STATUTORY GUIDANCE

November 2018 data exchange procedures

GCSEs (9 to 1)

ofqual

Contents

This document applies to GCSE (9 to 1) qualifications in English language and mathematics.

The following procedures outline the data that must be provided by awarding organisations during the November 2018 data exchange for each qualification forming part of the data exchange process.

This is a Regulatory Document under Condition B7 of the 'General Conditions of Recognition'[1] (June 2016): Compliance with Regulatory Documents.

In addition, this document sets requirements under Condition GCSE3.1 and GCSE9.1 of the GCSE Qualification Level Conditions.[2]

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-conditions-of-recognition
[2] 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 GCSE (9 to 1)

1.1. GCSE (9 to 1) predictions

In respect of each GCSE qualification in English language and mathematics which it makes available in November 2018, each exam board must create its own cohort-specific prediction for matched learners,[3] following the subject-specific requirements listed below.

GCSE English language

Each awarding organisation must create its own predictions for its specific cohort of re-sitting 17-year-old matched learners. Predictions must be based on the national relationship between GCSE outcomes in English language for re-sitting 17-year-old learners in November 2017 and mean GCSE attainment for those learners in June 2017.

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

Awarding organisations must also note the principles for using statistical and judgemental evidence detailed in appendix 1.

Note: The November 2018 GCSE English language results must be compared with GCSE English language results of the same learners in June 2018, where those learners have taken the assessments in both June and November 2018. Comparisons must be undertaken for matched re-sitting 17-year-old learners and all learners.

For the spoken language endorsement for GCSE English Language, awarding organisations must report outcomes (to include carry forward grades) both for matched re-sitting 17-year-old learners and for all learners.

GCSE mathematics

Each awarding organisation must create its own predictions for its specific cohort of re-sitting 17-year-old matched learners. Predictions must be based on the national relationship between GCSE outcomes in mathematics for re-sitting 17-year-old learners in November 2017 and mean GCSE attainment for those learners in June 2017.

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

Awarding organisations must also note the principles for using statistical and judgemental evidence detailed in appendix 1.

Each awarding organisation must use the outcomes of test equating (chained equi-percentile method) to support comparability between tiers at grades 4 and 5, where there are sufficient entries on each tier.

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[3] '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' and has the same meaning in this Regulatory Document.

Note: The November 2018 GCSE mathematics results must be compared with GCSE mathematics results of the same learners in June 2018, where those learners have taken the assessments in both June and November 2018. Comparisons must be undertaken for matched re-sitting 17-year-old learners and all learners.

1.2. Setting grade 9 in GCSE (9 to 1) qualifications

Each awarding organisation must set grade 9, in the GCSE (9 to 1) qualifications in November 2018, using the method described in appendix 1.

1.3. Setting grade 1 in GCSE (9 to 1) qualifications

Each awarding organisation must set grade 1, in the GCSE (9 to 1) qualifications in November 2018, using the method described in appendix 1.

1.4. GCSE reporting

Each awarding organisation must report all of its GCSE English language outcomes at grades 9, 7, 5, 4 and 1, **using template 1, no later than two days after the provisional sign-off of the award and by 12 noon, Friday 21st December 2018.**

Each awarding organisation must report all of its GCSE mathematics outcomes at grades 9, 7, 5, 4 and 1, **using template 2, no later than two days after the provisional sign-off of the award and by 12 noon, Friday 21st December 2018.**

Each awarding organisation must report information on four key areas, as detailed in the above templates:

1. **GCSE outcomes data**. Data must be reported on matched learners, excluding partial absences (EPA) where available, against predicted outcomes where these have been derived. Data must also be reported on all learners, including partial absences (IPA), where available.

2. **Evidence used.** Awarding organisations must also describe how evidence was used to guide the award, covering each category on the template.

3. **Maintaining standards**. Awarding organisations must also report any issues or concerns in the context of maintaining standards.

4. **Significant differences in grade boundary positions.** Awarding organisations must report any instances where GCSE subject level key grade boundary positions are significantly different from the previous series and/or the November 2017 series. A significant difference could be one which could cause concern with centres. These must be reported as soon as possible after the award is signed off by the Responsible Officer, together with an explanation for the difference.

For GCSE mathematics, each awarding organisation must also report:

5. **Test equating**. Awarding organisations must report the technical details of how test equating has been used to support comparability between the foundation and higher tiers, where there are sufficient entries on each tier.

