

GCSE, GCSE in vocational subjects,
GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA

Code of practice 2004/5

2004



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Introduction

The public has a legitimate interest in the continuing availability of high-quality qualifications that are fit for purpose, command public confidence and are understood, both by those who take them and those who use them. That interest extends to the proper maintenance of consistent standards across awarding bodies and over time. To that end new statutory arrangements came into effect in 1997 to regulate external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Following extensive consultation with key partners, the three regulatory authorities, the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC), the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)¹ published in September 2000 the Arrangements for the statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Arrangements were revised and published in 2004 as *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. This document sets out the overarching criteria for the accreditation of qualifications into the national qualifications framework. It also specifies the processes and procedures required to ensure high quality, consistency and rigorous standards in assessment and awarding across all qualifications within the framework and over time.

The GCSE, GCSE in vocational subjects, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA code of practice is designed to promote quality, consistency, accuracy and fairness in assessment and awarding and reflects changes in government policy in relation to these qualifications. The code will help to ensure that standards are maintained in each subject, across awarding bodies and different specifications from year to year. The code provides a basis for high standards in all aspects of the examining process and therefore makes an important contribution to upholding public confidence in these qualifications. To this end the GCSE, GCSE in vocational subjects, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA code of practice sets out:

- agreed principles and practice for the assessment and quality assurance of GCSE, GCSE in vocational subjects, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA qualifications;
- the responsibilities of awarding bodies, centres and regulatory authorities for the provision and administration of assessment;
- the basis upon which the regulatory authorities will systematically monitor the performance of awarding bodies in maintaining the quality and standards across the accredited qualifications they offer.

This code applies to the following qualifications:

- GCSE;
- GCSE in vocational subjects;

¹ Hereafter referred to as the regulatory authorities.

- GCE Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced level (including Advanced Extension Awards);
- VCE Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced (including double award);
- GNVQ specifications accredited for first teaching from September 2000;
- Free Standing Mathematics Qualifications (FSMQ).

Awarding bodies have agreed to implement this code of practice in full. It will be reviewed regularly by the regulatory authorities in light of evidence from its operational use.

Section 1: Responsibilities of awarding bodies and awarding body personnel

Awarding bodies' governing councils

1. The awarding body's governing council is responsible for setting in place appropriate procedures to ensure that standards are maintained in each subject examined from year to year (including ensuring standards between GCE and VCE qualifications in similar subjects and between GCSE and GCSE in vocational subjects are aligned), across different specifications within a qualification, and with other awarding bodies. It should act upon feedback from previous awards including recommendations from relevant monitoring and other reports. The procedures must ensure that any necessary action is taken to maintain parity of standards with other awarding bodies offering similar qualifications. This action includes exchanging appropriate information with the other awarding bodies and the regulatory authorities soon after awarding meetings and before the publication of results. It also includes giving the regulatory authorities access to inter-awarding body comparability studies and providing raw data and final reports to an agreed timescale.
2. The responsibilities of the governing council, as discharged through its staff and fee-earning personnel, are described below. The functions described should be fulfilled for each qualification specification. One person may discharge more than one role provided that the role does not produce a conflict of interest, such as that between the roles of reviser and scrutineer. However, for each specification, regardless of the size of its entry, the following separate roles should be identified and fulfilled: awarding body officer (as distinct from any examining personnel who are treated as direct employees of the awarding body), chief examiner and reviser. The awarding body should provide appropriate training and support to ensure that its personnel can carry out the functions set out in this code of practice. The awarding body should monitor and evaluate this provision to make sure that it is effective and remains fit for purpose.
3. Where additional tiers of personnel are needed to cope with the numbers of candidates involved in a particular specification, one person must have overall responsibility.
4. The governing council must ensure that regulatory authority representatives are provided with all the information they require, and are given access to such meetings and staff as the regulatory authorities deem necessary for them to carry out their duties. The governing council should work in co-operation with regulatory authority representatives to ensure, as far as possible, that schedules are arranged to facilitate their work.

5. The awarding body will appoint a single named person accountable directly to its governing council for ensuring the quality and standards of its qualifications (the accountable officer). In doing so, the awarding body guarantees to the regulatory authorities that it ensures:
 - i. all necessary action will be taken to maintain parity of standards in each subject and qualification from year to year, across different specifications, and with other awarding bodies;
 - ii. compliance with the requirements of this code of practice and *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and other relevant regulations;
 - iii. effective means for the consideration of the recommendations of the chairs of examiners;
 - iv. the awarding body's participation in comparability and monitoring activities, and that such changes as this work shows to be necessary are made.

Awarding body officers

6. Awarding body officers manage all stages of the examining process to ensure that:
 - i. they are carried out in accordance with this code of practice and with the awarding body's policies and procedures;
 - ii. fee-earning personnel and committees are provided with all necessary administrative, subject specialist and technical support;
 - iii. awarding body senior management, including the accountable officer, are alerted to issues or concerns that arise during the process.

Chair of Examiners

7. A chair of examiners² is responsible to the awarding body for maintaining standards across different specifications in a subject within a qualification, and from year to year. The chair of examiners must:
 - i. chair the question paper evaluation committee meetings, where possible, for every specification in the subject in that particular qualification type;
 - ii. monitor the standards of chief examiners and advise on their appointment, training and re-appointment;
 - iii. chair the awarding meeting(s) and recommend grade boundaries for each specification to the awarding body;

² An assistant chair of examiners can be appointed, subject to the approval of the regulatory authorities, where the awarding body considers this to be appropriate. When this option is taken, it is the responsibility of the awarding body to ensure that arrangements are made for coordinating the work of assistant chairs of examiners. The chair of examiners will remain the single point of accountability.

- iv. submit, as directed by the awarding body, an overall evaluation report on the internal and external assessment for the qualification.

Chief Examiner

8. The chief examiner³ for a specification is responsible to the chair of examiners for ensuring that the examination as a whole – including both internal and external assessment – meets the requirements of the specification and maintains standards year on year. The chief examiner must:
 - i. act as principal examiner or principal moderator for at least one component;
 - ii. supervise the construction of question papers⁴ and mark schemes and, where appropriate, the criteria for internal assessment, to ensure appropriate standards;
 - iii. ensure that the external assessments, as a whole, cover the assessment criteria, as set out in the specification, and satisfactorily sample the appropriate content;
 - iv. ensure that, over a reasonable number of years, the examination as a whole will address all the specification content;
 - v. seek to ensure parity across alternative components and options in terms of the demands made on candidates;
 - vi. monitor the standards of principal examiners and principal moderators and advise on their appointment, training and re-appointment;
 - vii. submit, as directed by the awarding body, an evaluation report on the examination in that specification.

Principal Examiner

9. The principal examiner is responsible for the setting of the question paper/task and the standardising of its marking. The principal examiner must:
 - i. set the questions and mark schemes for the question paper or approve those set by other examiners;
 - ii. seek to ensure parity of standards across optional questions in the paper and assist the chief examiner in ensuring parity of standards across optional papers;

³ Assistant chief examiners can be appointed, subject to the approval of the regulatory authorities, where the awarding body considers this to be appropriate. When this option is taken it is the responsibility of the awarding body to ensure that arrangements are made for coordinating the work of the assistant chief examiners. The chief examiner will remain the single point of accountability.

⁴ The term 'question papers' applies to all externally assessed components including tasks and awarding body set assignments.

- iii. monitor the standards of marking of all the examiners for the paper, including any assistant principal examiners and team leaders, and take appropriate steps to ensure accuracy and consistency;
- iv. advise on the appointment, training, and re-appointment of assistant principal examiners, team leaders and assistant examiners for the question papers;
- v. advise the awarding committee on how the question paper functioned, and recommend preliminary mark ranges for the judgmental grade boundaries for the question paper;
- vi. submit to the chief examiner an evaluation report on the performance of the question paper/task.

Reviser

10. The reviser is required to:

- i. provide written comments on early drafts of question papers/tasks and provisional mark schemes;
- ii. work through question papers, where appropriate.

The awarding body may appoint more than one reviser for each examination.

Scrutineer

11. The scrutineer is responsible for:

- i. checking the final drafts of all question papers/tasks without reference to the mark schemes to ensure that the questions can be answered in the time allowed and that there are no errors or omissions;
- ii. working through question papers, where appropriate;
- iii. checking the mark scheme to ensure that the marks given are identical to those on the question paper;
- iv. preparing a report for the awarding body officer.

Assistant examiners

12. Assistant examiners are responsible for marking candidates' work in accordance with the agreed mark scheme and marking procedures.

Principal moderator

13. The principal moderator for each internally assessed unit/component is responsible to the chief examiner for ensuring that the standards of the unit/component are maintained and are consistent with the unit specification and assessment criteria. The principal moderator must:
- i. compile exemplar work, annotated to show how the assessment criteria are to be applied;
 - ii. ensure that moderators meet the standardisation requirements and take action if any moderator fails to maintain the required standard;
 - iii. ensure that all moderators correctly interpret and apply the assessment criteria and that they are using the same criteria as the awarding body provides for the internal assessors;
 - iv. monitor the standards of assistant principal moderators, team leaders and assistant moderators, and advise on their appointment, training and re-appointment;
 - v. ensure that appropriate preparatory, follow-up and remedial work with centres is carried out;
 - vi. advise the awarding committee on how the component functioned and, where appropriate, recommend preliminary mark ranges for the judgmental grade boundaries;
 - vii. submit to the chief examiner an evaluation report on issues relating to the performance of the component.

Assistant moderators

14. Assistant moderators are responsible for moderating centres' assessment of candidates' work in accordance with the agreed assessment criteria and the awarding body's procedures.

Assistant principal examiners, assistant principal moderators and team leaders

15. Assistant principal examiners, assistant principal moderators and team leaders must be appointed where required by the size of entry. Assistant principals are responsible for a group of team leaders where the span of control would otherwise be too great for the principal examiners or principal moderators. Team leaders supervise a team of assistant examiners or assistant moderators. They must act as mentors for new appointees, check and guide the work of members of their team, and advise on the need for adjustments to assistant examiners' marks or assistant moderators' recommendations.

Maintaining an archive

16. While a specification remains in use, the awarding body must maintain a full archive containing marked scripts at each key grade boundary covering both series for at least the last five series. In addition, the awarding body must retain equivalent evidence from the first examination of the specification, to guide the work of examiners and awarders.
17. The awarding body must also supply material in accordance with the requirements of the National Archive.

