

GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020

Supplementary Information on Private Candidates

CCEA Awarding Organisation



Introduction

In the publication *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020: Technical Information*, CCEA Awarding Organisation, published 30 April 2020, we stated that we would communicate with schools and colleges with further guidance on private candidates for the Summer 2020 series. The information below refers to CCEA qualifications regulated by CCEA Regulation and should be read alongside *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020: Technical Information*, CCEA Awarding Organisation.

Heads of Centre have been asked to provide, for each subject, centre assessment grades for their students and to rank order their students within each grade. This should 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. See our *Technical Information* document for details on the submission of centre assessment grades and rank order information.

It is expected that, where possible, centres will base their judgements on the range of evidence they already hold within the centre. In the great majority of cases, centres will already hold sufficient information within their centre to enable them to be confident in the judgements they have reached about a student's likely performance in each subject.

However, there will be some students for whom Heads of Centre do not have access to the full range of evidence available for the majority of their students. This may apply, for example:

- where a student has transferred from one centre to another part-way through a course;
- where a student has returned to a centre in order to resit an examination;
- where a student with ongoing health issues has undertaken some of their studies outside of the school environment;
- where a student of a subject which is not routinely offered by the centre has been provided with specialist external support; and
- where a student has undertaken some or all of their studies independently, including home-schooled students.

This document provides additional clarification on the application of the *Technical Information* in these circumstances. Heads of Centre should only submit centre assessment grades and rank order information where they are confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement and to make the required declaration that appears in the Appendix to the *GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2020: Application for Permission to Accept New Private Candidate Entries*, CCEA Awarding Organisation. They must have the same level of confidence in their judgement as they do for other students at their centre, and they must ensure compliance with the *Technical Information*.

Where a Head of Centre does not feel able to reach a judgement about a particular student, it is important that they confirm their decision with the student as early as possible, so that each student is clear about their individual situation.

Evidence Held by Other Centres

In cases where a private candidate has transferred from one centre 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. It is expected that centres will work collaboratively to ensure that the centre responsible for the final entry has the information required in order to submit a centre assessment grade and centre rank order for the candidate.

In some cases, a student may have studied with one approved centre, for example a distance learning provider, but made their entry at a different centre, such as a local school or college. In these cases, it is expected that centres will work collaboratively to ensure that the centre responsible for the final entry has the information required in order to submit a centre assessment grade and centre rank order for the candidate. In some cases, this will require the entry to be transferred from one centre to another. If that is the case, the centre intending to submit the centre assessment grade should make a new entry for the student and request that the original centre withdraw their entry. This should only be done in consultation with, and with the agreement of, the original centre and the student.

Levels of Confidence

Heads of Centre should only submit centre assessment grades where they have seen sufficient evidence to be confident in their judgements. Such evidence must be in compliance with CCEA's *Technical Information* and, in particular, must use 'holistic professional judgement, balancing the different sources of evidence'. Where sufficient evidence is not already held within the centre, and a Head of Centre wishes to consider alternative sources of evidence, the following table on levels of confidence should be followed.

Table 1

Evidence Category	Level of Confidence	Requirements
<p>Evidence produced under the direct supervision of the centre, e.g. centre supervised assignments, practical assessments or mock examinations</p> <p>Evidence produced under the supervision of an independent organisation with which the centre has a direct relationship, e.g. specialist tutor</p> <p>Evidence which can be directly verified, e.g. video recording of public performance in which the candidate can be clearly identified</p>	High	<p>Where available, evidence from this category should always be preferred to that in lower categories.</p> <p>Evidence from this category should account for a significant proportion of specification coverage.</p> <p>Example: Private candidates who are former students, repeating qualifications with the centre that they attended, will have a past relationship with the centre. They will also have a strong historical performance record with the centre, and the centre will know the private candidate's motivation for repeating.</p>

Evidence produced independently but subject to centre validation	Medium	<p>Evidence from the High and Medium categories should jointly achieve broad coverage of the complete specification.</p> <p>Where a centre has no previous relationship with the private candidate and the private candidate has not submitted any evidence of prior attainment such as past qualification attainment, centres may choose to supervise additional assignments or mock assessments to ensure that the required specification coverage is achieved. This is permissible on the grounds of private candidates for whom the centre deems to have only Medium level evidence, to enable the centre to be confident in submitting the centre assessment grade and rank order information required for the private candidate.</p>
Evidence produced independently – i.e. without supervision, or under the supervision of a family member or independent tutor with whom the centre has no existing relationship	Low	Evidence from this category should not be relied on, unless centre validation has taken place.

