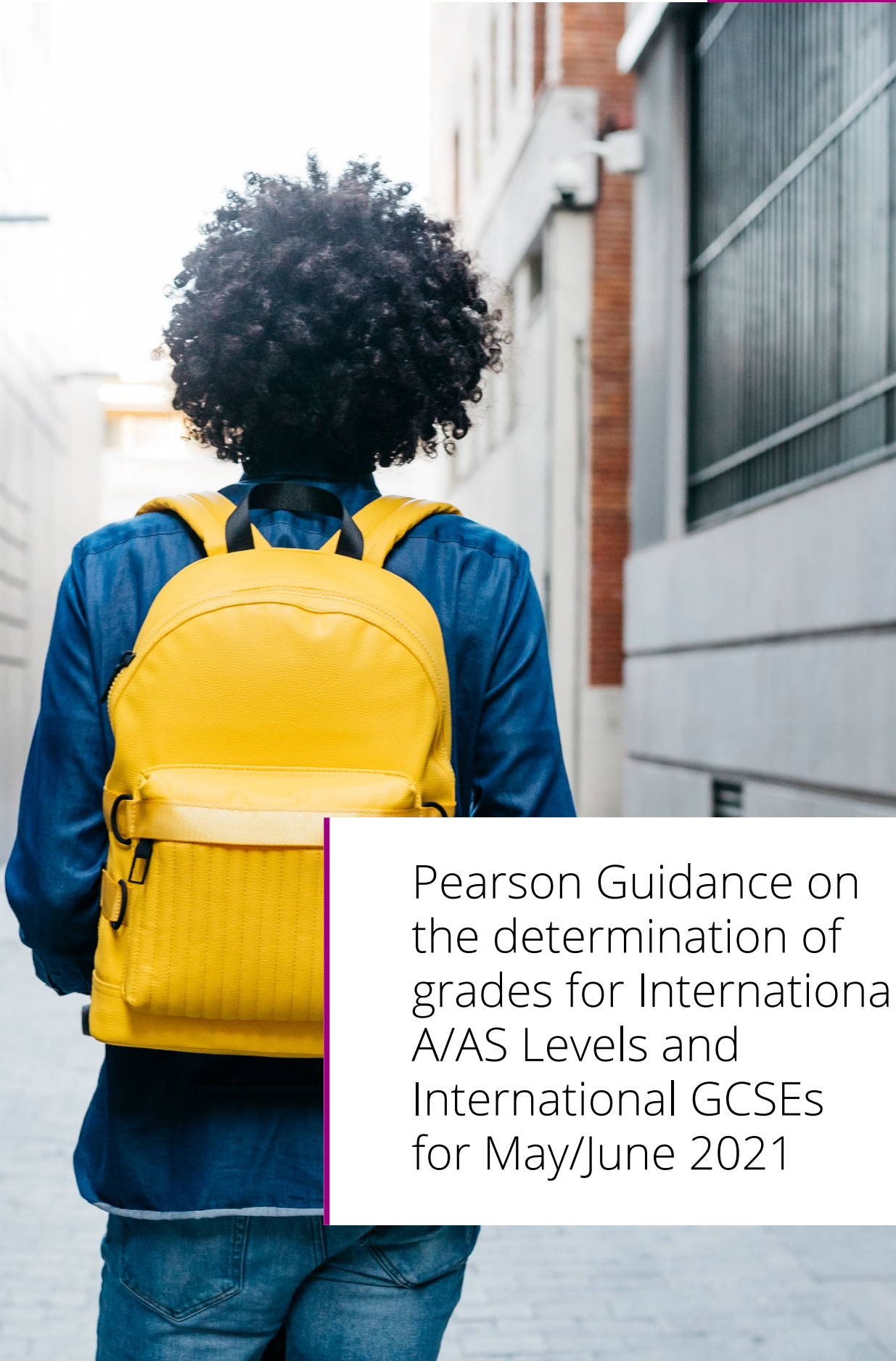




Pearson



Pearson Guidance on
the determination of
grades for International
A/AS Levels and
International GCSEs
for May/June 2021

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This document outlines the approach for Pearson International Qualifications for summer 2021. Pearson, as a member of The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), have assured parity between this approach and that for UK General Qualifications, which is reflected in the [JCQ Guidance on the determination of Grades for AS/A Levels and GCSE for Summer 2021](#)

Introduction

On 4 January 2021 the UK Secretary of State for Education announced the decision to replace GCSE and A level examinations with teacher-based assessment. On 3 February 2021, Pearson announced that it would also replace examinations with teacher-based assessment for the international versions of these qualifications.

The reasons for Pearson's decision regarding international qualifications were twofold: firstly, to ensure fairness for all students in the Pearson British curriculum system around the world, regardless of whether they opted for regulated or international versions; and secondly, because conditions around the world were unpredictable, varied and rapidly changing, and thus there was a need for a flexible approach for jurisdictions where examinations may not be possible. However, it was also understood that, for many of our centres worldwide, summative testing is the cornerstone of measurement of student achievement. The solution Pearson proposes is a flexible teacher-based assessment methodology, with teachers supported in their decision making by unseen assessment materials.

Pearson has worked in partnership with local ministries across countries in which it operates, to help them devise a solution that works for their jurisdiction. The final decision on approach sits with the ministry in each jurisdiction. This may involve mandating the use of unseen assessment materials, or indeed mandating that Pearson steps in to mark unseen assessments.

Pearson has proposed five options from which centres can select the most appropriate for their context. These options determine how they will collate evidence, how the assessment will be carried out – including the use of unseen assessments – and the corresponding level of Quality Assurance control required to validate the outcomes.

In conjunction with the British Council, Pearson is pleased to be able to accommodate private candidates via the unseen assessment option combined with the Pearson marking service.

International centres also offering regulated GCSE or A level qualifications should refer to the JCQ guidance for regulated qualifications.

Other relevant documentation

This guidance lays out the processes, information and support available to centres from Pearson. As our approach for international qualifications aligns with the evidence-based approach for UK qualifications, these supporting documents should also be used:

- May/June 2021 JCQ Guidance - Centre policy - See Appendix A
- [May/June 2021 Centre Policy Summary Online Form](#)

Pearson's approach to unitised International A level

Pearson's International A levels are unitised qualifications; qualifications are subdivided into units and individual units can be taken over a number of series. Each individual unit result is awarded a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) score and these individual unit scores are stored by Pearson. A qualification grade is only awarded when a **cash in** is claimed by the centre, and the best available unit mark from each unit (from the last two attempts) is used to aggregate a total UMS score, which is then converted to a grade.

Pearson's approach for International A levels for May/June 2021 is to require centres to provide letter grades by unit. As in May/June 2020, each unit grade will be assigned a fixed, notional UMS.

This means that IA2 components, centres are required to provide grades, and Pearson will issue notional UMS, at seven points: A*, A, B, C, D, E, U. For IAS components, centres are required to provide grades, and Pearson issue notional UMS, at six points: A, B, C, D, E, U.

As the unit results from this May/June will have associated UMS scores, they can be aggregated with both existing unit results from prior exam series, and future unit results from future exam series. Individual teacher assessed units from May/June 2021 can be re-sat in future series.

Our notional UMS scores for each awarded grade for each qualification for May/June 2020 and May/June 2021 can be found [here](#).

Terminology

For clarity the terminology used in this guidance document has been standardised. The terminology used is as follows:

- Additional assessment materials: unseen materials, past papers with mark schemes and mapping grids.
- Centres: these are exam centres approved by Pearson.
- Centre Policy: the policy sets out the processes centres will follow for determining grades, in an appropriate, consistent and fair way.
- Pearson marking service: Optional marking service open to all centres for Pearson to mark unseen materials on behalf of centres.
- Private Candidates: are students who have not studied with the exam centre that makes their entry.
- SENCOs: (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators) this encompasses relevant experts and assessors.
- Students: this means students entered for qualifications in May/June 2021 within the scope of this guidance as outlined above and encompasses 'candidates' and 'students'.
- Support materials: to assist in the determination and submission of grades, for example guidance, training, exemplar responses, performance data and grade descriptors.
- Unseen materials: optional unseen assessments with mark schemes which must not be opened until the scheduled date.

What will Pearson do?

Pearson will provide centres with a package of support materials to assist in the determination and submission of grades, provide contacts and answer queries. This will include unseen assessments, mark schemes and grade descriptors. Pearson will also provide an optional marking service for unseen assessments, training, support and guidance.

Pearson will, in addition to the guidance on Centre Policies in this document, provide a template and guidance on how to submit them. Following submission, Pearson will review Centre Policies and may contact centres if they have any concerns about the approach proposed in relation to any aspect of the process.

Pearson may arrange a virtual visit (via Zoom, Microsoft Teams or an alternative) with centres to provide further support and guidance where questions remain about a Centre Policy.

After the submission of grades, Pearson will conduct a quality assurance exercise that will have elements of both targeted and random sampling of centres so that the grades awarded across the system command confidence. Further information can be found in the quality assurance process.

Pearson may have further contact with centres if, following any sampled quality assurance activity, they have concerns in relation to the teacher assessed grades submitted.

Pearson are responsible for determining final grades and awarding qualifications as well as managing the second stage of appeals.

What will the British Council do?

The British Council, where active in a jurisdiction, will receive unseen assessments, store them securely, administer and invigilate the unseen assessments for those centres requesting unseen tests and arrange for the return to Pearson for marking where necessary. For centres not requesting unseen assessments, after the first scheduled day, the British Council will distribute the assessment materials to these attached centres.

What will centres do?

The following sets out five potential approaches that centres may take and the subsequent quality assurance measures Pearson will have in place on each. These options can vary by qualification undertaken:

Option	Range of evidence	Aims of quality assurance
1	Use of unseen materials on the secure release date. Marked by Pearson.	Review of adherence to centre policy and quality assurance of the centre's translation of marks into grades. Review in context of historical data (where available).
2	Use of unseen materials on the secure release date. Marked by centres.	Review of adherence to centre policy, of quality assurance of the centre's translation of marks into grades, and of marking decisions. Review in context of historical data (where available).
3	Unseen materials (after the release date) taken supervised in centre, and marked in centre. Supplemented with at least two pieces of extra evidence – use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.	Review of adherence to centre policy, of quality assurance of the centre's translation of marks into grades, and of marking decisions. Review of validity of centre's choice of supplementary evidence, and the weighting given to it. Review in context of historical data (where available).
4	Unseen materials (after the release date) taken in non-supervised conditions and marked in centre. Supplemented with at least two pieces of extra evidence – use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.	Review of adherence to centre policy, and quality assurance of the centre's translation of marks into grades, and of marking decisions. Review of validity of centre's choice of supplementary evidence and the weighting given to it, in the context of the unsupervised nature of unseen assessments. Review in context of historical data (where available).
5	At least three pieces of other evidence – use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.	Review of adherence to centre policy, and quality assurance of the centre's translation of marks into grades, and of marking decisions for the array of evidence presented. Review of validity and breadth of centre's choice of evidence, given unseen assessments not utilised. Review in context of historical data (where available).

To note, for a small number of jurisdictions, option 1a is being implemented. This is use of unseen materials in a secure setting, marked by Pearson and with Pearson providing the analysis of the evidence in order to confirm grades.

Centres will create and submit a Centre Policy – a pre-populated template option is available in appendix A. This will:

- outline the roles and responsibilities of individuals in the centre;
- detail what training and support will be provided to centre staff involved with the process, including any training around bias and objectivity in assessment and grading decisions;
- confirm the approach to be taken when determining teacher assessed grades, including the options selected for each qualification, the consideration of evidence and how that evidence informs students' grades;
- detail the internal quality assurance processes that are in place;
- detail any provision for Private Candidates, if applicable.

Centres will collaborate with Pearson if any concerns are raised following the submission of a Centre Policy. This may include participating in a virtual visit.

Independent centres will receive and securely store unseen assessment materials until the secure day. If unseen assessments are being held as per options 1 or 2, they will conduct a secure assessment. They will keep all materials secure until the day after the secure day. (For British council attached centres, please see section 'What will British Council do?')

Centres will review grades determined by teachers in line with the Centre Policy.

Centres must ensure that students are aware of the evidence used to determine their grade. Although teachers may share results associated with individual pieces of evidence, they must not share with students the grades submitted to Pearson before results are released.

