

CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

General Qualifications Alternative Awarding Framework

24 March 2021

ofqual

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About this document

This document sets out our regulatory requirements for awarding organisations offering specific general qualifications in 2021 in the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Requirements set out in this document

This document sets out the General Qualifications Alternative Awarding (GQAA) Conditions.

It also sets out our requirements in relation to the determination of results for GQ Qualifications – awarding organisations must comply with those requirements under Condition GQAA3.(2)(a)(i).

These conditions come into effect at 13:00 on 24 March 2021 for GQ Qualifications as defined in Condition GQAA1.7:

- advanced extension award qualifications
- project qualifications (at all levels)
- GCE (AS or A level) qualifications
- GCSE qualifications

With respect to all qualifications to which the conditions set out in this document apply, save to the extent set out in those conditions, awarding organisations must also comply with:

- our [General Conditions of Recognition](#), which apply to all awarding organisations and all qualifications, as well as any [Qualification Level Conditions and Subject Level Conditions](#) which apply to specific qualifications
- all relevant [Regulatory Documents](#)

Conditions

Condition GQAA1 Application, and interpretation and definitions

Application

- GQAA1.1 The GQAA Conditions apply –
- (a) to all GQ Qualifications,
 - (b) until such date as is specified in, or determined under, any notice in writing published by Ofqual under this condition.
- GQAA1.2 Any such notice published by Ofqual may –
- (a) be issued in respect of one or more –
 - (i) GQ Qualifications,
 - (ii) GQAA Conditions,
 - (b) be varied or withdrawn by Ofqual at any time prior to the date specified in or determined under it, and
 - (c) contain any transitional and saving provisions that Ofqual considers appropriate.
- GQAA1.3 An awarding organisation must comply with the requirements of any transitional and saving provisions contained in a notice published by Ofqual under Condition GQAA1.2.

Interpretation and definitions

- GQAA1.4 Unless alternative provision has been made in Condition GQAA1.7, the following shall apply to the GQAA Conditions –
- (a) the rules of interpretation and definitions outlined in General Condition J1,
 - (b) the definitions outlined in the Qualification Level Conditions and the Subject Level Conditions.

GQAA1.5 Except in the circumstances described in Condition GQAA1.6, the requirements imposed by the GQAA Conditions apply in addition to the requirements imposed by the General Conditions of Recognition and any relevant Qualification Level Conditions and Subject Level Conditions.

GQAA1.6 To the extent that there is any inconsistency between –

- (a) a requirement of a GQAA Condition, and
- (b) a requirement of a General Condition of Recognition, a Qualification Level Condition or a Subject Level Condition,

such that an awarding organisation could not comply with both such requirements, the awarding organisation must comply with the requirement of the GQAA Condition and is not obliged to comply with the requirement of the other Condition.

GQAA1.7 In these Conditions the following words shall have the meaning given to them below (and cognate expressions should be construed accordingly) –

Qualification Level Conditions

Any Qualification Level Condition that applies to a GQ Qualification.

GQ Qualification

A qualification which is any of the following -

- (a) an advanced extension award qualification,
- (b) a project qualification (at any level),
- (c) a GCE Qualification, or
- (d) a GCSE Qualification.

Private Candidate

A Learner in relation to whom there is no Relevant Centre.

Relevant Centre

In relation to a Learner, a Centre which –

- (a) has purchased the GQ Qualification on behalf of the Learner, and
- (b) materially contributed to the preparation of the Learner for the assessment (whether through teaching or instruction provided by Teachers employed by it or otherwise).

Subject Level Conditions

Any Subject Level Condition that applies to a GQ Qualification.

Condition GQAA2 Assessments under the GQAA Framework

- GQAA2.1 During the time period when this Condition is in force –
- (a) except where provided under Condition GQAA5, an awarding organisation must ensure that no Learner in the UK takes an Assessment by Examination for a GQ Qualification which it makes available,
 - (b) an awarding organisation is not required to Moderate an assessment for a GQ Qualification, and
 - (c) in respect of the following assessments, an awarding organisation is not required to undertake the monitoring usually required under the relevant Subject Level Conditions –
 - (i) A practical skills assessment delivered under Condition GCE(Geology)4.
 - (ii) A practical science assessment delivered under Condition GCE(Science)3.
 - (iii) A spoken language assessment delivered under Condition GCSE(English Language)3.
 - (iv) A spoken language assessment delivered under Condition GCSE(Modern Foreign Language)4.