Section 2: Awarding bodies' relationships with centres

Administrative demands and confidentiality

18. The awarding body's demands on centres must be the minimum necessary to support professional competence and maintain the integrity of the examination. Awarding bodies must agree collectively – and comply individually – with common administrative and other practices in areas specified by the regulatory authorities to an agreed timetable and standard.
19. The awarding body must produce and distribute clear statements of administrative procedures and products that impact on centres.
20. The awarding body must take precautions to ensure the confidentiality of examinations. These precautions must ensure that scripts from externally assessed components and copies of them are seen by no one other than awarding body staff and fee-earning personnel, representatives of the regulatory authorities and authorised staff at the candidate's centre until the closing date for enquiries about results.⁵

Responsibilities of centres

21. The awarding body must require centres offering its examinations to commit themselves to ensuring that:
 - i. they meet the administrative requirements of the awarding body;
 - ii. they comply with regulations concerning the security and confidentiality of external assessments;
 - iii. they conduct external assessments in accordance with the standards and procedures specified by the awarding body for the qualification;
 - iv. internal assessments are conducted by staff who have the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills in the area being assessed;
 - v. assessment evidence provided by candidates has been produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the specification;
 - vi. they secure the consistency of internal assessment through internal standardisation where more than one assessor is involved;

⁵ This does not exclude candidates' rights to access to script arrangements as detailed in section 10 of this document.

- vii. they avail themselves of the training and guidance offered by the awarding body that is needed to ensure understanding of the expectations of the specification, including attendance at any compulsory training sessions for internal assessors;
- viii. they retain candidates' assessment evidence under secure conditions to allow for the possibility of enquiries about results or appeals. If the nature of the work makes retention of portfolios or artefacts a problem, internal assessors must keep sufficient evidence (documentary, photographic, audio-taped or video-taped, as appropriate) to support their judgements;
- ix. published appeals procedures relating to internal assessment decisions are made widely available and accessible to all candidates;
- x. they meet requests from the awarding body for information for the purpose of moderation and monitoring;
- xi. they comply with the procedures of the awarding body for dealing with and, as appropriate, reporting malpractice.

Reporting results

- 22. The awarding body must report results on a consistent basis applicable to all specifications within a qualification. Information about results must be presented in a clear and readily understood manner. Candidates, centres and other recipients of information about results must receive such information in a standard format.
- 23. The outcomes of the assessment of individual units must be reported.

Feedback to centres

- 24. The awarding body must provide a mechanism for receiving and responding to comments from centres and others about their examinations, and for providing information about the performance of candidates where appropriate. Where an awarding body offers examinations through the medium of Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge), the awarding body should have a published policy about communicating bilingually with the centres involved, which is included in their customer service statement. In the case of Welsh, the statement should have due regard to the principle that in Wales, both Welsh and English will be treated on the basis of equality, insofar as it is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable.
- 25. The awarding body will take steps to help ensure that centres carry out their procedures correctly and that instructions given to centres have been followed.

Support and guidance

This section of the code should be read in conjunction with section 5 'Standardisation of marking and moderation: internal assessment'.

26. The awarding body must ensure that centres have access to regular advice and guidance on the teaching and assessment of qualifications that are covered by this code of practice, supported by meetings as appropriate.
27. The awarding body must provide appropriate support and guidance for teachers and internal assessors when a specification involving new techniques and approaches is introduced. This must take the form of written guidance, supported by meetings as appropriate.
28. The awarding body must provide opportunities – normally in the form of meetings – where teachers and internal assessors can discuss relevant qualifications issues, particularly in the case of new specifications where difficulties may arise across centres.
29. The awarding body must provide further guidance to centres that fail to meet the requirements for internal assessment and attendance at training sessions.

Section 3: Preparation of external assessments including provisional mark schemes

This section should be read in conjunction with the appropriate appendix.

Division of responsibilities

30. The awarding body personnel involved in setting question papers/tasks and mark schemes include the chair of examiners, chief examiner, principal examiner(s), scrutineer, reviser, and awarding body officer(s). Their responsibilities are described in section 1.
31. The chief examiner and principal examiner(s) are responsible for:
 - demonstrating how the specification's content and assessment criteria and objectives have been met in the question paper or task. This may take the form of a grid;
 - ensuring that the manner in which the content is tested in questions is clear and fit for purpose;
 - ensuring that, where candidates can choose between questions, it can be demonstrated that any permitted combination of questions provides for the coverage of a similar balance of content and assessment criteria;
 - taking account of feedback from previous assessment sessions, including recommendations from relevant monitoring reports;
 - ensuring final draft question papers meet the specification content and assessment objectives.

The timetable for drafting the question papers and provisional mark schemes must allow for all the above.

Preparing external assessments including provisional mark schemes

32. Question papers/tasks and provisional mark schemes must be produced at the same time. Awarding bodies must make sure that they have contingency plans in place that allow them to react swiftly in the event of question paper security being breached before an examination.

Assessment of written communication

33. Where the scheme of assessment requires candidates to produce extended written material in English, Irish or Welsh, the marks awarded will take into account the quality of written communication as defined by the appropriate qualification type criteria.

Revising the question papers and provisional mark schemes

34. The reviser(s) must:
- i. scrutinise the initial draft question papers/tasks and mark schemes;
 - ii. check that the nature and range of responses required by the mark scheme are appropriate;
 - iii. comment on individual questions and responses and the draft question paper(s) as a whole.

Account should be taken of feedback from previous examination sessions, including recommendations from relevant monitoring reports where these are available.

35. The initial draft question papers and mark schemes must be amended in the light of the comments and forwarded, together with the original comments of the reviser(s), to the awarding body officer for consideration by the question paper evaluation committee.

Evaluating external assessments and mark schemes

36. A committee, normally chaired by the chair of examiners, must be convened to evaluate the question papers/tasks. The chief examiner and the principal examiner responsible for the particular units/components must attend. In addition, the question paper evaluation committee should include the reviser(s) and may also include members of the subject committee who have recent and relevant teaching or examining experience. Where there is more than one specification in a subject within a particular qualification, membership of the committee should overlap (chair of examiners and at least one other member). Where the question paper/task is to be offered through the medium of Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge), at least one member of the committee should normally have the necessary expertise to advise on Welsh/Irish (Gaeilge) medium issues.
37. The committee must be serviced by an awarding body officer, who will provide administrative and technical support and guidance, and ensure that awarding body policies are observed.
38. When the draft questions/tasks and provisional mark schemes are submitted to the committee, they must be accompanied by the reviser's comments and details indicating where the content and assessment criteria for the specification have been met in the questions/tasks.

39. The committee will seek to ensure that the challenge and level of demand of the question papers and mark schemes are maintained year on year, referring, as appropriate, to previous years' question papers/tasks and mark schemes where these exist. For reasons of confidentiality the committee should not expect to have sight of question papers/tasks from the previous year where these have not been taken.
40. Where there is more than one specification in a subject within a particular qualification type, the chair of examiners must seek to ensure that the question papers set for the different specifications make comparable demands on candidates.
41. The committee will ensure that the question papers/tasks and provisional mark schemes meet the requirements of the assessment criteria as set out in the specification, and are of consistently high quality. As part of this work, the committee must ensure where appropriate that:

Rubrics

- i. are presented in a standard format and printed in a consistent style that readily distinguishes them from questions;
- ii. are written so that candidates can distinguish between advice, instructions and information;
- iii. indicate where candidates are expected to produce extended written material, and marking will take into account their quality of written communication;
- iv. detail any resources required, eg dictionaries, maps or calculators;

Questions/Tasks

- v. are within the specification;
- vi. can be answered in the time allowed;
- vii. use language which is clear, precise and intelligible to candidates;
- viii. use source material which does not cause offence because of inappropriate subject matter or language;
- ix. are not identical in successive years or examinations except for some VCE/GNVQ set assignments where the vocational context must not be identical in successive examinations;

Question papers or tasks

- x. show mark allocations;
- xi. do not, as far as is practicable, advantage or disadvantage particular groups of candidates on grounds other than competence in the subject;
- xii. make comparable demands on candidates, for alternative routes in the specification;

Mark schemes

- xiii. include general instructions on marking;
- xiv. are clear and designed so that they can be easily and consistently applied;
- xv. allocate marks commensurate with the demands of tasks/questions;
- xvi. include the mark allocation for each question/task and part of a question/sub-task, with a more detailed breakdown where necessary;
- xvii. include marking instructions for those questions where extended written answers are expected and the quality of written communication used by candidates will be assessed;
- xviii. include an indication of the nature and range of responses, appropriate to the subject, likely to be worthy of credit;
- xix. state the acceptable responses to each question/task, or part thereof, with detail which allows marking in a standardised manner;
- xx. allocate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do;

Equipment or materials

- xxi. required for any awarding body-set externally assessed test or task, including practicals, are specified in sufficient detail for the assessment to be carried out properly. The requirements for any such test/task should not make unreasonable demands on centres.

Checking the question papers and provisional mark schemes

- 42. The awarding bodies must ensure they have appropriate arrangements in place to evaluate those question papers and mark schemes which have been extensively rewritten at the original question paper evaluation committee meeting.
- 43. Question papers/tasks and provisional mark schemes will be checked by the scrutineer. This process will include:
 - i. checking the final drafts of the question papers/tasks, without reference to the mark schemes, to ensure that the questions can be answered in the time allowed and that there are no errors or omissions;
 - ii. working through the question papers where appropriate;
 - iii. checking the mark schemes to ensure that the marks given are identical to those on the question papers;
 - iv. preparing a report for the awarding body officer.
- 44. The report will be sent to the chief examiner, who must then approve any necessary changes to the question papers/tasks and provisional mark schemes.

45. The final draft question papers and provisional mark schemes must be submitted for final approval to the chair of examiners or awarding body officer. Where the external assessment is to be offered through the medium of Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge) the final Welsh/Irish (Gaeilge)-medium draft will be checked by a Welsh/Irish medium specialist who will advise the chair of examiners or awarding body officer on its approval.
46. Awarding body officers must alert appropriate senior management if they believe there has been a breach of the awarding body's policy. Senior management must act decisively and promptly to maintain quality and standards.

Section 4: Standardisation of marking: external assessment

This section should be read in conjunction with the appropriate appendix.

Division of responsibilities

47. The awarding body personnel involved in the standardisation of marking include: the chair of examiners, chief examiner, principal examiner, assistant principal examiners, team leaders, assistant examiners and awarding body officer(s). Details of their responsibilities are given in section 1.
48. The principal examiner must be responsible for the professional judgements underpinning the process of standardisation for one or more specified units/components. An awarding body officer must be responsible at all times for supervising and guiding the proceedings and for ensuring that all steps in the process are implemented. There must be a chief examiner responsible for the examination as a whole.