Centres must submit teacher assessed grades to Pearson with a Head of Centre Declaration that confirms that the centre complied with its Centre Policy. A declaration form and guidance on how to submit them will be provided by Pearson along with information on grade submission.

Centres will collaborate with Pearson where external quality assurance sampling is required, which will include participating in a virtual visit.

Centres will release results to students for qualifications on 10 August for International A/AS levels (Level 3 qualifications) and 12 August for International GCSE (Level 2 qualifications).

Centres will, on request, conduct the first stage of the appeals process, to check if an administrative or procedural error has occurred. Centres will also be required to submit second stage appeals to Pearson on a student's behalf, if the student continues to believe

that an error persists or the grade awarded was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement.

Timelines and key dates

The key dates to be aware of are:

- **22 March to 22 April:** Entry amendments window open for centres
- **12 April to 26 April:** Centres wishing to opt into the marking service must do so via Edexcel Online
- **12 April to 30 April:** Window open for Centre Policy submission via proforma on CAP (Centre Admin Portal)
- **19 April to 11 June:** Pearson reviews Centre Policies and conduct virtual visits
- **26 April:** Entry deadline for Private Candidates
- **26 April:** Unseen Assessment Schedule begins
- **4 May:** Additional Assessment Support (mapping grids, grade descriptors - released under padlock).
- **14 May:** Unseen Assessment Schedule final day
- **17 May:** Additional Assessment Support (mark schemes to accompany - released under padlock);
- **26 May to 18 June:** Grade submission window opens
- **1 June:** Deadline for Pearson to receive unseen assessment scripts from centres for the marking service
- **4 June:** Additional Assessment Support final mark schemes made available
- **11 June:** Last date for Pearson to return marks to centres from the marking service
- **18 June to 30 June:** Pearson conducts sample checks of evidence (*in exceptional circumstances, sample checks may take place until 23 July)
- **10 August:** International A/AS Levels and other Level 3 results day
- **12 August:** International GCSE and other Level 2 results day
- **10 August to 7 September:** priority appeals window
- **10 August to 16 August:** student requests centre review
- **10 August to 20 August:** centre conducts centre review
- **11 August to 23 August:** centre submits appeal to Pearson
- **10 August to end October:** majority of non-priority appeals take place
- **10 August to 3 September:** student requests centre review

- **10 August to 10 September:** centre conducts centre review
- **11 August to 17 September:** centre submits appeal to Pearson

Where to get further information support and guidance

For further information, support and guidance please visit the [May/June 2021 support pages](#) on the Pearson website.

From [here](#) Centres can sign up to the training events in the Pearson Professional Development Academy, access the training videos, guides and checklists Pearson has produced and link through to the subject qualification pages that have qualification level support.

The quality assurance process

The quality assurance process will support centres to construct appropriate processes to underpin the determination of grades. There are internal and external elements to the process.

The starting point of the process is the Centre Policy. This sets out the processes centres will follow for determining grades, in an appropriate, consistent and fair way. The policy should reference all of the relevant external advice and guidance provided in this document. A template for a Centre Policy is available alongside this document and centres can adopt and adapt this document. Each Head of Centre will then need to produce a summary of the policy which will be submitted to Pearson for review. The Centre Policy Summary Form can be found in Appendix A.

Internal quality assurance process

Every centre must produce a Centre Policy; this can simply be done by choosing to adopt or adapt the pre-populated template. The Centre Policy Summary Form must be uploaded to the Centre Administration Portal (CAP) by 30 April 2021 and must be signed by the Head of Centre. The full Centre Policy is to be uploaded to the CAP as an attachment. Pearson will contact centres that haven't returned these documents by 30 April 2021, or if they have missing/incomplete information.

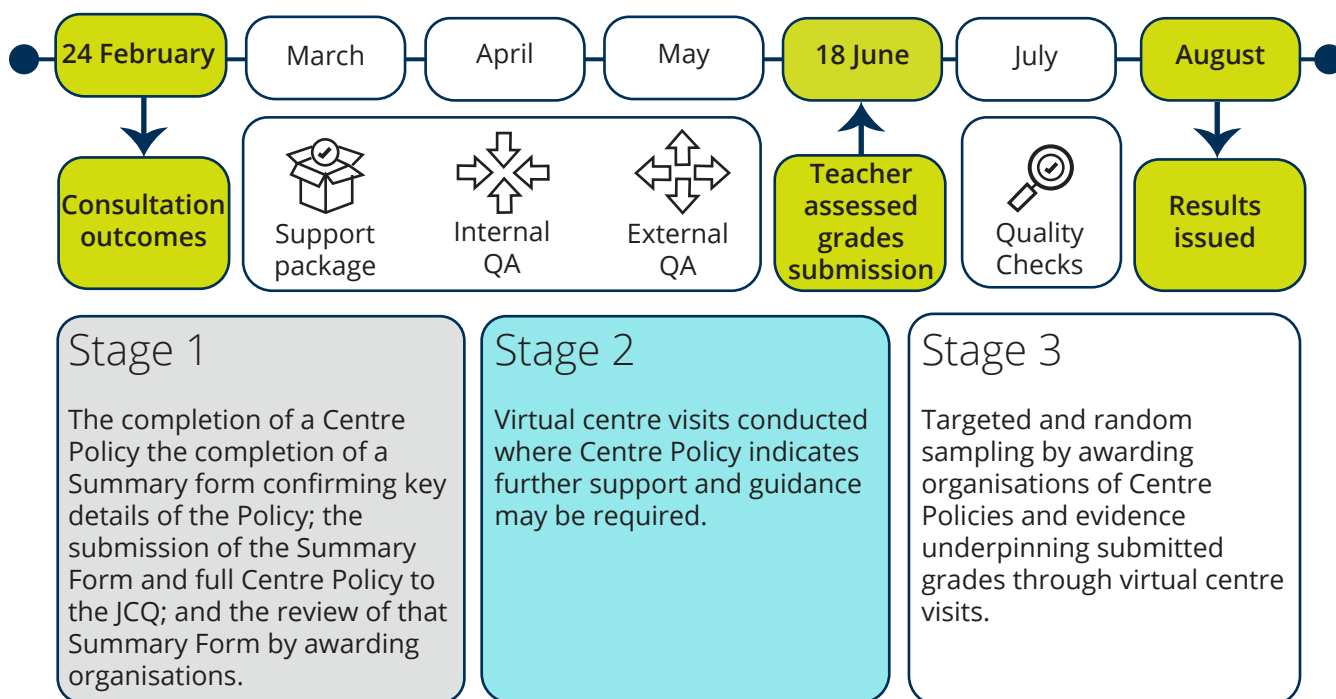
The Centre Policy will:

- Outline the roles and responsibilities of individuals in the centre
- Set out the approach for the determination of grades including how evidence will be used
- Describe the process that will be adopted where a potential conflict of interest has been identified, such as where a teacher's relative is a student
- Outline the internal quality assurance processes in place including arrangements to standardise judgements and consider teacher assessed grades against results from previous years when exams have taken place (2017 to 2019)
- Detail any provision for Private Candidates, if applicable.

Exams officers will be provided with further details regarding submission of the policy summary, although the process will be similar to that used in usual exam years for the submission of requests for Reasonable Adjustments through Access Arrangements Online.

Quality Assurance Process

Timeline



STAGE 1 – Centre Policy review

Following submission Pearson will carry out a review of all Centre Policy Summary Forms. This is to ensure the arrangements each centre has in place are appropriate. Pearson may contact centres where Pearson has questions or concerns.

All centres will receive email confirmation that their Centre Policy has been received. Centres do not need to wait for approval before beginning their grading processes. Centres will then receive an email confirming that their policy has been 'Accepted' or that there is a need for follow-up contact. Centres may be contacted by Pearson where there are gaps in the policy or if any clarification is required. An update to the Centre Policy may be requested at this time.

Some centres may not receive any further follow up from Pearson. However, quality checks of the full Centre Policy may still be performed at random.

STAGE 2 – Virtual centre visits

Where the Centre Policy suggests that further support and guidance may be required, centres will be contacted to arrange a virtual centre visit. These visits will take place in May and June.

Virtual centre visits are to be supportive with the aim of assisting centres to provide valid teacher assessed grades and to ensure the best possible systems are in place. The visits will be conducted virtually. They are likely to be held via Microsoft Teams or Zoom, and details will be confirmed at a later date. Pearson will work with centres to find an alternative if the use of these platforms is not suitable.

Visits will be attended by trained representatives from Pearson and senior leaders at centres. Pearson will work with centres to find a suitable time and date. Visits will take the form of a professional conversation and will focus on the process of providing teacher assessed grades.

If Pearson has significant concerns about a specific element of evidence the centre may be asked to remove the evidence and reconsider the grade.

In rare cases, where it is not possible to resolve issues arising from a virtual centre visit, results may be withheld pending further investigation.

STAGE 3 – Post-submission sampling

The final stage of the quality assurance process is to confirm that centres have implemented what was in their submitted policies and that their submitted grades reflect this. The sampling process will provide confidence that the grades awarded by Pearson across the system command assurance.

The sampling process will take place following the submission of grades by centres. Targeted sampling will be informed by:

- the outcomes of Stage 1
- Stage 2 centre policy review checks, where a centre's overall results profile for this year's cohort appears to diverge significantly compared to the profiles for cohorts from previous years when exams have taken place; and
- centres where Pearson had concerns about their policy.

In addition, random sampling will ensure appropriate subject/qualification, geographical and centre-type coverage.

Sampling after the submission of grades will involve a review of evidence at qualification and subject level by subject specialists.

The sampling process will help ensure that Centre Policies for determination of grades were followed. The depth and breadth of sampling will be defined by the option chosen by the centre.

Pearson will decide whether to accept the grades submitted by centres or undertake further review. This may lead to the withholding of results.

Centres are expected to work with Pearson at all stages of the quality assurance process. Failure to engage may jeopardise the timely issue of results to students and may lead to Pearson undertaking further investigation (see Malpractice section).

Centre policy guidance

Creating the Centre Policy

The first step in the process is for centres to produce a 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 students, based on the evidence they have produced.

Many centres will have a range of documents outlining their approach to ensuring valid and reliable assessment outcomes for their students, in a standard qualification series. For the purpose of the May/June 2021 series, Pearson 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 initially only be required to provide their Centre Policy, they will not be required to provide other documented procedures, but must reference them in their Centre Policy where they apply. Pearson may ask to review referenced documentation as part of the quality assurance process. Centres must ensure they keep all relevant documentation.

Summary of the Centre Policy

For every centre, the Head of Centre is required to complete the Summary of Centre Policy form and to upload the Centre Policy as an attachment prior to submission. Submission of the Centre Policy must be completed by 30 April 2021. Centres will ensure appropriate oversight according to governance arrangements.

A review of the Centre Policy Summary will be completed by Pearson to ensure that the arrangements each centre has in place are appropriate.

All centres will receive confirmation that the Centre Policy has been received.

In cases where Pearson have concerns about the arrangements in place, centres may be contacted to arrange a Virtual Centre Visit by Pearson to clarify points in the Centre Policy.

Senior leaders should use the sample content and template included in the annex, alongside the following guidance to develop a Centre Policy that is fit for purpose for their centre.

The final content will reflect the centre's actual practices. Sample content is provided in the Centre Policy Template and centres can amend the sample content as appropriate.

Content of the Centre Policy

It is recommended that the Centre Policy contains the following sections:

Statement of intent

This section of the Centre Policy should outline the purpose of the document, as appropriate to your centre.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in the determination of teacher assessed grades to read, understand and implement the Centre Policy. On behalf of the centre as a whole, the Head of Centre must confirm compliance with the policy through the submission of the Head of Centre Declaration.

Roles and responsibilities

This section of the Centre Policy should outline the personnel in your centre who have specific roles and responsibilities in the process of determining teacher assessed grades this year. For example, centres should consider the responsibilities of the following:

- Head of Centre
- Senior Leadership Team and heads of department
- Teachers / Specialist Teachers / SENCO
- Examinations Officer.

Training, support and guidance

This section of the Centre Policy should outline the training, support and guidance that your centre will provide to those determining teacher assessed grades this year.

Teachers involved in determining grades should be provided with centre-based training to help achieve consistency and fairness to all students. Teachers should engage fully with all training and support that has been provided by Pearson.