Condition GQAA3 Results for GQs

- GQAA3.1 An awarding organisation –
- (a) must issue a result to each Learner registered, on or before 18 June 2021, to take a GQ Qualification in 2021 which it makes available, and
 - (b) may issue a result to a Learner who –
 - (i) could reasonably have been expected by the awarding organisation to be registered to take a GQ Qualification in 2021 which it makes available, and
 - (ii) was not so registered.
- GQAA3.2 In respect of each result it issues under Condition GQAA3.1, an awarding organisation must –
- (a) ensure that it determines that result –
 - (i) in compliance with any requirements, and
 - (ii) having regard to any guidance,
which may be published by Ofqual, or otherwise specified to the awarding organisation by Ofqual, and revised from time to time, and
 - (b) take all reasonable steps to issue that result in line with any date or timescale published in respect of that qualification under Condition H6.1(b) which falls within August 2021.
- GQAA3.3 An awarding organisation must –
- (a) provide effective guidance to Centres in relation to the matters specified in the requirements set under Condition GQAA3.2(a)(i),
 - (b) provide that guidance (including in draft where it has not been finalised) to Ofqual upon request, and subsequently have regard to any comments provided by Ofqual on that guidance, and
 - (c) provide clear and effective arrangements through which the Centre can liaise with the awarding organisation if it encounters difficulties in relation to those matters.

Quality assurance

- GQAA3.4 An awarding organisation must not issue any result under Condition GQAA3.1 –
- (d) in respect of a Learner for whom it has not received a declaration from the head of Centre which meets the requirements published by Ofqual under Condition GQAA3.2(a)(i), or
 - (e) where quality assurance undertaken in line with the requirements set out under Condition GQAA3.2(a)(i) has identified issues in relation to that result that remain to be resolved to the awarding organisation's satisfaction.

Confidentiality of information provided by Centres

- GQAA3.5 An awarding organisation must take reasonable steps to ensure that, prior to its issue of results under Condition GQAA3.1, the proposed result provided to it by Centres under the requirements set under Condition GQAA3.2(a)(i) is kept confidential (including by Teachers and Centres).

Condition GQAA4 Appeals

- GQAA4.1 In respect of each result that it issues under Condition GQAA3.1, an awarding organisation must –
- (a) take all reasonable steps to ensure that a Centre has in place effective arrangements for its Learners (including Private Candidates where relevant) to request a review of that result on the basis that the Centre –
 - (i) did not follow its procedure properly and consistently in arriving at that result (including any failure of quality assurance), and/or
 - (ii) made an administrative error in relation to the result, and
 - (b) establish, maintain and comply with an appeals process which provides for an appeal to the awarding organisation, following the conclusion of a review by the Centre, on the basis that –
 - (i) the Centre did not follow its procedure properly and consistently in arriving at the Learner's result (including any failure of quality assurance) or in conducting its review,
 - (ii) the result reflects an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement on the part of the Centre, and/or
 - (iii) the awarding organisation made an administrative error in relation to the result.
- GQAA4.2 An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Centre –
- (a) makes Learners aware of the arrangements it has in place prior to the issue of results under Condition GQAA4.1(a), and
 - (b) provides Learners with a statement of the arrangements promptly when requested.
- GQAA4.3 For the purposes of Conditions GQAA4.1(a)(ii) and GQAA4.1(b)(iii), an 'administrative error' –
- (a) includes incorrect data entry or substituting one Learner's result for that of another Learner, and
 - (b) does not include any exercise of academic judgement by the Centre.

- GQAA4.4 Where a Centre considers that a Learner's result should be changed following a review under Condition GQAA4.1(a) –
- (a) the Centre must submit its proposed revised result to the awarding organisation together with its reasons for the change, and
 - (b) the awarding organisation must consider the reasons provided by the Centre for its proposed change and either –
 - (i) confirm that no change will be made to the Learner's original result, or
 - (ii) issue a revised result (which may or may not be in line with the Centre's proposal) where it considers it appropriate under Condition GQAA4.10.
- GQAA4.5 Where an awarding organisation finds that a Learner's result should be changed following an appeal under Condition GQAA4.1(b) it –
- (a) must provide its reasons for that decision to the Centre, and
 - (b) may seek the views of the Centre as to the appropriate revised result, and
 - (c) must issue a revised result (which may or may not be in line with the Centre's views) where it considers it appropriate under Condition GQAA4.10.
- GQAA4.6 The appeals process which an awarding organisation has established under Condition GQAA4.1(b) must –
- (a) provide that any request for an appeal in respect of a Learner is made –
 - (i) on the Learner's behalf by the Centre that carried out the relevant review under Condition GQAA4.1(a), and
 - (ii) with the consent of the Learner, and
 - (b) take all reasonable steps to ensure that a Centre that has carried out a review under Condition GQAA4.1(a) requests an appeal under Condition GQAA4.1(b) on behalf of any Learner that wishes to do so.
- GQAA4.7 That appeals process may –
- (a) provide that the awarding organisation shall only conduct an appeal on payment of a fee,

