

Saffron Walden County High School  
Centre Policy for Determining Grades  
Summer 2021

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# Centre Policy for determining grades in Summer 2021

## Introduction

This Centre Policy is based on the template provided by JCQ.

It takes account of the guidance provided in the following documents:

[JCQ Centre Guidance on the Determination of Grades](#)

Information for heads of centre, heads of department and teachers on the submission of teacher assessed grades: summer 2021, Ofqual, 24 March 2021

Information for centres about making objective judgements in relation to awarding qualifications in 2021, Ofqual February 2021 (Ofqual/21/6749/4)

## Statement of intent

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

### Statement of Intent

*The purpose of this policy is:*

- *To ensure that centre 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 Joint Council for Qualifications guidance.*
- *To ensure the consideration of historical centre data in the process, and the appropriate decision making in respect of, centre assessed grades.*
- *To support a high standard of internal quality assurance in the allocation of centre 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 the Department of Education, Ofqual, the Joint Council for Qualifications and awarding organisations for Summer 2021 qualifications.*
- *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

#### **Head of Centre**

- *Our Head of Centre, Miss P Lankester, will be responsible for approving our policy for determining teacher assessed grades.*
- *Our Head of Centre has overall responsibility for the school as an examinations centre and will ensure that clear roles and responsibilities of all staff are defined.*
- *Our Head of Centre will confirm that centre 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 awarding organisations.*
- *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 and Heads of Department**

*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 centre assessed grades.*
- *ensure an effective approach within and across departments and moderating the preliminary outcomes 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 the Joint Council for Qualifications.*
- *ensure teachers have the information required to make accurate and fair judgments.*
- *ensure that the centre assessed grade they assign to each student is a fair, valid and reliable reflection of the assessed evidence available for each student.*
- *Complete an evidence-selection form for each subject cohort, that includes the nature of the assessment evidence being used and the level of control for assessments considered.*
- *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 Joint Council for Qualifications, to provide centre assessed grades for each student they have entered for a qualification.*

- *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 main JCQ guidance.*
- *Any necessary variations for individual students will be recorded on the departmental CAG-capture spreadsheets.*
- *securely store and be able to retrieve sufficient evidence to justify their decisions.*

***Examinations Officer***

*Our Examinations Officer will:*

- *be responsible for the administration of our final centre 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 centre assessed grades this year.

### **Training**

- *Heads of Department will receive detailed guidance from our Senior Deputy Headteacher (Mr M Norman) regarding the processes to follow to ensure fairness, consistency and objectivity.*
- *Teachers involved in determining grades in our centre will attend department-based training and moderation sessions to help achieve consistency and fairness to all students.*
- *These department-based training sessions will make use of materials provided by Ofqual, the JCQ and by individual exam boards (such as grading descriptors and exemplification materials).*

### **Support for Newly Qualified Teachers and teachers less familiar with assessment**

- *We will provide mentoring from experienced teachers to NQTs and teachers less familiar with assessment.*
- *We will put in place additional internal reviews of the marking undertaken by NQTs 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 JCQ guidance entitled: *Guidance on grading for teachers*.

### **A. Use of evidence**

- *Heads of department will have regard to the Ofqual Head of Centre guidance on recommended evidence (as summarised by our Senior Deputy Headteacher and as listed below) and further guidance provided by awarding organisations.*
- *We will assess students on content that has been taught.*
- *Where possible, all candidate evidence used to determine centre assessed grades will be retained and made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals.*
- *There are, however, instances when the work was returned to students earlier in the year and is therefore not available. In these instances, following the JCQ guidance, the marks can still be used in determining the final grade.*
- *Where appropriate, we will be using student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by our awarding organisations, including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials, such as practice or sample papers/questions.*
- *Where relevant, we will use non-exam assessment work (often referred to as coursework), even if this has not been fully completed.*
- *Where appropriate, we will use student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that follow the same format as awarding organisation materials, and have been marked in a way that reflects awarding organisation mark schemes.*
- *Where appropriate, we will use substantial class or homework (potentially including work that took place during remote learning).*
- *Where appropriate, we will use internal tests taken by pupils.*
- *Where appropriate, we will use mock exams.*
- *Where appropriate, we will use records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects such as music, drama and PE.*

