

Centre policy on assessment and quality assurance processes

summer 2021 alternative arrangements

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Centre policy on assessment and quality assurance processes for the summer 2021 alternative arrangements

Section 1: WJEC requirements

Background

As outlined in Qualifications Wales' document Guidance for alternative arrangements for approved GCSE, AS and A level qualifications for the summer 2021 series, due to the policy decision taken to cancel the summer exams, centres will determine the grades to award to their learners for the following qualifications:

- Qualifications Wales approved GCSE, AS and A level
- Skills Challenge Certificates
- Level 2 and Level 3 Health and Social Care: Principles and Contexts
- Level 2 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development (Unit 216)

Qualifications Wales' document states that *whilst the approach to producing the Centre Determined Grades (CDGs) will be holistic in its nature, it needs to be underpinned by sufficient evidence of demonstrated attainment across key themes and skills.*

There is a requirement upon WJEC to ensure that schools and colleges (centres) implement an internal quality assurance process and for WJEC to implement a programme of external quality assurance. Appendix 1 provides a high level overview of the external quality assurance process that will be undertaken by WJEC.

The first step in the process is for centres to produce a high level Centre Policy. The Policy must provide a summary of a centre's approach to assessment and quality assuring the Centre Determined Grades they award to learners, based on the evidence they have produced to meet the requirements of WJEC's Qualification Assessment Frameworks. Abridged versions are available on the WJEC website, qualification pages.

Many centres have a range of documents outlining their approach to ensuring valid and reliable assessment outcomes for their learners, **in a standard examination series**. For the purpose of the summer 2021 series, WJEC will require centres to provide a succinct overview of the approach they will take to assessments and quality assurance of grading decisions, by submitting a high level policy which must contain, as a minimum, the information outlined below.

Centres will **not** be required to provide all their documented procedures to WJEC but must reference relevant documented procedures. WJEC will require each centre to submit its high level centre policy, so that it can be reviewed to ensure that each area is sufficiently covered. WJEC will provide feedback to centres, especially if any issues are identified, and may request some centres to submit documented procedures referenced in the policy.

The Centre Policy will also be an essential part of the appeals process should learners consider that an error has occurred in determining their grade. Centres will need to demonstrate that their Centre Policy has been appropriately followed in the arrival of a learner's Centre Determined Grade.

The purpose of this Centre Policy is:

- to ensure that Centre Determined Grades (CDG) are conducted fairly, consistently, free from bias and effectively within and across departments and maintained throughout the process
- to ensure the operation of effective processes with clear guidelines and support for staff
- to ensure that all staff involved in the processes clearly understand their roles and responsibilities
- to support teachers to take evidence-based decisions in line with Qualification Wales requirements
- to achieve a high standard of internal quality assurance in the allocation of CDGs
- to ensure the centre meets its obligations in relation to equality and disability legislation
- to ensure we meet all requirements set out in the Special Regulatory Conditions, Joint Council for Qualifications and Awarding Organisation instructions for Summer 2021 qualifications.

It will be the responsibility of everyone involved in the generation of Centre Determined Grades to read, understand, and implement the policy.

Centre policy for Summer 2021

The seven areas that must be covered in each centre's policy are detailed below.

1. Roles and Responsibilities

Documented roles and responsibilities of staff involved in assessment, and quality assurance procedures, including how and by whom responsibility for the centre's Public Sector Equalities Duty is undertaken. To include, as a minimum, the following roles:

- Chair of Governors
- Headteacher
- Senior staff involved in quality assurance of assessment plans and final decisions
- ALNCo
- Curriculum/subject leaders (where relevant)
- Teaching staff
- Examinations officer.

2. Subject assessment plans

A brief overview of how subject assessment plans will be developed, considering:

- how they meet WJEC Qualification Assessment Frameworks
- internal quality assurance and approval of the plans
- implementation of the chosen assessment instruments and associated mark schemes to ensure consistency across all teachers/assessors and learners for the same qualification.