Additional support and, where appropriate, quality assurance measures should be provided by the head of department for newer, less experienced teachers or single person departments. This will be agreed on a case-by-case basis but may include, for example, Senior Leaders or the Head of Centre validating the outcomes after comparing with outcomes in associated subject areas where applicable. In the case of small subject departments, heads of department may choose to collaborate with neighbouring centres for additional support.

The use of appropriate evidence

This section of the Centre Policy should set out how much regard will be given to the Guidance to Teachers on Grading.

Determining teacher assessed grades

This section of the Centre Policy should outline the approach the centre will take to deriving student grades.

Full details of how teacher assessed grades should be awarded is provided in the guidance on grading for teacher's section.

Internal and external quality assurance

These sections of the Centre Policy should outline:

- the approach the centre will take to ensure internal standardisation of teacher assessed grades, to ensure consistency, fairness and objectivity of decisions; and
- the arrangements in place to comply with Pearson's arrangements for external quality assurance of centre-determined grades in a timely and effective way.

Full details of how internal quality assurance should be applied is provided in the Internal quality assurance process section. Further details of the requirements for external quality assurance are provided in the External quality assurance process section.

Comparison of grades to results for previous cohorts

This section of the Centre Policy should outline the approach the centre will take to describe how results from previous cohorts will be used to draw comparisons with teacher assessed grades in 2021.

After the grading judgements have been made, centres should compare the grades for this year's cohort to cohorts from previous years when exams have taken place (2017 to 2019).

Regard should be given to the section using data in this guide, about how to compare grades to previous years' distributions, the level of expected variability of outcomes over time, and relevant limitations of such comparisons, including where centres are small or entries in a subject are small, for instance.

Where there is significant divergence from the qualification-level, i.e. International A Level or International GCSE profiles attained in previous examined years, Heads of Centre should prepare a succinct commentary which addresses this disparity and highlights the reasons for it. This commentary will need to be available for subsequent review.

Where centres are entering students for the first time to a Pearson international qualification, it may be appropriate to compare outcomes with your previous provider. However, these are intended to provide a measure of insight into expected outcomes and should not be used as the basis for determining student grades in May/June.

Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

This section of the Centre Policy should outline the approach the centre will take to provide students with appropriate access arrangements and applying special consideration in particular Instances.

Further guidance relating to Access Arrangements and Special Consideration can be found in the section Reasonable adjustments, access arrangements and special consideration.

Addressing disruption

This section of the Centre Policy should outline the approach for addressing disruption experienced by students within the centre.

Grades will be based on teachers' assessments of the standard at which students are performing and will be based on the student's demonstrated knowledge and skills. It is important to remember that students do not have to have completed a mandated amount of content or demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding across every area of the specification as they would normally.

Teachers will grade each student on their performance in the subject content they have been taught and will base their assessment on the student's demonstrated knowledge and skills.

While there is no set requirement for the minimum amount of content that students must have been taught, Heads of Centres will be required to confirm that students have been taught sufficient content to form the basis for a grade.

If the content for any of the pieces of evidence have not been taught, then the teacher should remove that piece of evidence entirely or remove the questions that assess that specific content.

If teachers need to remove any evidence at this point, they should consider whether they need to and can replace it with anything else.

Objectivity

In this section of the policy, centres should outline the arrangements in place to ensure objectivity of decisions.

Each teacher assessed grade should be a holistic professional judgement, balancing

different sources of evidence and data. It is important that the centre's grading judgements are objective; they should only take account of existing records and available evidence of a student's knowledge, skills and abilities in relation to the subject.

Ofqual have published Information for centres about making objective judgements. In writing this section of the Centre Policy for UK centres, international centres may wish to refer to this guidance.

Recording decisions and retention of evidence and data

In this section of the policy, centres should outline the arrangements in place to record decisions, retain evidence and data.

Information about the retention of evidence can be found in the box on retention of evidence. Further guidance on the use of data can be found in the section on Using data to support the grading process.

Authenticating evidence

This section of the Centre Policy should outline the centre's approach to authenticating student evidence and ensuring that work used in support of the teacher assessed grade is the student's own.

Robust mechanisms should be in place to ensure that teachers are confident that work used as evidence is the students' own and that no inappropriate levels of support have been given to students to complete it, either within the centre or with external tutors.

Pearson will be investigating instances where it appears evidence is not authentic.

Confidentiality, Malpractice and Maladministration, and conflicts of interest.

These sections of the Centre Policy should outline:

- the measures in place to ensure confidentiality of the grades determined by the centre and to make students aware of the range of evidence on which those grades will be based;
- the measures in place to prevent malpractice and other breaches of exam regulations, and to deal with such cases when they occur;
- and the measures in place to address potential conflicts of interest.

Private Candidates

This section of the Centre Policy should outline your approach to working with Private Candidates to arrive at an appropriate grade.

Further guidance on Private Candidates can be found in the section – Guidance for exam centres accepting Private Candidates.

Results

This section of the Centre Policy should outline your approach to the receipt and issue of results to students and the provision of necessary advice and guidance.

Further guidance on Results can be found in the section on Results.

Appeals

This section of the Centre Policy should outline your approach to Appeals, to ensure that they are handled swiftly and effectively, and in line with Pearson's requirements.

The guidance on appeals provides an overview of the grounds and stages of the appeals process.

Guidance on grading for teachers

Heads of Centre should ensure that students have the opportunity to show the full breadth of their knowledge and understanding in each subject based on what they have been taught. It is important that grades represent a holistic, objective judgement based on evidence of each student's performance in each subject. Evidence should be used consistently across the class or cohort wherever possible. The evidence can be of different types and can come from across the course of study. This guidance should support the consideration of the different factors that need to be accounted for when making a judgement about the grade.

Centres can also refer to Ofqual's guidance, Information for centres about making objective judgements. Teachers are expected to have reviewed the grade descriptors and exemplification materials provided by Pearson before grading students.

The following steps may be helpful when making grading decisions.

Step 1: Consider what has been taught

Look at the specification that has been taught to consider:

- what content has been taught?
- what content has not been taught to this cohort because of the impact of the pandemic?
- has the content that has been taught been covered deeply or superficially?

The evidence used to make judgements must only include the appropriate assessment of content that has been taught.

Step 2: Collect the evidence

Consider what evidence there is of student performance, potentially collected over the course of study, to make a holistic judgement of each student's performance on a range of evidence relating to the qualification's specification content that they have been taught.

Centres taking International A Level and International GCSE can draw on the unseen assessments if they are using this form of evidence. In addition to this, recommended evidence for heads of centre, heads of department and teachers on the submission of teacher assessed grades: May/June 2021 also includes:

- Student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by Pearson, including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers.

- Non-exam assessment (NEA) work (often referred to as coursework), even if this has not been fully completed.
- Student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that follow the same format as Pearson materials and have been marked in a way that reflects mark schemes. This can include:
 - substantial class or homework (including work that took place during remote learning);
 - internal tests taken by students; and/or
 - mock exams taken over the course of study.
- Records of each student's standard of work over the course of study.

In some limited circumstances, where other evidence is not available or possible to create, an oral assessment may be an appropriate form of evidence. This form of assessment may be needed, for example, where a candidate has little available evidence, is unable to attend an assessment in person and it is not possible to arrange a remote written assessment. If this is used, the assessment should be recorded so that it can be referred to later during internal and external quality assurance and, where necessary, the centre review and appeals process. The focus of the assessment should be to assess the student's knowledge and skills as required by the specification.

Assessments used might be produced by Pearson, third parties or they might be teacher-devised tasks.

It is not necessary for every aspect of the specification to be assessed to arrive at a grade. The aim is to include evidence that assesses the student's ability across a reasonable range of subject content reflecting, where possible, all assessment objectives, as set out in qualification specifications. Consider whether the evidence available is sufficient to support the judgement that is being made. If not, what additional assessment might be needed? Could the assessment materials provided by Pearson be used to supplement or help to confirm performance of previous assessments?

The evidence used should be consistent across the cohort, and the decision as to approach should sit with the centre. There may be exceptions to this if a student has missed some teaching, or one or more assessments, for valid reasons. Again, any exceptions to the approach must be a centre decision, not a decision by individual students. For most students in the cohort, consistency in the use of evidence is expected, and a differentiated approach is not warranted. Each student must be made aware of the evidence that is going to be used and understand that the range of evidence used to determine a grade is not negotiable.

Although there is no minimum requirement of content that students must have been taught, Heads of Centre will be required to confirm that students have been taught sufficient content to form the basis for a grade.

Retention of evidence

It is important that evidence on which a student's grade is based, including copies of the student's work where available and any mark records, is retained safely by the centre; it will be needed to:

- support the centre's determination of students' grades;
- the internal and external quality assurance processes; and
- the appeals process.

Scanned copies of handwritten evidence or other digital documentation will be acceptable. Centres must also retain any information relating to a student's access arrangements, or personal circumstances affecting student performance, which might need to be taken into account during the process of determining a student's grade.

Centres should keep records of student evidence and a record of any discussions with students around the evidence on which grades will be based readily accessible so it can be found if a student wishes to appeal their grade.

If some evidence of students' work is not available, the marks can still be used in determining the final grade. The evidence that is available can be considered by Pearson if the student decides to appeal.

Step 3: Evaluate the quality of the evidence

Ofqual's guidance document, on Information for heads of centre, heads of department and teachers on the submission of teacher assessed grades, gives guidance on how to balance the different sources of evidence when making a grading decision. In addition to that guidance, consideration should be given to the following:

- Coverage of assessment objectives;
- Coverage of content;
- Authenticity – is the evidence the student's own work?
- Level of control – was it taken in timed conditions? Was there an opportunity for redrafting? Was it supervised?

- Marking – how much support was available when applying the mark scheme? What internal standardisation processes have been applied?

While there is no one type of evidence that takes precedence, evidence gathered in conditions that enable confidence about the authenticity of the students' work will give more confidence in the overall holistic judgement. More recent evidence is likely to be more representative of student performance, although there may be exceptions.

Step 4: Establish whether the proposed range of evidence is appropriate for all students

Wherever possible the same range of evidence should be used for all students in a class or cohort, although there may be individual students for whom the proposed evidence is not appropriate. The rationale for any exceptions must be documented by the centre.

Each student must only be graded on their performance based on the subject content they have been taught. Before finalising grading decisions, teachers should satisfy themselves that each student has been taught the content in line with the proposed evidence. Students must be told what evidence is going to be used, so that they have the opportunity to raise any genuine and valid concerns. It is recommended that any student's views are recorded and documented along with reasons for the final decision.

Some students may have missed a section of teaching due to valid reasons such as bereavement or long-term illness, or it may be the case that reasonable adjustments or access arrangements weren't in place for a particular assessment. Where such adjustments/arrangements weren't in place, teachers must consider whether to either:

1. use the evidence when assigning a grade on the basis that it is the most appropriate evidence available, and disregarding it would disadvantage the student – if this is the case, the impact must be accounted for at stage 5 (see below), and the rationale recorded; or
2. use alternative evidence to replace assessments that are not appropriately representative of individual students' performance and if so, document decisions appropriately.

Step 5: Assign a grade

Teachers' grading decisions will be subject to a school or college's overall quality assurance processes.

Grades should be based on a holistic, objective judgement of the evidence of the students' performance on the subject content they have been taught. Consider the quality of the work in relation to the assessment materials used as well as the grade descriptors and

grading exemplification available to help reach a final grade. These materials exemplify the established performance standard that is maintained each year by Pearson and is to be applied in grading judgements in May/June. This will help to ensure that there is a common basis to all teacher assessed grades. It should be no easier or more difficult for a student to achieve a grade this year based on their performance than in previous years.

Decisions about potential must not factor in the student's grades. For example, if all the evidence collected for a student is of grade 6 and 7 standard, there would be no reason to consider providing that student any other grades. Further guidance on making holistic grading decisions is provided in the supporting document: Worked examples to assist teachers making grading decisions.

Finally, teachers should reflect on their judgements. Centres can refer to Ofqual's guidance, Information for centres about making objective judgements in relation to awarding qualifications in May/June 2021.

