

GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020

Technical Information –
Supplementary Questions and Answers
CCEA Awarding Organisation

Version 3
Published 21 May 2020

Introduction

This document sets out a range of technical questions about Summer 2020 awarding that principals have asked us in recent weeks.

We have provided answers based on the information available to us up to 21 May. This version (Version 3) of the document provides responses to questions on special consideration and access arrangements, the recently updated *Awarding for GCSE, AS and A Level Qualifications Summer 2020: Head of Centre Guidance* document, as well as further information on private candidates (questions 43–56). Please note, question 41 in Version 2 of the document, relating to gathering data on private candidates has now been removed. For the most up-to-date information on gathering data on private candidates, please refer to question 51 in this document.

In addition to this document, we have further frequently asked questions on our website that are less technical in nature and that are aimed more at students and parents.

We hope the questions below support and further explain the information provided in the *Technical Information* document issued on 30 April.

Questions and Answers

1. Should schools use the existing internal standardisation/moderation procedures?

The existing procedures for internal standardisation and for moderation only apply to internal assessment that has been completed and marked by the centre. It would therefore not be appropriate to use this summer. Guidance on the approach that centres should take is set out in the *Technical Information* document.

2. If a student is entered to resit a unit in Summer 2020 and the teacher knows that their performance has improved since 2019, should they take this into consideration or will the statistical modelling take this into account?

If the teacher has noted an improvement in performance, reflected in classwork, mock examinations etc., then this should be reflected in the centre assessment grade.

3. Can centres support each other? For example, if two schools with small subject cohorts are within an area learning community, can they support each other? Can a school in its first year of awarding a qualification get support from a more experienced school?

Yes, it is important that teachers understand the standards before they start to assign centre assessment grades. Therefore, we would encourage schools to adopt this approach if they feel it will help, particularly where there is a new teacher in a small department.

4. If exams had not been cancelled, the tier of entry for some students could have been amended, up until the examination, due to the student's progress. Is it permitted to take account of this in the assignment of the centre assessment grade?

CCEA normally accepts entry amendments from centres throughout the examination series, where required. However, due to the exceptional circumstances this summer, we issued

a deadline of **1 May 2020** for any entry amendments. There is a short window after this to amend errors. The latest date by which amendments can be made is 15 May 2020.

If a centre feels it initially entered a student for the wrong tier, and has **not** amended the tier, the change in a student's performance should be reflected in the centre assessment grade. However, please note that the centre assessment grade should not be higher than the maximum grade allowable through the combination of Foundation and Higher Tier units selected.

5. If students resit, can the internally assessed elements be used next year?

AS Coursework

Students who intended to submit their internally assessed units in Summer 2020 can carry these over for submission and moderation in Summer 2021.

GCSE Controlled Assessment

CCEA's intention is that GCSE students who planned to submit assessment evidence for their internally assessed components/units in Summer 2020 can carry this over for submission and moderation in Summer 2021. We are currently doing a feasibility exercise on this matter, on a subject-by-subject basis, and we will issue guidance as soon as possible.

Further information about 2021 arrangements will be available in due course.

6. Can schools use baseline data (or other data) for justification of changes in the ability of this year's cohort when compared to the cohorts from previous years?

Yes, comparability of baseline data and historical centre performance will be valuable in helping schools arrive at judgements around centre assessment grades.

7. What materials does CCEA specifically provide that may help inform our judgements on centre assessment grades?

A number of the resources provided on subject-specific areas of the CCEA website may help inform your decisions when making judgements on centre assessment grades. These include the specification and specimen assessment materials, grade boundary information, exemplification of examination performance documentation, agreement trial guidance materials (where available), and Chief Examiner and Principal Moderator reports from previous series. In addition, if the examinations in the qualification you deliver are marked online, you can also avail of the data held in CCEA Analytics. Further guidance and support can be obtained by emailing CCEA at CCEA.Analytics@ccea.org.uk.

8. Can CCEA provide centres with their historical performance data?

Your centre's updated Summer 2019 Marks Report will be available for you to download on CCEA's eResults System from Tuesday 5 May 2020. This will include updated information following the Review of Marking Period. For those qualifications which CCEA marks online, you can also avail of the data held in CCEA Analytics, which includes centre grade distributions over the past three years within the 'Award' tab. Further guidance and support can be obtained by emailing CCEA at CCEA.Analytics@ccea.org.uk. Centres may also wish to consider additional sources for this information, such as SIMS.

