

# Ysgol Eirias Summer Assessment Update Frequently Asked Questions



It has been wonderful to welcome our learners back into school. It's just not been the same without them. Of course all our learners are important to us, but our focus must now be those learners in Years 11, 12 and 13 as we prepare and support them during the final period of teaching and assessment before they receive their provisional grades at the beginning of June.

The purpose of this communication is to explain how the assessment and grading process will take place and the what the implications of these are for the learners.

## **The context**

As a result of the Covid pandemic, the Education Minister announced in December that there would be no examinations during the summer term of 2021. The WJEC recognised that there has been significant disruption to teaching and learning during the past year, which will have impacted different learners in different ways. In place of the examinations, learners will have their qualifications awarded through a process of Centre Determined Grades. Teachers have been given flexibility to use a wide range of evidence when determining grades to ensure no learner is disadvantaged. Evidence will be collected from a range of sources which may vary between subjects. This evidence may include:

- a series of standardised assessments materials (SAMs) produced by the WJEC
- where applicable a modified non- examined assessment (NEA, previously known as coursework) where reduced levels of control and amended deadlines allow students to develop their skills
- other sources of evidence e.g. assessments that have taken place previously such as mock exams if they have taken place.

NB Centre Determined Grades are NOT

- Awarded to show a learners potential i.e. what a pupil/parent/teacher feels that a learner is capable of achieving
- Based on a teacher prediction – they are based on secure evidence
- Issued as a result of external standardisation
- Applied using a ranking system
- Involving the application of an algorithm, as was the case last year.

## **How will this be achieved?**

Each subject has been provided with an Assessment Framework by the WJEC which summarises the key requirements of each qualification. It also provides advice to teachers on determining grades. These outline what a learner should cover rather than what they must cover.

Each subject is provided with clear guidance for marking and assessing the work. Distinct grade descriptors have been issued to ensure that, for example, a Grade C in one Centre is equivalent to a grade C in another Centre.

All work will be moderated by a clearly outlined process. This information can be found in our Centre Assessment Policy on the school website.

## **When will assessments take place?**

A summary of the assessments scheduled to take place by each subject on the curriculum can be found by clicking [here](#). (Your son/daughter will not take all of these!). You will also see the sources of evidence that will be used, any weighting of the units and the total number of assessments plus other relevant information. Assessments will need to be completed by 28<sup>th</sup> May.

After Easter, teaching staff will issue a subject specific calendar of assessments. We have done it this way to avoid students becoming over anxious by seeing the number of assessments to be completed all on one sheet. Learners will only receive information relating to their subjects. This subject specific information will also include details of topics to be tested during each assessment.

## **How will assessments take place?**

There is no requirement for any subject to hold all of their assessments in one session. It is not an examination. Class teachers can divide the assessment into sections to suit the programme of learning. For example, once the learners have completed the work for each part of the course, instead of completing three essays in a single two-hour examination, the learners could instead write one essay in each of three separate 40 minute sessions. Of course, if the learner has agreed access arrangements, they are still entitled to receive that provision in full. This is to ensure fairness for all learners.

The level of control (the conditions under which the assessment takes place) will be similar to that during the NEA completion.

Please note: all work MUST BE THAT OF THE LEARNER ALONE. Any learner receiving help would constitute malpractice, which could result in the student losing all their marks for that paper, that subject, or indeed all subjects.

## **Are Additional Needs access arrangements still in place?**

Yes, definitely. All learners with agreed access arrangements and who require reasonable adjustments to access assessment materials, will receive the arrangements for which they are eligible e.g. large print, coloured papers, extra time etc.

## **What if a learner is absent for an assessment?**

We would encourage learners in Yr 11, 12 and 13 to be in school at all times, wherever possible. Of course if they are genuinely ill, are displaying Covid19 symptoms, or are self-isolating they should not come into school.

If a learner is absent on the day of an assessment the class teacher will set another equivalent assessment activity for the learner to complete when they return, at a time that is convenient to both parties and gives the learner adequate notice of the assessment. If, however, the learner is likely to be off school for a period of time e.g. if asked to self-isolate, the school will put in place some alternative arrangements where possible e.g. through the use of TEAMS (if the learner is able to access the system at home). If there is no digital access, another alternative will be sought. Please let us know as soon as possible if your son/daughter is unwell and not able to attend school.

