

Awarding for Entry Level Qualifications Summer 2020

Head of Centre Guidance for Subjects Listed in the Appendix

Introduction

On 19 March 2020, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir MLA, announced that the Summer 2020 examination series would be cancelled to help fight the spread of the COVID-19 virus and that grades would be based on a range of evidence and data, including centre estimated grades.

This unprecedented change to assessments has required us to adapt the way grades will be awarded. Following consultation by the Department of Education with representatives of the teaching profession, CCEA has received instruction from the Minister of Education about how to proceed.

This information is provided in the context of the most up-to-date advice for educational settings provided by the Department of Education and HSC Public Health Agency. If that advice changes, Heads of Centre should consider this information in the light of any updated guidance.

CCEA Regulation has been working to enable the award of levels for CCEA's Entry Level qualifications this summer, to facilitate the progression of students to the next stage of education, training, apprenticeships or employment.

CCEA awarding organisation has been working on the technical process for awarding and will ask centres to generate, for each Entry Level subject, a centre assessment level for each student. This information is only required at qualification level for those students intending to 'cash in' their award this summer. It is not required for any individual completed units.

Centres will receive detailed guidance from CCEA awarding organisation on how it will collect these levels. This process will be as clear and straightforward as possible for Heads of Centre and their staff.

CCEA will provide detailed instructions about how and when to submit the data as soon as possible. However, we recognise that Heads of Centre and teachers need some certainty so that they can plan this work, so we confirm that the deadline for submitting data to CCEA will be no earlier than **29 May 2020**.

Approach to Awarding

This document provides further information for Heads of Centre and teachers about how to generate these centre assessment levels and the evidence that should be considered.

The centre assessment levels submitted to CCEA must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely level a student would have achieved if they had completed all assessments required by the qualification this summer. Heads of Centre should emphasise the need for judgements to be objective and fair.

We do not anticipate the need for an additional series for these qualifications. Students dissatisfied with levels provided for Summer 2020 will have the opportunity to re-enter as part of the normal CCEA qualifications timetable in the next available series. If students choose to re-enter for the qualification, the higher level awarded as the outcome will stand.

Centre Assessment Levels

Centre assessment levels should be based on a holistic professional judgement, balancing the different sources of evidence.

Teachers will have a good understanding of their students' performance and how they compare to other students within the subject for this year and the previous two years. We believe this approach is in the best interests of students. Teachers must consider each student's performance and retain a written record of the reasons why each centre assessment level has been arrived at.

We want teachers to make an objective judgement of the level each student would have been most likely to get if they had completed all assessments required for the qualification this summer. This could include candidates who do not achieve a level (level not achieved – LNA). In coming to this holistic judgement, centres should assume that it is no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular level this year compared to previous years.

Teachers should draw on all existing records and available evidence (as far as possible in the context of current public health advice). It is important that the judgements are objective, and they should only take account of the evidence about student performance. This will include the following, where it is available and does not require centres to contravene public health instructions:

- Records of each student's performance throughout their study, including, for example, progress review data, classwork or bookwork.
- Performance in coursework assessments required for the qualification, even if this has not been fully completed. You should not ask students to complete their coursework and you do not need to submit marks for any completed coursework. In case students decide that they want to enter in a subsequent examination series, you should retain any coursework completed to date.
- Previous outcomes for your centre in this subject for the past two years, where available – data shows that for most centres any year on year variation in results for a given subject is normally quite small.
- The performance of this year's students compared to previous centre cohorts in the past two years, where available.
- 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 tasks for determining a centre assessment level, and no student should be disadvantaged if they are unable to complete any work set after schools/ colleges and other exam centres were closed. Where students have completed additional work after school closures, caution should be exercised where that evidence suggests a change in performance. In many cases, it is likely to reflect the student's circumstances and context in which the work was done.

There will be no requirement to send any supporting evidence to CCEA, such as student work. However, centres should retain this work and (in addition to the written reasoning for each centre assessment level) records of any annotations and notes made in arriving at the centre assessment level for each student.

CCEA awarding organisation may elect to request and inspect supporting evidence at its discretion.

Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

Where students have agreed reasonable adjustments or access arrangements, the judgement should take account of likely achievement with the reasonable adjustment/access arrangement in place.

Special consideration requests, if 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 assessments, centres should bear that in mind when making their judgements.

Conflict of Interest

Where a staff member might have a personal interest in the performance of a candidate (for example as a relative), this must be disclosed to the Head of Centre. The Head of Centre must make appropriate arrangements to ensure any perceived or actual conflict of interest is appropriately addressed.

Private Candidates

Private candidates are students who have not been taught in the centre because they might be home-schooled or be following distance-learning programmes or studying independently.

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 are urgently exploring whether there are alternative options for those students who do not have an existing relationship with a centre and who need results this summer for progression purposes.

Unfortunately, this is unlikely to be possible for all private candidates, some of whom may need to take assessments in the next available series to get their result. We appreciate this is a matter of real concern to private candidates and will provide an update as soon as possible. Centres should submit centre assessment levels for all students for whom they are confident that they can make a judgement. This will be a decision for the Head of Centre.