- 9. Some Year 11 students were planning to sit a GCSE early, most likely Mathematics. What plans are in place for them?**

Any Year 11 student cashing in their GCSE Mathematics qualification in Summer 2020 will be awarded a grade. A centre assessment grade should be determined, and they should be included in the school's rank order with all other students entered for that qualification.

- 10. Will CCEA still be releasing new themes and tasks for Summer 2021 internal assessments for those subjects they currently do this for each academic year?**

CCEA is currently undertaking work on arrangements for 2021 and will engage with CCEA Regulation and the Department of Education on this. Our priorities for next year will be ensuring that assessments remain fair, valid and reliable in any approach we adopt. This includes task setting arrangements for both controlled assessments and coursework, which will need to be considered on a subject-by-subject basis to ensure no student is disadvantaged as a result of decisions we make.

- 11. In Summer 2021, some current Year 11 students can choose to re-enter for units they were originally entered for in Summer 2020, whereas others will have to sit all of their GCSE examinations. Will CCEA adjust exam content, paper length and/or level of challenge to address this?**

We fully understand the concerns around arrangements for Summer 2021. CCEA's priority for next year is ensuring that assessments are fair, valid and reliable and that public confidence is maintained in any approach we adopt. Further information about 2021 arrangements will be available in due course. It will be possible to assess the impact on students once dates are confirmed for schools to reopen.

- 12. In Summer 2021, there are two options for AS students: to take an A level grade based on AS missed components or to sit AS units alongside their A2 units. If they decide to sit AS units, are they required to sit them all or can they choose to sit only one? Can they choose, for example, to submit AS coursework that they have completed this year and which is not yet moderated and have a missed paper calculation for the examination?**

In Summer 2021, A2 students can choose to enter all, some or none of the available AS units in that series. This includes AS coursework units where work was completed in the 2019–20 academic year. If they submit their AS coursework, it will be included in moderation for Summer 2021.

- 13. Some Year 13 students had entered all their GCE units for a qualification in Summer 2020, for example in Mathematics. Will they get a grade and, if so, how will it be calculated?**

Students completing all GCE units (AS and A2) in Summer 2020 will receive a grade if a cash-in for the qualification has been received. The grade will be calculated using a statistical model, which uses a combination of centre assessment grades, rank orders, prior attainment data and previous years' outcomes in the centre for the subject(s).

- 14. I have a number of students in Year 13 who are completing GCE Mathematics in one year. Normally, these students wouldn't cash in their qualification until Year 14. Should the students cash in this year?**

CCEA is aware of this situation and will work to identify the students affected. We will make contact with the relevant centres over the coming weeks to provide further information on how this will be managed.

- 15. In the *Awarding for GCSE, AS and A Level Qualifications Summer 2020: Head of Centre Guidance* document, under Head of Centre Approval and Declaration, it states that: 'if the profile of grades submitted is substantially different from what might be expected based on my centre's results in the previous two years, where available, and the prior attainment of this year's students, the grades for my centre will be adjusted to bring them into line with overall standards'. CCEA has no data on individual GCSE students, so is it implied that GCSE grades, unless substantially different from the previous two years, will not be altered?**

CCEA, along with all other awarding organisations, awards grades on the basis of comparable outcomes. For Summer 2020, this will include information about previous centre performance in a qualification and expected grade distributions at full CCEA cohort level. This is to ensure that students in previous or future years are not disadvantaged as a result of decisions made in an awarding series. This approach will continue to inform any decisions on subject-level outcomes made in Summer 2020.

If the centre submits data that is very different to previous years, it should record this in its internal record-keeping and decision-making system.

- 16. Will GCSE profiles be used for the A level statistical modelling?**

Expected qualification-level outcomes at A level will be informed by students' GCSE prior attainment data, where available. This is the same as in any examination series. GCSE profiles may also be used to inform A level statistical standardisation.

- 17. Should Year 14 students taking AS resits be provided with AS centre assessment grades and be included in the rank order of the AS cohort?**

Yes, a Year 14 student cashing in their AS qualification, and entering for AS resits, should be provided with an AS centre assessment grade and be included in the rank order of the AS cohort.

- 18. Year 14 Art and Design students have already submitted their A2 Art and Design essays (20% of A2) to CCEA around 20 February, and these are normally marked over Easter. Will CCEA be marking this work and counting it towards the grades issued to A2 Art and Design students?**

CCEA will not be marking A2 Art and Design essays; however, teachers could use this work to help inform their centre assessment grades and the rank orders.