Number of examiners

49. There must be one principal examiner for each unit/component but where candidate numbers are small, the chief examiner may be responsible for all units/components and mark all the work. Under such circumstances the chief examiner should have recourse to a second opinion, as should any examiner who is the sole marker of a unit or component. This will normally be provided by the chair of examiners.
50. In the interests of reliable marking, and the reduction in scope for variability, the awarding body should ensure that marking is undertaken by the minimum possible number of examiners. In arriving at this minimum number, the awarding body must ensure that the number of scripts⁶ allocated to assistant examiners:
 - i. takes account of the nature of the unit/component being assessed and the time required to mark candidate work;
 - ii. takes account of the experience of examiners and, within limits to be specified by the awarding body, the quantity of scripts they are able to manage during the marking period.

⁶ The term 'scripts' applies to the outcome of any externally assessed component including tasks and awarding body set assignments.

Where principal examiners, assistant principal examiners and team leaders are appointed, the number of scripts allocated must take their duties into consideration.

51. Where there are Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge)-medium scripts, the allocation of these scripts to examiners must ensure that standardisation and monitoring of marking can be undertaken, even when the supervising examiner is not able to mark scripts in the medium of Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge). This will normally entail allocating both Welsh/Irish and English-medium scripts to Welsh/Irish medium examiners.
52. Assistant examiners will normally mark scripts from a number of different centres, subject to their total load being manageable. They should not mark work from any centre in which they have a personal interest. In the case of sole examiners where this requirement cannot be applied, arrangements must be made to ensure that the marking is scrutinised.
53. Where the number of examiners required demonstrably exceeds that which a chief examiner or principal examiner could reasonably oversee unaided, a team structure must be established. The number of teams should be kept to the minimum needed to secure reliable and consistent marking. The relationships between, and the functions of, examiners with a responsibility for supervising others should be clearly specified to secure the efficient monitoring and management of marking.

Team membership and training

54. All examiners should have relevant experience in the subject area. The membership of marking teams should normally be balanced in terms of prior marking experience. Where team leaders are appointed, they will normally have examined for at least two years in the same or a related subject. The same requirement applies to principal examiners and the chief examiner, whose responsibilities are detailed in Section 1.
55. First-time examiners must receive appropriate training encompassing all aspects of the examining process relevant to their role before marking scripts. During assistant examiners' first marking period, and on subsequent occasions if necessary, they should be allocated a mentor, normally a team leader, to provide close continuing support throughout the marking period.

First-hand marking

56. Principal examiners and, where appointed, team leaders should mark sufficient scripts at first-hand to gain a feel for the performance of candidates, and to gain direct evidence of the interpretation of questions (by candidates) and the application of the mark scheme.

The standardisation process

57. All examiners must be expected to study and provisionally mark a sufficiently wide range of scripts before attending the standardisation meeting. The awarding body should give guidance on the selection of scripts to ensure that a suitable sample is marked. Special provision must be made for familiarising new assistant examiners with the marking process.
58. All examiners must satisfactorily complete all aspects of the standardisation process relevant to their responsibilities; inability or failure to do so will result in disqualification from marking. Where disqualification occurs, the awarding body must take steps to ensure the integrity of the marking process.

Meeting to secure consistent application of the mark scheme

59. A meeting of all examiners must be held, except where a meeting is not required, for example when there is only one examiner. An awarding body officer will normally be present at the meeting in order to explain the administrative procedures of the awarding body to the examiners.
60. The awarding body must ensure that all examiners have a well-founded and common understanding of the requirements of the mark scheme and can apply them reliably. This is the responsibility of the principal examiner whose professional judgements on the interpretation and application of the mark scheme for the component must be final. Where there are large numbers of examiners divided into teams, the awarding body must ensure that co-ordination of all assistant principal examiners and team leaders takes place to ensure consistency of practice.
61. The process of helping to secure the consistent application of instructions to markers must include:
 - i. an administrative briefing, normally by an awarding body officer, including reference to this section of the code, awarding body procedures, time schedules, administrative documentation and contact points;
 - ii. an explanation by the principal examiner of the nature and significance of the standardisation process;
 - iii. a briefing by the principal examiner on relevant points arising from previous examinations, drawing as necessary on relevant statistical data and points made in chief examiners' reports and regulatory authorities' monitoring reports;
 - iv. discussion of marking issues, including:
 - a full consideration of the mark scheme in the context of achieving a clear and common understanding of the range of acceptable responses and the marks appropriate to them, and comparable marking standards for optional questions;

- the handling of unexpected, yet acceptable, answers;
 - v. the marking of a number of common, clean, photocopied responses sufficient to illustrate the range of performance likely to be demonstrated by the candidates in an assistant examiner's allocation and to help consolidate a common understanding of the mark scheme, including any criteria for the assessment of written communication.
62. Where changes are made to the original mark schemes an awarding body officer must be responsible for providing revised mark schemes which are issued to all examiners during the meeting, or as soon as possible afterwards. The revised mark schemes must be agreed, authorised and signed by the principal examiner. Assistant examiners must not finalise marking until they have received this authorised version. In the case of small-entry tests, even where there is only one examiner, final detailed mark schemes will be prepared.

Initial sampling to ensure consistent application of the mark scheme

63. Immediately after the standardisation meeting of examiners, assistant examiners must mark fully a sample of scripts (which may include the re-marking of those marked provisionally for the standardisation meeting) and forward them to a more senior examiner. The sample will normally:
- i. be not fewer than ten scripts;
 - ii. cover the range of attainment within the allocated scripts;
 - iii. cover as many of the questions as possible on the question paper which allow choice, or as many different types of response as possible.

The awarding body should have defined procedures in place which seek to ensure that principal examiners' marking is consistent.

64. Senior examiners must check the marking of scripts by the assistant examiners for whom they are responsible to ensure that the authorised mark schemes are being accurately and consistently applied. A record must be kept of the marks awarded by each examiner and of the accompanying explanatory comments.
65. Examiners must not proceed to finalise any marking until they have received clearance from the relevant senior examiners. Where senior examiners are not satisfied with the quality of marking, they must explain the reasons to the examiners concerned and require the sample of scripts to be re-marked. A further sample, normally of the same size, should then be sent for checking. Only if marking is then satisfactory should examiners be allowed to proceed. Examiners who do not display sufficient care, accuracy or consistency of professional judgement by this stage must not be allowed to continue marking and their scripts should be re-allocated.

Monitoring and adjusting marks

66. The continuing marking of all examiners must be monitored by the appropriate senior examiner, and if necessary, the appropriate corrective action taken. Sampling must be of sufficient scale, range and frequency for the awarding body to demonstrate that confidence can be placed in the monitoring process. Marks from this sampling process should be recorded by the senior examiner and used to construct a profile of the quality of marking of each examiner in terms of accuracy, consistency and leniency/severity.
67. A review of the entire marking process must be undertaken to decide if any adjustments should be made to the marks of individual examiners. The review must involve the awarding body officer, chief examiner, principal examiners and, where appointed, team leaders. The awarding body officer will be responsible for any changes made to the marks of individual examiners. Where adjustments are made to the marks of examiners who have marked both Welsh/Irish (Gaeilge) and English-medium scripts, the marks for scripts in both languages must be changed.
68. Adjustments to the marks of individual examiners must not be made without reference to:
- i. sufficient scripts marked by the individual examiner to confirm, or refute, any suspected shift in accuracy, consistency and leniency/severity;
 - ii. how the marking of individual examiners compares with that of the relevant senior examiners;
 - iii. appropriate statistical evidence eg raw mark distributions;
 - iv. where possible, the distribution of performance of the same candidates on different papers marked by different examiners.
69. Where required because of examiner inaccuracies, positive or negative adjustments of appropriate size should be made across the relevant range of marks. In order to be fair to candidates, awarding bodies will ensure that adjustments do not change the examiner's rank order unless the examiner has been demonstrably inconsistent.
70. The process of adjustment will be fully documented for subsequent reference if necessary.

Checking marking

71. The processing of the examination will include checks to ensure that all marks have been accurately recorded and transcribed, and that adjustments have been correctly applied and the marks accurately amended. All scripts must be checked for incomplete marking and errors in totalling.

72. The awarding body should monitor and evaluate the performance of examiners and take appropriate action to maintain standards in future examinations.

Supervising externally assessed set assignments

73. The awarding body must specify the conditions under which externally set assignments can be undertaken. The conditions specified must facilitate the supervision and authentication of candidates' work by the centre.
74. The awarding body must require centres to record full details of the nature of any substantial assistance given to individual candidates that is beyond that of the teaching group as a whole, but within the parameters laid down by the specification.
75. The awarding body must require centres to confirm that they have satisfied themselves that the work is that of the candidate and has been carried out within the parameters governing assistance. The centre must present a written declaration that the candidate's assignment was conducted under the required conditions. The awarding body must make centres aware of the likely consequences if excessive assistance outside the parameters of the specification is given.

Retaining evidence

76. The awarding body must ensure that candidates' original scripts are available for reference during the awarding meeting. All scripts must be retained for a sufficient period of time thereafter to allow for the possibility of enquiry about results, or appeals.

Section 5: Standardisation of marking and moderation: internal assessment

This section should be read in conjunction with the appropriate appendix.

Division of responsibilities

77. The awarding body personnel involved in the assessment and moderation of internal assessments include: the chair of examiners, chief examiner, principal moderator, assistant principal moderator, team leaders, assistant moderators and awarding body officer(s). Details of their responsibilities are described in section 1.
78. The awarding body must appoint a principal moderator for each internally assessed unit/component. The principal moderator must have substantial relevant experience of teaching and assessment in the subject area concerned.
79. The awarding body must appoint assistant moderators and, where necessary, assistant principal moderators and team leaders, with relevant teaching and assessment experience. The number of moderators appointed must be sufficient to ensure that standards in a given specification can be aligned effectively within and across centres to the timescale required. Moderators must, wherever possible, consider work from several centres, subject to their total load being manageable, and must not normally moderate the work of candidates from any centre in which they have a personal interest. An awarding body officer must be responsible at all times for supervising and guiding the proceedings, and for ensuring that all steps in the process are implemented.

Instructions, training and guidance for internal assessors

80. The awarding body must provide clear and comprehensive instructions and guidance to internal assessors. Centres and internal assessors must be given comprehensive information and feedback to ensure that they understand and can meet their responsibilities in relation to the requirements of the specification. The awarding body must provide training for internal assessors and teachers in task-setting, marking and internal standardisation where new or significantly revised specifications are introduced and as necessary, thereafter. The awarding body will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the instructions, training and guidance provided for internal assessors, so that they can be continually improved.
81. The awarding body must provide centres with clear administrative instructions, including details of how to record, transcribe and check individual candidates' marks. Guidance must also be given on how to make decisions and record relevant information.