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

- *Following the Ofqual guidance, we will consider when the assessments were taken, as more recent evidence is likely to be more representative of student performance, although there may be exceptions.*
- *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 take into consideration whether we are able to authenticate the work as the student's own, especially where that work was not completed within the school. In instances where teachers feel a piece of evidence is less representative of student performance, we will balance this against other evidence that is more representative (eg done under more controlled conditions (eg with more unseen material) or more recent assessments) when determining the grade.*
- *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 when deciding how representative it is of student performance.*
- *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 centre assessed grades.*

### **Awarding teacher assessed grades based on evidence**

- *Our teachers will determine grades based on evidence which is commensurate with 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 (by recording the marks for individual pieces of work on the departmental CAG-capture spreadsheet) to ensure the centre arrives at a fair and objective grade, which is free from bias.*
- *Our grades will be based on a holistic, objective judgement of the evidence.*
- *We will 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.*

## 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.

### Internal quality assurance

- *We will ensure that all teachers involved in deriving centre 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 relevant 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*
- *Where necessary, we will review and reflect on individual grading decisions, to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our awarding organisations.*
- *Where appropriate, we will amend individual grade decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our awarding organisations.*
- *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 the Area Co-ordinator or, if the single teacher is the Area Co-ordinator, our Senior Deputy Headteacher will ensure another appropriate teacher undertakes this moderation.*
- *In respect of equality legislation, we will ensure evidence for students of different protected characteristics is included in our internal standardisation.*
- *As we are part of a Multi-Academy Trust consisting of 4 secondary schools, we have put additional cross-school moderation activities in place, to provide an external eye to our grading decisions. This is further ensuring that the assessment criteria and the grading standard are consistently applied at our school and the other schools within our Trust.*

## 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 centre assessed grades in 2021 with results from previous cohorts in our centre taking the same qualification.

### **Comparison of Teacher Assessed Grades to results for previous cohorts**

- *Following the JCQ guidance, after the initial grading decisions have been made, the centre will review the aggregate cumulative grade distribution for each subject.*
- *If outcomes are much higher than in previous years, or much lower, the reasons for this will be considered.*
- *It is possible that, following this review, the school may need to reflect on the grading standard that teachers have applied in one or more subjects and make adjustments to ensure that, following the Ofqual guidance, the school has not been overly harsh or lenient in their assessment of the 2021 cohort compared to previous years in which exams took place.*
- *Following the JCQ guidance, any application of historical insights would be applied consistently to students within a subject.*
- *We will compile information on the grades awarded to our students in past June series in which exams took place (2017 - 2019).*
- *We will omit subjects that we no longer offer from the historical data.*
- *We will consider the size of our cohort from year to year.*
- *We will consider the external estimate data (from ALPs and FFT) for each subject for these cohorts to establish the ability profile of the cohorts.*
- *Private candidates will be excluded from comparisons.*
- *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.*
- *In the event of significant divergence from the qualification-level profiles attained in previous examined years, departments will prepare a succinct commentary that addresses the reasons for this divergence. This commentary would be available for subsequent internal or external review.*

## 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)**

- *Where students have agreed access arrangements (for example extra time) we will make every effort to ensure that these arrangements have been offered to students when assessments are being taken.*
- *Where an assessment has taken place without the appropriate access arrangements in place, we will apply special consideration (using the [JCQ – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020](#)) or, if this would still result in the adjusted mark for that element being out of line with other evidence for that student (as shown, for example, by the rank achieved in that element being significantly worse compared with the ranks achieved in other elements), that element would be excluded from the portfolio of evidence.*
- *Following the JCQ guidance, in instances where students are affected at the time of the assessment by temporary illness, temporary injury or other specific disadvantage (that would be additional to that experienced by other candidates taking that qualification) which are reasonably likely to have had a material effect on the candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in that assessment, minor adjustments would be made to the mark awarded, in line with the JCQ guide to special consideration (linked above), or that element could be excluded from the portfolio of evidence, if, after adjustment, this would still result in the adjusted mark for that element being out of line with other evidence for that student (as shown, for example, by the rank achieved in that element being significantly worse compared with the ranks achieved in other elements).*
- *We will record on the departmental CAG-capture spreadsheet how we have made any necessary adjustments.*

## 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.

- The assessments that will be used to determine our Centre assessed grades will assess content that has been taught.
- Our centre is aware 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.
- We will grade each student on their performance in the subject content they have been taught and will base our assessment on the student's demonstrated knowledge and skills.
- We understand that, while there is no set requirement for the minimum amount of content that students must have been taught, our Head of Centre will confirm that students have been taught sufficient content to form the basis for a grade.