Additional points about grading:

- Ensure that the grades represent a holistic judgement. The grading process this year is not intended to be a formulaic calculation, and should account for the context in which each student's evidence has been produced.
- At International GCSE, to achieve grade 1, students' evidence will show that they have demonstrated engagement with sufficient content, achieved some credit across elements of the specification content, and achieved credit in some assessment objectives. Where the evidence for a student does not support this, the student should be graded unclassified (U). At International AS and A level, students should be graded unclassified (U) if their evidence does not meet the minimum requirements of most of the statements within the grade E descriptor.
- Reasonable adjustments for disabled students and access arrangements should have been in place when evidence was generated. Where they were not, centres should consider using other evidence or take it into account when coming to their judgement. Where appropriate, this should include input from relevant specialist teachers and other professionals and it must be appropriately recorded/ documented.
- Special consideration requests will not apply in the usual way in May/June because students will not be taking their exams. However, where illness or other personal circumstances might have temporarily affected performance, for example in mock exams, centres should bear that in mind when making their judgements (see

stage 4, above). Another opportunity may be made available to replace that evidence with another piece where there is a justified rationale and recorded for doing so.

- Note that teachers are not making grading decisions in isolation. Once grades have been assigned, centres' internal quality assurance process will ensure that standards are appropriate prior to sign-off by the Head of Centre.

Using grade descriptors and exemplification

Grade descriptors and grading exemplification must be used to make holistic judgements about student performance.

The grade descriptors

Grade descriptors are general statements that give a high-level reflection of student performance characteristics. They are based on the assessment objectives for the relevant specification.

Assessment objectives are found in the relevant subject specification.

Using the descriptors and exemplification

A holistic judgement about the grade will be made based on the evidence.

Using the grade descriptors

Grade descriptors will help identify how the range of evidence for a student aligns with the expected performance standards.

Review the evidence. Read through the grade descriptors. Match the student's evidence to the suitable statements within the grade descriptors.

A student's collection of evidence may contain characteristics from different grade descriptors. For example, a student may show characteristics of a Grade 6 in one area, and characteristics of a Grade 2 in another area. For assistance with making grading decisions in such situations, please refer to Worked examples to assist teachers making grading decisions.

These grade descriptors do not highlight performance characteristics for all grades.

Teachers should determine the grade most appropriate for the standard of work produced by a student and must consider the full range of grades available when doing so. When considering which grade is most appropriate, consider:

- Each descriptor contains several statements describing features of typical performance at a grade, against which a student's evidence can be reviewed. If a

student's evidence securely matches the statements in a specific grade (e.g. Grade 6), consider the next descriptor above (e.g. Grade 8).

- If a student's evidence goes beyond aspects of the statements at grade 6 in some areas, but does not match any (or few) of the statements in the higher descriptor (e.g. Grade 8), then the teacher can provide the intermediary grade, where one exists (e.g. Grade 7).
- The same logic can apply across the grade range (e.g. Grade D for International AS and A level).
- Where a student's evidence has been graded, this may provide further assurance for the decision on a student's grade.

At International GCSE, if a student's performance is stronger than the grade descriptors for a grade 8, centres should consider assigning a grade 9.

At International A level, if a student's performance is stronger than the grade descriptors for a grade A, centres should consider assigning a grade A*.

Evidence should be compared with the exemplification provided by Pearson. Exemplification will not cover all areas of the specification. The same standard, as illustrated in the exemplification, must be applied to other pieces of student evidence.

Reaching a grade judgement

Professional experience and judgment will form a key part of this process. Due consideration must be given to all the evidence collected for each student.

Centres should make a holistic judgement where evidence crosses grade descriptors, balancing coverage of differently graded work across the course of study and accounting for conditions in which evidence was collected.

The use of tracking data and predicted grades in reaching grading decisions

One source of data which is available to centres is tracking systems, that provide target grades or predicted grades based on assessment inputs and data modelling. As the policy direction is that the final grade is derived solely based on performances produced by students, a grade derived based on a predicted trajectory or target grade is not permitted.

For example:

- if a student is currently performing consistently at a grade B standard, they should be awarded a grade B; and
- if a student's tracking data shows improvement over the year, having produced grade C level work in the first half of the year, and grade B work thereafter, the student should be awarded a grade B, even if a tracking system suggests that the candidate could potentially have achieved a grade A based on their trajectory.

Using data to support the grading process

Introduction

Used appropriately, data on historical student and centre performance can help support the internal quality assurance process for assigning grades. The purpose of reviewing data on past performance is not to attempt to determine a student or a centre's outcomes in May/June but as one source of evidence from examination series which operated as normal, that can inform teachers' professional judgement on the level of attainment achieved by their students.

Accordingly, centres are advised to consider the profile of their results in previous years in which exams have taken place. Centres can undertake a high-level check once grades have been assigned to students, to ensure that they have applied a consistent standard in their assessment of the 2021 cohort compared to previous years in which exams took place.

Centres must ensure that grade judgements have been recorded for students in the current assessments before considering historical records of mark data and grade distributions for students in previous assessments at the centre.

Given that for International A Levels, unit level teacher assessed grades are being submitted, Pearson strongly recommend using the unit aggregation guidance to add up your unit level grade judgements to reflect on what this means for the overall qualification grade a student would receive if they are due to certificate.

New centres will not have any historical data, so will need to focus attention on other aspects of quality assurance. If a centre has changed status, merged, or split in recent years, it will need to be taken into account when considering what data to collate.

The use of data in reviewing overall centre outcomes

Centres should be aware of the distribution of grades awarded to students in previous June series where exams have taken place. However, grading judgements should not be driven by this data. Historical grade data should only be considered after grading judgements have been made.

What data needs to be considered?

Centres are advised to compile information on the grades awarded to students in past June series in which exams took place (2017 to 2019), where they can be confident that a consistent national standard was applied. The usefulness of this information will depend on the following:

- The size of the centre's cohort from year to year – the larger the cohort, the more useful the data could be.
- The stability of the centre's overall grade outcomes from year to year – the more stable the outcomes are, the more confident the centre can be that variation would likely be low in 2021, had exams taken place.

This information should be compiled for each grade, for each subject/qualification and for each centre as a whole, as it is important to consider both subject and centre level variation during the internal quality assurance review. It is likely that the size of the cohort and the stability of the outcomes will be higher for all subjects combined than for a single subject.

Prior to 2019, International GCSE students may have received a mixture of A*–G and 9–1 grades. Where necessary, consider outcomes at the points of alignment between the two grade scales: 7/A, 4/C and 1/G when compiling historical data. [This guide](#) from Ofqual illustrates how the grade scales relate to each other.

When collating the information, centres should compile and review data across multiple years even if a centre changed awarding organisation in a subject. Grades from International GCSEs (for example, in mathematics) should be included if a centre offered such qualifications previously.

Centres may also wish to bring together other data sources that may help quality assure the grades determined in May/June 2021.

When aggregating outcomes across all subjects, centres should consider omitting subjects that are no longer offered from the historical data, to provide a more valid comparison with the grades derived in 2021. Where centres have taken on private candidates in previous series, and/or in the current series, they should generally be excluded from this data.

Looking at centre's outcomes over a three-year period in which exams took place (2017 to 2019), at subject and at centre level, may be a good approach to benchmarking outcomes for 2021.

This will help when considering year-on-year fluctuations in outcomes. In instances where there are fewer years of historical data, however, this is still likely to be useful.

The June 2020 series should not be used for benchmarking purposes, as the last consistent set of international standards was set in 2019. The centre assessment grades used as a basis for final outcomes in June 2020 were based on a different consideration to that for the current series.

In June 2020, centres were asked to provide the grade that they considered the student would most likely have achieved had exams taken place. In 2021, grades must be based on the evidence produced by students. Therefore centres should consider how 2020 outcomes related to the centre's historical outcomes before referring to them as part of the internal review.

Internal quality assurance: using the data to inform the overall review of outcomes

After all grading decisions have been made, centres should review the aggregate cumulative grade distribution for each subject, and qualification type (e.g. International GCSE, International A level). If outcomes are much higher than in previous years, or much lower, the reasons for it should be considered.

Identify evidence for any recurring trends in the profile of performance at the centre over previous years, such as strong results for some subjects or specific student groups. Comparisons should be contextualised with other information at centre level, for example data that suggests the cohort in a particular subject, or overall, is more or less able than in previous years (where exams have taken place) – for example, tracking data, prior assessment data, or a change in the profile of the cohort.

Also consider the grades awarded to different groups of students, including those with protected characteristics, as well as considering gender and disadvantage. Is each group's grade profile different from previous years, or compared with other groups? If so, why is that the case? Take particular care when assessing patterns of grades for small groups, where a single candidate may have a large effect.

It is recommended that a centre makes a record of these comparisons and the rationale for any variations as part of the internal quality assurance process, in order that it can be discussed with Pearson during any external quality assurance checks.

It is possible that, following this review, centres may need to reflect on the grading standard that your teachers have applied in one or more subjects. Do not, however, apply any historical insights inconsistently to students within a subject. If an issue is identified which cuts across several or most subjects, a review across all subjects may be needed. At all times, however,

remember that it is the evidence of students' work that must form the basis for each student's grade. For example, the fact that no student at a centre might have achieved an A* at International A level, or a grade 1 at International GCSE, in previous years is not a valid barrier to awarding these grades to a student who has demonstrated attainment to that level.

Once the review is complete

If a centre is selected for a quality assurance visit, they may be asked to provide a statement explaining the rationale of the outcomes by subject and/or qualification type level. This must include details of how they compare in previous years in which exams were sat, and an explanation for this – for example, if the centre's cohort were known to be particularly strong or weak relative to previous years; any changes at the centre that might have contributed to the level of attainment achieved by students in particular subjects; or the size of the cohort means that comparisons between years are considered unreliable.

Guidance on the use of additional assessment support and unseen materials for 2021

Pearson will provide unseen materials for use in May/June 2021. Centres can opt to have Pearson mark the unseen materials, or self-mark the unseen assessments.

The materials will be available for all International GCSE, International AS and A levels, with the exception of Art and Design;

Pearson recognises there is a need to balance flexibility based on the needs of the centre which is why Pearson is offering both controlled, exam style environment for use of these materials and the under controlled, non-exam style environment.

Centres should consider the option chosen in helping to define the Pearson support that they may opt to use.

Using the additional assessment support and unseen materials

Option	Pearson support to consider
Use of unseen materials on the secure release date. Marked by Pearson.	Unseen papers (secure) Grade descriptors
Use of unseen materials on the secure release date. Marked by centres.	Unseen papers (secure) Pearson mark schemes Grade descriptors
Unseen materials (after the release date) taken supervised in centre, and marked in centre. Supplemented with at least two pieces of extra evidence – use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.	Unseen papers Pearson mark schemes Grade descriptors Additional assessment materials with mapping grids
Unseen materials (after the release date) taken in non-supervised conditions and marked in centre. Supplemented with at least two pieces of extra evidence – use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.	Unseen papers Pearson mark schemes Grade descriptors Additional assessment materials with mapping grids
At least three pieces of other evidence – use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.	Grade descriptors Additional assessment materials with mapping grids

Unseen assessments

Key dates

- **26 April:** Unseen Assessment Schedule begins
- **4 May:** Additional Assessment Support (mapping grids, grade descriptors - released under padlock).
- **14 May:** Unseen Assessment Schedule final day
- **17 May:** Additional Assessment Support (mark schemes to accompany - released under padlock)
- **26 May to 18 June:** Grade submission window opens
- **4 June:** Additional Assessment Support final mark schemes made available

For centres using the marking service

Centres to opt in to marking service via Edexcel Online: Available by 12 April latest (communication will be sent directly to centres when this is available)

- **26 April:** Deadline for centres to opt in to marking service via Edexcel Online:
- **1 June:** All materials to be returned to Pearson for marking deadline
- **11 June:** All marks to be returned to centres deadline

For centres who are self marking

- **17 May:** Draft mark schemes for unseen assessment (released under padlock);
- **4 June:** Final mark schemes made available (released under padlock);

Using the unseen assessments

The unseen materials are derived from live papers intended to be sat in May/June 2021;

The unseen material can be used in two ways; the first being as unseen materials presented to students in a controlled situation, in a specified timeframe, for students to respond to; or after the specified timeframe, in the knowledge that they may be familiar to students, used as one part of the evidence to help determine a grade for each student. Use of the unseen materials is optional (unless mandated by ministries) and the extent to which these materials are relied upon to inform decision-making may vary across centres. They are intended to provide evidence of knowledge or to validate a previous assessment.

