

To: The Principals of Post Primary schools and Directors of Colleges of Further Education

For circulation to: Principals and Examinations Officers

## GCSE and A level Grade outcomes

**This circular provides clarification on the awarding procedures for GCSE and A level qualifications.**

The Code of Practice sets out the procedures used by Awarding Organisations when making decisions about GCSE and A level grade outcomes. These procedures have been agreed by the Qualifications Regulators across England (Ofqual), Wales (Welsh Government) and N Ireland (CCEA-Accreditation), and with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) representing AQA, CCEA, OCR, Pearson/Edexcel, and WJEC. The Code is available at [www.ccea.org.uk/accreditation](http://www.ccea.org.uk/accreditation).

The Qualifications Regulators monitor GCSE and A level outcomes to ensure:

- the maintenance of standards over time, particularly where there has been revision of specifications; and
- comparability of standards across Awarding Organisations.

One element in the awarding process is the use of statistical data as an indicator of the expected performance of the cohort. This uses candidates' prior attainment to predict grade outcomes. For A levels prior attainment of candidates in GCSEs is used to predict grade outcomes for the cohort. For GCSEs in England prior attainment is based on Key Stage 2 test results. In Wales and N Ireland prior attainment in GCSEs across 'common' centres is used. Further information is available at [www.ccea.org.uk/accreditation](http://www.ccea.org.uk/accreditation). Based on consideration of a range of data the Qualifications Regulators may request an Awarding Organisation to consider an adjustment to their proposed grade outcomes.

In order to assess and measure the overall performance of an individual school or the performance at subject level and to make comparisons with previous years, the relationship between the school and / or subject performance and the performance of the entire cohort at qualification or subject level should be monitored. The grade outcomes for any subject cohort can vary year on year. Therefore, the performance of candidates within centres in any year or the performance within a particular subject should be compared with the entire subject cohort for that year. The qualifications / subject data will be available on the JCQ web-site [www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk).

If you have any queries regarding the content of this circular please contact:

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