3. Centre devised assessments

Where relevant, a brief overview of how assessment instruments, and their associated mark schemes, **devised by centre staff** are quality assured to ensure for all learners, especially those with protected characteristics, are:

- valid
- reliable
- fair.

Where relevant, provide details of training for teachers/assessors and senior assessors/staff involved in designing and quality assuring centre devised assessments.

4. Assessment delivery

A brief overview of how assessments will be administered considering:

- face-to-face delivery
- remote delivery
- levels of supervision
- duration of task taking
- provision of feedback (usually not a feature of summative assessment)
- ensuring authenticity of each learner's work (especially if not directly supervised which may involve a brief viva voce)
- minimising the risk of plagiarism
- minimising the risk of candidate and centre staff malpractice
- provision for learners with approved access arrangements
- record keeping
- secure storage of learner evidence
- managing conflicts of interest
- training for teachers/assessors and senior assessors/staff.

5. Quality assurance of assessment and grading decisions

A brief overview of how final assessment and grading decisions are made, considering:

- internal quality assurance undertaken by teachers/assessors and senior assessors/subject or curriculum leads to ensure accuracy, reliability, and fairness.
- internal quality assurance undertaken by senior centre staff and governing bodies
- recording of initial assessment and grading decisions
- recording of internal quality assurance decisions
- equalities issues such as provision for learners with protected characteristics (appendix 2 includes guidance on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments)
- how teachers/assessors and senior assessors/subject and curriculum leaders/senior leaders have ensured objectivity in their grading decisions
- how senior leaders/governors have ensured compliance with the centre's Public Sector Equalities Duty
- the application of special consideration (appendix 3 includes guidance on special consideration)
- consideration of historical data in the decision-making process
- training for teachers/assessors and senior assessors/staff and, as appropriate, governors
- Data Protection legislation.

6. Learners and parents/carers communication

A brief overview of how information will be made available to learners and their parents/carers considering:

- communication of the centre's overall approach to ensure transparency and to promote confidence in the approach to be adopted
- when assessments will be completed
- what information will be considered by teachers/assessors when determining their final grades
- how account has been taken of any specific and relevant access arrangements and special consideration
- the decision-making record which aids learners and their parents/carers to understand the final evidence that will contribute to the determination of their final qualification grade

- the recording of reviews requested by the learners and the outcome of such reviews
- training for teachers/assessors and senior assessors/staff and, as appropriate, governors.

7. Internal reviews and complaints

It is a standard requirement outlined in the JCQ, General Regulations for Approved Centres (Section 5.7f) for centres to have a written internal appeals procedure relating to internal assessment decisions and to ensure that details of this procedure are communicated, made widely available and accessible to all learners.

It is a standard requirement outlined in the JCQ, General Regulations for Approved Centres (Section 5.8e) for centres to draw to the attention of candidates and their parents/carers their written complaints procedure which will cover general complaints regarding the centre's delivery or administration of qualifications.

WJEC's internal review and appeals guidance, due for publication week commencing April 26, will provide further guidance. For the purpose of the centre policy, reference should be made to the centre's commitment to read and take into account this guidance and to review and update the centre's complaints and internal appeals procedure(s).

Centre policy on assessment and quality assurance processes for the summer 2021 alternative arrangements

Section 2: WJEC guidance

Centres will have a range of documented policies and procedures they use for a standard examination series, many of which can be applied for the alternative arrangements in place for the summer 2021 series. However, some adjustments may need to be made to account for the changes being implemented this summer.

To aid centres' understanding of the points to include in each of the seven areas of their policy, below we provide some suggestions of aspects that might be included, depending on the context in which the centre is operating.