If Centres wish to utilise the unseen materials in a controlled situation Centres should follow the 'Unseen Assessment Schedule' which runs from Monday 26 April to Friday 14 May. The

dates provided in this schedule indicate when the paper can be sat from. The assessments can be sat from 6am BST on the designated day. There are no defined timeslots for these papers to be sat during this day to give centres best flexibility in organising the sitting of assessments. Please note, until this date Pearson expects centres to store all materials securely, as would be done in a normal exam series.

After a paper's designated day in the 'Unseen Assessment Schedule' has passed, these materials may then be used in a variety of ways, at any point after they are released. For example, they could be set as a test, including remotely if required, or as a class or homework activity. However, if this work is going to contribute towards the determination of a student's grade, it must represent their own work.

The unseen materials may be used in the form provided or tailored to better match the content that has been taught. Teachers can decide which activities should be completed, with the task being set, the student work collected and then marked using the accompanying mark scheme - drawing on other available support materials where provided. Centres should have arrangements in place to ensure consistent application of the mark schemes across different departments and/or sites (as described in Internal quality assurance process).

A student's normal access arrangements should be considered and implemented when work is set, especially if it is to be taken under timed, test conditions. Please see the section on Reasonable adjustments, access arrangements and special consideration of this document. If Centres have a student requiring a modified paper then please ensure this is requested ahead of the 'Unseen Assessment Window'.

Unseen materials mark schemes for centre who are self-marking

Accompanying mark schemes will be published with the unseen materials. These mark schemes will be published in two phases. Phase one, will see the draft mark scheme released before any marking has taking place through the Pearson marking service. Once marking has taken place, Pearson will publish a final mark scheme which will take account of actual student responses.

Unseen materials Marking Service

To support the use of unseen materials Pearson will be offering an optional marking service to centres where expert examiners will mark student responses. Once marked, papers will be returned to centres for consideration when deriving student grades. It is important to note that Pearson will not return grades to centres, only marks. Additionally, Pearson will provide support to centres in order to ensure understanding of how the mark aligns with performance descriptors so that there is confidence in understanding the mark, and

ultimately the grade. This will be an optional service and it is entirely up to centres as to whether they want to opt in or not. If centres would prefer to mark the materials themselves then Pearson will also provide mark schemes and training materials so that they can do so with confidence.

Scope

The marking service will be available for all examined components, including those exams that are sat in a window such as International GCSE Computer Science. Pearson will also be providing the marking service for International A Level Modern Foreign Languages speaking components. The marking service will only be available for the unseen assessment materials.

The marking service will not be available for any endorsement or non-examined components, such as International GCSE English coursework or Art & Design.

What will centres do?

Centres will need to opt in for the marking service - this will need to be indicated within Edexcel Online. Registering interest does not commit centres to using it. The data captured will be used to understand the uptake of the marking service to enable operational planning and provide the best support possible.

Centres will need to keep all unseen materials secure until the scheduled date, following the same process as they would in a live exam series.

Students will then sit the unseen materials - this can either be done on the scheduled date or at a later date, the marking service will be available regardless. Students must use the hardcopy materials in the format sent to centres to be eligible for the marking service.

Centres must return materials as soon as the assessment has been taken. It is crucial that materials are returned once the assessment has been taken so as to maximise the time available for these materials to be marked and marks then returned to centres. As indicated above, the latest date that materials can be received by Pearson for the marking service is 1 June.

Centres should only return completed attendance registers where they would like to make use of the marking service, indicating any students as absent if they are not returning a paper for every candidate entered. If centres are not using the marking service then these registers can be disregarded.

Centres should use, where possible, DHL as this will enable the tracking of returned parcels.

Centres that would like to use the marking service and require returns bags will need to order

the bags by completing the additional stationery request form. This is because Pearson will not be providing the usual stationery such as bags for returning scripts.

Centres should return material via the Digital Learner Work Platform (please see below) for the following components and more detail will be communicated to centres directly on how this platform will work for each unit specifically:

- WFR01/01
- WFR03/01
- WGN01/01
- WGN03/01
- WIT14/01
- WSP01/01
- WSP03/01

Digital Learner Work Transfer

Digital Learner Work Transfer is a secure online application which enables Centres to upload learner work to Pearson for assessment. Using Learner Work Transfer ensures that assessment material is kept safe, cannot be lost in transit, and arrives with us promptly for assessment.

Pearson will provide guidance materials and training videos on how to use the Learner Work Transfer system.

What will Pearson do?

Pearson will send hard copies of the unseen materials for each paper a centre has made an entry for. This dispatch will begin around the 9th April and materials should be in centres in advance of each paper's scheduled date.

Pearson will also supply centres with Attendance Registers. The registers will also include returns labels for those wishing to return papers for marking.

Pearson will scan all materials returned which will then be marked by Pearson's expert examiners.

Pearson will publish mark schemes that have been used for the marking service so that any centres internally marking these assessments have access to the same mark scheme.

Pearson will return all marks to centres via Edexcel Online. Further details with regards to the timing of this process will be communicated at a later date.

Pearson will provide a statement of expected item / paper performance for each qualification. This statement will outline previous grade boundaries and patterns of performance together with an observation from the Pearson marking service.

Understanding the outcomes from unseen materials

The information within the unseen materials are focused on the full breadth and depth of a specification, much like a normal examination paper. As this is the first time these papers have been sat and no student performance on the questions captured, there are no grade boundaries available. There is no requirement for the mark from an assessment to be converted into a grade, the mark can be considered alongside other pieces of evidence. Any gaps in the range of evidence should be considered when the materials are selected.

Additional assessment materials

Key dates

Pearson's existing assessment materials (including past papers and examiners' reports) will all be available as normal. In addition, the following materials will be made available to centres:

- **4 May:** Additional Assessment Support (mapping grids, grade descriptors - released under padlock).
- **26 May to 18 June:** Grade submission window opens

The additional support will, where available, include exemplar responses and links to other information which will help with using and marking these assessment materials, including past examiner reports.

The additional assessment materials mark schemes and mapping grids may be used at any point from 4 May until the date grades are submitted to Pearson. Sufficient time must be allowed to follow each centre's internal quality assurance processes before grades are submitted to Pearson by 18 June.

Using the additional assessment materials

The additional assessment materials are an optional part of the range of evidence that can be used to decide on each student's grade. The questions are organised by topic/theme/skills or demand as detailed on the mapping grid. The content included in the mapping grids does not include the question therefore allowing for a more flexible and adaptable approach to assessing your students, enabling Centres to select appropriate content to use with your students. These materials will assist Centres in assessing student performance in areas not assessed elsewhere. Their use will allow students to demonstrate their performance towards the end of their course of study.

The mapping grids will be drawn from a variety of past examination questions; they do not cover any NEA components;

- Content included in the mapping documentation will be pulled from past papers currently in the public area of Pearson's website (classified as 'published' content) and past papers currently under padlock to Pearson (classified as 'unpublished' content);
- map coverage of assessment objectives, content and/or skills covered within each set of questions;
- direct centres to where the question originally came from, allowing them to access further support materials as required; and

- indicate where pre-existing modified versions of items are available (see later section on modifying material).

Please note, the number, breadth and depth of the mapping grids will vary between subjects, and reflect the characteristics of each qualification (e.g. where there is only one exam component there will be fewer questions in the mapping grid than for a subject which is usually assessed entirely by examination). However, the assessments will draw on the equivalent of three series' worth of examination material, as a minimum.

For qualifications with tiered assessments or questions with variable levels of demand, the assessment set should allow for differentiation between the performance range of the cohort or class. For example, if an assessment is very easy, many of the students may get full marks, which may not help in the grading decisions.

How and when should the mapping grids be used?

The information included in the mapping grids may be used in a variety of ways, at any point after they are released. For example, they could be set as a test, including remotely if required, or as a class or homework activity. However, if this work is going to contribute towards the determination of a student's grade, it must represent their own work.

In particular the mapping grid material could be used to collate short assessments which:

- give students the opportunity to show what they know, understand or can do in an area of content that has been taught but not yet assessed;
- give students an opportunity to show improvement e.g. to validate or replace an existing piece of evidence; and
- support consistency of judgement between teachers or classes within a centre by giving students the same task to complete where appropriate (and with Reasonable Adjustments made where required).

Although the mapping grids are organised by topic/theme/skills or demand, there is the option to tailor the content within these grids in line with the content that has been taught. Different materials may be combined and/or elements that are not required can be removed. For example, if a multi-part question includes a part which focuses on an element of the specification that hasn't been covered, it may be removed and the marks available reduced accordingly.

How should the extra assessment materials be administered?

These materials are not exams and they do not need to be completed under examination conditions. However, the extent to which students should know what activity they will

complete in advance should be considered. Additionally, if it is decided that all students in a cohort sit the same activity under test conditions, this should happen on the same day to maximise fairness for all students in a centre.

The grouped questions could be set as a classroom test or as homework. Activities could be administered remotely, for example if a student is self-isolating or conditions require it. These are flexible activities, but students' performance should be considered in the light of the conditions in which the activity was completed.

Where an activity is completed under supervision, for example, the time the student has spent on the task, what materials have helped them and whether they have received any additional support, is known. These facts should be considered in assessing student performance and recorded as appropriate.

A student's normal access arrangements should be considered and implemented when work is set, especially if it is to be taken under timed, test conditions. Please see the section on Reasonable adjustments, access arrangements and special consideration of this document.

Once all the students' work has been marked, if there is reason to believe an outcome doesn't reflect a student's usual level of performance, because of a specific circumstance – for example because of the conditions the student completed the work in – it doesn't have to be included in your range of evidence. Other evidence could be used, or the student could be given another opportunity to complete a different piece of work. Reference should be made to the Guidance on grading for teachers to understand whether evidence is sufficient to award a grade. Reasons for any decisions must be recorded.

Understanding the outcomes from extra assessment materials

The content provided within the mapping document are not exams, nor are they designed to play the role of exams. The material is derived from past paper content and it is understood that students may have seen some material previously. The purpose of any materials should be considered before they are included in the range of evidence. It would be inappropriate to advise students on the content of any up-coming assessment. If a student has recently completed a particular activity there may be little benefit to them completing the same or a very similar activity again.

The information within the mapping grids is focused on discrete areas of a specification and may vary in breadth and demand depending on the topic. Therefore, unlike full past papers, there are no grade boundaries available. There is no requirement for the mark from an assessment to be converted into a grade, the mark should be considered alongside other pieces of evidence. Any gaps in the range of evidence should be considered when the

materials are selected. For example, reference could be made to the grade descriptors for the subject and target a particular aspect of the grade descriptor to ensure the appropriateness of the grading decision. This would be particularly relevant where an area of the specification referenced in the descriptor has been taught, but not yet evidenced.

Reasonable adjustments, access arrangements and special consideration

Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs), SEND leaders and assessors have previously been advised to continue to process online applications as if examinations were taking place in May/June. This will formalise the arrangements for the student's assessments and will ensure consistency with the Equality Act 2010.

An online application may be processed after 31 March 2021 provided the student meets the published criteria for the arrangement and the full supporting evidence is available for inspection. Every effort must be made to ensure that students' approved access arrangements and/or reasonable adjustments are put in place for any assessments used to determine teacher assessed grades. This applies regardless of whether the access arrangement/reasonable adjustment was approved online or delegated to centres. This includes such things as the use of a reader or supervised rest breaks.

The use of access arrangements/reasonable adjustments must be discussed with specialist teachers (where appropriate), students and parents/carers in advance of any additional evidence being gathered. This will ensure that all parties are aware of the arrangements the centre is making to ensure accessibility of the assessments.

Teachers will be required to confirm whether the approved access arrangement/reasonable adjustment was in place for assessments which will be used to determine the student's grade. This must be recorded on the Assessment Record. It is better not to use evidence if access arrangements were not in place when they were meant to be.

Centres must securely hold on file all evidence used to determine the teacher assessed grades including access arrangements/reasonable adjustments provided, until the published deadline for appeals has passed. However, if a student's result is subject to an on-going appeal, malpractice investigation or other results enquiry after the published deadline for appeals, then the evidence must be retained until this has been completed.

If the access arrangement/reasonable adjustment was not in place, the teacher must record the reason for this and be able demonstrate that this was taken into account when making their final judgement.

The range of evidence is flexible and can be tailored to an individual student according to coverage of the specification.

Centres are encouraged to share all access arrangements evidence where a student is transitioning between centres. The entering centre must check the paperwork and ensure that the arrangement is still appropriate, practicable and reasonable.