Setting internally assessed tasks

82. The awarding body must set down parameters and guidance for task-setting, and must publish detailed assessment criteria. The parameters must define the scale and nature of tasks that are acceptable; the marking criteria must require the appropriate assessment objectives to be fully addressed.
83. Where the scheme of assessment requires candidates to produce extended written material in English, Irish or Welsh, the marks awarded will take into account the quality of written communication as defined by the appropriate qualification type criteria.
84. Whenever a new or significantly revised specification is introduced that involves new internally assessed tasks, the awarding body must take steps to ensure that the tasks and mark schemes that centres devise are of an appropriate standard and conform to the requirements of the specification.

Supervising internal assessment

85. The awarding body must specify the conditions under which internally assessed work can be undertaken. The specified conditions must facilitate the supervision and authentication of candidates' work by teachers and internal assessors. Where, because of the nature of the subject, the specification requires centre-based candidates to undertake some internally assessed activities outside their school or college, the awarding body must require that sufficient work takes place under direct supervision to allow the internal assessors concerned to authenticate each candidate's work with confidence. The awarding body must ensure that moderators apply awarding body guidelines relating to word limits.
86. The awarding body must specify the degree to which candidates are allowed to re-draft their work prior to it being marked by the internal assessor.

Authentication of candidates' work

87. The awarding body must require internal assessors to record full details of the nature of all assistance given to individual candidates that is beyond that of the teaching group as a whole, but within the parameters laid down by the specification. The awarding body must require internal assessors to take any assistance into account, according to the awarding body's instructions, when assessing candidates' work.
88. The awarding body must require internal assessors to confirm that they have taken steps to satisfy themselves that work produced is solely that of the candidate concerned. This does not preclude normal assistance within the parameters of paragraph 82. The internal assessor must present a written declaration that the candidate's work was conducted under the required conditions as laid down by the specification. Where awarding bodies accept entries from private/external candidates they must ensure that adequate procedures exist for the authentication of internally assessed components.

Assessment and standardisation within centres

89. The awarding body must require internal assessors to show clearly how credit has been assigned in relation to the criteria defined in the specification. Internal assessments must indicate where quality of written communication will be assessed, where this is appropriate. The awarding body must provide guidance on how this is to be done.
90. Where the regulatory authorities have agreed that the nature of the subject requires credit to be allocated for the skills displayed by candidates in redrafting and refining work, the awarding body must ensure that internal assessors are given explicit parameters defining the limits within which they may give feedback to candidates.
91. The awarding body must require centres to standardise assessments across different assessors and teaching groups. This is to ensure that for a particular unit/component all candidates in the centre have been judged against the same standards. The awarding body must specify the necessary procedures, including the use of reference and archive materials where available, and trial marking of common pieces of work. The awarding body must normally provide training in the form of written guidance, supported by meetings as appropriate.
92. The awarding body must provide an opportunity for centres to check they are applying the assessment criteria appropriately.

Moderating assessments submitted by centres

93. To ensure that standards are aligned within and across centres, the awarding body must moderate the marks submitted by each centre against the specified assessment criteria.
94. The awarding body must adjust the marks submitted by centres as necessary to bring each centre's judgements into line with the required standard. The awarding body must take remedial action where there is evidence of standards being applied inconsistently, or of other departures from specification requirements.
95. The awarding body must provide centres with details of the moderation procedures that apply to a specification, amplifying as necessary the account printed in the specification itself. The documentation must confirm the awarding body's right to act as it judges necessary to align standards. In particular, arrangements must be specified for:
 - i. requesting, as necessary, at appropriate stages during and at the end of the course, samples of specific internal assessments and associated assessment criteria to indicate how credit has been assigned;
 - ii. drawing samples of marked, internally standardised candidates' work, to cover the full range of units and to represent adequately the range of attainment in the centre;

- iii. sampling the judgements made by all internal assessors where there is evidence that this is necessary in order to guarantee confidence in the internal assessment process;
 - iv. requesting additional samples or all relevant work from all candidates, if necessary;
 - v. establishing whether a centre's marks require adjustment, determining the nature of any required adjustment and making the necessary changes;
 - vi. giving centres details of and reasons for any significant adjustments made.
96. The awarding body must normally adjust marks from a centre where the difference between moderated and unmoderated marks exceeds the awarding body's specified tolerance limits. Final decisions must be based on full consideration of the sample of candidates' work. Additional samples must be requested if initial samples indicate that required standards are not being applied, but provide insufficient evidence to determine the appropriate remedial action to be taken. To be fair to candidates, awarding bodies should ensure that adjustments do not change the centre's rank order, unless the centre marks are demonstrably inconsistent.
97. Statistical information must be used, where applicable, in order to inform the awarding body's final judgements on marks awarded.

Methods of moderation

98. The awarding body must use one or more moderation methods that are reliable and valid for the subject area concerned. Where an awarding body offers examinations through the medium of Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge), the moderation methods must ensure reliable and valid moderation of Welsh/Irish (Gaeilge)-medium internally assessed work. For specifications in which internal assessment leads to written outcomes, moderators must inspect samples of candidates' written work.
99. For specifications in which a weighting of more than 20 per cent is allocated to assessments from which no written outcome or artefact arises, moderators must either visit centres while assessment is in progress or check audiotaped or videotaped samples of assessed work.
100. For specifications in which a weighting of more than 20 per cent is allocated to the assessment by artefacts, samples of candidates' actual work must be reviewed wherever possible, for example by visit or by post. Where logistical problems mean there is no sensible alternative, the awarding body can agree to moderate on the basis of photographed or videotaped evidence accompanied by internal assessors' notes detailing the basis for their assessment decisions.
101. For specifications in which a weighting of 20 per cent or less is allocated to assessments that lead to no written outcome or artefact, the awarding body must take all steps necessary to promote consistency of standards.

Standardisation of moderators

102. The awarding body must provide training and follow-up guidance for moderators in all relevant aspects of the internal assessment units and the moderation procedures. All moderators must take part in the training.
103. The awarding body must arrange for the standardisation of all moderators, to ensure common understanding of procedures and standards before moderation begins. This is the responsibility of the principal moderator who will ensure that the standards of the unit/component are maintained and are consistent with the specification and assessment criteria. Normally, a meeting will be required. Where the number of moderators is sufficiently large to require the formation of teams, pre-standardisation of all assistant principal moderators and team leaders must take place to ensure consistency of practice. All standardisation must include the consideration of archive material, where appropriate, selected to show candidates' work assessed in relation to the full range of assessment criteria and exemplar material, where available.
104. Principal moderators and, where appointed, assistant principal moderators and team leaders must each undertake some first-hand moderation of centres' assessments in each examination series.
105. The standards applied by each moderator must be checked by a more senior moderator, who repeats the assessment of candidates' work on a specified, representative sample of the moderator's allocation. Where an awarding body offers examinations through the medium of Welsh/Irish (Gaeilge) the allocation of candidate work to each moderator must allow the checking of the work of Welsh/Irish-medium moderators by senior moderators.
106. Samples to be reassessed by the senior moderator must include, wherever possible, some centres for which adjustments are recommended and some for which no adjustments are recommended. A centre for which a comparatively large overall adjustment is proposed should be included. If the senior moderator is not satisfied with the moderator's standards, a further sample of the moderator's allocation must be requested and reassessed.
107. The senior moderator must complete a report for the awarding body on the work of each moderator. Moderators whose standards are judged unsatisfactory may not continue their moderation, and candidates' work from all their centres must be remoderated. Such moderators may not be re-appointed without completing further training satisfactorily.
108. Where candidates' moderated work or evidence of that work cannot, for logistical reasons, be posted or inspected at a meeting, the senior moderator must normally accompany the moderator on at least one visit to a centre (normally a centre specified by the senior moderator or the awarding body) to check the moderator's judgements.

109. Moderators must be provided with clear administrative instructions, including details of how to record, transcribe and check moderated marks. The awarding body must ensure that checks are made on the accuracy with which moderators record and transcribe marks.

Re-using marks

110. Where candidates repeat non-modular qualifications, their moderated coursework marks may be carried forward during the lifetime of the specification.

Dealing with unsatisfactory practice

111. Further guidance must be provided to centres that fail to meet the awarding body's requirements for internal assessment.
112. Where a significant problem occurs - including non-attendance at compulsory training sessions - the awarding body must approve and monitor the centre's arrangements for assessment and standardisation for as long as necessary, informing:
- i. the regulatory authorities;
- and, where it is in the public interest to do so,
- ii. the other awarding bodies.
113. Where a centre fails to attend compulsory training events, the awarding body must take such steps as are necessary to safeguard the interests of candidates in future awards.

Section 6: Awarding, issuing results and marking review

This section should be read in conjunction with the appropriate appendix.

Division of responsibilities

114. The personnel involved in awarding include: chair of examiners, chief examiner(s), principal examiners, principal moderators and awarding body officers. Details of their responsibilities are given in section 1.

Procedures prior to the awarding meeting

115. The chair of examiners, chief examiner(s), principal examiner(s) and principal moderator(s) in a specification must ensure before the awarding meeting that they are fully conversant with the overall standard of work associated with particular grades in previous years or previous examination series. The prime objectives are the maintenance of grade standards over time and across different specifications within a qualification type. Attention should also be paid, where appropriate, to the alignment of standards between GCE and VCE and between GCSE and GCSE in vocational subjects in the same subject area.
116. Question papers/tasks (including internally assessed work), mark schemes and scripts exemplifying grade boundaries for previous awards in each subject or vocational area must be reviewed in the context of relevant statistics. In the case of a new specification, pertinent material from other examinations in the subject or other relevant subjects should be considered.
117. After the marking and moderating period, principal examiners and principal moderators must propose preliminary ranges of marks for each component/unit as a basis for locating key grade boundaries on the basis of judgement. Full details of the key grade boundaries are given in Appendices 2 and 3. All other grade boundaries are determined arithmetically.
118. Preparation must be undertaken prior to the awarding meeting to:
- i. Ensure that appropriate ranges of scripts are available for the awarding meeting;
 - ii. Identify, on the basis of preliminary calculation of outcomes, where problems of consistency and comparability may arise.

