

Supplementary information on validation of evidence by centres

Introduction

In summer 2020, heads of centre have been asked to provide, for each subject, centre assessment grades for their students and to rank order their students within each grade. This should reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely grade a student would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment. Regulators have provided information on the submission of centre assessment grades and rank order information by centres.

It is expected that, where possible, centres will base their judgements on the range of evidence they already hold within the centre. In the great majority of cases, centres will already hold sufficient information within their centre to enable them to be confident in the judgments they have reached about a student's likely performance in each subject.

However, there will be some students for whom heads of centre do not have access to the full range of evidence available for the majority of their students. This may apply, for example:

- where a student has transferred from one centre to another part way through a course;
- where a student has returned to a centre in order to resit an examination;
- where a student with ongoing health issues has undertaken some of their studies outside of the school environment;
- where a student of a subject which is not routinely offered by the centre has been provided with specialist external support; or
- where a student has undertaken some or all of their studies independently, including home-educated students.

This note provides additional clarification on the application of the regulators' information in these circumstances. Heads of Centre should only submit centre assessment grades and rank order information where they are confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement and to make the required declaration set out in the regulators' information. They must have the same level of confidence in their judgement as they do for other students at their centre and that they have ensured compliance with the regulators' information.

Where a head of centre does not feel able to reach a judgement about a particular student, it is important that this is communicated as early as possible, so that each student is clear about their individual situation.

Evidence held by other centres

In cases where a student has transferred from one centre to another part way through their studies, the current head of centre may wish to consult with the previous centre about evidence they hold and may take this into account in reaching a judgement where they are confident to do so. If it would be more appropriate for the original centre to submit the assessment grade and rank order information, the current entry should be withdrawn and the original centre should make a new entry for the student.

In some cases, a student may have studied with one approved centre, for example a distance learning provider, but made their entry at a different centre, such as a local school or college. In these cases it would be sensible for the centre which holds most evidence of the student's likely achievement to take responsibility for submitting their centre assessment grade and rank order information. In some cases this will require the entry to be transferred from one centre to another. If that is the case, the centre intending to submit the centre assessment grade should make a new entry for the student and should request that the original centre withdraw their entry. This should only be done in consultation with, and with the agreement of, the original centre and the student.

Levels of confidence

Heads of Centre should only submit centre assessment grades where they have seen sufficient evidence to be confident in their judgements. Such evidence must be in compliance with the regulators' information and, in particular must use "*holistic professional judgement, balancing the different sources of evidence*". Where sufficient evidence is not already held within the centre, and a head of centre wishes to consider alternative sources of evidence, the following table on levels of confidence should be followed.

Evidence category	Level of confidence	Requirements
Evidence produced under the direct supervision of the centre e.g. centre supervised assignments, practical assessments or mock examinations Evidence produced under the supervision of an independent organisation with which the centre has a direct relationship e.g. specialist tutor Evidence which can be directly verified e.g. video recording of public performance in which the candidate can be clearly identified	High	Evidence from this category should always be preferred to that in lower categories where available Evidence from this category should account for a significant proportion of specification coverage Centres may supervise additional assignments or mock assessments to ensure that the required specification coverage is achieved

Evidence produced independently but subject to centre validation	Medium	Evidence from the High and Medium categories should jointly achieve broad coverage of the complete specification Centres may supervise additional assignments or mock assessments to ensure that the required specification coverage is achieved
Evidence produced independently - i.e. without supervision, or under the supervision of a family member, or independent tutor with whom the centre has no existing relationship	Low	Evidence from this category should not be relied upon, unless centre validation has taken place

Centre validation process

Where evidence has not been produced under the direct supervision of the centre, the centre should undertake a validation exercise before relying on that evidence in reaching their judgment. The following table illustrates how centre validation could take place through a number of remote sessions with the student.

Confirmation of identify	When conducting remote sessions with a student the centre should ensure that they are able to confirm the student's identity. Where copies of photographic ID documents are not already held by the centre, these should be provided by the student and verified during a remote face to face session with centre staff.
Prior attainment	Where the student is able to provide evidence of prior attainment in the subject, electronic copies of certificates should be provided by the student.
Signed student declaration	Where evidence generated through independent study is submitted for validation, the following student declaration should be signed by the student: <i>I confirm that all evidence submitted for consideration of my centre assessed grade is my own work. I understand that if I submit work which has been made by someone else, or for which I have received too much help to produce, this will be considered malpractice and can result in penalties up to and including disqualification from the current examination series, and debarment from taking qualifications for a number of years.</i>

Initial exploration of evidence	Centres may hold an initial remote session at which the available evidence is discussed with the student, in order to enable the centre to gain an understanding of the conditions under which the submitted evidence has been generated. Following the session the centre will want to review the evidence in more depth in order to determine the extent to which the evidence available matches the requirements of the specification, and to identify any gaps in coverage or concerns about authenticity.
Validation of evidence	Centres may hold a number of remote validation sessions with the student, during which the student's understanding of the subject content covered in particular pieces of evidence can be probed in order to gain confidence that it is the student's own work. This approach could be used to ensure that the minimum percentage of High and Medium confidence evidence is met. Centres should not rely on any piece of evidence if they are not satisfied about its authenticity.
Remote assessments	Where necessary, centres may allow the student to undertake an additional assessment set by the centre and observed remotely by centre staff. This could include, for example, a centre-devised mock assessment or a centre-set assignment targeting a specific area of the specification. Where mock assessments are set during the validation process, these must not consist of past papers in the public domain. The centre should generate novel mock assessment, although it is recommended these are drawn from awarding organisation resources to ensure they are of an appropriate type and level of challenge. This approach could be used to ensure that the minimum percentage of High confidence evidence is met and to provide a comparator for other available evidence.

Retention of evidence

The head of centre should ensure that all evidence on which they have relied in reaching their judgment is retained in case it is requested by the awarding organisation. This includes any evidence of centre validation where this has taken place.

Accepting new candidate entries

Where a student had entered for an examination as a 'private candidate' prior to 19 March 2020, and their original centre has confirmed that they are unable to include them in their centre submission, it may be possible for the entry to be transferred to a new centre which is able to validate evidence of their level of achievement for the purpose of submitting a centre assessment grade and rank order information.

This process will be open to students who would otherwise be disadvantaged if they were not awarded a grade in Summer 2020, for example because it would prevent them from progressing to the next stage of their studies or into employment.

Centres should not accept an entry transfer for a new student, with whom they have no prior relationship, unless they have the prior permission of the relevant awarding organisation. Permission will only be granted where the awarding organisation is satisfied that the centre is able to comply with the regulators' information and the supplementary information contained in this document in order to generate both a centre assessment grade and rank order information with the same degree of confidence that is required for other students.

Since the process will be based on the validation of existing evidence, student entries should not be accepted unless the student is able to provide a range of evidence generated throughout their period of study which collectively covers the majority of course content within the specification.

Centres requesting permission to accept an entry transfer for a new student, with whom they have no prior relationship, will need to submit details of the process of validation that they intend to employ, setting out how it will generate the necessary level of confidence in the student's likely achievement. In order to demonstrate that the centre's processes have been subject to appropriate governance, centre submissions must be counter-signed by someone with an appropriate degree of independence and authority, for example, a Chair of Governors, Chair of Board of Trustees, Local Authority partner or external auditor. Centres will also be subject to additional monitoring by awarding organisations.