1. Roles and Responsibilities

In this section, the centre should provide one or two sentences, or a range of bullet points, outlining the responsibilities of each of the roles listed in the requirements. Some high level examples are provided below:

- Chair of Governors e.g. approving the policy
- Headteacher e.g. overall responsibility for the school/college as an examinations centre and ensuring clear and separate roles and responsibilities; ensuring that the internal quality assurance process has been completed effectively; signing the Head of Centre declaration
- Senior staff involved in quality assurance of assessment plans and final decisions e.g. providing training and support for staff; supporting the Head of Centre in the internal quality assurance of final CDGs; providing a clear centre policy on how records and evidence are stored securely; achieving a consistent approach across departments.
- ALNCo e.g. specialist role in respect of access arrangements
- Curriculum/subject leaders (where relevant): e.g. making decisions on assessment plans, ensuring consistency in decisions within their curriculum/subject area, including how agreed adjustments are made; managing teachers' storage of evidence and Learner Decision Records
- Teaching staff e.g. ensuring assessments are completed under the centre's appropriate level of control and have sufficient evidence in line with the centre policy to provide CDGs for each learner which are a fair, valid and reliable reflection of the assessed evidence available for each learner; completing Learner Decision Records; ensuring that each learners' work is stored securely and can be retrieved to support internal reviews and/or appeals
- Examinations officer e.g. ensuring accurate and timely entries; all information from WJEC is shared promptly with all relevant staff; other key duties undertaken such as making applications for appeals
- Depending on individual centre arrangements it is important that the role and responsibility for ensuring the accurate submission of CDGs to WJEC is documented.

2. Subject assessment plans

Here centres can outline how the subject/curriculum leaders will develop their assessment plans, in keeping with the Qualification Assessment Frameworks. This might include using some of the examples provided by WJEC, a combination of aspects of the examples, or using some other materials.

The section should cover how subject/curriculum leaders will decide on the specific assessments they will select to evidence learning and how they ensure consistency across teachers and learners.

Finally, centres should include details of how the plans are quality assured prior to implementation, how any necessary changes are made to those plans, as part of contingency planning, and how senior staff are confident that the assessment plans have been implemented by all teachers/assessors through any monitoring activity (which could link to internal quality assurance processes in section 5).

3. Centre devised assessments

If centres are delivering WJEC devised assessments, then in this section they need to reference that policy decision, and no further information will be required.

Where centres are making minor amendments to WJEC assessment materials, then they can refer to the section in WJEC's Centre Assessment Creation Guide and any training centre staff have undertaken, including the online training on assessment foundations and assessment creation available on the summer 2021 area of WJEC's secure website.

Where centres are devising their own assessment materials, then more detail will be required on the high level process the centre will undertake to ensure the assessments are valid, reliable and fair for all learners, especially those with protected characteristics. Centres may refer to the relevant sections in WJEC's Centre Assessment Creation Guide and any training centre staff have undertaken, including the online training on assessment foundations and assessment creation available on the summer 2021 area of WJEC's secure website. The centre should also reference their own internal policy/procedure on designing appropriate assessment materials.

4. Assessment delivery

In this section centres should provide a brief overview of the conditions under which assessment tasks are taken, including any similarities or differences in face-to-face and remote task taking. This could include details of how learners are supervised when taking different types of tasks, how the length of time given to learners to complete tasks is determined, linked to how similar assessments may usually be taken in tightly controlled exam conditions, and how any feedback given to learners in taking tasks is accounted for in final assessment decisions. The centre should reference their policy to ensure that appropriate provision is made for learners with approved access arrangements, including how this has been updated to account for the alternative arrangements in place for the summer 2021 series. Further guidance is included in appendix 2.

Many centres will already have policies and procedures related to non-examination assessments (NEA) delivery in place which can be referenced in this section, particularly in relation to ensuring the authenticity of each learner's work. The latter may involve comparing work produced in supervised conditions to that completed without supervision and in conducting a brief question and answer session with the learner to confirm authenticity.

A conflict of interest will exist if centre staff are involved in assessing and/or internal quality assuring assessment/grading decisions of members of their family or close friends. The centre will need to refer to how any conflicts of interest will be managed to ensure the integrity of the grades awarded. Further information is available in appendix 5.

