

GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020

Technical Information

CCEA Awarding Organisation

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Contents		Page
1	Background	1
2	Summary of timeline	1
3	How you will receive data from CCEA	2
4	Summary of information required from centres	3
5	Centre assessment grades and rank ordering of students	4
6	Quality assurance	9
7	Conflict of interest	9
8	Transferred students	9
9	Coursework/Controlled assessments	10
10	Entries	10
11	Malpractice	10
12	Standardisation	11
13	Private candidates	11
14	Issue of results	11
15	Appeals	12
16	Student options in 2021	12
17	Next steps	12

1. BACKGROUND

The recent CCEA publication *Awarding for GCSE, AS and A Level Qualifications Summer 2020: Head of Centre Guidance* stated that CCEA awarding organisation would communicate with schools and colleges by 30 April with further information on the submission of data required for awarding grades in Summer 2020. As well as this *Technical Information* document, we have produced *Technical Information – Supplementary Questions and Answers*. The information in both these documents will help you with the process and should be read alongside *Awarding for GCSE, AS and A Level Qualifications Summer 2020: Head of Centre Guidance*. The information applies to qualifications offered by CCEA awarding organisation that are regulated by CCEA Regulation.

We acknowledge that this unique situation presents challenges for teachers, Heads of Centres and other colleagues in schools and colleges, and we thank you for your continued co-operation.

2. SUMMARY OF TIMELINE

It is important that centres set aside an appropriate amount of time for all information to be accurately completed, checked and signed off within the centre before it is submitted to CCEA.

Below is an approximate timeline for the CCEA processes involved in the awarding of grades in Summer 2020. Where exact dates are not yet agreed, an estimate is included for guidance.

Activity	Dates
Centres and CCEA's entries team resolve anomalies in centre entries	Currently in progress
Centres begin compiling centre assessment grades and rank orders	Currently in progress
Centres quality assure their entry data (If a grade is required in any qualification, it is essential that an eligible cash-in is on our entry system.)	Currently in progress (must be completed before Friday 15 May)
Final date CCEA will accept any amendments to entries – all levels	Friday 15 May
CCEA releases an online application, for recording centre assessment grades and rank ordering, to centres through the Central Login	Week beginning 25 May
Deadline for submission of AS and A level centre assessment grades and rank orders and Entry Level centre assessment levels	Friday 5 June
Deadline for submission of GCSE qualifications and Occupational Studies centre assessment grades and rank orders and vocational qualifications centre assessment levels	Friday 12 June
Entry Level results issued	Tuesday 30 June
AS and A level results issued	Thursday 13 August
GCSE, Occupational Studies and vocational qualifications results issued	Thursday 20 August

For each subject with cash-in entries, we require the following information from centres:

- A **centre assessment grade** for each student – the judgement submitted to CCEA by the Head of Centre about the grade that each student is most likely to have achieved if they had sat their external examinations and internally assessed components. This professional judgement is derived from evidence that is held within the centre and which has been reviewed by subject teachers and relevant heads of department.
- The **rank order** of students within each grade – for example, for all those students with a grade C in GCSE Mathematics, a rank order where 1 is the highest attaining student at that grade, and so on.

3. HOW YOU WILL RECEIVE DATA FROM CCEA

Centres can now begin work to generate a centre assessment grade and an overall rank order in each subject. However, they must not try to submit the data until the application becomes available in the week beginning 25 May.

The application will be accessible via CCEA Central Login. It will be pre-populated with the data for your centre to include information and candidate numbers for each qualification, based on the entry information. Within each qualification a grade must be selected for each student from the dropdown menu. Then a rank order within each grade must be selected.

For example, if a centre has entries for GCSE Mathematics and awards 15 students grade A, then these students must be ranked from 1 (the highest rank grade A) down to 15. This rank order can be changed as you review it, and the application will not allow a rank lower than 15 within the grade.

The application will have a function for centres to indicate that they do not have enough evidence or information to provide a centre assessment grade for a student.

CCEA awarding organisation will agree an approach with CCEA Regulation for managing private candidates for whom there is no data.

Centres will not be able to submit data without Head of Centre sign-off.

Submissions will only be accepted through the CCEA application for CCEA qualifications.

4. SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REQUIRED FROM CENTRES

The following table itemises the data we require from centres for GCE AS and A level qualifications.