- (b) specify other reasonable requirements for the making of a request for an appeal, and
 - (c) specify a time period during which an appeal must be requested.
- GQAA4.8 Where that appeal process specifies a time period during which an appeal must be requested, the time period must –
- (a) be reasonable, and
 - (d) comply with any requirements which may be published by Ofqual and revised from time to time.
- GQAA4.9 That appeals under Condition GQAA4.1(b) process must provide for –
- (a) all appeal decisions to be taken by persons who have appropriate competence and who have no personal interest in the decision being appealed, and
 - (e) the awarding organisation to report the outcome of an appeal to the Centre that requested the appeal on the Learner's behalf, detailing the reasons for that outcome.
- GQAA4.10 Where an awarding organisation discovers through the review and appeals processes established under this condition that any result which it has issued is incorrect it must –
- (a) consider whether it is appropriate to correct that result, having regard to the guidance issued by Ofqual under Condition H6.3(b)(i), and
 - (f) correct that result where it considers it appropriate to do so.
- GQAA4.11 An awarding organisation must publish guidance on the review and appeal processes established under this condition, including on –
- (a) Learners' rights to reviews and appeals, including the grounds on which they may be brought as set out in Condition GQAA4.1,
 - (g) Centres' responsibilities for carrying out reviews and supporting appeals,
 - (h) the evidence that will be considered by the awarding organisation in an appeal, and
 - (i) the risk that, a Learner's result may be decreased following a review or an appeal.

GQAA4.12 Condition I1 does not apply to an advanced extension award qualification.

Condition GQAA5 Additional assessment opportunity 2021

[This is a placeholder for potential conditions to allow an autumn series]

Requirements in relation to the determination of results

Condition GQAA3.2(a) allows us to specify requirements and guidance in relation to the determination of results to be issued for GQ Qualifications under the GQAA Framework.

We set out our requirements for the purposes of Condition GQAA3.2(a)(i) below.

Introduction

Except in relation to any GQ Qualifications taken outside the UK where assessments are delivered and marked as normal, results for GQ Qualifications issued under the GQAA Framework must be determined by awarding organisations on the basis of judgements by Centres in respect of their Learners.

An awarding organisation must determine those results for a GQ Qualification which it makes available in line with the requirements set out below.

Where the assessments for a GQ Qualification that it makes available taken outside the UK are delivered and marked as normal, an awarding organisation must determine results as it would in any other year in line with the relevant General Conditions, Qualification Level Conditions and Subject Level Conditions.

The remainder of these requirements do not apply to such qualifications taken outside the UK.

Teacher Assessed Grades

An awarding organisation must request a Centre to provide a specified level of attainment in respect of each Learner at the Centre, or Private Candidate working with the Centre, to whom the awarding organisation is required to issue a result under Condition GQAA3.1 (the 'Teacher Assessed Grade').

Where relevant, the Teacher Assessed Grade should include a separate result for each Learner, alongside the main grade, reflecting a result for –

- (a) practical science skills usually provided under Condition GCE(Science)4.1(b),
- (b) practical skills provided in 2021 under Condition GCE(Geology)6.1(b),
- (c) spoken language skills usually provided under Condition GCSE(English Language)4.1(b), and
- (d) spoken languages skills provided in 2021 under Condition GCSE(Modern Foreign Languages)7.1(b).

An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Teacher Assessed Grade for a Learner is based on only the subject content which that Learner has been taught.

An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that in generating Teacher Assessed Grades its Centres have regard to the Ofqual documents –

- (a) '[Information for heads of centre, heads of department and teachers on the submission of teacher assessed grades: summer 2021](#)' (the 'Centre Guidance'), and
- (b) '[Information for centres about making objective judgements](#)'.

An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that before determining a Learner's Teacher Assessed Grade, the Centre discusses with the Learner the evidence to be used by the Centre to determine that grade.

