark is less than or equal to three times the width from grade 7 to grade 6, grades 9 and 8 are set by dividing the width between the maximum mark and grade 7 by three. Where there is a remainder of one or more marks, one extra mark is added in turn to successive intervals, starting with the highest interval (ie the maximum mark to grade 9).
4. If, in a subject with multiple entry options, the overall matched entry meets both of the criteria in paragraph 1:
- the aggregate subject-level matched outcome at grade 9 must be compared with the outcome suggested by the tailored approach applied at subject level, or with the subject-level prediction;<sup>23</sup>
  - if necessary some or all of the grade 9 boundaries, as appropriate, for the Group 1 options may be adjusted to bring the subject-level outcome closer to expectation while maintaining equitable outcomes for candidates in different options;
  - the boundaries for Group 2 options should not normally be adjusted independently (ie they should be moved only as a consequence of adjusting Group 1 boundaries);
  - if there are no Group 1 options, the grade 9 boundaries for the Group 2 options (provisionally set arithmetically, as in paragraph 3) should be adjusted consistently to bring the subject-level outcome closer to expectation.

For art & design see paragraph 5.

5. In art & design, some or all endorsements may have common judgemental boundaries. The grade 9 boundary is set as follows.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The tailored approach in the first year of a reformed specification and the subject level prediction in subsequent years.

<sup>24</sup> This procedure should also apply in any other subjects where there is an assumption that all options will share the same judgemental boundaries. This is in contrast to the situation where options happen to share the same judgemental boundaries but there is no *a priori* assumption that they should do so.



- (i) For endorsements which have common boundaries at grades 7 and 4 (and provided that the criteria in paragraph 1 are met for the aggregate matched entry) the grade 9 boundary is set so that the aggregate outcome for matched candidates at grade 9 is as close as possible to the predicted outcome for the aggregate of those endorsements based on whole-subject outcomes in the reference year.
  - (ii) For any de-coupled endorsement(s) (ie where one or more judgemental boundaries are unique to that endorsement), and provided that the criteria in paragraph 1 are met for that endorsement, the grade 9 boundary is set so that the outcome for matched candidates at grade 9 is as close as possible to the predicted outcome for that endorsement based on whole-subject outcomes in the reference year.
  - (iii) If neither the aggregate matched entry for endorsements with common boundaries nor the matched entry for any de-coupled endorsement meets the criteria in paragraph 1, the process in paragraph 3 above should be followed.
  - (iv) If, in (ii), the criteria in paragraph 1 are not met for a de-coupled endorsement (but the aggregate matched entry for endorsements with common boundaries and/or the matched entry for another de-coupled endorsement meets those criteria), the process in paragraph 2 above should be followed, with 'entry option' replaced by 'aggregate or de-coupled endorsement'.
6. In all cases, if a review of statistical and/or technical evidence suggests that a grade 9 boundary should be set at a different mark, the report on the award<sup>25</sup> must provide evidence to justify the final boundary mark recommended.
  7. Where the awarding data need to be re-run post-award, and the boundary recommendations reviewed, the criteria in paragraph 1 are applied to the new data; the grade 9 boundary is re-calculated on that basis.

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<sup>25</sup> This may be a Chair's report or a technical report.

## Appendix 1E

### Guidance for setting the grade 1/U boundary in reformed GCSE specifications

1. The setting of the grade 1/U boundary in reformed GCSE specifications will be guided by predictions. In the first year the prediction will be based on grade G outcomes from legacy specifications, and in subsequent years the prediction will be based on grade 1 outcomes from reformed specifications.
2. Given that the predictions at grade 1 might be less reliable and that there might be limited script evidence to review, one or more of the following methods should, where necessary, be used to support setting the mark used as a starting point for the awarders' consideration of the grade 1/U boundary:
  - a. Use the mark which gives a subject outcome as close as possible to prediction. (If there are very few candidates in the relevant part of the mark range, eg if the cumulative percentage just below grade 4 is very nearly 100%, an alternative means of determining the starting point mark may be needed, eg cognate subject information – see (b) below.)
  - b. Consider cognate subjects. For example, the starting point for grade 1 in a separate science (where there may be few candidates) could be placed at a mark which has the same relationship to the grade 4 boundary as the grade 1-1 boundary has to the grade 4-4 boundary in combined science.<sup>26</sup> A similar method could be used in German, by comparing with French and/or Spanish.
  - c. In the second or subsequent year, use the previous year's boundary.
3. Ask the awarders to review script evidence around the boundary which is used as a starting point. When reviewing the evidence awarders may wish to identify a range within which the grade 1 boundary would be 'broadly acceptable' and/or recommend a specific mark within that range.
4. Where evidence is limited, review the proposed boundary with the other exam boards to ensure consistency.

