

Summer 2020 grades for GCSE, AS and A level, Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) and Advanced Extension Award (AEA) in maths

Ofqual, 3rd April 2020

Headlines

Documents available	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information for Heads of Centre 2. Guidance for students, parents, carers and teachers 3. Letter to schools and colleges 4. Message to students
What data do you need to gather?	<p>For every GCSE, AS and A level subject, exam boards will require each school, college or other exam centre to submit the following information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A centre assessment grade for each student • The rank order of students within each grade – for example, for all those students with a grade of 5 in GCSE maths, or a grade B in A level biology, a rank order where 1 is the most secure/highest attaining student, and so on
What are CAGs?	<p>Centre assessment grades submitted to exam boards must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely grade a student would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment.</p> <p>This professional judgement is derived from evidence held within the centre and which has been reviewed by subject teachers and relevant heads of department</p>
When do CAGs need to be submitted to the Exam Board?	<p>The deadline for submitting data to exam boards will be no earlier than 29 May. centres will have a window of at least two weeks in which to submit the data. Exam boards will provide detailed instructions about how and when to submit the data as soon as possible.</p>
Accountability regime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges will not be held to account on the basis of results from summer 2020, • Results data should not be used by others, such as Ofsted, to hold colleges or teachers to account. • DfE will not be publishing accountability measures, such as L3VA, using the summer 2020 data. • Further detail coming on Monday...
How about Science practicals?	<p>Exam boards will also collect the grades for the separate endorsements. If they have been completed, the grades should be submitted. Otherwise use CAGs.</p>
How do I arrive at the CAG?	<p>This should be a holistic professional judgement, balancing the different sources of evidence. Colleges will have a good understanding of their students' performance and how they compare to other students within the subject this year, and in previous years. Consider each student's performance over the course of study and make a realistic judgement of the grade each student would have been most likely to get if they had taken their exam(s) this summer. This could include U.</p>
Does Comparable Outcomes apply?	<p>In coming to this holistic judgement, centres should assume that it is no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular grade this year, compared to previous years.</p> <p>Bear in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous results in your centre in this subject – these will vary according to prior attainment of the students, but data shows that for most centres any year-on-year variation in results for a given subject is normally quite small • The performance of this year's students compared to those in previous years

Can I set work to gather evidence now?	There is no requirement to set additional mock exams or homework tasks for the purposes of determining a centre assessment grade. Where additional work has been completed after schools and colleges were closed on 20 March, Heads of Centre should exercise caution where that evidence suggests substantially better or worse achievement than before 20 March
Do I need to submit evidence?	There will be no requirement to send any student work or other evidence to the exam boards, but centres should retain records of the grades and rank order submitted, in case of queries about the data submitted. Evidence will be more important in places where there is a better than expected performance.
Keep CAGs confidential	Centres must not , under any circumstances, share the centre assessment grades nor the rank order of students with students, or their parents/carers or any other individuals before final results have been issued. This is to protect the integrity of teachers' judgements, and to avoid teachers being put under pressure by students and parents, to submit a grade that is not supported by the evidence. Since the final grades for some or all students could be different from those submitted, it also helps to manage students' expectations.
Appeals	Under the circumstances, the normal arrangements for reviews of marking and appeals will not apply. Centres should expect the possible grounds of appeals to be relatively narrow and potentially that the only grounds for appeal would be that the statistical model has not been applied properly to the centre assessment grades for a particular centre. Further consultation to follow. Students who feel that their grades from the summer do not reflect their ability will have the opportunity to take their exams in the autumn series or in summer 2021. If they choose to do this, both grades will stand.
What should colleges do next?	Heads of Centre should now make arrangements to do the following. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check entries are complete and correct. 2. Contact any private candidates to confirm whether the centre will be able to submit a centre assessment grade and include them in the rank order. 3. Consider what evidence will be available to teachers and heads of department. 4. Begin the work to generate a centre assessment grade and an overall rank order in each subject, but do not try to submit the data yet. 5. Do not share the grade and/or rank order with students, parents and carers.
What about private entries (inc. home-schooled, distance learning)?	These students should be included where the Head of Centre is confident that they have seen sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement. Ofqual is urgently exploring alternative options for those students who do not have an existing relationship with a centre and who need results this summer for progression purposes. Some may instead need to take exams in the autumn to get their grades. Ofqual will provide an update as soon as possible.
What will Ofqual do once the Exam Boards have the data?	So that the final grades awarded are as fair as possible, exam boards will use a statistical model to standardise grades across centres in each subject, considering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expected grade distributions at national level, • results in previous years at individual centre level, and • the prior attainment profile of students at centre level. This statistical standardisation process will not change the rank order of students within your centre.
Areas not yet finalised	Ofqual will consult further on:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The principles underpinning the technical model for the statistical standardisation process2. Arrangements for private candidates and students in year 10 and below3. Arrangements for appeals4. An equalities impact assessment
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Two things not addressed in the announcements:

1. Autumn exam season

- a. SFCA is saying that eligibility for sitting exams in the Autumn must be limited to those who have missed an entry level requirement for their destination of choice, not to anyone who feels like having a go or who wants to challenge the grade awarded. Colleges' capacity will not be sufficient to accommodate large numbers of (re)sits, it cannot be assumed that they will have the necessary KS4 experience, expertise or resources. Students will have left their schools and moved on in their lives. The regressive step of working towards a KS4 certification alongside a KS5 programme should be restricted to only those whose progression route is at risk.
- b. "any pupil who does not feel their calculated grade reflects their performance will have the opportunity to sit an exam, as soon as is reasonably possible after schools and colleges open again" (Ofqual). SFCA is drawing attention to the need to avoid holding the Autumn exam season too early: it is a good thing to get them out of the way, so that students can get on with the core business of their P16 learning, but how does the preparation for these exams happen if students don't have time to be taught between term starting and exams happening? Another issue is the impossibility of guaranteeing that Covid19 will have cleared enough for us to be in a position to hold an exam season very early in the new year. The later we schedule the season for, the better the chance of it happening.
- c. The potential for inequality of opportunity: sharp-elbowed, self-confident and entitled parents are more likely to push for a son/daughter to be entered at the slightest whiff of either sense of injustice or a failure to meet an aspirational destination's entry level requirement, than parents from more disadvantaged communities.

2. Applied General Qualifications

It is a pity that some (all?) AGQs could not be deemed in scope. It should be made clear to the many students, parents and teachers who will inevitably ask the question, that AGQs will be subject to a slightly different treatment and further guidance will be published shortly.