Special consideration

The usual process of centres submitting special consideration applications to Pearson for qualifications will not apply in May/June.

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

Where this is not possible and a temporary illness, a temporary injury or some other event outside of the student's control may have affected their performance in assessments which will be used to determine a grade, teachers should take this into account and document how they have done so. Special consideration cannot be applied due to lost teaching and learning. This can be addressed through the flexibility of the range of evidence centres may use to determine students' grades. Students should only be assessed on the content of the specification covered. Centres must be satisfied that the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a student's ability to demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.

Centres must record how they determined the impact of the misfortune. Students must be reminded to raise any mitigating circumstances which warrant special consideration. It is important that students raise these issues as soon as possible, ideally at the time of the assessment and prior to the submission of the teacher assessed grade.

Guidance for centres on modifying sets of questions.

Pearson believes that centres are best placed to modify the sets of questions provided as additional assessment materials to cater for individual student needs. Centres will know the needs of their students and their normal ways of working. Centres will be experienced in modifying assessment materials for use in the classroom, for internal tests and mock examinations.

Pearson has indicated where modifications have been created for the organised content on the mapping grids. Centres should use past papers where possible to access these previously modified materials. Past modified question papers can be accessed on the [past papers page](#) on the Pearson website.

Unseen Content for International GCSE and International A level where Centres have ordered a modified paper through Pearson Access Arrangements Online (PAAO) will be made available on Secure Download Service (SDS) for large print and interactive versions. Braille and tactile will be supplied in hardcopy.

Appropriate adjustments for students with visual impairments

Centres will need to ensure that they meet their obligations as per the Equality Act 2010. Appropriate reasonable adjustments should be made to any additional assessment materials used in centres. To ensure this, SENCOs should continue to liaise with teaching and other centre staff to ensure the most suitable arrangements for students with visual impairments. Appropriate adjustments might include:

- the use of a computer reader for tests which are predominately text based
- the use of a reader
- enlarging assessment material on screen
- the use of a 'colour namer', particularly in a subject such as Geography where there are maps.

Advice on providing written or verbal descriptions of images

- Before providing a written or verbal description of a picture, remember to read the question that goes with the image. This will help to describe only the necessary detail.
- Always give the context to the image. For example, "this is an article from a website about running" or "this is a photograph of snowy mountains."
- Always describe what you see in the picture. For example, "there is a picture of a woman running. She is wearing a tracksuit and trainers." Remember to keep your sentences short and name the things that are needed to answer the question.
- Always avoid interpretation or assumption. For example, say "a woman and child" rather than a "mother and daughter."

Advice on creating sets of questions from Pearson's past papers

- Centres will be able to copy and paste text and questions and then ensure the font is the correct size, bold and in Arial. It is recommended that for questions with

mathematical fractions, equations, tables, graphs and images the relevant questions are printed from the past papers. Remember to have all material per question from the question paper, source booklet and diagram book.

- A4 18 point bold can be enlarged to A3 24 point bold.
- A4 24 point bold can be enlarged to A3 36 point bold.
- If material is to be used with read/write text to speech technology, for text questions Centres will be able to copy and paste as above. For those questions with mathematical fractions, equations, tables, graphs and images, it is recommended that centres create the normal way of working for their students as they would for classroom materials.

The mark scheme

Avoid changing the mark scheme. Consistency of approach is essential. Any errors made, omissions of questions or information needed to answer the question, may have implications at the appeals stage.

Support from Pearson

Pearson will continue to provide our usual support to centres with advice and guidance on how to modify the additional assessment material resources for use in classroom Assessments.

Pearson recognises that the additional assessment materials are being provided in a different way to past examination material and that these may present an issue for some teachers with visual impairments. In these cases, centres should contact us and Pearson will provide extra support and guidance.

Where centres feel unable to modify the sets of questions, Pearson will work with them to find an appropriate solution which in exceptional circumstances may include the production of modified versions, whether in a modified enlarged format or in Braille.

Centres should ideally contact us as soon as possible and no later than 30 April 2021.

Pearson will endeavour to produce the modified materials within ten working days of the request being received. This will be dependent on the complexity of the subject and the discussions between us and the centre.

Please contact additional_requirements@pearson.com

Submission of grades

Pearson will contact centres with further information in the coming weeks. The final date for entering grades will be on 18 June 2021.

Pearson will provide details on how to input candidates' grades in the collection system.

What to consider when submitting grades

Pearson will ask for the following information:

- A grade for each candidate
- In the case of tiered International GCSE subjects, schools and colleges should provide grades that reflect their tier of entry.

A teacher can include a 'U' (ungraded).

Pearson will collect grade decisions for the endorsements in spoken language in International GCSE English Language and practicals in International A-level Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics at the same time as teacher assessed grades. Pearson will confirm their individual arrangements to centres.

Head of Centre declaration

A declaration by the Head of Centre is required to finalise the submission of grades. Further information on submission will be provided along with details of grade submission.

Head of Centre Declaration

A declaration should be completed by the Head of Centre.

I confirm that:

- these grades have been checked for accuracy, reviewed by a second member of staff and are accurate and represent the professional judgements made by my staff
- entries were appropriate for each candidate in that students entered were those already studying the course, and each candidate has no more than one entry per subject. Information for heads of centre, heads of department and teachers on the submission of teacher assessed grades: May/June 2021
- my centre has met the requirements set out by Pearson for internal quality assurance
- I am satisfied that each student's grade is based on an appropriately broad range of evidence, including evidence from other centres, providers or specialist teachers if relevant, and is their own work
- each student has been taught (or, in the case of private candidates, has studied) an appropriate amount of content to form the basis for a grade
- awarding organisation requirements have been met for any private candidates
- access arrangements and reasonable adjustments were provided with appropriate input from the SENCo and other specialists (and where they were not, that has been taken into account)
- I and my staff have made objective judgements, judgements have not been influenced by pressure from students or parents/carers, and I am confident that the judgements are fair
- all relevant student evidence and records are available for inspection, as necessary

Head of Centre Name: _____

Centre Number: _____

Centre Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Guidance for exam centres accepting Private Candidates

Information relating to Private Candidates can be found in its own specific [guidance document](#).

Malpractice

Pearson greatly appreciates all of the hard work that centres will undertake in setting out and implementing their processes to determine grades. Centres are required to submit grades that have been determined in line with published guidance and their own Centre Policy.

The decision to not go ahead with exams in May/June 2021 means that the causes and drivers for malpractice will be different to those in a normal examination series. However, malpractice can still occur through genuine error or intent, particularly around the determination of grades. A minority of centre staff may fail to appropriately adhere to the guidance in determining grades and some students might attempt to gain an unfair advantage.

To support centres in these challenging times Pearson has set out below some of the circumstances in which Pearson will investigate potential malpractice concerns. Please note that the list is not intended to be exhaustive and there may be other instances of potential malpractice which will require investigation.

Centres/centre staff

Pearson's Investigations team will investigate credible allegations of malpractice or issues reported from our monitoring processes that raise concerns about a failure to follow the published requirements for determining grades. Examples include:

- Exam entries are created for students who had not studied the course of entry or had not intended to enter for May/June 2021.
- Grades created for students who have not been taught sufficient content to provide the basis for that grade.
- A teacher deliberately and inappropriately disregarding the centre's published policy when determining grades.
- A teacher fabricating evidence of candidate performance to support an inflated grade.
- A teacher deliberately providing inappropriate levels of support before or during an assessment, including deliberate disclosure of mark schemes and assessment materials, to support an inflated grade.
- A teacher opening unseen assessment materials ahead of the scheduled date.
- A teacher intentionally submitting inflated grades.

- A failure to retain evidence used in the determination of grades in accordance with the Pearson grading guidance.
- A systemic failure to follow the centre's policy in relation to the application of Reasonable Adjustments, Access Arrangements or Special Consideration arrangements for students in relation to assessments used to determine grades.
- A failure to take reasonable steps to authenticate student work.
- A failure to appropriately manage Conflicts of Interest (COIs) within a centre.
- A Head of Centre's failure to submit the required declaration when submitting their grades.
- Grades being released to students (or their parents/carers) before the issue of results.
- Failure to cooperate with Pearson's quality assurance, appeal or investigation processes.
- Failure to conduct a centre review or submit an appeal when requested to do so by a student.

Centres which identify such incidents should report them to our Investigations team by completing a [JCQ M2 form](#) and submitting this and any relevant evidence to pqsmalpractice@pearson.com.

Students

It is possible that some students may attempt to influence their teachers' judgements about their grades.

Students might attempt to gain an unfair advantage during the centre's process by, for example, submitting fabricated evidence or plagiarised work. Such incidents would constitute malpractice and centres are asked to report these to Pearson in the normal way using the [JCQ M2 form](#) and emailing this and supporting information to candidatemalpractice@pearson.com.

Students, or individuals acting on behalf of a student, such as parents/carers, might also try to influence grade decisions by applying pressure to centres or their staff. Pearson anticipates that the majority of such instances will be dealt with by the centre internally – in such cases, Pearson asks that the centres retain clear and reliable records of the circumstances and the steps taken, and that students are made aware of the outcome. However, if a student continues to inappropriately attempt to pressure centre staff then please inform the

candidate malpractice investigations team using the JCQ M1 Form. Pearson will contact your centre if Pearson receives credible allegations that such pressure has been applied in order that appropriate steps can be taken.

In all the scenarios listed above, as well as any others that have not been explicitly identified here, the [JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures 2020-2021](#) continues to apply. Please be aware that, as always, all investigations into alleged malpractice remain confidential and the findings, including any sanctions imposed, are not publicly disclosed.

Should Centres have any questions or concerns regarding malpractice, please contact the Investigations team via pqsmalpractice@pearson.com.

Results

The dates for the publication of results are being brought forward in May/June. This will see International AS and A-Level and International GCSE results being published in the same week.

International AS and A-Level qualifications

- International AS and A-Level results will be released to centres on Monday 9 August 2021.
- International AS and A-Level students will receive their results on Tuesday 10 August 2021.

International GCSE qualifications

- International GCSE results will be released to centres on Wednesday 11 August 2021.
- International GCSE students will receive their results on Thursday 12 August 2021.

Appeals

The arrangements for awarding grades to students in May/June 2021 include internal and external quality assurance measures which aim to ensure that on results day students are issued with fair and consistent grades that have been objectively reached. Sharing information with students about the evidence being used as part of a centre's grade determination process is important and should help to avoid any issues when results are released.

Post results, the need for appeals should be limited as students should be confident in their grades because of the following:

- An effective Centre Policy which is adhered to by all centre staff involved in the determination of teacher assessed grades, and which has been reviewed by Pearson.
- A high standard of internal quality assurance both in determining teacher assessed grades based only on student evidence and ensuring that there are no administrative or procedural errors.
- Effective provision of access arrangements for all eligible students.
- Effective arrangements for students that may have been disadvantaged during an assessment that contributes to their grade either by taking the circumstances into account in determining grades or by using alternative evidence that was unaffected by the adverse circumstances.
- Accurate recording and effective checking of information on the assessment record for the student to avoid errors in submitting teacher assessed grades.
- Effective communication with students and parents/guardians, so that they understand:
 - the centre's approach to determining their grades before grades are submitted to Pearson, including the evidence used and a realistic understanding of the standard at which they are performing.
 - the sources of evidence that will be used to determine their grade in advance of that grade being submitted to Pearson.
 - How cash-in grades are calculated for International AS and A-Level qualifications based on unit grades being converted to UMS.

This transparency should enable students to raise any errors or circumstances relating to particular pieces of evidence to be taken into account in advance of the grade submission and should reduce the number of instances in which students seek an appeal.

- Effective oversight and clear professional accountability from the Head of Centre who will complete the Head of Centre Declaration.

Maintaining Records

The appeals process relies on excellent record-keeping through the assessment process:

- Teachers / heads of department are required to document the sources of evidence used for determining grades along with a rationale for what was selected.
- Document any exceptional circumstances for students, for example:
 - if a student's evidence is different from the subject cohort and the rationale for that;
 - if approved access arrangements/reasonable adjustments were in place and if not how they were taken account of when determining the grade;
 - how any mitigating circumstances such as illness were taken into account when determining the grade.
- Centres should document discussions with students about the range of evidence used.
- Maintain records as documented in their Centre Policy.
- Ensure that any evidence that is to be used to determine students' grades (e.g. student work and marks where work is not available) is stored safely and can be retrieved promptly by centre staff, if needed for a centre review or requested by Pearson for an appeal.