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<sup>26</sup> This means that if the grade 1-1 boundary in combined science is at the mark which is  $x\%$  of the grade 4-4 boundary, then the starting point for the grade 1 boundary in the separate science should be positioned similarly. In the absence of cognate subject information, 20% may be used.

## Appendix 2

### Principles for using the secure collaboration area

1. The collaboration area is to be used for sensitive data relating to the data exchange that was previously sent to Ofqual by email as an encrypted attachment.
2. Email should be used as usual where no sensitive data is included or attached. All email correspondence should be sent to [dataexchange@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:dataexchange@ofqual.gov.uk).
3. Where appropriate, notification alerts should be set up by individual users to notify them when folders or documents are added or changed.
4. In terms of version control, all templates must be uploaded using the date as a prefix, for example 01072019-WJEC-Template 1–08.30. Therefore, whenever a revised data template is uploaded, please create this as a new document using the date as a prefix and the time as a suffix where necessary.
5. Old versions of templates must not be deleted from the collaboration area.
6. Awarding organisation users must not create extra folders within the data exchange library of the collaboration area without consulting Ofqual first.

## Appendix 3

### Principles for using statistical and judgemental evidence in the first and second awards of reformed A Level, AS and GCSE 9 to 1 qualifications in summer 2019 in England

1. Prior to the first awards of reformed GCSE 9 to 1, AS and A levels, the Ofqual Board agreed that awarding should be based primarily on statistical predictions. The same approach has been used for the second year of awards. Examiner judgement has played a greater role in the third year onwards.
2. The principles in this document therefore apply to all of the first and second awards of the reformed GCSE 9 to 1, AS and A level qualifications in summer 2019, bearing in mind that, for subjects with small entries or multiple options, a degree of flexibility might be necessary.

### Principles

3. Prior to the summer 2019 awards, awarders should be briefed that, in the first and second awards of reformed GCSE 9 to 1, AS and A levels, the statistical evidence provides the best estimate of where the subject-level grade boundaries should lie, and the most effective mechanism to align grade standards between awarding bodies. The changes to the qualifications will make it more challenging for awarders to judge the quality of student work relative to previous years. However, awarding bodies will rely on their awarding committees to identify instances where the boundary marks suggested by the statistics might be problematic.

#### **A level**

4. For the first and second award of reformed A levels, predictions will be used to generate statistically recommended boundaries (SRBs) at subject level for grades A\*, A and E. The basis for these predictions will be the same across awarding bodies and will provide a common starting point for reviewing scripts at grades A and E. At all three grades (A\*, A and E), for **each subject (except French, German and Spanish)**, the expectation is that the subject boundary that most closely meets the prediction will be chosen, unless there is convincing evidence to suggest otherwise. For **French, German and Spanish**, at grades A\* and A, the expectation is that the subject boundary that most closely meets but still exceeds the prediction will be chosen, unless there is convincing evidence to suggest otherwise. For **French, German and Spanish**, at grade E, the

expectation is that the subject boundary that most closely meets the prediction will be chosen, unless there is convincing evidence to suggest otherwise.

## AS

5. For the first and second awards of reformed AS, predictions will be used to generate SRBs at subject level for grades A and E. The basis for the predictions will be the same across awarding bodies and will provide a common starting point for reviewing scripts at these two grades. The expectation is that the subject boundary that most closely meets the prediction will be chosen, unless there is convincing evidence to suggest otherwise.

## GCSE

6. For the first and second awards of reformed GCSE 9 to 1, predictions will be used to generate SRBs at subject level for grades 9<sup>27</sup>, 7, 4 and 1<sup>28</sup> (grades 7, 4 and 1 to align with grades A, C and G in the legacy qualifications in the first awards). The basis for the predictions will be the same across awarding bodies and will provide a common starting point for reviewing scripts at grades 7, 4 and 1. At all four grades (9, 7, 4 and 1) the expectation is that the subject boundary that most closely meets the prediction will be chosen, unless there is convincing evidence to suggest otherwise.