The Head of Centre should communicate their decision to any private candidates and take advice from CCEA awarding organisation where cases are not straightforward. It will be important for centres to make sure that their entries are complete and accurate, as levels will only be issued for those students who have been entered.

Head of Centre Approval and Declaration

The Head of Centre will be required to confirm that the centre assessment levels are a true representation of authentic 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.

The Head of Centre will be required to submit the following declaration when the data is submitted.

I confirm that these centre assessment levels are accurate and represent the professional judgements made by my staff and that entries were appropriate for each candidate. Having reviewed the relevant processes and data, I am confident that they honestly and fairly represent the levels that these students would have been most likely to achieve if they had conducted their assessments as planned, and they have not been disclosed to either the candidate or their parent/guardian/carer.

How to Submit Information

CCEA is currently working to adapt its IT systems to collect this data in a way that is as straightforward as possible for the centre. The final deadline for submission of data will be specified by CCEA. It will not be earlier than **29 May 2020**.

When the IT system is completed, CCEA awarding organisation will issue instructions on how to submit information.

Centres can commence the work to generate centre assessment levels, but they will not be able to submit data until further instruction is provided.

If centres do not submit the required information about a student by the specified date(s), it will not be possible to provide an award for that student.

Entries

CCEA awarding organisation will work with centres to finalise entry data as early as possible this year. It is essential to the process of calculating levels that the entry files are accurate and finalised before centres submit centre assessment levels. CCEA awarding organisation will convey further information about entries or changes as soon as possible.

Sharing Data with Students, Parents and Carers

Students, parents and carers will want to know that the process of generating centre assessment levels is rigorous, objective and fair. We have published a message for students, parents and carers on our website that Heads of Centre may wish to circulate or publicise.

During the awarding process described in this guidance note, and in advance of the issue of results, centres must not share the centre assessment levels submitted with students, their parents/carers, or any other individuals outside the centre.

The Head of Centre should ensure that the confidentiality of this data is protected within the centre and only shared with those staff where there is an absolute need to do so. This is to protect the integrity of the teachers' judgements and to avoid teachers or Heads of Centre being put under pressure by, for example, students and parents, to submit a level that is not supported by the evidence.

Since the final levels for some, or all, students could be different from those submitted, it also helps to manage students' expectations.

Notwithstanding these confidentiality requirements, data subjects (students) can request a copy of their personal data under article 15 of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). However, in respect of personal data such as exam marks or other information processed by a data controller to determine results, an exemption from disclosure exists under paragraph 25 (2) of schedule 2 of the Data Protection Act 2018. This exemption allows Data Controllers (in this case centres) to delay disclosure of such information until after results have been published to the students.

CCEA awarding organisation will send its instructions to centres as soon as possible and once the centre assessment levels have been submitted to CCEA, the process to produce the final results will commence. More information will be made available to teachers, students, parents and carers at the time results are issued, to facilitate any appeals.

Arrangements for Appeals

Under the circumstances, the normal arrangements for reviews of moderation and appeals will not apply. We are considering what arrangements might be put in place to allow an effective appeal.

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the data submitted to CCEA as part of this process is correct.

Re-entering Qualifications

Students who feel that their levels from this summer do not reflect their ability will be able to re-enter qualifications at the next available opportunity. If they choose to do this, the higher level achieved stands.

Malpractice

CCEA will investigate any allegations of acts which are intended to give an unfair advantage in the awarding process or undermine the processes described. The consequences of malpractice remain the same as in previous years.

Next Steps

Heads of Centre should now arrange to do the following:

- Check entries are complete and correct.
- Contact any private candidates to confirm whether the centre will be able to submit a centre assessment level.

- Consider what evidence will be available to teachers.
- Begin the work to generate a centre assessment level, but do not try to submit the data yet.
- Ensure confidentiality so that the level is not shared with students, parents and carers or other individuals inside and outside the centre who are not part of this process.

CCEA Regulation will enact several changes to its regulations to enable this year's results to be delivered in the changed circumstances, including:

- arrangements for private candidates; and
- arrangements for appeals.

CCEA awarding organisation will provide detailed information to Heads of Centre as soon as possible about how to submit the data. Please do not send information to the awarding organisation at this stage.

Further Advice and Information

Further advice and information are available through [ccea.org.uk](https://www.ccea.org.uk) – follow the links for COVID-19 information.

Appendix

Entry Level Qualifications

Qualification	Levels Available
Art and Design	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
English	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
French (VRQ)	Entry Levels 2 and 3
Geography	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
German (VRQ)	Entry Levels 2 and 3
History	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
Home Economics	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
Irish (VRQ)	Entry Levels 2 and 3
Italian (VRQ)	Entry Levels 2 and 3
Learning for Life and Work	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
Life Skills (6 units)	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
Extended Life Skills (12 units)	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
Mathematics	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
Physical Education	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
Religious Studies	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
Science	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
Spanish (VRQ)	Entry Levels 2 and 3
Occupational Studies	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3
Extended Occupational Studies	Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3

