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GUIDANCE

# Examinations and assessments: coronavirus

Information on examinations and assessments, including A levels, during the coronavirus pandemic.

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## Contents

- How will my grade be assessed?
- Am I able to appeal against the GCSE or A level grades that I have been awarded?
- Is there a complaints process?
- What will happen for learners in year 10?
- How will AS levels be affected?
- How will teachers awarding grades affect external (private) candidates and home educated learners?
- When will learners have the next opportunity to sit exams?
- Why won't AS level grades in summer 2020 count towards A level grades?
- Will learners have to sit the Numeracy (Reasoning) paper test this year?
- Will learners be required to take the online personalised assessments in Numeracy (Procedural) and Reading?

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## Examinations

### How will my grade be assessed?

On 17 August Education Minister Kirsty Williams' announced that learners in Wales would be awarded their centre assessment grades.

The move to award qualifications based on Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs) means that grades awarded to learners in Wales are the professional judgements of teachers, except where grades already issued or calculated are higher than their CAG. Or, in the case of A levels, their AS level grade is higher than their CAG and their issued grade.

All CAGs provided by schools and colleges have been approved by the Head of Centre.

### Am I able to appeal against the GCSE or A level grades that I have been awarded?

Qualifications Wales has published full guidance about the [arrangements for the summer 2020 exam series](#) on their website.

Qualifications Wales has also published guidance if your **results are not as you expected** and the **appeals process**. The Minister for Education issued a statement on 12 August to say that all appeals would be free in Wales and if your AS grade was higher than your A level grade in 2020 then the AS grade will carry through to the A level.

### Is there a complaints process?

Qualifications Wales has published [updated guidance on appeals](#).

Every school must have a [complaints procedure](#) which they must publish.

In normal circumstances a complaint would be addressed to a teacher and escalated to the headteacher and finally the governing body if someone was unhappy with the way the complaint was addressed.

Welsh Government doesn't get involved in individual complaints which are a matter for the school.

### What will happen for learners in year 10?

Year 10 learners who were due to sit exams that would have led to a whole GCSE qualification this summer will be issued a grade following the same process as Year 11 learners. Teacher assessment and other evidence will be used to calculate a Centre Assessment grade. If your standardised grade was higher than your Centre Assessment Grade you will be issued with the standardised grade.

Details can be found in [WJEC's FAQ](#) section .

Year 10 learners who were due to sit units only, that is units that will lead to GCSE results next summer, will not receive estimated results. Qualifications Wales announced on 27th March, that candidates entered for a unit in summer 2020 would not need to re-sit this unit in 2021. However, since this announcement, Qualifications Wales has asked the WJEC to make adaptations to GCSE assessments to mitigate lost teaching and learning time. The extent of these adaptations means that in some unutilised GCSEs, learners will be required to sit a combination of units, not the full qualification, which may include some units for which candidates were entered in summer 2020. Guidance on the full range of adaptations made to GCSEs is available on a secure area of the WJEC website which schools can access.

Qualifications Wales published [Regulatory Requirements](#) for Adapting Assessments to GQ Qualifications in 2021 and in [a letter](#) dated 15th July 2020. This is a fair solution for all learners regardless of whether they were entered in year 10 and it allows centres and learners some choice over which units to sit. Centres have been notified which qualifications this applies to.

This change does not apply to GCSE Science. For all GCSE Science qualifications, candidates' final grades will be based on the remaining units of the qualification, which must be entered in year 11 and not on units which they entered in year 10. However, they may choose to re-sit these units, if they wish, and they will then be given the best of the two results.

### How will AS levels be affected?

This year all AS learners will receive an estimated AS grade and there will be no AS exams until summer 2021. The estimate will be based on a range of evidence, including teacher assessment grades, and will not contribute to A level results in 2021.

In summer 2021, AS learners will have two options for their A level award. They can either choose to only sit the A2 units, with the A level grade awarded solely on their performance in those units, or they can choose to sit AS and A2 units. If they choose to sit the AS units alongside the A2 units they will be awarded the best grade from either route – either the grade awarded from performance on the A2 units alone or the grade awarded from combining both AS and A2 units.