The awarding committee

119. For each specification, there must be an awarding committee, chaired by the chair of examiners, which:
- i. checks that the required standards are brought to bear in each component/unit and in the examination as a whole;
 - ii. assists the chair of examiners in arriving at recommended boundary marks for each key grade in the examination.
120. In addition to the chair of examiners, the committee must include the chief examiner(s), principal examiner(s) and principal moderator(s)⁷. In exceptional circumstances where a senior examiner or moderator is unable to attend an awarding meeting, the awarding body officer will ensure that an examiner or moderator of nearest seniority for the specification under consideration attends the meeting. Awarding body officers must advise the committee and direct its procedures. Where necessary, the committee may include others with particular expertise.
121. Where there is more than one specification in the same subject, or where specifications share units or where the same unit is assessed through the medium of English and Welsh/Irish (Gaeilge), there must be a single awarding committee or an overlap of membership (chair of examiners and at least one other member) across the committees responsible.
122. The role of the overlapping member(s) of the committee is, in principle, no different from that of the other members: to bring their professional experience and expertise to bear on the task of recommending grade boundaries. These members are expected, in addition, to consider the consistency of the recommendations in the light of standards applied in other specifications.

The awarding process

123. The process of awarding must be conducted by establishing the range for each key grade boundary, and, subsequently, marks at each grade boundary for each externally and internally assessed unit/component. A record of the preliminary ranges of marks proposed by the principal examiners and principal moderators must be included in the report of the awarding meeting. Where the nature of particular specifications requires modifications to be made to the procedures set out below, arrangements will be agreed between the regulatory authorities and the relevant awarding body.

⁷ The roles of chief examiner, principal examiner and principal moderator may be combined in one person in small-entry specifications.

Setting grade boundaries

124. Awarders must consider candidates' work, selected on the basis of the range for each key grade boundary. These ranges must be based on the preliminary ranges of marks proposed by principal examiners and principal moderators and must also take account of the relevant technical and statistical information. If necessary, marked scripts and internally-assessed material outside the preliminary ranges must be included to ensure that work of the appropriate standard is considered.
125. A provisional boundary must be set separately for each component/unit for each key grade identified in the relevant qualification type appendix at the back of this document. Other arrangements may apply to specifications or options with small entries to avoid distortions caused by a typical mark distributions. Depending on the assessment pattern, it may be appropriate to consider a boundary for more than one component or module/unit before moving on to the next boundary, with the prior agreement of the regulatory authorities.
126. Each boundary must be set using professional judgement. The judgement must reflect the quality of candidates' work, informed by the relevant technical and statistical evidence.
127. The following must be used, as appropriate, to inform the determination of marks at key grade boundaries:
 - i. procedures required by this code of practice and, consistent with the code, by the awarding body concerned. (These may be set out as an agenda for the meeting);
 - ii. copies of question papers/tasks and final mark schemes;
 - iii. reports from the principal examiner(s)/principal moderator(s) on how the question paper functioned;
 - iv. archive scripts and examples of internally-assessed work (including, in appropriate subject areas, photographic or video evidence) at the relevant grade boundaries;
 - v. samples of current candidates' work (marked scripts and/or internally-assessed material) distributed evenly across key boundary ranges for each component, with enough representing each mark to provide a sound basis for judgement so far as the size of entry and nature of work permits. The material should be selected from a sufficient range of centres where work has been marked/moderated by examiners/moderators whose work is known to be reliable;
 - vi. any published performance descriptions, grade descriptions and exemplar material where available;
 - vii. any other supporting material (such as marking guides for components where the evidence is of an ephemeral nature);

- viii. technical information – including mark distributions relating to the question papers/tasks and individual questions for the current and previous series (where available);
 - ix. information on candidates' performance in previous series (where available);
 - x. details of significant changes in entry patterns and choices of options;
 - xi. information on centres' estimated grades for all candidates;
 - xii. information about the relationship between component/unit level data and whole subject performance, where available;
 - xiii. relevant evidence from the regulatory authorities' monitoring and comparability reports.
128. Awarders must first consider candidates' work in the range for each key boundary, ensuring that a sufficient amount of candidates' work is inspected. They must consider each mark in turn, as follows.
- i. First, working down from the top of the range, awarders must identify the lowest mark for which there is consensus that the quality of work is worthy of the higher grade of the boundary pair. This forms the upper limiting mark;
 - ii. Next, working up from the bottom of the range, awarders must identify the highest mark for which there is consensus that the quality of work is not worthy of the higher grade. The mark above this forms the lower limiting mark.
- Awarders must then use their collective professional judgement to recommend a single mark for the grade boundary, which will normally lie within the range including the two limiting marks. This judgement will include consideration of the evidence listed in paragraph 127. Awarders must consider candidates' work at the recommended mark to confirm that this is appropriate and to identify scripts to be archived.
129. The procedures to be adopted for determining boundary marks for internally-assessed components and units depend on whether the boundaries have previously been set, consistent with arrangements agreed between awarding bodies and the regulatory authorities. (For example, the boundary marks for VCE and GNVQ portfolio components are pre-set and; boundary marks for some GCSE common coursework elements are determined by inter-awarding body agreement).
130. When the boundary marks for an internally-assessed component/unit have been pre-set, the grade distribution for the component/unit – together with data on previous distributions and any changes in the entry pattern – must be reported to the awarders.
131. Boundary marks for other internally-assessed components/units must be determined according to the procedures set out in paragraphs 124–128 above.

132. For established specifications in which internal-assessment boundary marks have been stable for two or more examination series and the nature of the associated tasks and marking criteria have not changed, key internal-assessment boundary marks may be carried forward from the previous series. Boundary marks should be carried forward only if this is recommended by the principal moderator after completion of the moderation process, and by the designated awarding body officer in the light of the technical and statistical evidence available.
133. Where there are a number of different routes to a subject grade, including replacement papers where there has been a security breach, the chair of examiners must ensure that the standards of the awards for grades derived from each route are comparable. Where a component/unit is shared between different specifications or options, the same grade boundaries must be used.
134. For all qualifications, awarding committees must consider available aggregate outcomes as part of the awarding process, in the light of evidence about the nature of the candidature. Additional information on aggregation is provided in the relevant qualification type appendix.
135. The chair of examiners' recommendations must be reviewed by the accountable officer to ensure that grades awarded represent continuity and parity of standards across years, over time and across specifications. In this review, the following evidence must be considered:
 - i. reports from the awarding meeting, including the chair of examiners' recommendations;
 - ii. evidence of awarders' professional judgements on the quality of candidates' work within the range considered at the awarding meeting;
 - iii. the most complete technical and statistical evidence available, including that outlined in paragraph 127 and any generated subsequent to the awarding meeting (for example, information from cognate subjects).
136. Should the chair of examiners' recommendations be deemed to need reconsideration by the accountable officer, the chair of examiners must be engaged in this process and consulted before any change is finalised.
137. Where a final boundary mark is proposed that lies outside the range over which candidates' work was considered at the awarding meeting, the awarding committee must be reconvened and the regulatory authorities must be informed.
138. Responsibility for setting the final grade boundary rests with the accountable officer. If the accountable officer selects a final grade boundary that is not supported by the chair of examiners, a full report must be made to the awarding body's governing council. The regulatory authorities must be informed and provided with an evidence-based justification for the proposed decision at least two working days before it is finalised.

139. If they deem it necessary – and within one working day of receipt of such information – the regulatory authorities will inform the accountable officer of any dissatisfaction with the justification and proposed decision, giving their reasons and requiring reconsideration with a further report on the final decision within a further working day.
140. The regulatory authorities reserve the right to advise the awarding body's governing council of any remaining concerns and, further, to make them known publicly.
141. The awarding committee must be advised of the reasons for any changes to the recommended grade boundaries as soon as possible, and in any event before the publication of results.

Marking review

142. The procedures identified in the previous sections are intended to minimise error in the marks awarded. Nevertheless there will, from time to time, be cases where some doubt remains about whether the marks given to a candidate or group of candidates are acceptable. The purpose of the marking review is to ensure that such cases are considered and remedial action taken where necessary.
143. The marking review will consist of a re-marking of scripts marked by examiners about whom there is lingering doubt.⁸ Each externally assessed component will be treated in this manner when it is awarded. Other candidates may be included in the marking review if the awarding body and/or chief/principal examiner considers there to be good reason such as marked discrepancies between estimated grades and provisional grades.
144. After the re-marking by senior examiners of those candidates' work identified as indicated in paragraphs 142 and 143 the revised mark will replace the original mark in every case and the result will be automatically re-calculated.
145. Where an awarding body offers examinations through the medium of Welsh or Irish, the procedures for marking review must allow for the review, as appropriate, of the work of Welsh or Irish medium candidates.

Issue of results

146. The awarding body must issue results for each series of examinations on the agreed date.

⁸ The additional requirements for GCSE, which augment this paragraph, are set out in Appendix 1, paragraphs 5 and 6.

147. The awarding body must ensure that all available work from candidates is marked and/or moderated before results are issued. In the event of any difficulty, the awarding body must notify the regulatory authorities in good time of the nature of the difficulty and the action taken to resolve it. The regulatory authorities may, at their discretion, request progress reports and confirmation of completion from the awarding body's accountable officer.

Section 7: Arrangements for candidates with particular assessment requirements

148. The awarding body must ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment which prevent candidates from effectively demonstrating their attainment. Arrangements for candidates with particular assessment requirements (special arrangements) must also ensure that such candidates are not given, or do not appear to be given, an unfair advantage. Special arrangements are generally not appropriate where the candidate's particular difficulty directly affects performance in the assessment objectives that are the focus of assessment.
149. The awarding body must make special arrangements according to the needs of the individual candidate, reflecting, where practicable, the candidate's usual method of working, the assessment requirements as set out in the specification and any guidelines set down by the regulatory authorities.
150. The awarding body must ensure in making special arrangements that the validity, reliability and integrity of the assessment are preserved and that certificates accurately reflect candidate attainment.

Special arrangements and special consideration

151. Awarding bodies will ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to enable candidates with permanent or temporary disabilities to fulfil the examination requirements. Details of special arrangements will be published by each awarding body.
152. Awarding bodies will also provide a mechanism whereby centres may request that special consideration be given to candidates who, as a result of illness or other adverse circumstances, miss part of an examination or are disadvantaged in an examination unit or component.

Candidates with disabilities (permanent or long-term) and exceptional cases (temporary)

153. Similar arrangements must apply to specified disabilities and to specified subjects. Such arrangements may include the provision of large print or Braille papers, reading to candidates, using a typewriter, dictating to an amanuensis or tape recorder, the modification of questions (excluding any change to technical terms), and additional time (except in those instances where performing a task in limited time is an assessment objective). Comparable arrangements should also exist for those candidates who are deemed to be exceptional cases.

Monitoring and reporting

154. Each awarding body will monitor the way in which the arrangements for candidates with particular assessment requirements work. Data regarding the delegation of additional time will be collected. The following types of data may also be collected:
- i. data that centres provide on notification forms;
 - ii. other data provided by centres, eg requests for special consideration, requests for approval of arrangements not specified in the awarding bodies published arrangements and requests concerning temporary impairment.
155. From these data, awarding bodies will report to the regulatory authorities on the numbers of candidates notified as having particular requirements. The reports will be subdivided into agreed categories.