As is standard practice, centres will have policies in place to prevent candidate and centre staff malpractice, as documented in the *JCQ Malpractice and Maladministration Procedures* document. The centre should reference their policy, and outline changes they have made to it to account for alternative arrangements in place for the summer 2021 series.

In this section, centres should provide a brief summary of how all evidence on which a learner's grade is based, including copies of the learner work and any mark records, and final decision making records are retained securely as this will be needed to support the quality assurance, review and appeals processes. The summary should include how information relating to a learner's access arrangements, or personal circumstances affecting learner performance which may need to be taken into account during the grading process is stored.

Finally, the centre should reference any training provided to centre staff on record keeping, evidence storage, prevention of malpractice/maladministration, and provision of access arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

5. Quality assurance of assessment and grading decisions

As all centres will have documented internal quality assurance processes of assessment decisions in place, reference should be made to the IQA policy/procedure with a summary of how this has been updated to account for the alternative arrangements in place for this summer series. These updates will relate to aspects of section 2, as to how the implementation of the specific qualification assessment plans has been monitored to ensure consistency across learners and teachers/assessors.

The centre should outline, at a high level, how teachers/assessors and senior assessors/subject and curriculum leaders/senior leaders have ensured objectivity in their decisions, avoiding bias and discrimination. Specific reference should be made to the centre policy on compliance with Public Sector Equalities Duties.

Specific reference should also be made to the internal sampling strategy being undertaken this summer, both at a teacher/assessor level and at candidate level, outlining how learners with different protected characteristics are included in the sampling process. Reference should also be made to how the centre quality assures the application of special considerations, in the context of the arrangements for the summer 2021 series, and as outlined in appendix 3.

A brief outline of the steps that will be taken where, as a result of the internal quality assurance process, it is deemed necessary to adjust a teacher's decision to bring judgements into line with those of other teachers within department or centre, and how these decisions are recorded. In some cases, especially where there is only one teacher

in a centre delivering a qualification, it will be necessary for quality assurance processes to be taken across different centres.

WJEC's grading guidance, due for publication week commencing March 15, will provide further details on how centres should consider information on previous cohorts' qualification performance at the quality assurance stage, bearing in mind that grade outcomes tend not to vary significantly year on year where the ability of the cohort is similar. For the purpose of the centre policy, reference should be made to the centre's commitment to read and take into account this guidance when the Head of Centre declaration is signed.

The centre should reference any training provided to centre staff on quality assurance processes, and ensuring objectivity in assessment decisions, including the online training on avoiding bias and discrimination provided on the summer 2021 area of WJEC's secure website.

Finally, the centre should reference how it will meet its obligations as a data controller such as undertaking its own data protection impact assessment and review and, if appropriate, update its privacy notices.