GCE AS and A Level – Summary of Information Required from Centres

Candidate Groups in Summer 2020	Centre Assessment Grade Required?	Included in Rank Order Within Each Grade?
Candidates entered for A2 units and A level cash-in who have completed and cashed in AS in 2019	Yes, A level only	Yes, A level only
Candidates entered for all AS and A2 units in 2020 and AS and A level cash-in in 2020 – these will be candidates completing the course in one year (for example AS and A Level Mathematics)	Yes, for both AS and A level	Yes, for both AS and A level
Candidates entered for A2 units and A level cash-in, who are resitting some AS units in 2020 but are not cashing in AS in 2020	Yes, A level only	Yes, A level only
Candidates who have no entries for AS units in 2020, have completed all AS units in a previous series and are cashing in AS and A level in 2020	Yes, for both AS and A level	Yes, for both AS and A level
Candidates entered for AS units and AS cash-in	Yes	Yes
Candidates entered for AS units but not cashing in until 2021	No	No
Private candidates	Yes, if the centre has sufficient evidence to make an informed judgement – otherwise, no	

Note: We are aware of differing cash-in practices across centres for GCE Mathematics and Further Mathematics – please cash in (or not) as you would in a normal series. CCEA may be in contact if further information is required.

The following table itemises the data we require from centres for GCSE qualifications.

GCSE – Summary of Information Required from Centres

Candidate Groups in Summer 2020	Centre Assessment Grade Required?	Included in Rank Order Within Each Grade?
Candidates entered for all GCSE units and GCSE cash-in (including short course)	Yes	Yes
Candidates entered for some GCSE units and GCSE cash-in (including short course)	Yes	Yes
Candidates cashing in after one year, for example Year 11 (or younger)	Yes	Yes
Candidates entering units only, for example Year 11	No	No
Private candidates	Yes, if the centre has sufficient evidence to make an informed judgement – otherwise, no	

5. CENTRE ASSESSMENT GRADES AND RANK ORDERING OF STUDENTS

This section provides guidance on the information that centres may use in determining centre assessment grades and rank orders.

The centre assessment grades submitted to CCEA 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 coursework, controlled assessment or other assessments required by the qualification. The knowledge, expertise and professionalism of teachers are key to the success of this stage of the process.

In arriving at a centre assessment grade and a rank order for students, it is important that teachers use all the information available to them from their delivery of the qualification. It would not be appropriate for CCEA to specify or weight the types of information available, as this may undervalue other useful information within the department and the centre.

Qualifications have different structures and there is flexibility for schools in how they deliver them. This makes it impossible for CCEA to suggest particular methods, for example:

- There is not uniform entry practice across centres, and also within centres; for example at GCSE, while many students are entered for units in Year 11, there are teachers who choose to enter their students for all their units at the end of a two year course.
- Centres or individual teachers may consider that Year 11 performance in GCSE units is not representative of overall subject performance.
- Some qualifications are 100% examination, while others have a high percentage of internal assessment.
- Teachers are at different stages of delivery of the qualification, and internal assessment will be at various stages of completion/marking.

- CCEA is also aware that centres may not currently have access to all the evidence relating to their students in light of the current pandemic.

The previous guidance issued, *Awarding for GCSE, AS and A Level Qualifications Summer 2020: Head of Centre Guidance*, lists possible indicators of performance that centres may wish to refer to when deciding centre assessment grades and rank ordering within these grades. The indicators include:

Indicator
Records of each student's performance throughout their study, including, for example, progress review data, classwork, bookwork and/or participation in performances in subjects where this is assessed, e.g. music, drama and PE.
For A level students who took AS in 2019, their AS results in that subject and subject performance in the A2 course of teaching and learning.
For GCSE students who sat units prior to Summer 2020, their notional unit grades in that subject.
Performance in any controlled assessments/coursework or other assessments required for the qualification, even if this has not been fully completed.
Performance in any class or homework assessments and mock examinations taken throughout their study.
Tiers – in GCSE subjects that include units available at Foundation or Higher, the tier entered by students should be considered. The centre assessment grade should not be higher than the maximum grade allowable through the combination of Foundation and Higher Tier units selected.
For resitting students, any information about previous grades achieved or coursework, controlled assessment or other assessment (e.g. practical and oral assessment) marks that would under normal circumstances be carried forward.
Performance of 2020 students compared to the performance of students in the previous two years where possible, and comparison of previous centre outcomes with your estimated grades. (<i>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.</i>)
Any other relevant information that provides objective evidence of educational attainment within the subject.

Given the timing of the announcement, we recognise that centres will have incomplete evidence and that the range and amount of evidence will vary between different subjects. Judgements should be made on the available evidence. There is no requirement to set additional mock examinations or homework tasks for determining a centre assessment grade, and no student should be disadvantaged if they are unable to complete any work set after schools/colleges and other examination centres were closed. Where students have completed additional work after school closures, this should be used with caution.