## All awards

7. Awarders will use their professional judgement to determine whether the quality of work demonstrated at the subject-level SRBs<sup>29</sup> is acceptable at each grade where script evidence is reviewed<sup>30</sup>. In doing this, awarding bodies may pose the following question to their awarders: *'Based on the evidence you have seen is the subject-level statistically recommended boundary acceptable?'* Awarders should be reminded that they should not necessarily expect performance at the SRBs to be similar to performance at the corresponding boundaries in the legacy specifications – performance standards may be legitimately lower in the first two years of new specifications.
8. Where awarders are content that a subject-level statistically recommended boundary is acceptable, that boundary should be confirmed, since the limits of judgement suggest that awarders are not able to differentiate between subject-level standards within a few marks of one another<sup>31</sup>. However, if the awarders

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<sup>27</sup> For grade 9, in the first year of each specification, 'prediction' refers to the percentage calculated by the formula in Appendix 1D.

<sup>28</sup> For grade 1 see also Appendix 1E.

<sup>29</sup> Although many of these principles are framed around subject-level boundaries, in practice awarders may review work at component level.

<sup>30</sup> Grades 7, 4 and 1 at GCSE, and grades A and E at AS and A level.

<sup>31</sup> See Ofqual (2015)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/451321/2015-08-05-summer-series-gcse-as-and-a-level-grade-standards.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/451321/2015-08-05-summer-series-gcse-as-and-a-level-grade-standards.pdf).

are not content with the balance of outcomes across the components, they may adjust the component boundaries while keeping the subject-level boundaries at the statistically recommended positions<sup>32</sup>.

9. In a subject with components with scaling factors that are unequal, adjusting one component up by one mark and one component down by one mark might not retain the same subject SRB. In this case, the change to component thresholds would not be permitted, unless such changes ensured that the overall subject-level boundaries remained the same (ie by adjusting component boundaries by different numbers of marks).
10. Where awarders are not content that a subject-level SRB is acceptable, additional script review will be required<sup>33</sup>. In that situation, on each component, awarding bodies should increase the review range away from the SRB, in the direction suggested by the awarders. Sufficient work should be provided until the awarders are content that their final recommended subject boundary is acceptable.
11. If the exam board wishes to set boundaries other than those suggested by the subject-level predictions, and there are more than 500 matched candidates, it will need to provide additional technical evidence to Ofqual to support this. A subject specific report detailing the judgemental evidence that has guided awarders to their decisions will also be required.
12. Ofqual will consider the outcomes of awards based on the statistical and judgemental evidence provided, and bearing in mind the aim of aligning grade standards across awarding bodies.

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<sup>32</sup> However, the awarders must be made aware that, because the assessment pattern has changed, carrying forward judgemental standards at component level will not necessarily maintain standards at subject level.

<sup>33</sup> This refers to instances where awarders are concerned that the overall standard for the qualification is not reflected by the statistically recommended boundaries. If awarders wish to re-balance component outcomes within a qualification (but keep the same overall subject outcomes), then additional review of appropriate ranges of scripts will similarly be necessary.

## Appendix 4

### Summary of data exchange templates

<b>Template</b>	<b>Description</b>
Template A	A level OOT (unreformed and legacy)
Template AR	A level (reformed in England) where award is not closest to prediction
Template B	A level (unreformed and legacy)
Template BR	A level (reformed in England)
Template BW	A level (unreformed and legacy – Wales)
Template BRW	A level (reformed in England – Wales)
Template C	AS (unreformed and legacy)
Template CR	AS (reformed in England)
Template CW	AS (unreformed and legacy – Wales)
Template CRW	AS (reformed in England – Wales)
Template DR	AS (reformed in England) where award is not closest to prediction
Template E	GCSE all (unreformed and legacy)
Template ER	GCSE all (reformed in England)
Template EW	GCSE all (unreformed and legacy – Wales)
Template ERW	GCSE all (reformed in England – Wales)
Template F	GCSE matched (unreformed and legacy)
Template FR	GCSE matched (reformed in England)
Template G	GCSE OOT (unreformed and legacy)
Template GR	GCSE (reformed in England) where award is not closest to prediction
Template J	Concerns with grade boundary positions
Template K	Project

# Annex A

[Embargoed until 22 August 2019]





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