

# Summer 2017 Data Exchange Procedures

## GCSE, AS and A level



The following procedures outline the data that must be provided by awarding organisations during the summer 2017 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.

This is a **Regulatory Document** under **Condition B7** of the General Conditions of Recognition<sup>1</sup> (June 2016): Compliance with Regulatory Documents.

In addition, in relation to post-reform GCE and GCSE qualifications –

- a) This document sets requirements under Condition GCE3.1 and GCE9.1 of the GCE Qualification Level Conditions<sup>2</sup> and Condition GCSE3.1 and GCSE9.1 of the GCSE Qualification Level Conditions<sup>3</sup> respectively.
- b) 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. Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 and Appendix 3 set those specific requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-conditions-of-recognition>

<sup>2</sup>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/601727/GCE\\_Qualification\\_Level\\_Conditions\\_and\\_Requirements\\_-\\_August\\_2016\\_0317\\_erra.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/601727/GCE_Qualification_Level_Conditions_and_Requirements_-_August_2016_0317_erra.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/591884/GCSE\\_9\\_to\\_1\\_Qualification\\_Level\\_Conditions\\_and\\_Requirements\\_-\\_Feb\\_2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591884/GCSE_9_to_1_Qualification_Level_Conditions_and_Requirements_-_Feb_2017.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/591884/GCSE\\_9\\_to\\_1\\_Qualification\\_Level\\_Conditions\\_and\\_Requirements\\_-\\_Feb\\_2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591884/GCSE_9_to_1_Qualification_Level_Conditions_and_Requirements_-_Feb_2017.pdf)

## 1 GCE A level

### 1.1 Predictions for unreformed A level (subjects where there are no new specifications being awarded in 2017)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 18-year-old matched cash-in learners<sup>5</sup>. The prediction (for all subjects except French, German and Spanish) 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.

For French, German and Spanish the prediction must be based on the national relationship between A level outcomes in each subject in 2016 and the GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2014. For French, German and Spanish each awarding organisation must add 1% to their prediction at grade A.

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 2017)

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 2016, and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2013.

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

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

### 1.3 Predictions for reformed A level in England (new specifications being awarded for the first time in 2017)

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

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<sup>5</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. 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.

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

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

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

Awarding organisations must also note the principles for using statistical and judgemental evidence detailed in appendix 3.

## 1.4 GCE A level reporting

### Legacy and unreformed A level (specifications in sections 1.1 and 1.2)

Wherever actual and predicted outcomes differ 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 GCE A level are given in the following table.

Graded entry (matched 18-year-olds <sup>6</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 level French, German and Spanish, awarding organisations must report outcomes against the adjusted predictions at grade A.

For A\*, for qualifications (except French, German and Spanish) 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  $\pm 2$  per cent. The agreed rules for moving the A\* conversion point are included in this document (appendix 1A).

For French, German and Spanish, the outcome at A\* must be above prediction. Otherwise, the same rules apply.

### All A level (specifications in sections 1.1 – 1.3)

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 provide this to Ofqual by **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017**. 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 and GCSE outcome data received from awarding

<sup>6</sup> 19 year olds for legacy A levels.

organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2017'), **using Template A** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

Where a subject level boundary for a reformed specification is chosen that does not result in matched outcomes that are as close to prediction as possible at grade A\*, A or E, 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 and GCSE outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2017'), **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, Monday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017**.

For 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 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

### 2.1 Predictions for unreformed AS (subjects where there are no new specifications being awarded in 2017)

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

3. AS outcomes in that subject for 17-year-old learners in 2011 and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2010;
4. AS outcomes in that subject for 17-year-old learners in 2012 and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2011.

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

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

### 2.2 Predictions for legacy AS (outgoing specifications in subjects where there are also new specifications being awarded for the first time in 2017)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 18-year-old matched cash-in learners who are also certificating for A level. The prediction must be based on the national relationship between AS outcomes in that subject for 18-year-old learners who certificated AS and A level (in the same series) in 2016, and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2014.

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 (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 cash-in learners. The prediction must be based on the national relationship between AS outcomes in that subject for 17-year-old learners in 2016, 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.

Awarding organisations must also note the principles for using statistical and judgemental evidence detailed in appendix 3.

## 2.4 Predictions for reformed AS in England (new specifications being awarded for the first time in 2017)

Each awarding organisation must create for each specification its own prediction for its specific cohort of 17-year-old matched cash-in learners. The prediction (for all subjects except French, German and Spanish) must be based on the average of the national relationship between:

5. AS outcomes in that subject for 17-year-old learners in 2011 and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2010;
6. AS outcomes in that subject for 17-year-old learners in 2012 and GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2011.