Qualifications Wales have published a more [detailed set of questions and answers about examinations](#).

### How will teachers awarding grades affect external (private) candidates and home educated learners?

Qualifications Wales has published [guidance about how grades will be awarded](#). This guidance also provides advice about the approach that will be taken for private candidates such as those being home schooled. Where an exam centre, normally a school or college, is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of the learners' achievement to make an objective judgment, then the learner will be provided a centre assessment grade.

To enable more private candidates to be awarded a grade this summer, Qualifications Wales has enabled the transfer of private candidates to different exam centres, where these centres have more knowledge of the student and their performance – for example this may be their former school if taking a re-sit.

Recognising that there may still be cases where exam centres may not have sufficient knowledge of a candidate to make an objective judgement about their performance, Qualifications Wales has established another route. Under this process, grades will be calculated for those private candidates who have sat some of the qualification in an earlier exam series for example they may have taken GCSE units the previous year. A similar method to that used when learners are unable to sit all exams due to illness or other exceptional reasons will be used to do this. Further information is available here [Private Candidate Policy Statement](#).

WJEC have published [guidance for private candidates](#).

### When will learners have the next opportunity to sit exams?

For learners who choose to sit exams they have missed this year, there will be an opportunity to sit core GCSEs in English Language, Mathematics, Mathematics-Numeracy and Welsh Language in November 2020. Other qualifications will be available in January 2021 and as part of the summer 2021 series.

### Why won't AS level grades in summer 2020 count towards A level grades?

On 27 March, following detailed consideration of the options available the Minister for Education was able to outline the approach for learners who were due to sit their AS levels and Year 10 learners who would have taken GCSE unit assessments this summer. Learners who were due to sit their AS exams this year will not be required to take those exams at a later date. Instead they will be treated in a similar way to those taking GCSEs and A levels and will be awarded a calculated grade based on centre assessment data and statistical modelling. Calculated grades will not however contribute to A level results in 2021.

For those continuing with the subject to the A2 level, you will have two options in summer 2021:

Option 1: You can choose to sit both the AS units and the A2 units for the A level. The full A level grade will be calculated on how you do in all these units in the full A level.

Option 2: You can sit just the A2 units and your performance in these will be used to calculate a result for the AS units. The combined marks will then be used to produce the A level grade.

If you choose to follow option 1, WJEC will still check what your grade would have been with option 2. If option 2 gives a higher grade, then you will get the higher grade.

The process for awarding A-level grades is complex and made up of a number of components. Actual marks are needed from each AS unit, to provide UMS (Uniform Mark Scale) marks which can then be combined with the A2 unit (UMS marks, to produce the A level grade. This detail won't be available for calculated grades this summer, and so can't be used in production of the A level grade in summer 2021. This is why, unless you opt to take your AS units alongside your A2 units, for the purposes of determining your A-level award summer 2021, the AS unit marks will be derived from your actual performance in your A2 units. This is a tested and well-established statistical methodology, already used where students miss certain units due to illness.

We are working closely with key stakeholders, including the FE and HE sectors to ensure learners are not disadvantaged.

## Assessments

### Will learners have to sit the Numeracy (Reasoning) paper test this year?

No. The requirements for National Tests and online assessments in Wales during the 2019 to 2020 academic year have been relaxed.

### Will learners be required to take the online personalised assessments in Numeracy (Procedural) and Reading?

The requirement for learners to take the personalised assessments and for schools to provide reports to parents and carers has been relaxed during the current academic year. The assessment site is still available to access reports and for schools to schedule assessments when they next consider it appropriate to do so.

Where learners have completed procedural numeracy assessments this year, schools will have access to feedback on their skills, age-standardised scores and progress reports.

Feedback reports for the reading assessments are also available. However, scores and progress reports will only be available once the majority of learners have taken the reading assessments. Given current circumstances, this is now subject to a delay and we will provide a further update on this when available.

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