When determining the centre assessment grade, your teams may want to revisit aspects of the qualification such as:

- the range of skills, knowledge and understanding covered;
- the structure and unit/component weightings; and
- the assessment requirements.

They may also find it helpful to look at the standards required for the different elements of the qualification. You will find information on our qualifications pages at www.ccea.org.uk to support you in understanding the expected standards of the qualifications you are delivering. This may include:

- previous series grade boundaries;
- specimen assessment materials;
- past papers and mark schemes; and
- Chief Examiner reports (including Principal Moderator reports where there is internal assessment).

If the examinations in the qualification you deliver are marked online, you can also avail of the data held in the CCEA Analytics application. This includes centres' grade distributions for the past three years. Further information can be obtained by contacting CCEA at CCEA.Analytics@ccea.org.uk

Next, you should consider all the key evidence you have for each student and reflect on how much it tells you about the student's attainment, as measured against the requirements of the relevant course assessment. For example, this could be, but is not limited to:

- the consistency of a student's practical or performance evidence;
- their depth or breadth of knowledge and understanding in relation to questions on key topics;
- their degree of analytical or evaluative skills demonstrated on key topics; or
- the quality of their responses to discriminating questions or tasks.

Not every topic in every area needs to be assessed exhaustively – a selection of important and representative questions and tasks evidenced under the appropriate conditions can give a good indication of likely performance. This will be particularly important this year when some of the evidence may be incomplete or coursework evidence is not available to centres.

You also need to provide a rank order for each of your students within each grade. Unique rankings, with no ties, are required. This will help us make differentiated adjustments where necessary to the centre submissions.

Rank ordering in centres with more than one class

We acknowledge that it will undoubtedly be a challenge to rank order students, especially in departments with more than one teacher and class, and particularly if there are very large numbers of students. Where there is more than one teacher delivering a qualification to more than one class, you will need to agree collectively the rank order for all students within your centre. Within your subject departments you will need to discuss the rank order and come to

a shared view of the standard being applied within your centre. We recognise that this will be challenging for some centres and in some subjects, given the current circumstances.

One approach to rank ordering your students is outlined below:

- Each teacher could start off by estimating grades and rank orders for their students.
- Working with the head of department, teachers could discuss and compare the evidence of students at the top and bottom of the rank order within each grade, ensuring that a consistent standard is being applied and adjusting accordingly.
- Teachers could then integrate the ranking of students by discussing individual students, beginning at the top of the rank order and working down.

We appreciate that if two or more students are almost indistinguishable in terms of their subject performance, then it may be very difficult to put them into rank order. However, CCEA will require a single rank order for all students. Tied rank order placings will not be allowed and will mean that submission is not possible.

Students who are taught at a different centre (consortium)

Students who are being taught at a different centre from the one where the entry was made should be included in the grading and rank ordering of the centre that made the entry. The centre making the entry should consult with the teaching centre and compare evidence on student performance in both centres to establish an agreed grade and rank order position. The home centre, which is making the entry for the student, has final responsibility for submitting a centre assessment grade and incorporating the student into the home centre's rank order.

Example 1:

A school sends one student, called Lucy Smith, to another school for A Level Geography because of a timetable clash. The school where Lucy studies most other subjects is the school that has entered her for a CCEA A Level Geography award.

The school that is teaching Lucy Smith for A Level Geography has assessed her as a grade A. They would also have ranked her as 7th at grade A out of a total of 9 students assessed as grade A at their school. There are students from three different schools being taught at this school.

The school entering Lucy notes that the teaching school ranks Lucy 7th; however, they have to rank Lucy Smith amongst their other A Level Geography students, and they have decided Lucy Smith is the best of their grade A students. They have done this by discussing Lucy's performance with the teaching school and comparing all the information available about Lucy's performance with the performances of the students being taught geography in their school.

Example 2:

A school sends three students to a local further education college for Health and Social Care. The school will enter its own students. As there are only three students entered in total at the school for Health and Social Care, there are grades that no student will have been allocated.

The school entering the students will have responsibility for submitting a centre assessment grade and rank order for the students. The school entering the students should take into consideration all the information available to them, such as the grade and rank order the FE

college has provided to them, as well as all other information available to them. The students were graded by the FE college as follows: two at grade B and one at grade D. They were placed in a rank order by the FE college amongst a much bigger cohort.