For French, German and Spanish the prediction must be based on the national relationship between AS outcomes in each subject in 2016, and the 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.

Awarding organisations must also note the principles for using statistical and judgemental evidence detailed in appendix 3.

## 2.5 GCE AS reporting

### Legacy and unreformed AS (specifications in sections 2.1 and 2.2)

Wherever actual and predicted outcomes differ 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 GCE AS are given in the following table.

Graded entry (matched 17-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%

### All AS (specifications in sections 2.1 – 2.4)

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

<sup>7</sup> 18 year-olds (who are also certificating A level) for legacy AS.

this to Ofqual by **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017**. 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, 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 and GCSE outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2017'), **using Template D** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

Where a subject level boundary for a reformed specification is chosen that does not result in matched outcomes that are as close to prediction as possible at grade A or E, 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 and GCSE outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2017'), **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, **Monday 31st July 2017**.

For 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 C and CW**.

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 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**

### **3.1 Predictions for legacy GCSE (outgoing specifications in subjects where there are also new specifications being awarded for the first time in 2017)**

#### **GCSE mathematics (linear)**

Each awarding organisation must create its own predictions for its specific cohort of re-sitting 17-year-old matched cash-in learners. Predictions must be based on the national relationship between GCSE outcomes for re-sitting 17-year-old learners across both the (previously) modular and linear GCSE mathematics specifications in 2016 and mean GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2015.

Each awarding organisation must report outcomes against predictions based on the GCSE/mean GCSE relationships described above.

Outcomes relative to the prediction are subject to the reporting tolerances quoted on page 15 (including  $\pm 2$  per cent at grade A\*).

#### **GCSE English/English language**

Each awarding organisation must create its own predictions for its specific cohort of re-sitting 17-year-old matched cash-in learners. Predictions must be based on the national relationship between GCSE outcomes for re-sitting 17-year-old learners across both GCSE English and GCSE English language in 2016 and mean GCSE outcomes for those learners in 2015. Separate predictions for GCSE English and GCSE English language must also be provided based on national GCSE outcomes in the respective subjects for re-sitting 17-year-old learners in 2016.

Outcomes relative to the aggregate predictions across both GCSE English and GCSE English language are subject to the reporting tolerances quoted on page 15 (including  $\pm 2$  per cent at grade A\*).

Each awarding organisation must report outcomes against predictions based on the GCSE/mean GCSE relationships described above.

The outcomes must be reported against predictions as follows:

7. For GCSE English
8. For GCSE English language
9. For GCSE English and GCSE English language combined.

### **3.2 Predictions for unreformed GCSE (subjects where there are no new specifications being awarded in 2017)**

#### **GCSE specifications that first certificated in summer 2011<sup>8</sup>**

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

10. GCSE outcomes in that subject for 16-year-old learners in 2011 and Key Stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2006;
11. GCSE outcomes in that subject for 16-year-old learners in 2012 and Key Stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2007<sup>9</sup>.

WJEC must follow the same procedure for subjects where the England entry is more than 50 per cent of the total entry and where there are more than 1,000 Key Stage 2 matched learners.

AQA, Pearson and OCR must report outcomes against predictions based on the GCSE/Key Stage 2 relationships described above.

WJEC must report outcomes against predictions based on the GCSE/Key Stage 2 relationships described above where Key Stage 2 data are used. Where Key Stage 2 data are not used, WJEC must report outcomes against predictions based on combined data from common centres (schools and colleges) in 2011 and 2012.

CCEA must report outcomes against predictions based on combined data from common centres (schools and colleges) in 2011 and 2012.

#### **GCSE specifications that first certificated in summer 2012**

##### **GCSE English literature (CCEA), GCSE Gaelige and GCSE ICT**

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

12. GCSE outcomes in that subject for 16-year-old learners in 2012 and Key Stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2007.
13. GCSE outcomes in that subject for 16 year-old learners in 2013 and Key Stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2008

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<sup>8</sup> Not including OCR GCSE Computing.

<sup>9</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.

WJEC must follow the same procedure for subjects where the England entry is more than 50 per cent of the total entry and where there are more than 1,000 Key Stage 2 matched learners.

AQA, Pearson and OCR must report outcomes against predictions based on the GCSE/Key Stage 2 relationships described above.

WJEC must report outcomes against predictions based on the GCSE/Key Stage 2 relationships described above where Key Stage 2 data are used. Where Key Stage 2 data are not used, WJEC must report outcomes against predictions based on combined data from common centres in 2012 and 2013.