- 19. The 'early opportunity' exam series has been ruled out by CCEA/DE. How should schools respond to the challenge from parents and students that Northern Ireland students will be disadvantaged compared to English students and Northern Ireland students who take exams through English boards?**

Because education policy is devolved here, the Minister of Education must assess the evidence available and then make a decision based on what he believes is appropriate for the education system in Northern Ireland. Students in Northern Ireland will have the opportunity to re-enter for their assessments in Summer 2021 rather than in an additional sitting in the 2020–21 academic year.

- 20. Is there a published deadline for submission of centre assessment grades and rank orders?**

Submission of centre assessment grades and student rank orders will be carried out using an application that will be made available through CCEA's Central Login from the week beginning 25 May 2020. Completion dates for the exercise are as follows:

- GCE (AS and A level) – 5 June 2020
- GCSE – 12 June 2020
- Entry Level – 5 June 2020
- Occupational Studies and vocationally related qualifications – 12 June 2020.

- 21. What procedure is in place for schools who wish to highlight with evidence that the 2020 GCSE cohort is much stronger than the 2018 and 2019 cohorts?**

For each student, CCEA will only accept two pieces of data – the centre assessment grade for the student and their position in the rank order within that grade. No other information will be accepted or required. When arriving at your decisions on centre assessment grades, all evidence at your disposal should be considered to ensure that, as far as possible, the data you provide is a fair and accurate reflection of the ability of the student and of the cohort as a whole.

- 22. For each GCSE Double Award Science student, how should the Head of Science make decisions about centre assessment grades and rank orders when there are three discrete subject teachers combining to give two grades?**

CCEA appreciates that Double Award Science is made up of three different subject areas. There is no set method for making holistic judgements about the student's likely performance at overall qualification level. However, we would suggest that teachers should consider the student performance in their subject area first. It may be useful to decide on a notional centre assessment grade and rank order at subject level and then come together as a department to discuss. Each student should be discussed individually using all the evidence available. It may also be useful to consider the centre's percentage attainment at each grade from previous years before creating the holistic judgements and to revisit them again towards the end of the process to refine judgements.

23. Why will the AS grade awarded in Summer 2020 for AS qualifications not contribute to overall A level grades in Summer 2021?

The nature of the AS grade awarded in 2020 will not allow it to contribute to A level results in 2021. In a normal series, AS and A level grades are awarded on the basis of an accumulation of uniform marks, achieved at the unit level, which are then added together to arrive at an overall qualification-level grade. As Summer 2020 AS grades will not be calculated using uniform marks, it is not possible for AS grades awarded this year to contribute to A level grading in Summer 2021.

However, the AS grade awarded in Summer 2020 will still enable students to:

- make final A level choices and to progress into the A level year;
- complete UCAS forms in the autumn for university entry in 2021; and
- provide evidence of educational achievement if the student moves towards employment or a different pathway.

24. How do schools allocate a grade and rank order to students who have been absent for most of the academic year and for whom they have little evidence, for example as a result of health issues?

Managing this situation will prove challenging for all concerned – students, parents and the school. Where evidence is available, no matter how limited, it should be considered. The school should also seek the views of a tutor or external agencies, where applicable, to help them arrive at an accurate assessment of the student(s).

In the event that a Head of Centre does not feel able to reach a judgement about a particular student, it is important that this is communicated to them and their parents/carers as early as possible, so that all parties are clear about their individual situation.

25. We have a student who has only recently received a diagnosis that requires access arrangements to be put in place; however, these were not applied to internal assessments/mock examinations. What advice would you give to help us arrive at a centre assessment grade?

In these instances, the centre is best placed to judge how any diagnosis that requires access arrangements might affect a student's performance. If the diagnosis was confirmed at a late stage, evidence held on the student's past performance must be considered in that context. This will ensure that the centre assessment grade reflects, as accurately as possible, likely achievement with access arrangements in place.

26. I have a number of Year 10 students cashing in a GCSE qualification in Summer 2020. Should I include them in the rank order with the other students?

Yes, all students cashing in for the same qualification should be included in the rank order (at each grade), no matter what year group they are in.