The rank order submitted by the school entering the students may look like this:

Grade A*	N/A	
Grade A	N/A	
Grade B	1	Lucy Smith
	2	John Brown
Grade C	N/A	
Grade D	1	Marie Jones
Grade E	N/A	

In the previous guidance issued on 16 April 2020, *Awarding for GCSE, AS and A Level Qualifications Summer 2020: Head of Centre Guidance*, there is a requirement for centres to keep records of data used and decision-making. This will help show that a consistent approach to decision-making/standardisation has been adopted within your centre and that the centre is confident that the decisions made were appropriate based on the cohort's performance. This approach is recommended to support centres in their governance arrangements. Centres will take their own approach to ensuring their record-keeping and decision-making processes are robust.

Special consideration and access arrangements

Where students have agreed reasonable adjustments or access arrangements (for example a reader or scribe), the centre's judgement should take account of likely achievement with the reasonable adjustment/access arrangement in place. 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. When centres are considering special consideration, they should refer to the JCQ publication [A guide to the special consideration process 2019–2020](#).

Using the full range of grades

Centres must ensure they use the full range of grades as appropriate to the evidence they have available. Comparisons of students' performance against the performance of cohorts from the previous two years will support this. This includes grade U for work that is below the threshold required for a grade and grade A* for exceptional performance.

Qualifications with tiered units

In GCSE subjects which include units available at Foundation or Higher, the tier entered by students should be considered. The centre assessment grade should not be higher than the maximum grade allowable through the combination of Foundation and Higher Tier units selected. One rank order is required per grade, to include all students regardless of tier of entry.

Subject-specific information

GCSE, GCE AS and A Level Double Awards

Centre assessment grades should be based on the double grading system A*A*, A*A, AA, etc.

GCSE Religious Studies (Short and Full Course)

In submitting grades and rank orders, centres will be asked to produce these separately for Religious Studies (Short Course) and Religious Studies (Full Course).

GCSE Digital Technology (Multimedia) and Digital Technology (Programming)

In submitting grades and rank orders, centres will be asked to produce these separately for Digital Technology (Multimedia) and Digital Technology (Programming).

AS and A Level Mathematics and Further Mathematics

In submitting grades and rank orders, centres will be asked to produce these separately for legacy and revised AS and A Level Mathematics and Further Mathematics qualifications.

6. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Head of Centre will be required to confirm that the centre assessment grades and the rank order of students are a true representation of student performance. If the Head of Centre is unavailable to do this, the Board of Governors may delegate a deputy Head of Centre. However, the Board of Governors should notify CCEA of this change. It is vital to the awarding process that centre assessment grades and rank ordering of students are as accurate as possible to ensure this year's cohort are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged over previous and future cohorts. In signing off this information the Head of Centre, where possible, should compare the centre assessment grades with centre outcomes from the previous two years for each subject.

One sign-off will be required for each data submission. Centres will not be able to submit data without this authorisation.

7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Heads of Centre are responsible for managing any potential conflicts of interest in relation to the submission of centre assessment grades and rank order information, for example where a member of centre staff is involved in the preparation of centre assessment grades for a family member.

The Head of Centre must ensure that records of a potential conflict of interest, and the steps taken to mitigate it, are retained. If the potential conflict of interest involves the Head of Centre, this should be notified to CCEA ahead of submission using the established routes for capturing centre staff declarations of interest.

8. TRANSFERRED STUDENTS

In cases where a student has transferred from one school or college to another part-way through their studies, the current Head of Centre may wish to consult with the previous centre about evidence they hold and may take this into account in reaching a judgement where they are confident to do so.

9. COURSEWORK/CONTROLLED ASSESSMENTS

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 intended to submit their internally assessed components/units in Summer 2020 can carry these over for submission and moderation in Summer 2021. We are currently doing a feasibility exercise on this on a subject-by-subject basis and will issue guidance on this as soon as possible.

10. ENTRIES

CCEA's entries team have been in communication with centres regarding entry data. We must ensure that we have the most accurate entry data possible prior to collecting centre assessment grades and rank orders, as this information will be used to populate the online application for centres to use to submit data. As per the normal rules of entry, all necessary unit entries and cash-in entries are required for a full award. Unit entries, even those with no cash-ins, should reflect the intended entries for Summer 2020.

We would ask that you follow all guidance on entries provided to date and observe the deadlines issued to enable grading and issue of results to proceed as planned.

The **final date** for making individual entry amendments is **Friday 15 May 2020**.

Please do not remove any unit entries for Summer 2020 unless there has been a clear error. We are unable to accept any further amendments after this date. **Only students correctly entered for units and grades by this date** can be included in the grade and rank order capture system and will be guaranteed outcomes on the published results dates.

Any entry errors discovered after 15 May will not be processed until after the published results dates.