CCEA must report outcomes against predictions based on combined data from common centres (schools and colleges) in 2012 and 2013.

### **GCSE mathematics (CCEA), GCSE English (CCEA) and GCSE English language (CCEA)**

CCEA must report outcomes against predictions based on data from common centres in 2016.

### **GCSE science suite<sup>10</sup>, GCSE environmental and land-based science, GCSE computing<sup>11</sup> and GCSE computer science**

AQA, Pearson and OCR must create for each specification their own prediction for their specific cohort of 16-year-old matched cash-in learners. The prediction must be based on the national relationship between GCSE outcomes for 16-year-old learners in that subject in 2016 and Key Stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2011.

WJEC must follow the same procedure where the England entry is more than 50 per cent of the total entry and where there are more than 1,000 Key Stage 2 matched learners.

AQA, Pearson and OCR must report outcomes against predictions based on the GCSE/Key Stage 2 relationships described above.

WJEC must report outcomes against predictions based on the GCSE/Key Stage 2 relationships described above where Key Stage 2 data are used. Where Key Stage 2 data are not used, WJEC must report outcomes against predictions based on data from common centres in 2016. For GCSE Science, GCSE Additional Science and the separate sciences, this will be for 16 year old learners.

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<sup>10</sup> Including GCSE science, GCSE additional science, GCSE biology, GCSE chemistry and GCSE physics.

<sup>11</sup> OCR GCSE computing first certificated in summer 2011 but follows the same procedure as other GCSE computer science specifications.

CCEA must report outcomes against predictions based on data from common centres in 2016.

### **GCSE further additional science**

For GCSE further additional science specifications that share the same or very similar assessments with GCSEs in the separate sciences (biology, chemistry and physics)<sup>12</sup>, awarding organisations must report outcomes against the predictions created for the aggregate of the separate sciences and use test equating as appropriate to check that the standards set are comparable.

For GCSE further additional science specifications that have unique assessments, awarding organisations must create their own prediction for their specific cohort of 16-year-old matched cash-in learners. The prediction must be based on the relationship between GCSE outcomes for 16-year-old learners in that awarding organisation's own GCSE further additional science specification in 2016 and Key Stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2011.

### **GCSE citizenship**

AQA, Pearson and OCR must create for each specification their own prediction for their specific cohort of 16-year-old matched cash-in learners. The prediction must be based on the national relationship between GCSE outcomes for 16-year-old learners in GCSE citizenship in 2016 and Key Stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2011.

Awarding organisations must prioritise bringing full course outcomes into line with predictions.

### **Other GCSEs**

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

Awarding organisations do not need to report GCSE double-award outcomes.

## **3.3 Predictions for reformed GCSE qualifications in England (new specifications being awarded for the first time in 2017)**

### **GCSE Mathematics**

Each awarding organisation must create their own predictions for their 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 2016 and Key Stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2011.

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<sup>12</sup> The same assessments having identical questions or very similar assessments where most of the questions are the same.

Each awarding organisation must report outcomes against predictions based on the GCSE/Key Stage 2 relationship described above.

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

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

Awarding organisations must also note the principles for using statistical and judgemental evidence detailed in appendix 3.

Each awarding organisation must use the outcomes of test equating using the chained equi-percentile method to support comparability between tiers at grades 4 and 5.

### **GCSE English language**

Each awarding organisation must create their own predictions for their specific cohort of 16-year-old matched learners. Predictions must be based on the national relationship between GCSE outcomes in English language and English for 16-year-old learners in 2016 and Key Stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2011.

Each awarding organisation must report outcomes against predictions based on the GCSE/Key Stage 2 relationship described above.

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

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

Awarding organisations must also note the principles for using statistical and judgemental evidence detailed in appendix 3.

### **GCSE English literature**

Each awarding organisation must create their own predictions for their 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 2016 and Key Stage 2 outcomes for those learners in 2011.

Each awarding organisation must report outcomes against predictions based on the GCSE/Key Stage 2 relationship described above.

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

Data for *all learners* must include partial absences.

Awarding organisations must also note the principles for using statistical and judgemental evidence detailed in appendix 3.

### **3.4 Setting grade 9 in reformed GCSE specifications in England (new specifications being awarded for the first time in 2017)**

Each awarding organisation must set grade 9 in the first award of a reformed GCSE specification using the following formula applied to matched 16 year old learners:

- Percentage of those achieving at least grade 7 in that specification who should be awarded grade 9 =  $7\% + 0.5 \times (\text{percentage of candidates awarded grade 7 or above in that specification})$ .

### **3.5 Setting grade 1 in reformed GCSE specifications in England (new specifications being awarded for the first time in 2017).**

Each awarding organisation must set grade 1 in the first award of a reformed GCSE specification using the method described in appendix 3.