As part of the guidance provided under Condition GQAA3.3(a), an awarding organisation must provide guidance for Centres on deciding Teacher Assessed Grades in order to supplement Ofqual's Centre Guidance.

Art and design

In respect of a GQ Qualification in Art and Design which it makes available, an awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the only evidence used to arrive at the Teacher Assessed Grade for a Learner is that Learner's portfolio, whether or not that portfolio has been completed at the time that the Centre's judgement is made.

Additional assessment materials

In order to assist Centres make their judgements, an awarding organisation must provide a suite of assessment materials that Centres may choose to use ('Additional Assessment Materials').

Additional Assessment Materials must include –

- (a) questions and tasks,
- (b) mark schemes,
- (c) information and guidance for Teachers about content coverage, topic selection and marking, and
- (d) where appropriate, attainment data and exemplar materials.

Where appropriate, the questions and tasks provided in Additional Assessment Materials must be questions and tasks set in previous assessments for the GQ Qualification.

Where a Centre chooses to use Additional Assessment Materials, an awarding organisation must not specify when they are used or impose conditions under which any assessment taken using them is undertaken. However, an awarding organisation should encourage a Centre using Additional Assessment Materials to deliver any assessment based on them on the same day to all of its Learners taking the relevant GQ Qualification where the same questions or tasks are used.

An awarding organisation must –

- (a) make its Additional Assessment Materials available to Centres by 16 April 2021, and
- (b) unless precluded by law, publish the questions and tasks that form part of its Additional Assessment Materials in a publicly accessible form by 23 April 2021.

As part of the guidance provided under Condition GQAA3.3(a), an awarding organisation must provide guidance for Centres on using Additional Assessment Materials.

Internal quality assurance by Centres

An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that a Centre has in place, and complies with, effective arrangements to quality assure the judgements that it makes in relation to its Teacher Assessed Grades before submitting them to the awarding organisation.

An awarding organisation must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the arrangements that a Centre has in place in relation to internal quality assurance includes –

- (a) a set policy on its approach to making judgements in relation to each Teacher Assessed Grade, including how Additional Assessment Materials and any other evidence will be used,
- (b) internal arrangements to standardise the judgements made in respect of the Centre's Learners and a process for internal sign-off of each Teacher Assessed Grade,
- (c) a high-level cross-check of the Teacher Assessed Grades against results for previous cohorts at the Centre who took assessments for the same qualification in previous years to provide an indication that Teacher Assessed Grades overall are not overly lenient or harsh by comparison with those results from previous years,
- (d) specific support for newly qualified Teachers and Teachers less familiar with assessment, and
- (e) a declaration by the head of Centre.

An awarding organisation must ensure that the Head of Centre declaration contains the points specified in Ofqual's Centre Guidance. An awarding organisation may add further points to the Head of Centre declaration.

An awarding organisation should also take all reasonable steps to ensure that a Centre's arrangements for internal quality assurance allow any relevant actions to take place remotely.

Awarding organisations must take all reasonable steps to work together to ensure that the requirements they place on Centres in relation to internal quality assurance are consistent

As part of the guidance provided under Condition GQAA3.3(a), an awarding organisation must provide guidance for Centres on internal quality assurance.

External quality assurance by awarding organisations

An awarding organisation must ensure that it has in place, and complies with, effective arrangements that allow it to undertake quality assurance of Teacher Assessed Grades.

An awarding organisation must ensure that those arrangements include provision for

–

(a) as far as reasonably practicable, the awarding organisation to check the internal quality assurance arrangements of every Centre that will submit grades to it under the GQAA Framework before those grades are submitted, and

(b) more detailed checks in relation to –

(i) Centres selected from different types of Centre, and

(ii) Centres selected on the basis of set criteria, which may include new Centres, Centres where Teacher Assessed Grades appear to be substantially out of line with results in previous years (for example, Centres where Teacher Assessed Grades appear to be implausibly high or low), Centres with unexpected entry patterns, Centres where the internal quality assurance check highlighted concerns, Centres in relation to which the awarding organisation has received relevant complaints or information from whistleblowers, and Centres that have submitted Teacher Assessment Grades after the deadline set by the awarding organisation.

The more detailed checks referred to in (b) must include sampling, at GQ Qualification level, of the evidence on which Teacher Assessed Grades are based.

Under Condition GQAA3.4(b), an awarding organisation must not issue a result where any issues identified as part of its quality assurance have not been resolved to the awarding organisation's satisfaction.

Awarding organisations must take all reasonable steps to work together to ensure that their approaches to external quality assurance are consistent.



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