6. Learners and parents/carers communication

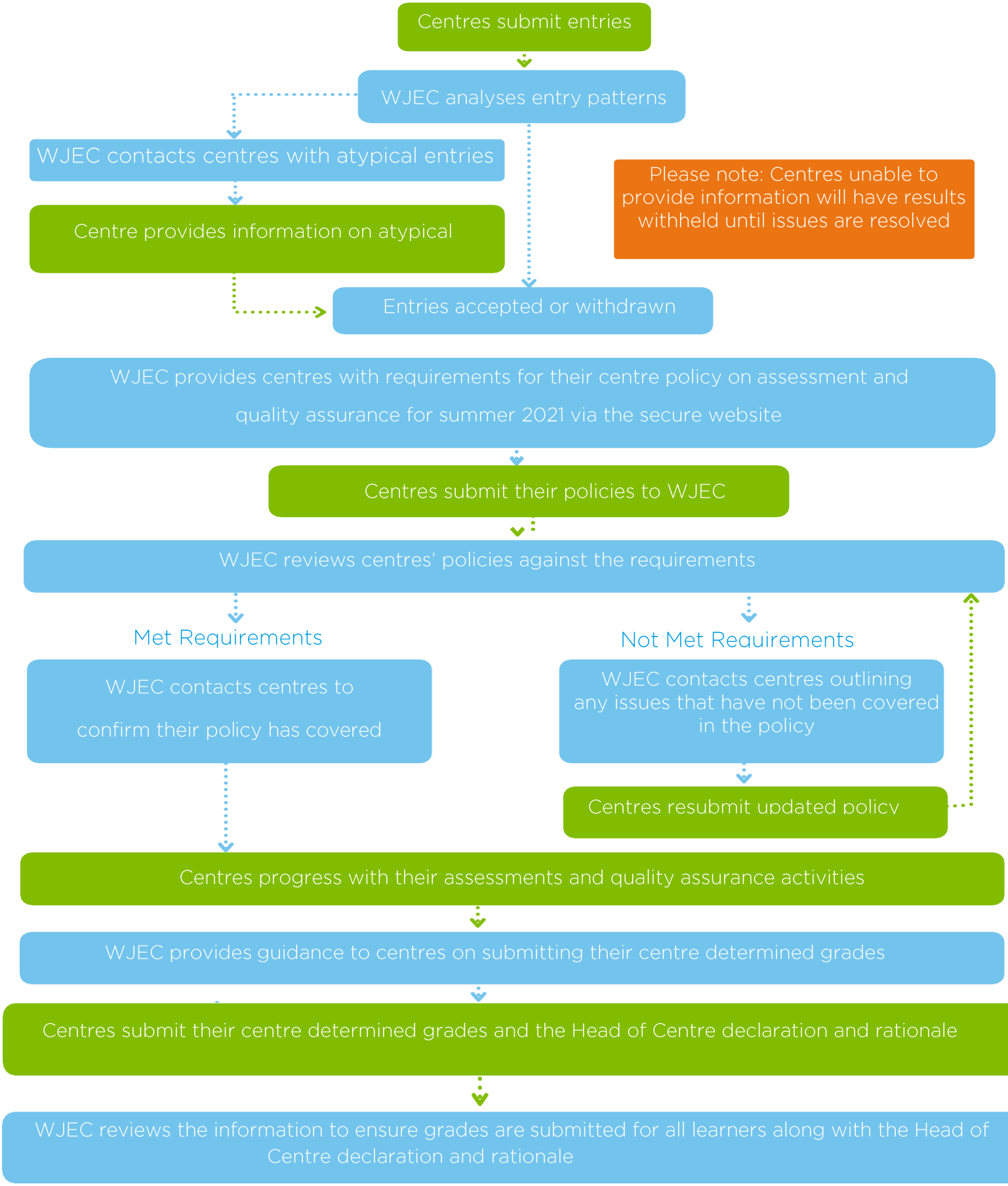
In this section, the centre should provide an outline of how and when they will communicate their approach to generating and quality assuring Centre Determined Grades, referencing relevant policies.