### 3.6 GCSE reporting

#### Legacy and unreformed GCSE (specifications in sections 3.1 and 3.2)

Wherever actual and predicted outcomes differ for grades A and 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 short course outcomes).

Graded entry <sup>13</sup>	Reporting tolerance for grades A & C
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  $\pm 2$  per cent for full course specifications. The agreed rules for moving the A\* conversion point are included in this document (appendix 1A).

#### Reformed GCSE in England (specifications in section 3.3)

For reformed GCSE mathematics, each awarding organisation must report the technical details of how test equating has been used to support comparability between the foundation and higher tiers, using **Template M**. Reports should be uploaded to Ofqual via the secure collaborative portal at the same time that the data from the award is reported to Ofqual.

#### 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 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017**. 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 or legacy specification are outside the reporting tolerance (measured to one decimal place) at grade A\*, A or

<sup>13</sup> Matched 16-year-olds for Key Stage 2 predictions and 16-year-olds from common centres for common centre predictions, except for legacy GCSE specifications where the graded entry is matched 17-year-old resitters.

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 and GCSE outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2017'), **using Template G** and according to the schedule provided to Ofqual.

- AQA, Pearson and OCR must report on **Template G** any outcomes that are out of tolerance against Key Stage 2 based predictions.
- WJEC must follow the same procedure for subjects where the England entry is more than 50 per cent of the total entry and where there are more than 1,000 Key Stage 2 matched learners. Where this does not apply, WJEC must report out-of-tolerance outcomes against common centre predictions.
- CCEA must report any out-of-tolerance outcomes against common centre predictions.

Where a subject level boundary for a 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, 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 and GCSE outcome data received from awarding organisations as part of the data exchange procedures, Summer 2017'), **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 and legacy GCSE data based on predictions, excluding partial absences, to date.

For unreformed and legacy 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 specification is flagged as being out of tolerance at grades A or C, 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 and legacy 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 **4 p.m., Saturday 5th August 2017** at the latest.

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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 on page 14.



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 4 p.m., Saturday 5th August 2017** at the latest.

In a few cases awarding organisations 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 Reporting concerns with grade boundary positions**

For all **A level, AS and GCSE** 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 2016 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**.

For reformed GCSE qualifications, awarding organisations must report any concerns with the subject level boundary for grade 1/U using **Template J**.

## 5 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 collaborative portal.

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:**

14. will review the data on the basis of its published procedure,
15. may contact awarding organisations to ask for additional information or clarification, and will aim to do this within 24 hours of receipt, and
16. 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.
17. will upload data to the portal in July (Fridays) showing each awarding organisations' award outcomes and aggregated outcomes across awarding organisations.
18. will discuss outcomes with awarding organisations at the Maintenance of Standards meetings on **1st August 2017 (AS and A level) and 7th August 2017 (GCSE)**.

## Appendix 1A

### Rules for moving the A\* conversion/boundary point (legacy and unreformed 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  $\pm 2$  per cent (in A level French, A level German and A level Spanish, the (matched) outcome must be above prediction). 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  $\pm 2$  per cent 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 entry option level) is set so that the outcome for matched candidates at grade A\* is as close as possible to the predicted outcome, provided that, in that 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.
2. In specifications where, in every entry option, the matched entries fail one or both of the criteria in paragraph 1<sup>16</sup>, the A\* boundary is set in each entry option as follows.
  - (i) Where the mark width from the A 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 A boundary to the maximum subject mark 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.

If the overall matched entry meets both of the criteria in paragraph 1, the subject-level matched outcome at A\* must be compared with the prediction. If necessary some or all of the A\* boundaries should be adjusted to bring the outcome closer to prediction.

3. If, in a specification with multiple options, some (but not all) entry options fail one or both of the criteria in paragraph 1 above, the following process is followed.
  - Step 1 Calculate the weighted (by matched entry size) average of the differences between the A\* and A boundaries, for each of the entry options meeting the criteria in paragraph 1.

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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> Whether in the case of a small entry specification with a single entry option, or in a specification with multiple entry options each of which has small entries.