27. When will the application to upload centre assessment grades be made available?

The application to allow schools to upload their centre assessment grades and rank orders within each grade will be available to schools from the week beginning 25 May 2020. The application will be accessible through the CCEA Central Login. Guidance will also be issued to accompany the release of the application. The guidance will explain how access can be granted to members of staff involved in the data collation process, so that they can help upload data onto the application.

28. Will we be able to export, for our records, the data we have shared with CCEA on centre assessment grades and rank orders?

Yes, an export facility will be available to users so that data shared with CCEA on centre assessment grades and rank orders can be held in the school for reference purposes. This function will also help centres check data by year group and/or subject entries to ensure the data they have uploaded is accurate before submission.

29. My Year 13 students normally cash in their AS qualifications at the end of Year 14. This year, should we cash in our students at the end of Year 13 instead?

This will be a decision for you and your students. If your students do not cash in this year, they will not receive an AS qualification grade in Summer 2020. They will, however, have the option to receive an AS qualification grade in Summer 2021 that will be calculated on the basis of their performance in their A2 examinations next year.

However, should the students concerned not be taking the associated A2 units in Summer 2021, they will not be able to receive an AS qualification grade in Summer 2021. In this scenario, if an AS qualification grade is required, an AS level cash-in entry should be made in Summer 2020.

30. We have a number of students that are doing four AS level qualifications. These students normally wait to see their unit level results in each before they decide which ones to carry on into their A2 year and then put a late cash-in on the system for the one subject they are not carrying forward. Is this possible in Summer 2020?

No, if your students have yet to decide which AS qualification they will drop, they should cash in all of their AS qualifications. Failure to do so will mean they will not be awarded an AS qualification grade in the subject and achievement in this subject will be lost.

If a student is sure which subject they will drop, then an AS cash-in needs to be put on for that subject only.

We are working to identify all centres and students in this scenario, and we will make contact to discuss the entry options available to these students.

31. I have a number of students in Year 14 who sat their AS examinations in Summer 2019 but did not cash in their AS qualifications. Instead, they decided to delay cash-in until Summer 2020. How will these be managed?

For those Year 14 students that did not cash in their AS qualifications in Summer 2019, the unit level marks they achieved last year will make up their AS qualification grade. There are a number of potential solutions that we are working through to process these students' grades.

We will work to identify the students affected and make contact with centres in due course.

32. I have a number of Year 14 students who were due to resit some or all of their AS units in Summer 2020 and **did not** cash in their AS qualifications in Summer 2019. Should we cash in these students?

We recognise that those students will have been able to calculate their AS qualification grade from Summer 2019 using their uniform marks without cashing in their qualification. However, if they wish to receive a new AS qualification grade in Summer 2020, a cash-in must be entered for them, but this is ultimately a decision for the school and the student. If they do cash in, the student will appear on the school's rank order for that subject or subjects in Summer 2020.

No matter what decision you make, we would ask that the AS unit level resit entry for each student remains on the system.

Supplementary Question

Can I exclude a Year 14 student who is resitting an AS unit from the AS rank order if I am not confident that they are in a position to improve their AS qualification grade? For example, one AS Geography student has a uniform mark total from Summer 2019 that puts them just over a grade boundary. They opted to resit one or more of their AS units in Summer 2020 to improve their grade, but I know that they have not improved. I will therefore place them where I judge they belong in the rank order. At the end of the standardisation process, they may well drop below the boundary and into the grade below, which I wish to avoid.

No, you cannot exclude a Year 14 student from the AS rank order if they have a cash-in on the system. We will, however, work with centres that have students in this situation. We will ensure that they get the highest grade, whether it's the notional grade achieved in 2019 or the statistical grade achieved in Summer 2020. We will be able to see that they have previous attainment on the system. We are exploring how our application can flag these students and award them the higher of the two grades – the notional AS qualification grade achieved (but not awarded) in Summer 2019, or the AS qualification grade awarded in Summer 2020.

- 33. I have some Year 14 students who were due to resit some or all of their AS units in Summer 2020 and did cash in their AS qualifications in Summer 2019. Should we cash in these students?**

Again, this is a decision for the school and the students. If they wish to receive a new AS qualification grade in Summer 2020, a cash-in must be entered for them. They will then appear on the school's rank order for that subject or subjects. No matter what decision you make, we would ask that the AS unit resit entry for the student remains on the system.

If you decide to cash in your students in Summer 2020 and they have a previous AS grade from Summer 2019 (or earlier), the Summer 2020 AS grade will be stand-alone.