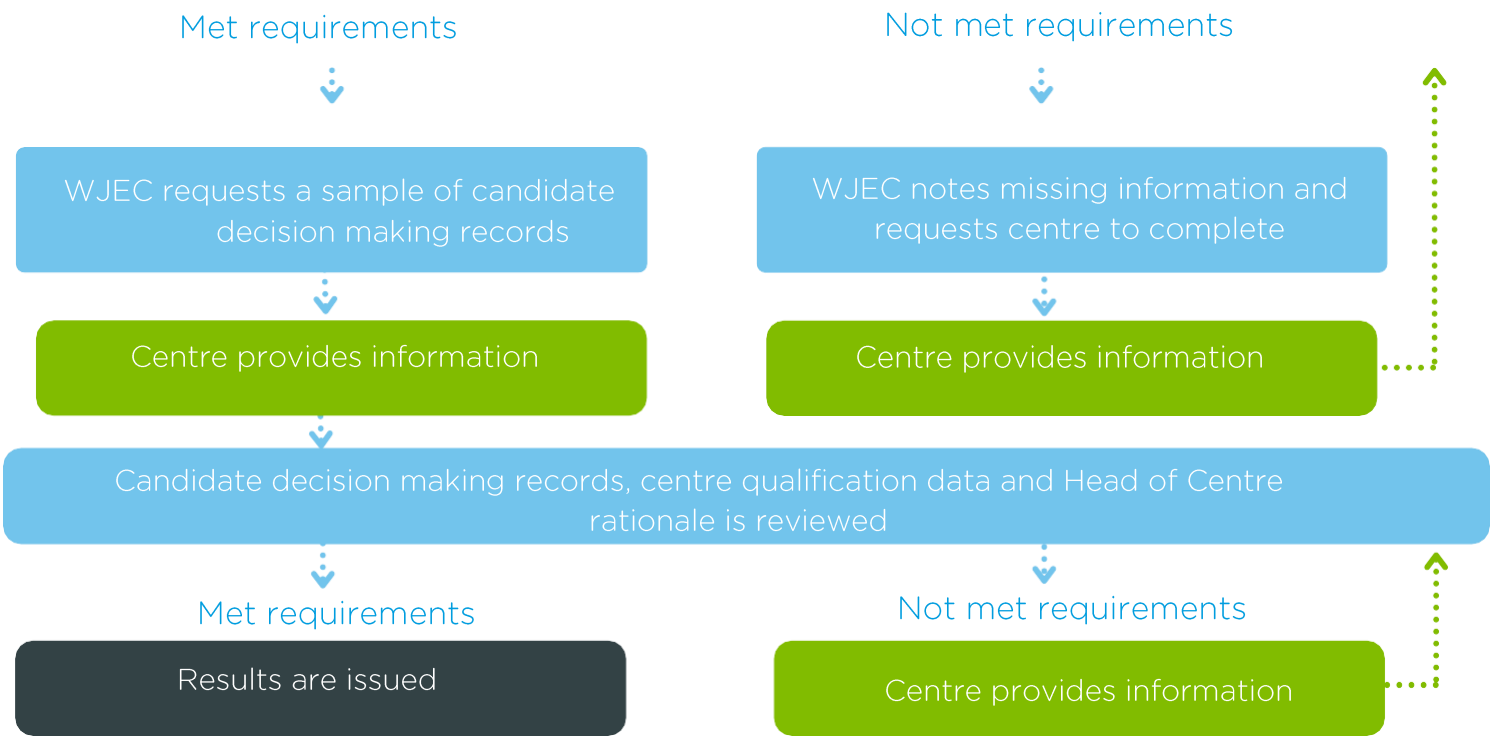
7. Internal reviews and complaints

In this section, the centre should provide an outline of how it will manage internal complaints, providing a link to their complaints policy. This is part of the standard process centres usually undertake as outlined in the JCQ, General Regulations for Approved Centres (Section 5.8e).

Qualifications Wales has published in its updated alternative arrangements document, dated March 4, its high level requirements of internal reviews to be undertaken by centres, and the appeals process that will be undertaken by WJEC. For the purpose of the centre policy, reference should be made to the centre's commitment to read and take into account this guidance and to review and update the centre's complaints and internal appeals procedure(s).

Appendix 1 WJEC External Quality Assurance Process Summer 2021




Met requirements
Not met requirements
WJEC requests a sample of candidate decision making records
WJEC notes missing information and requests centre to complete
Centre provides information
Centre provides information
Candidate decision making records, centre qualification data and Head of Centre rationale is reviewed
Met requirements
Not met requirements
Results are issued
Centre provides information

Appendix 2

Guidance on Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments for summer 2021

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to provide advice to centre staff on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for summer 2021.