- Step 2 Add that average to the A boundary of each entry option that does not meet the criteria in paragraph 1 to obtain the A\* boundary for that option.<sup>17</sup>
- Step 3 The subject-level matched outcome at A\* must be compared with the prediction. If necessary some or all of the A\* boundaries should be adjusted to bring the outcome closer to prediction.
4. In A level Art & Design, some or all endorsements may have common judgemental (A and E) boundaries. The A\* boundary is set as follows<sup>18</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 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 those endorsements combined.
  - (ii) For any de-coupled endorsement(s) (ie where one or both judgemental boundaries are unique to that endorsement), the A\* boundary is set so that the outcome for matched candidates at grade A\* is as close as possible to the predicted outcome for that endorsement, provided that the criteria in paragraph 1 are met (for that endorsement).
  - (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 2 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 3 should be followed, with '(entry) option' replaced by 'endorsement'.
5. In all cases, if a review of statistical and/or technical evidence suggests that an A\* boundary should be set at a different mark, the report on the award<sup>19</sup> must provide evidence to justify the final boundary mark recommended.

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<sup>17</sup> Normal rounding rules apply, except that if the calculated A\* boundary is yy.5, it is rounded down, eg 78.5 is rounded down to 78.

<sup>18</sup> This procedure should also apply in 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.

<sup>19</sup> This may be a Chair's report or a technical report.

## Appendix 2

### Principles for using the secure collaborative portal

1. The portal 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 01072017-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 portal.
6. Awarding organisation users must not create extra folders within the data exchange library of the portal without consulting Ofqual first.



## Appendix 3

### Principles for using statistical and judgemental evidence in awards of reformed A Level, AS and GCSE 9-1 qualifications in summer 2017 in England

1. In August 2014, the Ofqual Board agreed that, in the first year of new 9-1 GCSEs, awarding should be based primarily on statistical predictions.
2. In May 2015, the Ofqual Board also agreed that, in the first year of new AS and A levels, awarding should be primarily based on statistical predictions derived from prior attainment at GCSE. The Board agreed further that a similar process should be used for the second year of awards. Examiner judgement will play a greater role in the third series onwards.
3. The principles in this document therefore apply to all of the first and second awards of the reformed GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in summer 2017, bearing in mind that, for subjects with small entries or multiple options, a degree of flexibility might be necessary.

#### Principles

4. Prior to the summer 2017 awards, awarders should be briefed that, in the awards of reformed A levels, reformed AS, and reformed GCSE 9-1 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

5. For the reformed A level specifications, 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 key 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.

## AS

6. For the reformed AS specifications, 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

7. For the reformed GCSE 9-1 specifications, predictions will be used to generate SRBs at subject level for grades 7 and 4 (to align with grades A and C in the legacy qualifications, respectively)<sup>20</sup>. The basis for the predictions will be the same across awarding bodies and will provide a common starting point for reviewing scripts. 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

8. Awarders will use their professional judgement to determine whether the quality of work demonstrated at the subject-level SRBs<sup>21</sup> is acceptable at each key grade (grade 1 is considered separately – see page 26). 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 year of new specifications.
9. 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>22</sup>. However, if the awarders 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>23</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Grade 1 is considered separately – see page 26.

<sup>21</sup> Although many of these principles are framed around subject-level boundaries, in practice awarders may review work at component level.

<sup>22</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).

<sup>23</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.

10. 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 (i.e. by adjusting component boundaries by different numbers of marks).
11. Where awarders are not content that a subject-level SRB is acceptable, additional script review will be required<sup>24</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.
12. If the exam board wishes to set boundaries other than those suggested by the subject-level predictions, 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.
13. 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.

### **Setting the 1/U subject level boundary in the first awards of reformed GCSE specifications**

14. The nature of mark distributions towards the bottom of the grade range means that predictions cannot be used reliably as the principal means of setting the 1/U boundary. Instead, statistical evidence will be used to set a nominal F/G boundary and the 1/U boundary will then be calculated arithmetically.
15. Awarders will still use their professional judgement to determine whether the quality of work demonstrated at the calculated 1/U boundary is acceptable. The matched outcomes based on the calculated 1/U boundary will also be compared to a grade 1 prediction.
16. To calculate the 1/U boundary
  - a. determine a notional F/G boundary on the basis of statistical evidence;
  - b. calculate the difference between the 4/3 boundary and the notional F/G boundary;

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<sup>24</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.

- c. divide this difference by three, ignoring any remainder;
  - d. subtract this value from the notional F/G boundary.
17. If the total matched entry is too small, or there are too few matched candidates towards the bottom of the grade range, for statistical evidence to take priority, alternative approaches will be needed. The report on the award must describe the approach(es) used.
18. In all cases, if a review of statistical and/or technical evidence suggests that the 1/U boundary should be set at a different mark, the report on the award must provide evidence to justify the final boundary mark recommended.

## Appendix 4

### Summary of data exchange templates

Template	Description
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 D	AS OOT (unreformed and legacy)
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 M	GCSE mathematics (reformed) tiering report