Section 8: Malpractice

156. The awarding body must have procedures in place for dealing with malpractice on the part of candidates, centre staff or others involved in providing a qualification, and must ensure that all centres, its own staff and the regulatory authorities receive copies of those procedures.
157. The awarding body must require centres to report to it any malpractice suspected after candidates have been registered, making clear any possible implications of a failure to cooperate for the issue of certificates and the future acceptance of entries.
158. The awarding body must report significant cases of malpractice to the regulatory authorities automatically, and report all cases on request. The awarding body must initiate investigations, and cooperate fully with any follow-up investigations required by the regulatory authorities, sharing information with other awarding bodies or with other agencies as necessary.
159. Each awarding body will investigate any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice in either the internally or externally assessed components and must take such action, with respect to the candidates and centres concerned, as is necessary to maintain the integrity of the examination.
160. Each awarding body has the right to impose special conditions on the future involvement of a teacher or internal assessor in the conduct, supervision or administration of its examinations and to refuse to accept examination entries from a centre in cases where malpractice is established. Other awarding bodies will be informed when such special conditions are imposed.
161. The awarding body will investigate each case of alleged malpractice to establish the full facts and circumstances relating to the case and, where appropriate, the candidate's conduct in other assessments. The head of a centre will normally be asked to submit a written report on the case to the awarding body and to provide appropriate supporting documentation.
162. Each case of malpractice will be considered and judged on an individual basis in the light of all information available. The outcome should be commensurate with the gravity of the malpractice as determined by the awarding body.

Section 9: Enquiries about results and appeals

163. Each awarding body must publish its arrangements for the submission of enquiries about results and for appeals against the awarding body's decisions. These arrangements must indicate that all summer enquiries must be received by 20 September and advise of a comparable schedule for any additional series that has been agreed with the regulatory authorities.
164. Each awarding body must publish common arrangements for dealing with enquiries about results and for appeals against their decisions.
165. The services available for enquiries about results must include a clerical check, a post-results review of marking (may also be referred to as a re-mark) and re-moderation of internally assessed components. The post-results review of marking service may be available on a priority basis for individual candidates.
166. The enquiry about results procedure which is carried out on internally assessed work must be identical to the original moderation procedures.
167. Each awarding body must publish common administrative arrangements and deadlines. The awarding body must provide notification of the outcome of any priority enquiry concerning a subject grade within 20 days of receipt. Notification of the outcome of any other paid enquiry concerning a subject grade must normally be provided within 40 calendar days of receipt. All reports relating to paid enquiries must also normally be provided within 40 days.
168. The awarding body must wherever possible ensure that a post-results review of marking is undertaken by someone other than the original examiner.
169. Each awarding body will make a charge for the result enquiry services. The awarding bodies will adopt common principles relating to the refund of fees in instances where candidates' results are raised or lowered following an enquiry or subsequent appeal. In the case of a group enquiry, the awarding body will refund either the total fee or a proportion depending on the outcomes of the enquiry. Information about these principles and their application will be provided to all centres.
170. In cases where the outcome of an enquiry brings into question the accuracy of results for other candidates in the same examination, the awarding body must take whatever steps they consider appropriate to protect the interests of all candidates who may have been similarly affected.

171. In cases where a clerical check or post-results review of marking reveals inaccurate marking, subject grades or unit marks may be confirmed, raised or lowered. The awarding body must ensure that centres confirm to them that candidates whose work is to be clerically checked or the subject of a post-results review of marking have consented to their inclusion in the process. In the case of private candidates the awarding body must ensure that the candidate is advised that their mark may be confirmed, raised or lowered and establish that the candidate consents to this. The awarding body must inform centres that before giving their consent, candidates should be advised that their grades may be confirmed, raised or lowered.
172. In cases where a re-moderation reveals inaccurate moderation, subject grades already awarded can only be confirmed or raised. Marks for modules, units or components may be confirmed, raised or lowered, and these marks will be carried forward to any subsequent, subject grade. It is not necessary to obtain candidates' permission before a centre requests re-moderation.
173. The awarding body must not consider enquiries about results direct from internal candidates or their carers. Enquiries about results must be accepted direct from private candidates.
174. The awarding body must require centres offering its examinations to ensure that they have in place:
- i. a procedure for candidates or their carers to request access to the enquiry and appeals system;
 - ii. a procedure for lodging enquiries about results in cases where the centre supports an enquiry lodged by a candidate or carer;
 - iii. a formal, codified procedure for handling disputes when a candidate or carer disagrees with a decision by the centre not to support an enquiry.

Centres must be required to ensure that the procedures are published, and are made widely available and accessible to all candidates and their carers.

175. In deciding whether to support an enquiry or appeal, centres should take account of all relevant factors and afford candidates or their carers a reasonable opportunity to express their views.
176. Following receipt of the outcome of an enquiry, appellants must be allowed up to two calendar weeks in which to lodge an appeal. Appeals should focus on whether an awarding body:
- i. used procedures which were consistent with this code of practice;
 - ii. applied its procedures properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

177. Appeals must be heard by awarding body appeals panels including at least one independent member (who is not, and has not been, a member of the awarding body's board or committees, or an employee or examiner at that awarding body, at any time during the previous seven years). Each awarding body should advertise for and appoint independent members of appeals panels who match a specification agreed between the regulatory authorities and the Joint Council for General Qualifications. Each awarding body should use arrangements, endorsed by the regulatory authorities, to appoint (for terms up to four years) and train independent panellists to hear appeals. All appointments of independent panellists should be notified to the Joint Council and the regulatory authorities.
178. Where appeals are lodged, awarding bodies must carry out a preliminary appeals process and then – unless the outcome leads the appellant to withdraw the application – conduct a formal appeals hearing and send a decision letter within 10 weeks of the lodging of the original request. In any event, awarding bodies will communicate the outcomes of all appeals on summer examinations by 14 February in the following calendar year and on any additional examinations to a comparable schedule agreed with the regulatory authorities.
179. When the relevant awarding body's enquiries and appeals procedures have been exhausted an appeal may be made to the Examinations Appeals Board, which has been set up to ensure that schools and colleges, and through them candidates and parents, are satisfied that the grades awarded are as fair and accurate as they can be.

Section 10: Access to marked examination scripts

180. A 'script' refers to any candidate's work deriving from an externally assessed component which is primarily written, subject to a list of excluded components agreed by the regulatory authorities. These arrangements do not apply to internally assessed components.

Rights to access

181. Access to externally assessed components must be granted when a request is made to the awarding body either by a centre or by a private candidate. Access will be available by individual component.

182. The awarding body must make clear to centres that all requests to have access to their marked examination scripts from candidates who sat examinations at that centre should be processed and transmitted to the relevant awarding body within the timescales prescribed below. Private candidates must make requests for access to their scripts directly to the awarding body.

183. Awarding bodies must inform centres that it is the centres' responsibility to make candidates aware of the arrangements for access to scripts in advance of the candidates sitting any examination to which the arrangements apply.

Conditions of access

184. Awarding bodies will release scripts to centres on the following conditions:

- i. scripts must be seen only by teachers who are members of staff at that centre or returned directly to the candidates concerned;
- ii. prior written permission must be obtained from any candidates concerned where teachers intend to use their scripts as examples for other students. This permission must only be sought after the candidates have received their results. Candidates who grant their permission have the right to anonymise their scripts before use;
- iii. scripts used by teachers at the centre must be kept securely within the centre. Once no longer required, scripts must be disposed of confidentially. Confidential disposal must not take place earlier than three months after the publication of results or appeal involving those scripts;
- iv. candidates have the right to instruct their centres not to request their scripts for any purposes;

- v. the originals of scripts that are or have been the subject of any malpractice investigation can be withheld by the awarding body concerned. In these circumstances a centre or private candidate may request photocopies of the scripts;
- vi. the awarding body will not carry out any further investigation if a script has been altered in any way.

Supporting enquiries

185. In order to allow consideration of scripts for the sole purpose of deciding whether or not to request a GCE or VCE enquiry about results, centres and private candidates may request advance photocopies of the relevant scripts. A request for such photocopies must be sent to arrive at the awarding body by no later than eight days after the publication of results. The photocopies must be sent by the awarding body so that the centre or private candidate receives them no later than 10 days before the closing date for enquiries about results. Advance photocopies will not be available for candidates' scripts that are to be reconsidered as part of a priority enquiry post-results review of marking.
186. The awarding body must make available on request photocopies of candidates' marked scripts along with the outcome of enquiries about results for both priority and regular enquiries about results.

Supporting teaching and learning

187. Requests for access for other purposes must be received by the awarding body no later than two weeks after the closing date for enquiries about results. In response to these requests, original scripts must be sent by the awarding body so that the centre or private candidate receives them no earlier than the closing date for such enquiries and no later than eight weeks after the closing date for enquiries about results.
188. When a centre or private candidate requests either a photocopied or an original marked script, awarding bodies must also make available copies of the mark scheme for the relevant component.

Further responsibilities of awarding bodies

189. Awarding bodies must continue to mark and annotate all scripts in accordance with good practice recognised by the regulatory authorities.
190. Awarding bodies must continue their arrangements to collect appropriate archive materials for all examinations.

Appendix 1: GCSE-specific issues¹

Preparing Question Papers and mark schemes

1. Question paper rubrics must include a reminder that marking will take into account written communication (for specifications accredited for first teaching from September 2001).
2. Mark schemes must include, where appropriate, instructions for marking quality of written communication (for specifications accredited for first teaching from September 2001).
3. In GCSE Welsh Literature only:
 - a) Question paper rubrics must include a reminder that marking will take into account the spelling, punctuation and grammar of answers.
 - b) Mark schemes must include marking instructions for spelling, punctuation and grammar
4. For tiered examinations, question papers must discriminate effectively within each tier. Non-tiered and higher tier papers must provide a suitably demanding challenge for grade A*.

Marking Review

5. The marking review will consist of the re-marking by senior examiners of components marked by examiners about whom there is lingering doubt where candidates' aggregate marks are one per cent or less below the C/D grade boundary.
6. Other candidates may be included in the marking review if the awarding body considers there are good reasons, such as marked discrepancies between estimated grades and provisional grades.

¹ Refer to the subsequent appendices for specific information on linear and unitised qualifications.

Appendix 2: GCSE-specific issues for non-unitised qualifications

Setting key component grade boundaries¹

GCSE and GCSE (short course) – non-tiered components

1. The three key grade boundaries must be dealt with in the following sequence throughout the awarding process:
 - C/D;
 - A/B;
 - F/G.