## Objectivity

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

### **Objectivity**

*Staff will fulfil their duties and responsibilities in relation to relevant equality and disability legislation.*

*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;*
- *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;*
- *centre 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;*

*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**

- *We will ensure that Heads of Departments maintain records that show how the centre assessed grades process operated, including moderation activities and the rationale for the selection of evidence.*
- *We will ensure that, where possible, 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.*
- *There are, however, instances when the work was returned to students earlier in the year and is therefore not available. In these instances, following the JCQ guidance, the marks can still be used in determining the final grade.*
- *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, where possible, either electronically or on paper in a secure centre-based system that can be readily shared with our awarding organisations.*

## 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.

- *We will consider the level of control that was in place when assessments were undertaken.*
- *We will prioritise assessments that were undertaken under higher levels of control.*
- *Teachers will include evidence when they 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.*
- *Where teachers are not confident that the work intended to be used as evidence is the student's own or that the student has received inappropriate levels of support, they will raise the issue with their head of department. The head of department, in consultation with the senior Deputy Headteacher (M Norman), will investigate the issue and may decide to exclude this piece of work from the evidence or to balance the evidence against other evidence where there is greater confidence that it has been done under more controlled conditions (eg with more unseen material) when determining the grade.*
- *It is understood that awarding organisations will investigate instances where it appears evidence is not authentic. We will follow guidance provided by awarding organisations 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**

- *All staff involved have been made aware of the need to maintain the confidentiality of centre assessed grades.*
- *Once the range of evidence has been determined, an overview outlining the evidence to be used when determining grades for each subject will be shared with students and parents.*
- *Relevant details from this Policy, including requirements around sharing details of evidence and the confidentiality requirements, have been shared with parents/guardians.*
- *This policy will be made available on our school website.*
- *Although students and parents/carers may be aware of grades awarded for previous assessments (eg mock examinations), which were not confidential at the time, these grades pre-dated this process, which incorporates moderation, and should not therefore be considered as an indication of the final grade which may be submitted.*

### 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**

- *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, in particular the specific types of malpractice which may affect the Summer 2021 series, including:*
  - *breaches of confidentiality;*
  - *deception;*
  - *improper assistance to students;*
  - *failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work;*
  - *over direction of students in preparation for common 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 awarding organisations during the External Quality Assurance and appeal stages; and*
  - *failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made.*

### *Conflicts of Interest*

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

#### **C. Conflicts of Interest**

- *To protect the integrity of assessments, all staff involved in the determination of grades have been instructed to declare any conflict of interest such as relationships with students to our Head of Centre (via the exams officer) for further consideration.*
- *Our Head of Centre will take appropriate action to manage any conflicts of interest arising with centre staff in accordance with the JCQ documents - [General Regulations for Approved Centres, 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021](#).*
- *We will also carefully consider whether it would be necessary to separate duties and personnel, to ensure fairness in later process reviews and appeals.*

## Private candidates

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

### A. Private Candidates

- *We are following the **JCQ Guidance on Private Candidates***
- *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.*
- *The external candidates will sit assessments at high levels of control within the centre, to ensure authenticity, and these will be used to determine the grades awarded.*
- *The Senior Deputy Headteacher has contacted the Private candidates' families to ensure that they are only assessed on what they have studied.*

## External Quality Assurance

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

### A. External Quality Assurance

- *All staff involved have been made aware of the awarding organisation requirements for External Quality Assurance, as set out in the **JCQ Guidance**.*
- *All necessary records of decision-making in relation to determining grades have been properly kept and can be made available for review, as required.*
- *Where possible, student evidence on which decisions regarding the determination of grades has been retained and can be made available for review, as required.*
- *We realise there may, however, be 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.*
- *All staff involved have been briefed on the possibility of interaction with awarding organisations 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 the awarding organisations, 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**

- *All staff involved have been made aware of the specific arrangements for the issue of results in Summer 2021, including the issuing of A/AS and 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 awarding organisations, for example regarding missing or incomplete results, to enable such issues to be swiftly resolved.*
- *Parents/guardians will be 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

- *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.*
- *Leavers will be appropriately guided as to the necessary stages of appeal.*
- *Arrangements will be in place for the timely submission of appeals to awarding organisations, 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.*