- 34. My current Year 13 students are taking their GCE qualification in a linear fashion, i.e. they will take all of their examinations at the end of the two years, in Summer 2021. Will I still be able to take this approach?**

Yes, your students can still do all of their examinations as planned in Summer 2021.

- 35. Circumstances this year have meant that aspects of our school's usual examinations entry pattern have changed. For example, we normally cash in our students' AS qualifications at the end of their A2 year, but this year we will be cashing them in at the end of their AS year. Does this constitute malpractice?**

CCEA recognises that schools may well have to adjust their examinations entry patterns to meet the challenges presented this year. Therefore, changes to usual examinations entry patterns will not constitute malpractice.

- 36. I have a private candidate entered this summer who is taking an Art qualification through our school. However, they are educated outside the school system and we have no past or current relationship with this student, so I do not know anything about their past performance.**

Because there are no examinations this summer, you should notify the student that you need to discuss summer awarding with them as soon as possible. If you have low/no evidence of this private candidate's performance (see CCEA awarding organisation guidance issued 11 May 2020), please record 'judgement not possible' in the appropriate column in the CCEA data submission application (due to be released to schools in the week beginning 25 May).

Please contact the CCEA awarding organisation helpdesk to provide as much information as possible on these candidates, subject to their permission being granted. This could help CCEA work with the appropriate authority to offer advice.

37. I have a student who did attend my school in Year 11 but has been enrolled with an EOTAS centre for Year 12. The student has been entered for their GCSEs through my school, but I do not know anything about their performance in Year 12.

You should consult with the EOTAS centre to establish the student's likely performance had they sat their examinations this summer and discuss the evidence they are using to make this judgement. In order to rank order the student, it will be important to have as much of this evidence as possible. It will also be important to consider the student's performance in assessments in Year 11, when they did attend your school.

38. I have three private candidates resitting one A level each to get into a competitive university course, as they missed one grade required last year. They are working very hard, at home, with extra tuition. I haven't seen their work recently, but I can request it if I want to. I also know these students as we taught them up until last June and we know their A level, AS and GCSE results. Can I include these private candidates in my entries for Summer 2020?

Yes, see the CCEA awarding organisation guidance on private candidates for further information. Because you have past qualification attainment data and a past relationship with the students you should be in a position to make an informed decision on a centre assessment grade and rank order position for these private candidates.

39. I have a mature private candidate who is resitting a GCSE in English to get into a higher education course. Can I continue to include them in my entries?

Yes, see the CCEA awarding organisation guidance on private candidates for further information. It is likely you will have past attainment data and you also have the option to contact their former school/college if they are not a former student from your centre.

40. I am reluctant to include high performing private candidates (repeating students) in my school's entry data and submit centre assessment grades and rank order information on their behalf as I am worried they will take up my 'quota' for top grades this year. This could mean ranking students in my current Year 14 cohort beneath the repeating students and, if my grades are adjusted downwards by CCEA, the current Year 14 students may not get the top grades.

All students that have been entered through your school and have a cash-in on the system must be assigned a centre assessment grade **and** a position in the rank order, unless a judgement is not possible. There is no 'quota'. Schools with high performing repeating students who, for example, may be resitting A Level Chemistry to get into medicine, should be treated in the same way as other students. The process being used to issue grades across the UK involves inclusion of private candidates. These students form part of entries every year. Annual past performance data includes private candidates and they must be included in this year's data process to help maintain standards.

- 41. Some of our students have applied to universities or other organisations for bursaries to support them with their fees. Will universities still make these schemes available? How will they assess them if students are expected to show that they have top marks, as for Summer 2020 there will be no raw marks or uniform marks available, just a grade?**

We have contacted UCAS on this point. They have advised that students/teachers should contact the university/organisation offering the bursary or grant scheme directly. These organisations are likely to be willing to continue to make these schemes available and, as a result, it is possible that they will devise criteria and or application processes to ensure students can apply

- 42. Will the All Ireland Scholarship (AIS) operate in Summer 2020?**

The All Ireland Scholarship, which is funded by JP McManus, provides financial support to high achieving students from low income households. Each year, CCEA uses examinations performance data in the form of raw and uniform marks to administer the All Ireland Scholarship. Because grades in Summer 2020 will be awarded on the basis of centre assessment grades and rank order position, the data necessary to enable us to identify the highest performing candidates will not be available. CCEA will therefore be unable to administer the All Ireland Scholarship this year.