GCSE and GCSE (short course) – tiered components

All tiered subjects, except mathematics

2. The key grade boundaries must be dealt with in the following sequence throughout the awarding process:
 - C/D foundation tier;
 - C/D higher tier;
 - A/B higher tier;
 - F/G foundation tier;
 - D/E higher tier.
3. Scripts at the arithmetically determined D/E boundary on the foundation tier are used to inform the judgmental D/E decision on the higher tier.

Mathematics (specifications not using uniform marks)

4. The key grade boundaries must be dealt with in the following sequence throughout the awarding process:
 - C/D intermediate tier;
 - C/U higher tier;
 - A/B higher tier;
 - F/G foundation tier;
 - B/C intermediate tier;
 - D/E foundation tier;

¹ Refer to Appendix 3 *Aggregation and grading for unitised qualifications* for information on GCSEs which use uniform marks (including mathematics and modern foreign languages).

- D/E intermediate tier.
5. Scripts at the arithmetically determined B/C boundary on the higher tier are used to inform the judgmental B/C decision on the intermediate tier.

Setting grade boundaries for the subject as a whole

6. After key grade boundaries for each component have been set, provisional boundaries for the subject as a whole must be established for the key judgmental grades as detailed below. For each of the judgmental boundaries, two indicators are calculated through the process described below.

Indicator 1

- i. The boundary mark for each component is scaled as necessary to reflect the mark allocation for that component as detailed in the specification;
- ii. The resulting scaled component boundary marks are added and the result is rounded to the nearest whole number (0.5 rounded up);

Indicator 2

- iii. The percentage of candidates at and above the boundary mark on each component is determined;
- iv. A weighted mean of these percentages is calculated, using the weightings of components as detailed in the specification;
- v. The mark is identified on the distribution of total examination marks at which the cumulative percentage of candidates most closely corresponds to the weighted mean;

Conclusion

- vi. Whenever the two indicators do not coincide, the grade boundary should normally be set at the lower of the two indicator marks, unless, in the awarders' judgement, there is good reason, as a result of a review of the statistical and technical evidence, to choose a higher mark within the range spanned by the indicators.
7. The other grade boundaries must be determined arithmetically as set out below.

Key subject grade boundaries

GCSE and GCSE (short course) – non-tiered and tiered examinations (except mathematics)

8. The following three key subject boundaries are set using indicators 1 and 2:
- C/D;
 - A/B;
 - F/G.

9. The B/C boundary is obtained by dividing the mark interval between the A/B and C/D boundaries by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade B interval.
10. The D/E and E/F boundaries are obtained by dividing the mark interval between the C/D and F/G boundaries by three. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade D interval. Where there is remainder of two, one extra mark is added to each of the grade D and grade E intervals.
11. In a tiered examination, the D/E boundary on the higher tier is set using indicators 1 and 2.
12. All other boundaries are determined arithmetically:
 - i. In a tiered examination the E/U boundary on the higher tier is provisionally set by subtracting half the mark interval between the C/D and D/E boundaries (rounding up half marks) from the D/E boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads the awarders to judge that the E/U boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiner's grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal;
 - ii. The G/U boundary is the same number of marks below the F/G boundary as the E/F boundary is above the F/G boundary.
13. The A*/A boundary is provisionally set the same number of marks above the A/B boundary as the A/B boundary is above the B/C boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads the awarders to judge that the A*/A boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiner's grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal.

GCSE Mathematics

14. The key grade boundaries (see paragraph 4) are set using indicators 1 and 2.
15. All other boundaries are determined arithmetically:
 - i. The B/C boundary on the higher tier is obtained by dividing the mark interval between the A/B and C/U boundaries by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade B interval;
 - ii. The E/F boundary on the foundation tier is obtained by dividing the mark interval between the D/E and F/G boundaries by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade E interval;
 - iii. The E/U boundary on the intermediate tier is set the same number of marks below the D/E boundary as the C/D boundary is above the D/E boundary;
 - iv. The G/U boundary on the foundation tier is set the same number of marks below the F/G boundary as the E/F boundary is above the F/G boundary.

16. The A*/A boundary is provisionally set the same number of marks above the A/B boundary as the A/B boundary is above the B/C boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads awarders to judge that the A*/A boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiner's grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal.

Appendix 3: Aggregation and grading for unitised qualifications

1. Aggregate marks will be calculated on the basis of a uniform mark scale (UMS). Uniform marks for each unit must be calculated in such a way as to maintain the candidates' relative position between the raw grade boundaries. Each unit must be reported in uniform marks. Uniform marks for individual assessment units are added to generate a final grade for the qualification as a whole.
2. Where a candidate has taken more than the required number of units, the awarding body will generate the best grade for the candidate. Results for units which are not included in the aggregation remain available for future use if required.
3. The re-sit rules for each qualification are as follows:
 - i GCSE
In modular or staged schemes, any individual assessment unit may be re-sat once before certification, with the better mark counting towards the final grade.
 - ii GCE, VCE and GNVQ
Individual assessment units may be re-sat before certification, with the best mark counting towards the final grade.

GCE, VCE and free-standing mathematics qualifications (FSMQ)

4. Grade boundary marks for each externally assessed unit or component will be determined judgements for the key boundaries in the following sequence:
 - E/U;
 - A/B.
5. When a unit consists of two or more components, such as a written paper and a coursework assessment, grade E/U and A/B boundary marks will be determined for each component separately. The boundary mark for each component is scaled as necessary to reflect the weighting for that component as detailed in the specification, and these scaled component boundary marks are added to give unit boundary marks. These unit boundary marks will then be converted to the UMS scale.
6. Where candidates repeat a unit which consists partly of coursework, their moderated coursework marks may be carried forward during the lifetime of the specification.

7. For each unit, the grade B/C, C/D and D/E boundary marks are determined arithmetically. The grade B/C, C/D and D/E boundary marks are calculated by dividing the mark interval between the A/B and E/U boundaries by four:
- Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the A–B mark range;
 - Where there is a remainder of two, one extra mark is added to each of the A–B and B–C mark ranges;
 - Where there is a remainder of three, one extra mark is added to each of the A–B, B–C and C–D mark ranges.
8. Schemes of assessment are based on a uniform mark total of 300 for the Advanced Subsidiary GCE and VCE subject awards, 600 for the Advanced GCE and VCE subject awards and 1200 for the Advanced VCE (Double Award). In a specification with six equally-weighted units there are thus 100 uniform marks available for each unit. There are 100 uniform marks available for each Advanced FSMQ (in Foundation and Intermediate FSMQ, uniform marks are not used).
9. For each unit, the raw grade boundary mark will be converted to the equivalent UMS boundary mark, based on the percentages given in the table below. A mark of zero on the raw mark scale must always be converted to zero on the UMS scale. The maximum raw mark for the unit is always converted to the maximum UMS mark for the unit.

GCE/VCE/FSMQ unit

	A	B	C	D	E
Percentage of available uniform mark	80	70	60	50	40

10. The lowest uniform mark for each grade in the qualification is fixed in accordance with the tables below:

Grade	Maximum uniform mark	A	B	C	D	E
UMS grade boundary – Advanced GCE/VCE	600	480	420	360	300	240
UMS grade boundary – Advanced subsidiary GCE/VCE	300	240	210	180	150	120

Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (Double Award)

Maximum uniform mark	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
1200	960	900	840	780	720	660	600	540	480

GNVQ

11. Grade boundary marks for each externally assessed GNVQ unit and will be determined judgementally for the key boundaries in the following sequence.
 - Pass;
 - Distinction.
12. The Merit grade boundary mark is determined arithmetically by dividing the mark interval between the Pass and Distinction boundaries by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the Merit mark range.
13. Schemes of assessment are based on a uniform mark total of 600 for GNVQ subject awards.
14. For each GNVQ unit, the raw grade boundary mark at each of the grades Distinction, Merit and Pass will be converted to the equivalent UMS boundary mark, as shown in the table below. A mark of zero on the raw mark scale must always be converted to zero on the UMS scale. The maximum raw mark for the unit is always converted to the maximum UMS mark for the unit.

GNVQ Unit

Maximum uniform mark	Distinction	Merit	Pass
100	80	60	40

15. The lowest uniform mark for each grade in the qualification is fixed in accordance with the table below:

Foundation and Intermediate GNVQ Subject Award

Maximum uniform mark	Distinction	Merit	Pass
600	480	360	240

GCSE and GCSE in Vocational Subjects¹

Non-tiered components or units/modules

16. The three key grade boundaries must be dealt with in the following sequence for each component or module/unit:
- C/D;
 - A/B;
 - F/G.
17. All other boundaries are determined arithmetically:
- i. The B/C boundary is obtained by dividing the mark interval between the A/B and C/D boundaries by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade B interval;
 - ii. The D/E and E/F boundaries are obtained by dividing the mark interval between the C/D and F/G boundaries by three. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade D interval. Where there is remainder of two, one extra mark is added to each of the grade D and grade E intervals;
 - iii. The G/U boundary is the same number of marks below the F/G boundary as the E/F boundary is above the F/G boundary.
18. The A*/A boundary is provisionally set the same number of marks above the A/B boundary as the A/B boundary is above the B/C boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads the awarders to judge that the A*/A boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiner's grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal. For all schemes using uniform marks, this review should be carried out at component or module/unit level rather than at qualification level.

Tiered components or units/modules, except mathematics

19. The key grade boundaries must be dealt with in the following sequence for each component or module/unit:
- C/D foundation tier;
 - C/D higher tier;
 - A/B higher tier;
 - F/G foundation tier;
 - D/E higher tier.

In modern foreign languages all of the boundaries for one skill are normally considered before moving on to the next skill.

¹ For linear GCSEs refer to the appropriate appendix.

20. Scripts at the arithmetically determined D/E boundary on the foundation tier are used to inform the judgmental D/E decision on the higher tier.
21. All other boundaries are determined arithmetically:
- i. The B/C boundary is obtained by dividing the mark interval between the A/B and C/D boundaries by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade B interval;
 - ii. The D/E and E/F boundaries are obtained by dividing the mark interval between the C/D and F/G boundaries by three. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade D interval. Where there is remainder of two, one extra mark is added to each of the grade D and grade E intervals;
 - iii. The E/U boundary on the higher tier is provisionally set by subtracting half the mark interval between the C/D and D/E boundaries (rounding up half marks) from the D/E boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads the awarders to judge that the E/U boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiner's grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal;
 - iv. The G/U boundary is the same number of marks below the F/G boundary as the E/F boundary is above the F/G boundary.
22. The A*/A boundary is provisionally set the same number of marks above the A/B boundary as the A/B boundary is above the B/C boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads the awarders to judge that the A*/A boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiner's grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal. For all schemes using uniform marks, this review should be carried out at component or module/unit level rather than at qualification level.