The guidance covers the following Qualifications Wales approved qualifications:

- Qualifications Wales approved GCSE, AS and A level
- Skills Challenge Certificates
- Level 2 and Level 3 Health and Social Care: Principles and Contexts
- Level 2 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development (Unit 216)

The following JCQ guidance should also be considered:

- Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments book 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021
- Notice to Centres – SENCOs and assessors – June 2021
- Important supplementary information for SENCOs and assessors 2020/21.

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments allow candidates with specific needs, such as special educational needs or disabilities, to access assessments, meeting the needs of the individual without affecting the integrity of the assessment. They are agreed before an assessment takes place and should reflect a candidate's normal way of working.

Where candidates have agreed access arrangements or reasonable adjustments (for example a reader or scribe), the centre must make every effort to ensure that these arrangements are in place when assessments are being taken. Where, for some reason, that has not been possible, the judgements should be reflected in the final judgement.

Centres are strongly recommended to seek advice from relevant specialist teachers or other specialists supporting the candidate on the evidence used for grading.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires and enables schools and colleges to make decisions in a fair, transparent and accountable way, considering the needs and rights of different learners.

Applying for access arrangements

Centres should continue to test for, submit applications to WJEC, and apply relevant access arrangements (and paper modifications), as if standard examinations were going ahead*. This is to ensure that any candidate's work, taken into account when determining the centre grade, has had the relevant access arrangement(s)/modification(s) in place, to ensure they provide as accurate a representation of ability as possible and to allow for the smooth progression of the arrangements in future examination series.

*Specialist advice should always be sought, where necessary.

The deadline for processing online access arrangements applications has been extended this year from 21 February to 31 March 2021. An online application may, however, be processed after 31 March given the current exceptional and challenging circumstances.

Modified papers

A full list of modified papers is available on the WJEC secure website. The modified papers will be available from the week commending 15 March. Modified papers will not be printed and despatched to centres but will available to download electronically from our secure website

Centres have previously been requested to make all applications for additional modifications to WJEC by 4 March 2021.

Determining grades

Each Centre Determined Grade must be an objective decision based on evidence of a candidate's knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities in relation to the subject.

For learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), schools and colleges should make their judgement assuming learners had continued to receive any usual additional learning support.

Evidence should be gathered from relevant professionals to enable teachers to make secure judgements about Centre Determined Grades. This might include, for example, seeking information from teachers in another school, college, or alternative provision such as a hospital setting. It could also include peripatetic or advisory teachers who may work across a number of centres, such as qualified teachers of deaf, vision impaired and multi-sensory impaired children and young people.

Appeals

As in other series, appeals may be submitted on the grounds of access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. Further information will be available in the guidance on appeals.

Contact details

Modified papers: Modifiedpaperqueries@wjec.co.uk

Other access arrangements: SpecialRequirements@wjec.co.uk

Appendix 3

Guidance on Special Considerations for summer 2021

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to provide advice to centre staff when making decisions on Centre Determined Grades.

The guidance covers the following Qualification Wales approved qualifications:

- Qualifications Wales approved GCSE, AS and A level
- Skills Challenge Certificates
- Level 2 and Level 3 Health and Social Care: Principles and Contexts
- Level 2 Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development (Unit 216).

Special consideration

The process of centres submitting special consideration applications to awarding bodies **will not** apply this summer.

As the evidence is flexible and can be tailored to an individual learner according to the coverage of the specification, instances of special consideration should be limited. Centres should be able to select work completed by learners where they are unaffected by adverse circumstances.

Where this is not possible and a temporary illness, injury or other event outside of a learner's control may have affected their performance in assessments which will be used to determine a grade, teachers should take this into account.

The event must relate to the learner's performance(s) **at the time of taking relevant assessments** which contribute to the Centre Determined Grade and due to events outside of their control. These include:

- Temporary illness or accident/injury
- Bereavement
- Domestic crisis
- The centre not implementing previously approved access arrangements.