Disclosing Information to Students

Students will need certain information to help them decide whether to appeal.

If centres have not shared the following information before results day, they will need to be prepared to do so on results day if students request it:

- The Centre Policy
- The sources of evidence used to determine their grade along with any grades/marks associated with them
- Details of any special circumstances that have been taken into account in determining their grade, e.g. access arrangements, mitigating circumstances such as illness.

Appeals Process

After results day
Results issued (10/12 August)

1. **Student** asks centre for review because they think there has been an error

Note: Grades can go up, down or stay the same

Centre review: Centre checks for errors and process issues. Centre wants to change grade?

No

Yes

Awarding Organisation checks and issues final grade; may require input from Centre

Centre informs student of outcome

2. If **Student** thinks the error has not been resolved they ask centre for Awarding Organisation appeal

Centre submits Awarding Organisation appeal

Note: Grades can go up, down or stay the same

Awarding Organisation appeal:
Have processes been followed, is the grade a reasonable exercise of academic judgement?

No

Yes

Awarding Organisation issues final grade; may require input from Centre

Awarding Organisation issues final grade

Centre informs student of outcome

May/June 2021 appeals process

The same appeals process will apply to all candidates regardless of the assessment approach adopted by the centre, including where the centre has used the Pearson unseen assessment materials and marking service.

Student appeals

If a student is dissatisfied with their grade there are two stages to the May/June 2021 appeals process by which a student may appeal:

Stage 1: centre review

The first stage of the process is referred to as a centre review. If a student does not consider that they have been issued with the correct grade, they can ask their centre to check if an administrative or procedural error has occurred. The centre will need to ensure the student is aware that their grade could go down, up or stay the same. If the centre finds that an error has occurred, they will be able to submit a request to Pearson to correct the error and amend the grade.

The following grounds may be used by a student to request a centre review:

- The centre made an administrative error, examples include:
 - an incorrect grade was submitted
 - an incorrect assessment mark was used when determining the grade.
- The centre did not apply a procedure correctly, examples include:
 - the centre did not follow its Centre Policy
 - the centre did not undertake internal quality assurance
 - the centre did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances such as illness.

Stage 2: appeal to Pearson

The second stage of the process is an appeal to Pearson as the awarding organisation. These are submitted by the centre on the student's behalf. The centre will need to ensure the student is aware that their grade could go down, up or stay the same.

The following grounds may be used to appeal to Pearson:

- The centre did not apply a procedure correctly, examples include:
 - the centre did not follow its Centre Policy
 - the centre did not undertake internal quality assurance

- the centre did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances such as illness.
- The student considers that the centre made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/or the determination of the grade from that evidence.
- Pearson made an administrative error, for example:
 - the grade was incorrectly changed by Pearson during the processing of grades.

Centre appeals

There are two grounds which a centre may use to appeal to Pearson if they disagree with a grade given to a candidate:

- The centre has made an error when submitting grades. The centre will need to submit details of the grade(s) that require changing and a rationale explaining how the error occurred. Examples include:
 - an administration error in the initial submission of the grades by the centre
 - the centre has found an error occurred in the calculation of a grade during the centre review stage.
- The centre disagrees with or believes an error has been made by Pearson regarding the calculation of the cash-in grade for International AS / A-Level qualification.

Centre requirements

The following are requirements that centres must follow:

- Centres must conduct a centre review if requested by the student.
- Centres must inform students of the outcome of a centre review. If the student wishes to appeal to Pearson, the student must then submit a request to their centre to proceed.
- Students should be made aware by their centre that Pearson will determine the grade at appeal, that the grade could go down, up or stay the same and that the outcome will be final.
- Students must provide the centre with their written consent before an appeal is submitted to Pearson on their behalf. This must be retained by the centre.
- Centres must submit a stage 2 appeal to Pearson if requested to do so by a student. The appeal to Pearson can only be submitted after the stage 1 centre review has

been completed and the outcome issued to the student.

Appeal Outcomes

It will be possible to ask Pearson to prioritise some appeals, for example, those that are needed for a place at Higher Education. The timelines for priority and non-priority appeals are outlined in the timeline and key dates section of this guidance.

Please note that where an appeal raises significant concerns about a centre's implementation of its policy, or where appeals do not appear to have been submitted as requested by students, the centre may be referred to Pearson's malpractice investigation team for potential review and further action.

Appendix A

Centre Policy template

FOR PEARSON INTERNATIONAL A/AS LEVELS AND
INTERNATIONAL GCSES FOR SUMMER 2021

Centre Policy for determining teacher assessed grades in Summer 2021

Background

Every centre is required to create a Centre Policy that reflects its individual circumstances. It is anticipated that you may choose to adopt this pre-populated template in full. Or you may choose to make amendments – adding or deleting material – to reflect your own practices. In any case, centres must understand and actively implement the centre policy adopted, although this template is provided for information and does not constitute legal advice.

The template is written with a minimal amount of content in [brackets] that can be deleted, and material in CAPITAL LETTERS that should be added, if the content is retained as part of your policy.

Your policy must take account of the guidance provided in the document:

Pearson Guidance on the determination of grades for International A/AS Levels and International GCSEs for May/June 2021

Centre Policy for determining teacher assessed grades – summer 2021: [ADD SCHOOL NAME HERE]

Statement of intent

This section outlines the purpose of this document in relation to our centre.

Statement of Intent

This section provides details of the purpose of this document, as appropriate to our centre:

[For example:]

The purpose of this policy is:

- *To ensure that teacher assessed grades are determined fairly, consistently, free from bias and effectively within and across departments.*
- *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 [insert name of Pearson guidance] guidance.*
- *To ensure the consideration of historical centre data in the process, and the appropriate decision making in respect of, teacher assessed grades.*
- *To support a high standard of internal quality assurance in the allocation of teacher assessed grades.*
- *To support our centre in meeting its obligations in relation to equality legislation.*
- *To ensure our centre meets all requirements set out by with [insert name of Pearson guidance].*
- *To ensure the process for communicating to candidates and their parents/carers how they will be assessed is clear, in order to give confidence.*

Roles and responsibilities

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the personnel in our centre who have specific roles and responsibilities in the process of determining teacher assessed grades this year.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section gives details of the roles and responsibilities within our centre:

[For example:]

Head of Centre

- *Our Head of Centre, [INSERT NAME], will be responsible for approving our policy for determining teacher assessed grades.*
- *Our Head of Centre has overall responsibility for the [school/college] as an examinations centre and will ensure that clear roles and responsibilities of all staff are defined.*
- *Our Head of Centre will confirm that teacher assessed grade decisions represent the academic judgement made by teachers and that the checks in place ensure these align with the guidance on standards provided by Pearson.*
- *Our Head of Centre will ensure a robust internal quality assurance process has been produced and signed-off in advance of results being submitted.*

Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Department and Co-ordinators

Our Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Departments will:

- *provide training and support to our other staff.*
- *support the Head of Centre in the quality assurance of the final teacher assessed grades.*
- *ensure an effective approach within and across departments and authenticating the preliminary outcome from single teacher subjects.*
- *be responsible for ensuring staff have a clear understanding of the internal and external quality assurance processes and their role within it.*
- *ensure that all teachers within their department make consistent judgements about student evidence in deriving a grade.*
- *ensure all staff conduct assessments under the appropriate levels of control with reference to guidance provided by [insert name of Pearson guidance].*
- *ensure teachers have the information required to make accurate and fair judgments.*
- *ensure that a Head of Department Checklist is completed for each qualification that they are submitting.*

Teachers/ Specialist Teachers / SENCo

Our teachers, specialist teachers and SENCo will:

- *ensure they conduct assessments under our centre's appropriate levels of control and have sufficient evidence, in line with this Centre Policy and guidance from the [insert name of Pearson guidance], to provide teacher assessed grades for each student they have entered for a qualification.*
- *ensure that the teacher assessed grade they assign to each student is a fair, valid and reliable reflection of the assessed evidence available for each student.*

- *make judgements based on what each student has been taught and what they have been assessed on, as outlined in the section on grading in the [insert name of Pearson guidance].*
- *produce an Assessment Record for each subject cohort, that includes the nature of the assessment evidence being used, the level of control for assessments considered, and any other evidence that explains the determination of the final teacher assessed grades. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be recorded.*
- *securely store and be able to retrieve sufficient evidence to justify their decisions.*

Examinations Officer/School Co-ordinator

Our Examinations Officer will:

- *be responsible for the administration of our final teacher assessed grades and for managing the post-results services.*

Training, support and guidance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the training, support and guidance that our centre will provide to those determining teacher assessed grades this year.

Training

This section provides details of the approach our centre will take to *training, support and guidance in determining teacher assessed grades this year*

[For example:]

- *Teachers involved in determining grades in our centre will attend any centre-based training to help achieve consistency and fairness to all students.*
- *Teachers will engage fully with all training and support that has been provided by Pearson.*

Support for newer and teachers less familiar with assessment

This section provides details of our approach to *training, support and guidance for newly qualified teachers and teachers less familiar with assessment*

[For example:]

- *We will provide mentoring from experienced teachers to newer and teachers less familiar with assessment.*
- *We will put in place additional internal reviews of teacher assessed grades for newer and other teachers as appropriate.*

Use of appropriate evidence

This section of our Centre Policy indicates how our centre will give due regard to the section in the *[insert name of Pearson guidance]* entitled: *Guidance on grading for teachers*.

Please note that you may use more than one approach, particularly across different qualifications. If this is the cases, please select all of the approaches you will be taking.

A. Use of evidence	
<i>Outline of assessment approach</i>	<i>Please select a minimum of one option (Yes/No)</i>
<i>We will use unseen materials provided by Pearson on the secure release date and will be marked by Pearson</i>	
<i>We will use unseen materials provided by Pearson on the secure release date and will be marked by our centre.</i>	
<i>We will use unseen materials provided by Pearson (after the release date) taken and supervised in centre and marked in centre. Supplemented with at least two pieces of extra evidence – including for example the use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.</i>	
<i>We will use unseen materials provided by Pearson (after the release date) taken in non-supervised conditions and marked in centre. Supplemented with at least two pieces of extra evidence – including for example the use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.</i>	
<i>We will use other evidence – including for example the use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.</i>	
<p>This section gives details in relation to our use of evidence. Please provide further details where evidence other than unseen assessments provided by Pearson will be used. <i>[For example:]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teachers making judgements will have regard to the guidance provided by Pearson.</i> • <i>All candidate evidence used to determine teacher assessed grades, and associated documentation, will be retained and made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals.</i> • <i>We will be using student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by Pearson, including past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers.</i> • <i>We will use non-exam assessment work (often referred to as coursework), even if this has not been fully completed.</i> • <i>We will use student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that follow the same format as Pearson materials, and have been marked in a way that reflects Pearson’s mark schemes.</i> • <i>We will use substantial class or homework (including work that took place during remote learning).</i> • <i>We will use internal tests taken by pupils.</i> • <i>We will use mock exams taken over the course of study.</i> 	

Our centre will ensure the appropriateness of evidence and balance of evidence in arriving at grades in the following ways:

[For example:]

- *We will consider the level of control under which an assessment was completed, for example, whether the evidence was produced under high control and under supervision or at home.*
- *We will ensure that we are able to authenticate the work as the student's own, especially where that work was not completed within the school or college.*
- *We will consider the limitations of assessing a student's performance when using assessments that have been completed more than once, or drafted and redrafted, where this is not a skill being assessed.*
- *We will consider the specification and assessment objective coverage of the assessment.*
- *We will consider the depth and breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills assessed, especially higher order skills within individual assessments.*

Determining teacher assessed grades

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to awarding teacher assessed grades.

Awarding teacher assessed grades based on evidence

We give details here of our centre's approach to awarding teacher assessed grades.

[For example:]

- *Our teachers will determine grades based on evidence which is at the standard at which a student is performing, i.e. their demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills across the content of the course they have been taught.*
- *Our teachers will record how the evidence was used to arrive at a fair and objective grade, which is free from bias.*
- *Our teachers will produce an Assessment Record for each subject cohort and will share this with their Head of Department. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be shared.*

Internal quality assurance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to ensure internal standardisation of teacher assessed grades, to ensure consistency, fairness and objectivity of decisions.