Mathematics

23. The key grade boundaries must be dealt with in the following sequence for each component or module/unit:
- C/D intermediate tier;
 - C/U higher tier;
 - A/B higher tier;
 - F/G foundation tier;
 - B/C intermediate tier;
 - D/E foundation tier;
 - D/E intermediate tier.

24. All other boundaries are determined arithmetically.
- i. The B/C boundary on the higher tier is obtained by dividing the mark interval between the A/B and C/U boundaries by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade B interval;
 - ii. The E/F boundary on the foundation tier is obtained by dividing the mark interval between the D/E and F/G boundaries by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade E interval;
 - iii. The E/U boundary on the intermediate tier is set the same number of marks below the D/E boundary as the C/D boundary is above the D/E boundary;
 - iv. The G/U boundary on the foundation tier is set the same number of marks below the F/G boundary as the E/F boundary is above the F/G boundary.
25. The A*/A boundary is provisionally set the same number of marks above the A/B boundary as the A/B boundary is above the B/C boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads awarders to judge that the A*/A boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiner's grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal. This review should be carried out at component or module/unit level rather than at qualification level.

All GCSE exams which use uniform marks

26. When a unit/module consists of two or more components, such as a written paper and a coursework assessment, the key grade boundary marks (as defined in paragraphs 16, 19 or 23) will be determined for each component separately. The component boundary marks are aggregated to give unit/module boundary marks.

Conversion to uniform marks

27. In all specifications using uniform marks with the exception of modern foreign languages, the raw grade boundary marks for each component/unit will be converted to the equivalent UMS boundary marks based on the percentages given in the table below². Awarding bodies will select an appropriate maximum uniform mark for the subject award in the light of the assessment scheme. For GCSE in vocational subjects this will always be 100 uniform marks for an individual unit.

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Percentage of available uniform marks	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

² Where other uniform mark scales are in use, these must be agreed with the regulatory authorities in advance and detailed in the relevant specification.

28. The same procedures will be adopted for the conversion of raw marks to uniform marks for units in all GCSE specifications, including GCSEs in vocational subjects, which use UMS. For all units, a raw mark of zero will convert to a uniform mark of zero. For untiered and higher tier units, the maximum raw mark will be converted to the maximum uniform mark. For foundation or intermediate tier units, the maximum raw mark will convert to the maximum uniform mark allowed for the grade range, ie one below the lowest uniform mark above the targeted grades.
29. The subject grade awarded for those schemes which use uniform marks will be determined by the total uniform mark. However, the grade range will be restricted by the tier of entry of the qualification or of the terminal paper(s)³.
30. Where a tier of entry is required for the GCSE subject award, uniform marks for coursework are not truncated in accordance with the tiering arrangements.
31. In modern foreign language specifications which use uniform marks, the raw grade boundary marks for each skill will be converted to the equivalent UMS boundary marks, as shown in the table on the next page.⁴

Maximum uniform mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

32. The lowest uniform mark for each grade in the Modern Foreign Language qualification is fixed in accordance with the table below:

Maximum uniform mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40

Conversion to uniform marks for GCSEs in Vocational Subjects

33. For each unit, the raw grade boundary mark will be converted to the equivalent UMS boundary mark, as shown in the table below:

Maximum uniform mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

34. The lowest uniform mark for each grade in the qualification is fixed in accordance with the table below:

Maximum uniform mark	A*A*	AA	BB	CC	DD	EE	FF	GG
300	270	240	210	180	150	120	90	60

³ This restriction does not apply to MFL, GCSEs in vocational subjects and some modular and staged schemes where the terminal element is not defined.

⁴ Where the MFL is modular, the maximum uniform mark may vary depending on the weighting of the component/module/unit, but will always be in the same proportion as laid down in the table.

Appendix 4: Advanced Extension Award (AEA)-specific issues

Preparation of external assessments including provisional mark schemes

1. In addition to the normal examining and awarding body personnel, the lead awarding body must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the question paper evaluation committee includes an appropriate representative from those awarding bodies which offer AS/A level examinations in that subject. Where, for practical reasons this is not possible, the lead awarding body must ensure that the other awarding bodies are given the opportunity to comment on the draft question papers and mark schemes. Where the question paper/task is to be offered through the medium of Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge), at least one member of the committee should normally have the necessary expertise to advise on Welsh/Irish (Gaeilge) medium issues.
2. The lead awarding body in each Modern Foreign Language must take steps to ensure comparability in the question papers and mark schemes set by the awarding bodies offering AEAs in French, German, Spanish and Irish.

Awarding

3. In addition to the normal examining and awarding personnel, the lead awarding body must take all reasonable steps to ensure the attendance at the awarding meeting of an appropriate representative from those awarding bodies which offer AS/A level examinations in that subject. Where for practical reasons it is not possible for them to attend, the lead awarding body must ensure that the other awarding bodies receive written information about the process and decisions, following which they are given the opportunity to comment. Where the question paper/task is to be offered through the medium of Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge), at least one member of the awarding committee should have the necessary expertise to advise on Welsh/Irish (Gaeilge) medium issues.
4. Grade boundary marks for AEA must be determined judgementally in order of the grade boundaries ungraded/merit, merit/distinction.

Glossary of selected terms

This glossary contains terms used in this code of practice relating to GCSE, GCSE in vocational subjects, GCE, VCE and GNVQ examinations. It is designed to promote a common understanding of generic terms which are applicable to all the qualifications covered by the code. The most broadly-accepted usage has generally been taken as standard. The glossary does not attempt to be comprehensive.

Responsibilities of awarding bodies and their relationship with centres

<i>Awarding body</i>	An organisation recognised by the regulatory authorities for the purpose of awarding accredited qualifications.
<i>Centre</i>	An organisation (such as a school or college) accountable to an awarding body for the assessment arrangements leading to an award.
<i>Monitoring reports</i>	Reports which represent the outcomes of monitoring activity by the regulatory authorities relating to awarding bodies' quality assurance arrangements or to standards of achievement in specific subjects or sectors.
<i>Regulatory authority</i>	An organisation designated by government to establish national standards for qualifications and to secure compliance with them.
<i>Scrutineer</i>	The scrutineer is responsible for checking the final drafts of all question papers and tasks.

Assessment and awarding

<i>Aggregation</i>	The process of combining (by summation or other agreed procedure) the marks or other units of credit awarded through an assessment scheme.
<i>Assessment criteria</i>	Statements which describe performances and place them in context with sufficient precision to allow valid and reliable assessment.
<i>Assessment objective</i>	One of a set of statements in a specification describing the focus of assessment.
<i>Authentication</i>	Confirmation that work has been produced solely by the candidate on whose behalf it is submitted.

<i>Awarding</i>	The process through which candidates' grades are determined on the basis of available evidence.
<i>Comparability</i>	The extent to which the same awards reached through different routes represent the same or equivalent levels of attainment.
<i>Component</i>	A discrete assessable element within a specification but which is itself not separately certificated.
<i>External assessment</i>	A form of assessment in which question papers and tasks are set by the awarding body, taken under specified conditions (including details of supervision and duration) and assessed by the awarding body. This includes awarding body set assignments.
<i>Internal assessment</i>	A form of assessment that does not meet the above definition of external assessment.
<i>Internal standardisation</i>	A process carried out by centres in relation to internally-assessed work to ensure, for a particular specification, that all candidates are judged against the same standards, across different assessors and teaching groups.
<i>Marking Review</i>	The re-marking of candidate work, prior to the issue of results. This includes work originally marked by examiners about whom there is lingering doubt about the consistency and standard of their marking.
<i>Mark scheme</i>	A scheme detailing how credit is to be awarded in relation to a particular assessment unit or component. A mark scheme normally characterises acceptable answers to questions/tasks or parts of questions/tasks and identifies the amount of credit each attracts.
<i>Moderation</i>	The process through which internal assessment is monitored by the awarding body to ensure that it is reliable, fair and consistent with required standards.
<i>Post-results review of marking</i>	A process in which a second examiner reviews the marking of the first examiner to make sure that the authorised mark scheme has been applied reliably. The second examiner needs to see the original marks and any annotations made by the first examiner to gain a full and clear understanding of whether the mark scheme has been applied as intended.
<i>Question paper / task</i>	A form of external or internal assessment including tests, assignments and projects.

<i>Rubric</i>	A set of instructions and other items of guidance provided for candidates on an assessment.
<i>Script</i>	A candidate's written response to the external or internal assessment.
<i>Specification</i>	The complete description – including mandatory and optional aspects – of the content, assessment arrangements and performance requirements for a qualification.
<i>Standardisation</i>	A process, relating to both external and internal assessment, by which the awarding body ensures that the mark scheme or assessment criteria for a unit or component are applied consistently by examiners or moderators. For example, the process may include a meeting of examiners or moderators to consider the mark scheme or assessment criteria in detail.
<i>Unit</i>	The smallest part of a qualification that can be separately certificated. A unit may comprise separately assessed components.

Arrangements for candidates with particular assessment requirements

<i>Special arrangements</i>	Arrangements which are approved in advance of an examination or assessment to allow attainment to be demonstrated by candidates with either a permanent or long-term disability or learning difficulty, or a temporary disability, illness or indisposition.
<i>Special consideration</i>	Procedures which provide some compensation for candidates who have suffered temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the examination.

Enquiries and appeals

<i>Appeal</i>	A process through which an awarding body may be challenged on the outcome of an enquiry about results or, where appropriate, other procedural decision affecting a centre or individual candidates.
<i>Enquiry about results</i>	A process through which an awarding body may be asked to check one or more of the steps leading to a reported result.

About this publication

Who's it for? This document is for awarding bodies and associated organisations involved in the delivery of GCSE, GCSE in vocational subjects, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA qualifications.

What's it about? This document specifies the processes and procedures required to ensure high quality, consistency and rigorous standards in assessment and awarding.

It replaces The GCSE, GCSE in vocational subjects, GCE, VCE and GNVQ code of practice 2003/4 (May 2003) and QCA website version 2 (5 August 2003)

Related material *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

What's it for? The code of practice is designed to promote quality, consistency and fairness in all GCSE, GCSE in vocational subjects, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA qualifications.

What next? The regulatory authorities will continue to keep this code of practice under review to ensure it continues to reflect best practice.

This publication has been sent to:

Awarding bodies, Joint Council for Qualifications

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