

## CCEA Equality Screening Exercise

**Option 7 - CCEA GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre.**

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## **1 Background and Introduction**

On 6 January 2021, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir MLA, cancelled all CCEA GCSE, AS and A2 examinations scheduled for January, February, May and June 2021. Instead, by Formal Direction of the Minister dated 2 March 2021, the approach to awarding grades in Summer 2021 will be based on teacher professional judgements, with moderation. The guidance, which applies to GCSE, AS and A level qualifications offered by CCEA awarding organisation, is intended to support teachers and school leaders in submitting appropriate Centre Determined Grades for each student.

In 2021, centres are asked to use a range of evidence to arrive at a professional and academic judgement of the standard at which each student is performing in the context of the specification for which they are entered and from this provide a grade to CCEA. This is different from 2020, when centres were asked to supply a centre assessment grade based on their judgement of the grade a student would likely have achieved if they had been able to complete examinations. It will require centres and CCEA to develop and use different processes from those used last year.

More detail is found in the following document:

- *CCEA GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre.*

The above document was provided to the panel members to inform their screening of the impact.

## **2 Screening exercise**

A screening exercise was carried out with the following included

- Setting up an equality panel to represent a range of expertise
- Gathering panel views through an Equality Screening Questionnaire
- Screening panel meeting to review feedback and agree impacts
- Reporting

### **2.1 Equality panel screening questionnaire**

The screening panel were asked to consider and comment on the likely impact, in any way, on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this new and temporary process, including an indication of the level of impact on the group, i.e. minor, major, or none. Comments were invited for each question for the nine Section 75 categories.

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this temporary process, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?  
minor/major/none
2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?
3. To what extent is the temporary process likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?  
minor/major/none
4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

### Additional questions

5. Are there any potential impacts of the process on people with multiple identities?
6. Are there other potential equality impacts relevant to the outcomes outlined that have not been covered?

## **2.2 Panel questionnaire returns**

10 returns were received from panel members. The summary of the findings to each question are found below.

In answer to question 1:

- 9 no impacts and 1 major were received on section 75 categories for Religious belief, Political Opinion, Racial Group, and Sexual Orientation.
- 9 no impacts, 1 minor and no major were received for Marital Status and Men and Women Generally.
- 7 no impacts, 2 minor and 1 major were received for Age.
- 7 no impacts, 1 minor and 2 major were received for Disability.
- 8 no impact and 2 major were received for Dependents.

In answer to question 2, 1 yes response was received for Religious Belief and Political Opinion – ‘opportunities for collaboration between schools from different sectors’.

In response to question 3 - 3 major impacts were recorded but these had already been raised, discussed and closed out in response to Question 1.

In response to question 4 - Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group, 1 yes response was received in each category – religious belief and political opinion. The response was the same as in question 2 above.

## **2.3 Screening panel meeting**

The panel was invited to attend a MST meeting to allow for discussion on the responses and decide on the level of impact for each of the section 75 groups.

Where there was no impact in an equality category that it would be recorded as such and discussion was mainly based around the comments in relation to minor and major impacts. The consultation was in relation to additional bias that may have been introduced into the system by the proposals or additional bias exacerbated by the current conditions could be factored into discussion.

Discussion at the meeting considered the impacts recorded through the questionnaire and concluded that no major impacts on section 75 groups would be as a result of new bias being introduced.

## **3. Outcomes**

Major Impact 0

Minor impact 9

No impact 0

- The CCEA GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre will not have major impact on the equality for the Section 75 groups.

#### 4. Approvals

	Name	Job Title	Date
Screened by	Donna Finlay	Programme Manager (Temporary)	7 <sup>th</sup> April 2021
Approved by	Kelly McBride	Head of Resources	

## Appendix 1

### **Minutes of the Equality Screening Exercise in Relation to Option 7 – CCEA GCSE, AS and A Level Awarding Summer 2021: Alternative Arrangements – Process for Heads of Centre**

**In attendance:** Donna Finlay (Chair), Kelly McBride, Liam Dempsey, Treasa Hawksford, Roger Trigg, Michael McAuley, Teresa Robb, Deborah Stinson, David Wilson, Lorraine Neill, Noeleen McGreer, John Trueman, Rosemary Bryans.

#### **Apologies:**

N/A

RB welcomed the panel and thanked them for the timely turnaround in forwarding the completed questionnaires for the meeting and for their contribution. She then briefed the panel on housekeeping issues for the afternoon and then introduced the Chair.

The Chair opened by advising that the meeting was to discuss Option 7 – ‘Head of Centre Guidance Summer 2021, the Chair then introduced the meeting:-

‘On 6 January 2021, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir MLA, cancelled all CCEA GCSE, AS and A2 examinations scheduled for January, February, May and June 2021. Instead, by Formal Direction of the Minister dated 2 March 2021, the approach to awarding grades in Summer 2021 will be based on teacher professional judgements, with moderation. The guidance, which applies to GCSE, AS and A level qualifications offered by CCEA awarding organisation, is intended to support teachers and school leaders in submitting appropriate Centre Determined Grades for each student.

In 2021, centres are asked to use a range of evidence to arrive at a professional and academic judgement of the standard at which each student is performing in the context of the specification for which they are entered **and from this provide a grade to CCEA.**

This is different from 2020, when centres were asked to supply a centre assessment grade based on their judgement of the grade a student would likely have achieved if they had been able to complete examinations. It will require centres and CCEA to develop and use different processes from those used last year.