If a learner needs to complete an assessment at home, we would request parents assist in ensuring the learner completes the assessment in the appropriate time frame, and under the correct conditions, without any inappropriate help and support. WJEC advise that regular checks are undertaken to authenticate work not completed under the direct supervision by the teacher. This could be achieved by:

- conducting a question and answer session with the learner to discuss aspects of their responses
- online video conferencing to observe working and discussing progress with the learner
- comparing your child's performance at home with work completed within the classroom
- setting specific timescales for the work to be started and finished, and keeping records of when the work was produced

- reminding your child of the risks of getting help at home from family members which could constitute over-assistance and might lead to a malpractice investigation.

If the learner is unable to complete their NEA because of Covid restrictions, the learner's teacher will advise the best way forward. This might include using incomplete work as evidence, or another alternative to demonstrate the learner's knowledge, understanding and skills.

### **What other sources of evidence may be used?**

Two other sources of contributing evidence may be used to support a grading

- Other WJEC past paper questions which have been completed under controlled conditions
- Other assessments e.g. in class assessments carried out under "test" conditions.

Please note: any assessment undertaken prior to the publication of guidance on Centre Determined Grades January 2021 will only be used to support a judgement. This is because learners would not have been aware of the significance of the assessment at the time it was completed.

### **How will teachers decide on a grade?**

To determine a grade, teachers will make a holistic judgement based on all of the evidence they have of the learner's performance in the subject. There are different factors to consider when making their judgement. For example, they may go through the following stages when determining a grade:

- Consider what they have taught
- Collect the evidence
- Evaluate the quality of the evidence grading
- Consider extenuating circumstances
- Assign a grade

Each learner will have a Learner Decision Record which states the grade for that subject, outlines the evidence that has been considered and the justification of the grade that has been given.

### **Will the grade be based on a target or predicted grade?**

No. WJEC have been very clear with schools that grading is based on **demonstrated** attainment, not potential. The grade awarded must be based on the learner's performance in the evidence teachers have collected. If all the collated evidence suggests your child is performing consistently at a grade B, a grade B should be awarded; there would be no reason to consider awarding that learner a grade A or A\*. Information held in tracking systems that provide target or predicted grades based on assessment inputs and data modelling can be used to support grading decisions, but it is essential that the final grade is derived solely based on the evidence used to determine the grade, not a predicted trajectory or a target grade.

### **Will the teachers' grading be objective?**

At the end of May, teachers of each subject studied by the learner will record the Centre Determined Grade, along with a clear and unambiguous rationale as to how the evidence selected led to the final grading judgement. This information will be filled in on the Learner Decision Making Records.

## Are there any qualifications delivered in Ysgol Eirias that will not have Centre Determined Grades (CDGs)?

Some of our students follow courses that are regulated by Ofqual (England) rather than Qualification Wales (see below). A separate grade system is being followed for these qualifications. Pupils will not receive their grades for these courses by June as they will for courses regulated by Qualifications Wales. We are still waiting details from the board for most of these subjects.

A2 subjects	AS Subjects	GCSE Subjects
Applied Business	Applied Business	Personal Finance
Applied Tourism	Applied Tourism	
Classics	Environmental Science	
Environmental Science	Medical Science	
Medical Science	Personal Finance	
Personal Finance		

## How will the school ensure consistency in gradings?

Evidence and assessment approaches may vary from one learner to another both within and between subjects. Teachers are required to select an assessment approach and evidence in line with the guidance from the exam board. Where applicable, teachers will select the past papers or assessments most appropriate to the content the learner has studied. In all cases, when deciding upon the assessment approach, teachers will have carefully considered how to ensure your child can demonstrate their full potential.

## What happens after the grades have been decided by the teacher?

After the initial marking, teachers of the subject will moderate a sample of the learners work across classes within the same subject and across the different grades. This is to agree the grades across the subject are accurate and consistent. Should there be any discrepancy the Head of Faculty or Head of Subject (as appropriate) will review the grading and make the final decision as to the outcome. Any discussion re a discrepancy in the awarding of the grade will be recorded on the Learner Decision Making Records.