- 43. I have some students who wish to apply for special consideration. What is the process for this?**

Special consideration will not apply this year. Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment. Because the Summer 2020 examinations have been cancelled, special consideration will not be applied by CCEA. For the purposes of assigning a centre assessment grade and position in the rank order, you should assume the trauma did not take place, i.e. decide what grade they could reasonably be expected to achieve in the absence of any impediment.

- 44. In our January mock examinations, a student did not perform as well as expected because of illness. I have subsequently used this mark to inform my decisions on the student's centre assessment grade and rank order position. Have I done the wrong thing?**

In this instance, you may use the principles of special consideration to apply a tariff to the student's mark in their mock examination so that it gives a better reflection of their ability, considering the circumstances under which the assessment was taken. In light of this, you may then wish to review the centre assessment grade assigned to the student and their position in the rank order.

Additional examples of these circumstances and the appropriate tariffs are set out in the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process 2019–2020*.

45. Can students who have been given a special consideration tariff by schools be flagged in the application that we will use to send CCEA our centre assessment grades and rank orders? This would allow CCEA to identify these students and also to ensure this is reflected on their results slip.

No, special consideration does not apply this year because an examination has not been completed on a fixed timetable day.

46. On page 8 of the *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020: Technical Information, CCEA Awarding Organisation* it states:

'Special consideration requests which apply when a student is unable to take an assessment, or suffers a traumatic event that might affect their performance, will not apply this summer. Instead, judgements should reflect how students would have performed under ordinary circumstances. Where illness or other personal circumstances might have affected performance in mock examinations or other assessments, centres should bear that in mind when making their judgements.'

Can you give me an example of how I would apply special consideration for an assessment held in school?

Some examples are provided below. For further information on which students are normally eligible for special consideration, please refer to the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process 2019–2020*.

Example 1

A student's parent sadly died six weeks before they were due to sit their mock GCSE History paper. The paper had a total possible raw mark of 100 and the student scored 60/100 in the paper.

This circumstance would attract the maximum allowance of 5%, which will be calculated on the total raw marks available, i.e. 5% of the 100 = 5. The student's new mark will therefore be 65/100.

Example 2

A candidate broke their non-writing arm the day before a class assessment was due to take place. The student took the assessment but was in obvious discomfort throughout. The assessment had a total of 50 marks available and the student scored 35/50.

This circumstance would attract an allowance of 3%, which will be calculated on the total raw marks available, i.e. 3% of 50 = 1.5 which is rounded up to 2 raw marks. The student's new mark will therefore be 37/50.

Special consideration should not be applied retrospectively if the centre has made some adjustment at the time of the mock examination/assessment, for example by giving the candidate 25% extra time to complete their assessment or awarding them extra marks to compensate.

47. What arrangements are in place for those students who would normally have access arrangements?

For students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, you should make a holistic decision on centre assessment grades and rank orders, based on their likely performance had they continued to receive any usual learning support and had the approved access arrangements or reasonable adjustments been in place.

For further information on definitions relating to access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, please refer to the JCQ publication *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments 2019–20*.

48. What adjustments should I consider for my Year 12 students who would have had access arrangements in place for the GCSE modules they sat in Year 11?

Access arrangements allow candidates with **specific needs**, such as special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries, to access the assessment and show what they know and can do without changing the demands of the assessment. The intention behind an access arrangement is to meet the particular needs of an individual candidate without affecting the integrity of the assessment.

Access arrangements must reflect the support given to the candidate in the centre. This is commonly referred to as 'normal way of working'. The only exception to this is where an arrangement is put in place as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment.

When arriving at a centre assessment grade, the mock examinations/assessments under consideration should have been completed under the student's 'normal way of working', so no adjustment will be necessary.

49. We have received confirmation there has been a change to the Head of Centre declaration, presented in the *Awarding for GCSE, AS and A Level Qualifications Summer 2020: Head of Centre Guidance* that was published on 16 April. What was the reason for the change?

A number of changes have been made to the document:

- CCEA Regulation has updated the Head of Centre declaration to show that the statistical model being developed to support standardisation would consider a range of evidence including past results for the *previous three years*, as indicated by the Minister of Education, Peter Weir, in his statement on 16 April. The original Head of Centre declaration stated that the statistical model would use data from *previous two years*, where available.
- The statement on conflicts of interest in the Head of Centre declaration has been updated to ensure Heads of Centre have appropriate procedures in place to manage any conflicts that may arise within a centre during the process. In the event of a Head of Centre having a conflict in a school (i.e. a child/family member at the school or a member of the teaching staff), the Head of Centre must inform the CCEA Centre Support Team using a Conflict of Interest Form. Further information on this will be included in the communication that will accompany the update to this document.