Each awarding organisation must report all of its GCSE English language spoken language outcomes at pass, merit and distinction using **template 3**, **by 12 noon, Friday 21st December 2018**.

Each awarding organisation must report all of its November 2018 GCSE English language results for re-sitting 17-year-olds and all learners compared with GCSE English language results for the same learners in June 2018, using **template 4, no later than two days after the provisional sign-off of the award and by 12 noon, Friday 21st December 2018.**

Each awarding organisation must report all of its November 2018 GCSE mathematics results for re-sitting 17-year-olds and all learner compared with GCSE mathematics results for the same learners in June 2018, using **template 4, no later than two days after the provisional sign-off of the award and by 12 noon, Friday 21st December 2018.**

2 Sending data

Each awarding organisation must confirm its data exchange contacts with Ofqual before the process begins. All data are to be uploaded to the secure collaborative portal and in accordance with the principles in appendix 2.

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

On receipt of the above GCSE information, Ofqual:

- will review the data on the basis of its published procedure

- may contact awarding organisations to ask for additional information or clarification, and aim to do this as soon as possible after receipt

- will discuss outcomes for the November series with awarding organisations at the Maintenance of Standards meeting on 4 January 2019

Appendix 1

Principles for using technical and judgemental evidence in awards of GCSE 9 to 1 qualifications in November 2018

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 was 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 the second awards of the reformed GCSE 9 to 1 qualifications in November 2018, bearing in mind that, for subjects with small entries or multiple options, a degree of flexibility might be necessary.

Principles

3. Prior to the November 2018 awards, awarders should be briefed that, in the second November awards of reformed 9 to 1 GCSEs, 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 exam boards. The changes to the qualifications will make it more challenging for awarders to judge the quality of student work relative to previous years. However, exam boards will rely on their awarding committees to identify instances where the boundary marks suggested by the statistics might be problematic.

4. For the reformed 9 to 1 GCSE specifications, predictions will be used to generate statistically recommended boundaries (SRBs) at subject level for grades 7 and 4.[4] The basis for the predictions will be the same across exam boards 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.

5. Awarders will use their professional judgement to determine whether the quality of work demonstrated at the subject-level SRBs[5] is <u>acceptable</u> at each key grade (grades 9 and 1 are considered separately – see paragraphs 11 – 16 of this appendix). In doing this, exam boards 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

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[4] Grades 9 and 1 are considered separately – see paragraphs 11 – 16 of this appendix.
[5] Although many of these principles are framed around subject-level boundaries, in practice awarders may review work at component level.

legacy specifications – performance standards may be legitimately lower in the first two years of new specifications.

6. 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.[6] 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.[7]

7. 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).

8. Where awarders are not content that a subject-level SRB is acceptable, additional script review will be required.[8] In that situation, on each component, exam boards 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.

9. 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.

10. Ofqual will consider the outcomes of awards based on the technical and judgemental evidence provided, and bearing in mind the aim of aligning grade standards across exam boards.

Setting the 9/8 and 1/U subject level boundaries in the November 2018 awards of reformed GCSE specifications

11. The nature of the cohort and mark distributions towards the top and bottom of the grade range in the November series means that predictions cannot be used reliably as the principal means of setting the 9/8 or 1/U boundaries.

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[6] 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.
[7] 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.
[8] 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.

12. Instead, a provisional grade 9/8 and 1/U boundary will be set based on the relative position of the grade boundaries in the reformed specifications in the June 2018 series. Awarders will then use their professional judgement to determine whether the quality of work demonstrated at the provisional boundaries is acceptable, based on comparisons with the grade 9 and grade 1 archives from the November 2017 and June 2018 series.

13. To calculate the provisional 1/U boundary in English language and mathematics:

> Place the boundary above zero by the number of marks which is 20% of the width between the grade 4 boundary and zero.[9]

14. To calculate the provisional 9/8 boundary in English language:

> Place the boundary above the grade 7 boundary by the number of marks which is 40% of the width between the maximum and the grade 7 boundary.

15. To calculate the provisional 9/8 boundary in mathematics:

> Place the boundary above the grade 7 boundary by the number of marks which is 60% of the width between the maximum and the grade 7 boundary.

16. In all cases, the report on the award must provide evidence to justify the final boundary mark recommended.

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[9] Note that all calculated boundaries should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

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.

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 11122018-WJEC-Template 1. 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.

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