

Letter for learners in Wales

9 February 2021



Dear Learner,

Update on arrangements for GCSEs, AS and A levels, Skills Challenge Certificate and Essential Skills Wales qualifications

We [wrote to you](#) recently about the assessment arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and A levels and vocational qualifications for 2021. We know this is a very uncertain time for anyone studying for a qualification. We want to give you as much information as we can, when we can. Today, we've sent the [first set of guidance](#) to your teachers and lecturers about what is expected of them for assessments for Summer 2021 and confirmed arrangements for [Skills Challenge Certificate](#) and [Essential Skills Wales](#) qualifications.

What is the guidance for teachers and lecturers about?

This guidance is to support schools and colleges in their judgements of your grades this summer. It sets out high level information about the requirements for producing Centre Determined Grades (CDG). It gives an overview of what decisions teachers need to make, how they should make those decisions and what types of evidence should be used to support those decisions. By the end of February WJEC will provide Qualification Frameworks that will set out the requirements for each qualification. There will be more information about timelines and appeals provided shortly too.

How will teachers and lecturers determine grades?

Schools and colleges will award your GCSE, AS or A level grades in summer 2021. They will award these grades based on pieces of work that you have completed over the course of study, in line with the guidance provided to them.

Your school or college will be able to choose the pieces of work that they use to inform their judgement. They will share this information with you and the approach they will be taking to come to their final judgements about the grades you will receive.

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Your school or college will have plans to make sure their judgements to determine your grades are as fair and objective as possible and there will be guidance and training available to support them with this.

How will grades be quality assured?

Schools and colleges will have internal quality assurance processes in place to ensure grade decisions are as consistent as possible (within subjects and across subjects). WJEC will provide the external quality assurance to check the processes that schools and colleges are using to award grades are appropriate. Additionally, processes to promote transparency of grade judgements between schools and colleges across Wales are being explored by Welsh Government, so that learners can be confident in their grades.

How will teachers and lecturers record their decisions?

Your teachers and lecturers will record their reasoning and evidence so that they can be sure that they have made the correct decision about the grades they have determined for you. They will take into account any reasonable adjustments you are entitled to, as well as any special consideration that might apply to you as an individual. They will keep a record of this process.

What happens if I think my grade is wrong?

Schools and colleges will be required to have a process which will allow you to ask for a review of your grade if you think it is wrong and /or correct any factual errors. WJEC will be required to have a process which will allow for an appeal of a grade on the grounds of a procedural error, such as the wrong result being given to someone with a similar name.

The details are being worked on as a matter of urgency and we will write to you again when they have been agreed.

What about Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications?

Today (9 February) we've confirmed that awarding the Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications will align with the approach for awarding Approved GCSEs, AS and A level qualifications in summer 2021.

What about Essential Skills Wales qualifications?

Today (9 February) we've announced alternative assessment arrangements for Essential Skills Wales qualifications. Schools and colleges will be able to provide a Centre Determined Grade for learners who are unable to access the usual methods of assessments due to the impact of Covid-19.

Regular updates on assessments

We hope this information gives you some clarity about the process of awarding your GCSE, AS or A level, Skills Challenge Certificate and Essential Skills Wales qualifications this summer. We know you will still have many questions, and this is an anxious time.

We are working with WJEC, Welsh Government, the Design and Delivery Advisory Group and other stakeholders to finalise processes. We continue to work on the arrangements for vocational qualifications, if you didn't see the information we sent last week, it is available [here](#). In the meantime, keep focussing on your studies and we will keep you updated with the plans as soon as they are agreed. If you have any questions, please contact your teacher or lecturer or contact us via communications@qualificationswales.org.

Getting your feedback

We are going to ask for your feedback in a series of surveys, so we can understand any concerns you may have. We are launching a young people's advisory group in March, so we have ongoing feedback from learners. If you would like to get involved, please contact us at communications@qualificationswales.org.

Yours sincerely



Philip Blaker

Chief Executive