Learners will not be eligible for special consideration if preparation for, or performance in their assessments is affected by:

- Long term illness, disability, or other difficulties unless the illness or circumstances manifest themselves at the time of an assessment
- Bereavement occurring more than six months before the assessment, unless an anniversary has been reached at the time of the assessment or there are on-going implications such as an inquest or court case
- Consequences of disobeying the centre's internal regulations.

Special consideration is never applied due to lost teaching and learning time. Lost teaching and learning is being addressed this summer via the assessment methods and the flexibility afforded to the centre in the content that will be assessed, as outlined in the qualification assessment frameworks provided by WJEC. Additional information will be provided in the WJEC guidance on grading. Centre Determined Grades are based on the evidence produced by the learner and not on their potential.

How to apply special consideration

Special consideration should be implemented by the centre at assessment level through applying an allowance of additional marks to each assessment affected. The size of the allowance depends on the timing, nature and extent of the illness or other circumstance. The maximum allowance given will be 5% of the total raw marks available in the assessment.

The severity of the circumstances and the date of the assessment in relation to the circumstances should be considered.

Centres must be satisfied that the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a learner's ability to demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration cannot be applied in a cumulative fashion. For example, because of a recent trauma at the time of the assessment and the learner suffering from a viral illness. Special consideration should only be applied for the most serious indisposition.

The following are examples of circumstances which must apply at the time of the assessment.

5% This is the maximum allowance and will be reserved for the most exceptional cases, such as:

- terminal illness of the learner
- terminal illness of a parent/carer
- death of a member of the immediate family within two months of the assessment
- very serious and disruptive crisis/incident at or near the time of the assessment.

4% Very serious problems such as:

- life-threatening illness of learner or member of immediate family
- major surgery at or near the time of the assessment
- severe disease
- very recent death of member of extended family
- severe or permanent bodily injury occurring at the time of the examination
- serious crisis/incident at the time of the assessment.

NB 'Very recent' is defined as within one month of the assessment(s) taking place.

3% A more common category (more cases will fall into this category), including:

- recent traumatic experience such as death of a close friend or distant relative
- recent illness of a more serious nature
- flare-up of a severe congenital/medical condition or a psychological condition
- broken limbs
- organ disease
- physical assault trauma before an assessment
- recent crisis/incident.
- witnessing a distressing event on the day of the assessment.

NB 'Recent' is defined as up to four months prior to the examination(s) taking place.

2% The most common category of allowance – most cases will fall within this category:

- illness at the time of the assessment
- broken limb on the mend
- concussion
- effects of pregnancy (not pregnancy per se)
- extreme distress on the day of an assessment (not simply assessment related stress).

1% Reserved for more minor problems:

- illness of another learner which leads to disruption in the assessment
- stress or anxiety for which medication has been prescribed
- hay fever on the day of an assessment
- minor upset arising from administrative problems.

Appeals

As in other series, appeals may be submitted on the grounds of the application of special consideration. Further information will be available in the guidance on appeals.

Contact details

SpecialRequirements@wjec.co.uk

Appendix 4

Guidance on Conflict of Interest

The *JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres* require that centres record conflicts of interest and take steps to mitigate their effects. In addition, in certain circumstances, centres are required to notify awarding bodies of the conflict of interest.

The way in which grades are being awarded this year means that there are different risks and requirements relating to conflicts of interest. Heads of Centre are responsible for managing any potential conflicts of interest in relation to the submission of Centre Determined Grades.

The requirements for this series are:

The Head of Centre must ensure that records of a potential conflict of interest, and the steps taken to mitigate it, are retained.

In the following instances, WJEC must be notified of the conflict of interest:

- The potential conflict of interest involves the Head of Centre
- A member of centre staff has been entered as a candidate
- A member of centre staff is involved in determining a grade for a member of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter).

The notification must include details of the candidates involved and the steps taken to mitigate the conflict.

Conflicts of interest must be notified to WJEC using our online form – the link for this will be made available at a later date.