- Further information on managing entries for private candidates has been added.
- Additional guidance to inform decision-making on centre assessment grades and rank order has been included. Some tips on avoiding unconscious bias when making judgements about centre assessment grades can be found at www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-grading-exams-gcse-alevel-bias-marking-grades

50. My school has seen recent improvements in grade outcomes. Will the awarding arrangements in place this summer take account of the improvement?

We understand that schools will be anxious about the awarding process in place in Summer 2020, particularly those with evidence that suggests this year’s cohort could reasonably be expected to perform better than those in previous years. We are working with experts across the UK, including other JCQ awarding organisations and Ofqual, to ensure the statistical model provides grades that are fair. The Minister of Education, Peter Weir, has instructed CCEA to ensure the grade distribution in 2020 is similar to previous years, to uphold public confidence.

51. Will CCEA be collecting data on private candidates? I am worried that the inclusion of private candidates will impact on other students in my centre assessment grade and rank order submission?

In addition to the application to capture centre assessment grades and rank orders, CCEA will issue a separate application to all centres to capture information on private candidate entries. This will allow us to make sure private candidates are not negatively affected in a centre’s rank order.

We require centres to upload information on private candidate entries using the application in line with the 5 June and 12 June deadlines for submitting GCE and GCSE centre assessment grades and rank order positions.

52. How can I provide a centre assessment grade and rank order for a private candidate with the same level of confidence as students who have attended our school this year?

While you should have the same level of confidence in the grade and rank order position you submit for private candidates as you do for other students, this does not mean that you need to use the same evidence to make your judgement. The evidence you do have should be both sufficient and reliable to allow you to make a holistic professional judgement that may be arrived at differently than with the other students in your school.

For evidence to be reliable, you must be able to validate the conditions under which it was taken, for example under the supervision of a tutor/teacher who your school has a relationship with. It is also important that you have a discussion with the student and tutor/teacher. In some cases, it may be appropriate to ask the student probing questions that will ascertain their level of understanding and provide you with confidence that the evidence they have submitted is their own work. After these discussions, you may decide that it is necessary to supervise additional assignments or mock assessments. We have provided more detailed information on how evidence can be validated in *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020: Supplementary Information on Private Candidates, CCEA Awarding Organisation*.

53. What should I do if, having followed the guidance in *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020: Supplementary Information on Private Candidates, CCEA Awarding Organisation*, I still do not feel confident enough to provide a centre assessment grade and rank order for a private candidate?

If you have followed the suggestions in the above document and confidence still remains low, you should not remove a candidate from the entry file. You should contact the CCEA Helpline, helpline@ccea.org.uk, with your concerns.

54. CCEA has advised that all work done independently by students since 20 March should be used with caution when providing centre assessment grades and rank order. Why is it acceptable then to set new work for private candidates?

Where a school has made an agreement to accept an entry from a private candidate but has a low level of confidence in the evidence that is provided, it may be necessary to set a remote assessment. To ensure maximum confidence in the new evidence, we have provided information in our document *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020: Supplementary Information on Private Candidates, CCEA Awarding Organisation*.

55. How long do I have to make decisions on centre assessment grades and rank orders for private candidates?

Centres have up until 5 June 2020 to submit centre assessment grades and rank orders for GCE subjects and up until 12 June 2020 to submit for GCSE and Occupational Studies. Where a private candidate does not provide the additional evidence needed to allow a centre to make a judgement with a high level of confidence, the centre can record 'No Judgement Possible' in the application when submitting the candidate's centre assessment grades.

56. What types of evidence should we accept in instances where we know very little about the private candidate?

Examples of acceptable evidence for making judgements on centre assessment grades and rank order positions are provided on page 5 of *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020: Technical Information, CCEA Awarding Organisation* issued on 30 April. It may be that only a limited range of evidence is submitted to you; however, if you can confidently use the evidence, you should do so.