## What about courses run through the LINC programme or College?

The same processes will need to be followed by all centres offering WJEC (and other examination boards courses). The centre where the course is delivered will be responsible for assessing and awarding the provisional grade, and dealing with any review requests.

## Can a learner appeal their grade?

Yes. Qualifications Wales has confirmed that there will be a three-stage appeals process:

Stage 1 – In June, school will share **provisional** centre determined grades with our learners. The Centre Determined Grade is provisional until qualification grades are issued by WJEC on results days. (See below).

A learner can ask us to review the provisional grades that have been issued and/or check for any errors before they are submitted to WJEC. This is known as a centre review. Learners must clearly outline the grounds for their request. School will investigate the learners request and provide them with a response, including the reason for our decision to uphold or not uphold their case. Please note, grades may go up, down or remain the same.

A template form for learners to request a review and for the school to record their decision will be provided by WJEC.

Stage 2 – After results day in August a learner can appeal to WJEC that the grade judgement that their school has made is unreasonable and/or a procedural error has been made. Please note, grades may go up, down or remain the same.

Stage 3 - Following completion of the Stage 2 appeal, learners can request an Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) review from Qualifications Wales to check whether WJEC has followed their procedures correctly. Please note, grades may go up, down or remain the same.

Final qualification grades will not be issued to learners until the results days, which are 10<sup>th</sup> August for AS and A levels and 12<sup>th</sup> August for GCSEs.

## Timeline

Date/Dates	Activity
March 15-May 28 <sup>th</sup>	Assessments take place
19 <sup>th</sup> -25 <sup>th</sup> March	Centres submit Assessment and Internal QA policies to WJEC
22 <sup>nd</sup> March	Briefing to parents and Yr 12 and 13 learners by Headteacher
23 <sup>rd</sup> March	Yr 11 Parents Evening
24 <sup>th</sup> March	Briefing to parents and Yr 11 learners by Headteacher
26 <sup>th</sup> March -11 <sup>th</sup> April	Easter Break
12 <sup>th</sup> April	WJEC provides feedback to centres on their policies
22 <sup>nd</sup> April	Entries amendment window deadline
W/C 26 <sup>th</sup> April	Final appeals process information
28 <sup>th</sup> May – 7 <sup>th</sup> June	Half Term
Beginning of June	Learners will be issued with their provisional Centre Determined Grades. Learners may request a Grade Review.
14 <sup>th</sup> June – 2 <sup>nd</sup> July	Submission window for Centre Determined Grades
21 <sup>st</sup> June – 12 <sup>th</sup> July	WJEC Quality Assurance of learner decision records and overall outcomes
13 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> July	WJEC discusses any issues arising from the QA with centres
10 <sup>th</sup> August	AS and A level Results Day
10 <sup>th</sup> August – 7 <sup>th</sup> September	AS and A level appeals window
12 <sup>th</sup> August	GCSE Results Day
24 <sup>th</sup> August – 21 <sup>st</sup> September* Provisional date	GCSE appeals window

## And Finally

We continue to receive additional information on the summer assessment series from Welsh Government, the WJEC and Qualifications Wales. Our summer assessment timeline is a 'live' document.

We are awaiting further guidance on:

- the review and appeals process;
- centre to centre discussions;
- internal and external quality assurance;
- decision making records;
- and version three of the overarching assessment guidance.

These updates will require further changes to our timeline.

While we may not be in a position to answer all your questions now, rest assured that we will continue to share updated information as soon as possible. Please monitor the School website: [www.eirias.co.uk](http://www.eirias.co.uk), Talaxy messages, Teams Messages, and of course email us on [general@eirias.conwy.sch.uk](mailto:general@eirias.conwy.sch.uk) with specific questions.

In the meantime, please be reassured that next few weeks present learners with a great opportunity to produce some outstanding work. We appreciate that the challenge may feel daunting, but please be assured that we are supporting your child every step of the way. We want every one of them to succeed to the best of their ability.

Thank you for your continued support.

### **Useful Resources**

The WJEC have produced some free digital resources to support teachers and learners in the delivery of qualifications are available:

<https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/assessments-2021-get-the-support-you-need/free-teaching-and-learning-tools-and-resources/>

Information about the changes made to the content of courses: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/assessments-2021-get-the-support-you-need/summer-2021-changes-to-assessments/>