11. MALPRACTICE

The process being adopted this year is unprecedented and will pose many challenges to schools, colleges and teachers. CCEA will continue to ensure that the integrity of its qualifications system is maintained. There may be instances where schools and colleges or teachers are put under external pressure from a student or their parent/guardian to influence the decision-making on a grade or rank order. Any external pressure must be reported to CCEA, who may investigate this as potential malpractice.

Other examples of potential malpractice include allegations of the disclosure of centre assessment grade/rank order information to students and/or their parent/guardian before results days; centres submitting results that they know to be inaccurate; or centres entering student(s) who were not originally intending to cash in in the 2020 summer series.

CCEA will investigate any allegations of acts which are intended to give an unfair advantage in the data collection and awarding process or undermine the processes outlined. The consequences of malpractice are as published in the JCQ guidance: [JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures 2019–2020](#).

12. STANDARDISATION

So that the final grades awarded are as fair as possible and uphold public confidence, awarding organisations will standardise the judgements across different centres once they have been submitted, using a statistical methodology developed in conjunction with CCEA Regulation. CCEA will share further details on the statistical models being used for standardisation, once these have been finalised with CCEA Regulation, with the issue of results. This process will be designed to ensure standards are maintained and grades awarded in Summer 2020 are of equal value to previous years. Evidence such as expected grade distributions at full CCEA cohort level, centre results in at least the previous two years, where available, and the prior attainment profile of students at centre level will inform the statistical model. We will apply the statistical standardisation to align the judgements across and within centres, so that, as far as possible, your students are not unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged this summer. This means that the centre assessment grades you submit and the final calculated grades that students receive could be different.

13. PRIVATE CANDIDATES

Where centres have accepted entries from private candidates, those students should be included where the Head of Centre is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement.

We appreciate that there may be instances where students do not have existing or substantive relationships with centres and understand that making judgements about these individual performances may be more difficult. We are exploring this issue with JCQ and other awarding organisations and will provide further guidance as soon as possible.

14. ISSUE OF RESULTS

As planned, the results in August will be issued as follows:

- AS and A level results (and COPE)
 - Restricted release to centres on Wednesday 12 August 2020
 - Release to students on Thursday 13 August 2020
- GCSE results (and Occupational Studies, VQs and OLA qualifications)
 - Restricted release to centres on Wednesday 19 August 2020
 - Release to students on Thursday 20 August 2020

Students entering for a GCSE cash-in will be awarded an overall grade but uniform marks, raw marks and scaled marks will not be issued.

Students entering for an AS cash-in will be awarded an overall grade but uniform marks, raw marks and scaled marks will not be issued.

Students entering for an A level cash-in will be awarded an overall grade but uniform marks, raw marks and scaled marks will not be issued.

15. APPEALS

There will be an appeals process for students who do not feel the grade they have been awarded reflects their performance. CCEA Regulation will consult on the appeals process, and more information will be available in due course.

The standard post-results services such as access to scripts, reviews of marking and reviews of moderation will not be available this summer.

16. STUDENT OPTIONS IN 2021

GCSE

The previous guidance issued on 16 April, *Awarding for GCSE, AS and A Level Qualifications Summer 2020: Head of Centre Guidance*, outlined options for students to complete exams in Summer 2021. The options are provided again below.

Students who were due to sit units that will lead to GCSE grades next summer will not receive a unit result. For those students, there will be two options. They can choose to sit only the units they planned to take in 2021, and the unit(s) they entered for in Summer 2020 will have a mark calculated using statistical predictions based on their performance in 2021 units. As a result, an overall grade will be awarded. Alternatively, students can choose to sit all the units in Summer 2021. Whichever option a student chooses, they will be awarded the highest grade.

AS/A LEVEL

In Summer 2021, students will have two options for their A level award. If a student chooses to only sit the required A2 units, then their AS outcomes will be calculated using statistical predictions based on their performance in the A2 units. If they choose to sit any AS units, alongside the A2 units, they will be awarded the highest grade at A level from either route. At present no dates have been set for schools to open. CCEA will provide further information regarding arrangements for exams due to be completed in 2021 once it is clear when schools will reopen. It will then be possible to assess the full impact of school closures.

17. NEXT STEPS

We hope this guidance enables you to have your centre assessment grades and rank orders ready for when the online application becomes available.

CCEA appreciates that the success of this exceptional awarding series will require teachers, centres and CCEA working in partnership, and we thank you in advance.

Please consult the *Supplementary Questions and Answers* document. You can also contact the CCEA helpline for further clarification on helpline@ccea.org.uk or (028) 9026 1220.