In addition to *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020: Supplementary Information on Private Candidates, CCEA Awarding Organisation*, some further examples to assist with managing private candidates are provided below:

Example 1

You have an agreement with a private candidate to enter them for an A Level Chemistry resit. They did not attend your school in the past. They have entered with your school because you are on a list of schools willing to accept private candidates. Your Chemistry department has had no engagement with this candidate.

The candidate has been going to a private tutor who is a teacher at another school. You have no prior relationship with the tutor. You have contacted the candidate to say that, given the current circumstances, you may not be able to provide CCEA with a centre assessment grade and rank order for them. The candidate is very upset, as they need the grade to progress to university this year.

You contact the candidate and advise them that you will consider all evidence they have of their attainment this year. The candidate sends you a number of past papers and their results from their Summer 2019 A levels. Some have been sat with the tutor and some the candidate has used to study independently. You discuss this with the candidate and agree that you will contact the tutor to discuss the conditions under which the papers were sat. The tutor confirms that they were done independently under direct supervision and are a true reflection of the candidate's performance. You ask the tutor to email you with a declaration that these assessments were carried out independently by the candidate with no access to any resource or help of any kind. You ask the candidate to complete the signed student declaration. You accept the declarations and although the evidence covers only a narrow focus of the specification, it sufficiently covers the units they were resitting.

You feel that the evidence you have may allow you to provide a centre assessment grade, but it is still difficult to provide a place in your rank order. You contact the candidate's previous school for a discussion about the candidate, and you decide that you will also need to set a remote assessment, focusing on some discriminating questions. You agree a set time with the candidate, and they remotely complete the assessment within that time and send it to you. They complete the student declaration and send this to you also. You contact the student and discuss their answers with them.

You can now confidently provide a centre assessment grade and rank order for the candidate.

Example 2

You have an agreed to enter a student attending an EOTAS centre for their GCSE Mathematics and English Language. They attended your school for four years and sat a number of Year 11 units in Summer 2019, including GCSE English Language and Mathematics. Your school has had no direct contact with the student since they left. However, your school has had previous links with the EOTAS centre.

You have contacted the student's parents to say that, given the current circumstances, you may not be able to provide them with a centre assessment grade and rank order. The family are very upset, as the student needs their GCSE English Language and Mathematics to get on to their FE course this year, and they have been focusing all of their time in the EOTAS centre on these subjects.

You contact the student and the EOTAS centre and advise them that you will consider all evidence they have of their attainment this year. They send you all the work they have done, which includes a limited number of class tasks and assignments and one mock examination for each subject. The EOTAS centre confirms that the mock examination was done independently under direct supervision and is a true reflection of the student's performance. Help given to the student on their classwork is clearly annotated by the EOTAS tutor, therefore the student's performance is evident.

Although there is not a wide range of work, there is still evidence that the student has covered all the Year 12 content. You compare the level of responses the student has provided with those of the students at your school and also all the evidence you have from Year 11 to provide a centre assessment grade and rank order.

Example 3

A centre provides additional after-school classes for adult learners that are delivered by a tutor you employ. The centre is concerned that there may be appeals from private candidates who are not being awarded a grade in Summer 2020 due to lack of evidence.

The centre has a relationship with the tutor who can provide information on each private candidate. The centre can also engage in remote sessions with the adult learners to ascertain their understanding of the subject content, to gather information on previous accreditation and to review work produced by the learner. Where necessary, centres may allow the private candidate to undertake an additional assessment set by the centre and observed remotely by centre staff.

Centres have up until 5 June 2020 to submit centre assessment grades and rank orders for GCE subjects and up until 12 June 2020 to submit for GCSE and Occupational Studies. Where a private candidate does not provide the additional evidence needed to allow a centre to make a judgement with a high level of confidence, the centre can record 'No Judgement Possible' in the application when submitting the candidate's centre assessment grades.

Example 4

A student has been educated at home for health reasons for the past two school years. He has studied Double Award Science with an Education Authority tutor, with whom the school has no previous relationship. However, the school does have a relationship with the student, as he has been registered there for the past five years.

To help make a decision on the candidate's centre assessment grade and rank order position, the centre may wish to consider providing a remote assessment for the candidate, in line with *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020: Supplementary Information on Private Candidates, CCEA Awarding Organisation*. As the centre has past qualification attainment data and a current relationship with the candidate, they should then be in a position to make an informed decision on the centre assessment grade and rank order position for this candidate. Where necessary, centres may allow the candidate to undertake a further assessment, observed remotely by centre staff, as outlined in our guidance on private candidates.