Centre Validation Process

Where evidence has not been produced under the direct supervision of the centre, the centre should undertake a validation exercise before relying on that evidence in reaching their judgement. The following table illustrates how centre validation could take place through a number of remote sessions with the student.

Table 2

Confirmation of identify	When conducting remote sessions with a student, the centre should ensure that they are able to confirm the student's identity. Where copies of photographic ID documents are not already held by the centre, these should be provided by the student and verified during a remote face-to-face session with centre staff.
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Prior attainment	Where the student is able to provide evidence of prior attainment in the subject, electronic copies of certificates should be provided by the student.
Signed student declaration	Where evidence generated through independent study is submitted for validation, the declaration that appears in the Appendix to the application form should be signed by the student.
Initial exploration of evidence	<p>Centres may hold an initial remote session at which the available evidence is discussed with the student in order to enable the centre to gain an understanding of the conditions under which the submitted evidence has been generated.</p> <p>Following the session, the centre will want to review the evidence in more depth in order to determine the extent to which the evidence available matches the requirements of the specification and to identify any gaps in coverage or concerns about authenticity.</p>
Validation of evidence	<p>Centres may hold a number of remote validation sessions with the student, during which the student's understanding of the subject content covered in particular pieces of evidence can be probed in order to gain confidence that it is the student's own work.</p> <p>This approach could be used to ensure that the minimum percentage of High and Medium confidence evidence is met. Centres should not rely on any piece of evidence if they are not satisfied about its authenticity.</p>
Remote assessments	<p>Where necessary, centres may allow the student to undertake an additional assessment set by the centre and observed remotely by centre staff. This could include, for example, a centre-devised mock assessment or a centre-set assignment targeting a specific area of the specification.</p> <p>Where mock assessments are set during the validation process, these must not consist of past papers in the public domain. The centre should generate novel mock assessment, although it is recommended these are drawn from CCEA resources to ensure they are of an appropriate type and level of challenge.</p> <p>This approach would only be used in cases where centres believe only a medium level of evidence is available, to ensure that centres can have a high level of confidence in the evidence</p>

Retention of Evidence

The Head of Centre should 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. 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.

Accepting New Private Candidate Entries

Where a student had entered for an examination as a private candidate prior to 19 March 2020, and their original centre has confirmed that they are unable to include them in their centre submission, it may be possible for the entry to be transferred to a new centre which is able to validate evidence of their level of achievement for the purpose of submitting a centre assessment grade and rank order information.

This process will be open to students who would otherwise be substantially disadvantaged if they were not awarded a grade in Summer 2020, for example because it would prevent them from progressing to the next stage of their studies or into employment.

Centres should not accept an entry transfer for a new student, with whom they have no prior relationship, unless they have the prior permission of CCEA awarding organisation. Permission will only be granted where CCEA awarding organisation is satisfied that the centre is able to comply with the *Technical Information* and the supplementary information contained in this document in order to generate both a centre assessment grade and rank order information with the same degree of confidence that is required for other students.

Since the process will be based on the validation of existing evidence, student entries should not be accepted unless the student is able to provide a range of evidence generated throughout their period of study which collectively covers the majority of course content within the specification.

Centres requesting permission to accept an entry transfer for a new student, with whom they have no prior relationship, will need to submit details of the process of validation that they intend to employ, setting out how they will generate the necessary level of confidence in the student's likely achievement. In order to demonstrate that the centre's processes have been subject to appropriate governance, centre submissions must be counter-signed by someone with an appropriate degree of independence and authority, for example a Chair of Governors, Chair of Board of Trustees, local authority partner or external auditor. Centres will also be subject to additional monitoring by CCEA awarding organisation.

The deadline for changing the entry of a private candidate transferring from one centre to another on the basis of evidence availability is 16:00 on Friday 15 May 2020.

Private Candidates for Whom a Centre Assessment Grade Cannot be Submitted

The Head of Centre should take advice from CCEA awarding organisation in cases where the evidence level is low and not straightforward. It will be important for centres to make sure that their entries are complete and accurate, as grades will only be issued for those students who have been entered.

Where a student had entered for an examination as a private candidate and their original centre has confirmed that they are unable to include them in their centre submission and they have been unable to transfer their entry to a new centre, they will have the opportunity to sit the examination in the next available series. Heads of Centre can contact CCEA directly if they wish to discuss any candidates they believe they cannot facilitate due to low levels of evidence.