Head of Centre Internal Quality Assurance and Declaration

Internal quality assurance

This section gives details of our approach to internal standardisation, within and across subject departments.

[For example:]

- *We will ensure that all teachers involved in deriving teacher assessed grades read and understand this Centre Policy document.*
- *In subjects where there is more than one teacher and/or class in the department, we will ensure that our centre carries out an internal standardisation process.*
- *We will ensure that all teachers are provided with training and support to ensure they take a consistent approach to:*
 - *Arriving at teacher assessed grades*
 - *Marking of evidence*
 - *Reaching a holistic grading decision*
 - *Applying the use of grading support and documentation*
- *We will conduct internal standardisation across all grades.*
- *We will ensure that the Assessment Record will form the basis of internal standardisation and discussions across teachers to agree the awarding of teacher assessed grades.*
- *Where necessary, we will review and reflect on individual grading decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by Pearson.*
- *Where appropriate, we will amend individual grade decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by Pearson.*
- *Where there is only one teacher involved in marking assessments and determining grades, then the output of this activity will be reviewed by an appropriate member of staff within the centre.*
 - *This will be [ADD DETAILS].*
- *In respect of equality legislation, we will consider the range of evidence for students of different protected characteristics that are included in our internal standardisation.*

Comparison of teacher assessed grades to results for previous cohorts

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach we will take to compare our teacher assessed grades in 2021 with results from previous cohorts.

Comparison of Teacher Assessed Grades to results for previous cohorts

This section gives details of our internal process to ensure a comparison of teacher assessed grades at qualification level to results for previous cohorts in our centre taking the same qualification.

[For example:]

- *We will compile information on the grades awarded to our students in past series in which exams took place (e.g. 2017 - 2019).*
- *We will consider the size of our cohort from year to year.*
- *We will consider the stability of our centre's overall grade outcomes from year to year.*
- *We will consider both subject and centre level variation in our outcomes during the internal quality assurance process.*
- *We will prepare a succinct narrative on the outcomes of the review against historic data which, in the event of significant divergence from the qualifications-levels profiles attained in previous examined years, which address the reasons for this divergence. This commentary will be available for subsequent review during the QA process.*

This section gives details of the approach our centre will follow if our initial teacher assessed grades for a qualification are viewed as overly lenient or harsh compared to results in previous years.

[For example:]

- *We will bring together other data sources that will help to quality assure the grades we intend to award in 2021.*

This section gives details of changes in our cohorts that need to be reflected in our comparisons.

[For example:]

- *We will omit subjects that we no longer offer from the historical data.*

Access Arrangements and Special Considerations

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to provide students with appropriate access arrangements and take into account mitigating circumstances in particular instances.

Reasonable adjustments and mitigating circumstances (special consideration)

This section gives details of our approach to access arrangements and mitigating circumstances (special consideration).

[For example:]

- *Where students have agreed access arrangements or reasonable adjustments (for example a reader or scribe) we will make every effort to ensure that these arrangements are in place when assessments are being taken.*
- *Where an assessment has taken place without an agreed reasonable adjustment or access arrangement, we will remove that assessment from the basket of evidence and alternative evidence obtained.*
- *Where illness or other personal circumstances might have affected performance in assessments used in determining a student's standard of performance, we will take account of this when making judgements.*
- *We will record, as part of the Assessment Record, how we have incorporated any necessary variations to take account of the impact of illness or personal circumstances on the performance of individual students in assessments.*
- *To ensure consistency in the application of Special Consideration, we will ensure all teachers have read and understood the document: [JCQ – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020](#)*

Addressing disruption/differential lost learning (DLL)

B. Addressing Disruption/Differentiated Lost Learning (DLL)

This section gives details of our approach to address disruption or differentiated lost teaching.

[For example:]

- Teacher assessed grades will be determined based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed for each student.

Objectivity

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the arrangements in place to ensure objectivity of decisions.

Objectivity

This section gives a summary of the arrangements in place within our centre in relation to objectivity.

[For example:]

Senior Leaders, Heads of Department and Centre will consider:

- *sources of unfairness and bias (situations/contexts, difficulty, presentation and format, language, conditions for assessment, marker preconceptions);*
- *how to minimise bias in questions and marking and hidden forms of bias); and*
- *bias in teacher assessed grades.*

To ensure objectivity, all staff involved in determining teacher assessed grades will be made aware that:

- *unconscious bias can skew judgements;*
- *the evidence presented should be valued for its own merit as an indication of performance and attainment;*
- *teacher assessed grades should not be influenced by candidates' positive or challenging personal circumstances, character, behaviour, appearance, socio-economic background, or protected characteristics;*
- *unconscious bias is more likely to occur when quick opinions are formed; and*

Our internal standardisation process will help to ensure that there are different perspectives to the quality assurance process.

Recording decisions and retention of evidence and data

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our arrangements to recording decisions and to retaining evidence and data.

C. Recording Decisions and Retention of Evidence and Data

This section outlines our approach to recording decisions and retaining evidence and data.

[For example:]

- *We will ensure that teachers and Heads of Departments maintain records that show how the teacher assessed grades process operated, including the rationale for decisions in relation to individual marks/grades.*
- *We will ensure that evidence is maintained across a variety of tasks to develop a holistic view of each student's demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills in the areas of content taught.*
- *We will put in place recording requirements for the various stages of the process to ensure the accurate and secure retention of the evidence used to make decisions.*
- *We will comply with our obligations regarding data protection legislation.*
- *We will ensure that the grades accurately reflect the evidence submitted.*
- *We will ensure that evidence is retained electronically or on paper in a secure centre-based system that can be readily shared with Pearson.*

Authenticating evidence

D. Authenticating evidence

This section of our Centre Policy details the mechanisms in place to ensure that teachers are confident in the authenticity of evidence, and the process for dealing with cases where evidence is not thought to be authentic.

[For example:]

- *Robust mechanisms, which will include (INSERT HERE), will be in place to ensure that teachers are confident that work used as evidence is the students' own and that no inappropriate levels of support have been given to students to complete it, either within the centre or with external tutors.*
- *It is understood that Pearson will investigate instances where it appears evidence is not authentic. We will follow all guidance provided by Pearson [LINK] to support these determinations of authenticity.*

Confidentiality, malpractice and conflicts of interest

Confidentiality

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to ensure the confidentiality of the grades our centre determines, and to make students aware of the range of evidence on which those grades will be based.

A. Confidentiality

This section details the measures in place in our centre to maintain the confidentiality of grades, while sharing information regarding the range of evidence on which the grades will be based.

[For example:]

- *All staff involved have been made aware of the need to maintain the confidentiality of teacher assessed grades.*
- *All teaching staff have been briefed on the requirement to share details of the range of evidence on which students' grades will be based, while ensuring that details of the final grades remain confidential.*
- *Relevant details from this Policy, including requirements around sharing details of evidence and the confidentiality requirements, have been shared with parents/guardians.*

Malpractice

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to prevent malpractice and other breaches of exam regulations, and to deal with such cases if they occur.

B. Malpractice

This section details the measures in place in our centre to prevent malpractice and, where that proves impossible, to handle cases in accordance with Pearson requirements.

[For example:]

- *Our general centre policies regarding malpractice, maladministration and conflicts of interest have been reviewed to ensure they address the specific challenges of delivery in Summer 2021.*
- *All staff involved have been made aware of these policies, and have received training in them as necessary.*
- *All staff involved have been made aware of the specific types of malpractice which may affect the Summer 2021 series including:*
 - *breaches of internal security;*
 - *deception;*
 - *improper assistance to students;*
 - *failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work;*
 - *over direction of students in preparation for assessments;*

- *allegations that centres submit grades not supported by evidence that they know to be inaccurate;*
- *centres enter students who were not originally intending to certificate a grade in the Summer 2021 series;*
- *failure to engage as requested with Pearson during the External Quality Assurance and appeal stages; and*
- *failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made and teacher assessed grades.*

- *The consequences of malpractice or maladministration as published in the JCQ guidance: [JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures](#) and including the risk of a delay to students receiving their grades, up to, and including, removal of centre status have been outlined to all relevant staff.*

Conflicts of Interest

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to address potential conflicts of interest.

C. Conflicts of Interest

This section details our approach to addressing conflicts of interest, and how we will respond to such allegations.

[For example:]

- *To protect the integrity of assessments, all staff involved in the determination of grades must declare any conflict of interest such as relationships with students to our Head of Centre for further consideration.*
- *We will also carefully consider the need if to separate duties and personnel to ensure fairness in later process reviews and appeals.*

[Optional section if your centre is accepting Private Candidates – if not, then this section can be deleted]

Private candidates

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to working with Private Candidates to arrive at appropriate grades.

A. Private Candidates
<p><i>This section details our approach to providing and quality assuring grades to Private Candidates.</i></p> <p><i>[For example:]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• Our arrangements for assessing Private Candidates to arrive at appropriate grades are identical to the approaches utilised for internal candidates.</i><i>• Where it has been necessary to utilise different approaches, the JCQ Guidance on Private Candidates has been followed and any divergences from our approach for internal candidates have been recorded on the appropriate class/student documentation.</i><i>• In undertaking the review of cohort grades in conjunction with our centre results profiles from previous examined years, the grades determined by our centre for Private Candidates have been excluded from our analysis.</i>

External Quality Assurance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the arrangements in place to comply with Pearson arrangements for External Quality Assurance of teacher assessed grades in a timely and effective way.

A. External Quality Assurance
<p><i>This section outlines the arrangements we have in place to ensure the relevant documentation and assessment evidence can be provided in a timely manner for the purposes of External Quality Assurance sampling, and that staff can be made available to respond to enquiries.</i></p> <p><i>[For example:]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• All staff involved have been made aware of the Pearson requirements for External Quality Assurance as set out in the Pearson Guidance.</i><i>• All necessary records of decision-making in relation to determining grades have been properly kept and can be made available for review as required.</i><i>• All student evidence on which decisions regarding the determination of grades has been retained and can be made available for review as required.</i>

- *Instances where student evidence used to decide teacher assessed grades is not available, for example where the material has previously been returned to students and cannot now be retrieved, will be clearly recorded on the appropriate documentation.*
- *All staff involved have been briefed on the possibility of interaction with Pearson during the different stages of the External Quality Assurance process and can respond promptly and fully to enquiries, including attendance at Virtual Visits should this prove necessary.*
- *Arrangements are in place to respond fully and promptly to any additional requirements/reviews that may be identified as a result of the External Quality Assurance process.*
- *Staff have been made aware that a failure to respond fully and effectively to such additional requirements may result in further action by Pearson, including the withholding of results.*

Results

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to the receipt and issue of results to students and the provision of necessary advice and guidance.

A. Results

This section details our approach to the issue of results to students and the provision of advice and guidance.

[For example:]

- *All staff involved have been made aware of the specific arrangements for the issue of results in Summer 2021, including the issuing of international A/AS and international GCSE results in the same week.*
- *Arrangements will be made to ensure the necessary staffing, including exams office and support staff, to enable the efficient receipt and release of results to our students.*
- *Arrangements will be in place for the provision of all necessary advice, guidance and support, including pastoral support, to students on receipt of their results.*
- *Such guidance will include advice on the appeals process in place in 2021 (see below).*
- *Appropriate staff will be available to respond promptly to any requests for information from Pearson, for example regarding missing or incomplete results, to enable such issues to be swiftly resolved.*
- *Parents/guardians have been made aware of arrangements for results days.*

Appeals

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to Appeals, to ensure that they are handled swiftly and effectively, and in line with JCQ requirements.

A. Appeals

This section details our approach to managing appeals, including Centre Reviews, and subsequent appeals to Pearson.

[For example:]

- *All staff involved have been made aware of the arrangements for, and the requirements of, appeals in Summer 2021, as set out in the **JCQ Guidance**.*
- *Internal arrangements will be in place for the swift and effective handling of Centre Reviews in compliance with the requirements.*
- *All necessary staff have been briefed on the process for, and timing of, such reviews, and will be available to ensure their prompt and efficient handling.*
- *Leaners have been appropriately guided as to the necessary stages of appeal.*
- *Arrangements will be in place for the timely submission of appeals to Pearson, including any priority appeals, for example those on which university places depend.*
- *Arrangements will be in place to obtain the written consent of students to the initiation of appeals, and to record their awareness that grades may go down as well as up on appeal.*
- *Appropriate information on the appeals process will be provided to parents/carers.*



Pearson