The Chair then proceeded to go through each category as itemised in the equality screening document.

#### **1 Religious Belief**

<b>Major</b>	<b>Minor Impact</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

The Chair advised that there was a common theme throughout the process by one panel member who felt that there was no impact in any of the nine categories and that they had qualified their reasoning with the following statement:-

‘The HOC Guidance is designed to ensure that all candidates are treated equally and fairly in the Summer 2021 Awarding process. The guidance was influenced by lessons learned from the S2020 experience and as such will positively impact on equality of opportunity.’

The Chair advised that there was a common theme throughout the process by one panel member who felt that there was major impact in all of the nine categories and that they had qualified their reasoning with the following statement:-

*‘AS levels may now count to A level. Potential major. need data on AS results and if any basis from previous years on this category.’*

The Chair invited comments from the panel members.

The panel member who had made the comment advised that their concern was that the change was significant from when option 7 was first considered.

The Chair advised that the vast majority of cases will use A2 evidence.

A panel member from awarding advised that the cancellation of prior exams was based on A2 alone. The change allows the use of AS but the candidate had to sit all as and A2 units. The grades in 2020 were inflated so should not be carried forward and summer 2020 would not contribute to grade. It is not that AS can't contribute but that it must be assessed against the A2 specification.

**Recommendation:**

On the basis of the above, the Chair recommended that unless anyone had anything further to add that the impact be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

**2. Political Opinion**

Major /Minor Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
1	0	9	10

**Recommendation**

The Chair advised that the same comment as before had been made:-

*‘AS levels may now count to A level. Potential major. need data on AS results and if any basis from previous years on this category’*

- and as it had been discussed that the impact be recorded as minor.’

Agreed by the panel.

**3 Racial Group**

Major/Minor Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
1	0	9	10

**Recommendation:**

The Chair advised that the same comment as before had been made:-

*‘AS levels may now count to A level. Potential major. need data on AS results and if*

*any basis from previous years on this category'* and as it had been discussed that the impact be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

#### **4 Age**

<b>Major Impact</b>	<b>Minor Impact</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>

The Chair advised that the same comment as before had been made:-

*'AS levels may now count to A level. Potential major. need data on AS results and if any basis from previous years on this category'*

- and as it had been discussed that the impact be recorded as minor.

Other comments in relation to age are as follows:

*'As per the guidance, GCSE students in Year 11 will not be able to be assessed (with two exceptions). Next year (summer 2022), this will make this Yr 11 cohort different to previous cohorts in that they will not have received a grade for qualifications/units they may have planned to sit early (in 2021). In 2022, their burden of assessment will be increased when compared to year 12 cohorts of a number of years prior.*

*Older candidates are more likely to be private entries or from a centre where they don't have an academic history. It will be harder to assess this group.'*

The Chair advised that the two exceptions are Maths and Irish and working is currently being looked at for summer 2022.

The panel member for Awarding advised that advice has been provided to DE in relation to this.

#### **Recommendation**

The Chair recommended that unless anyone had anything further to add that the impact be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

#### **5 Marital Status**

<b>Major Impact</b>	<b>Minor Impact</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

#### **Recommendation:**

The Chair advised that the same comment as before had been made:-

*'AS levels may now count to A level. Potential major. need data on AS results and if*



*any basis from previous years on this category'*

- and as it had been discussed that the impact be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel

## **6 Sexual Orientation**

<b>Major Impact</b>	<b>Minor Impact</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

### **Recommendation:**

The Chair advised that the same comment as before:-

*'AS levels may now count to A level. Potential major. need data on AS results and if any basis from previous years on this category.'*

-and as it had been discussed that the impact be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel

## **7. Men and Women Generally**

<b>Major Impact</b>	<b>Minor Impact</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

The Chair advised that the same comment as before had been made:-

*'AS levels may now count to A level. Potential major. need data on AS results and if any basis from previous years on this category.'*

-and as it had been discussed that the impact be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel

## **8. Disability**

<b>Major Impact</b>	<b>Minor Impact</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>

The Chair read the comment in relation to major impact:

The Chair advised that the same comment as before had been made:-

*'AS levels may now count to A level. Potential major. need data on AS results and if any basis from previous years on this category'*

- and as it had been discussed that the impact be recorded as minor.

The Chair then read the second comment in relation to major impact:-

*'Using school's previous performance has a greater negative effect on pupils from less affluent areas. People from this category have a greater likelihood of living in areas of social deprivation so this will have a disproportionate effect on this group.'*

*There was no information in the papers as to how CCEA will mitigate against this effect.*

*Although this is used only in the challenge function, it is still an area CCEA need to consider mitigation for.*

*Again, this group have a greater likelihood of being in a low socio economic group. The impact of learning from home is greater on this group. So COVID disruption is more likely to mean this group do not reflect their best ability in assessments this year. Basing grades solely on their achievements in the last two school years will be likely to lower their grade. A fairer assessment would be over their longer school career.'*

The panel member who had made the comment recognised that CCEA couldn't do any more than stated but there was no access to use prior attainment data.

The panel member from awarding advised that the Centre should award grades on the evidence in the context of the specification.

A further panel member advised that no child should be disadvantaged by having learning disrupted but assessed on what they have done.

**Recommendation:**

The Chair recommended that unless anyone had anything further to add that the impact be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel

**9. Dependants**

<b>Major Impact</b>	<b>Minor Impact</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>

The Chair read the comment in relation to major impact:

The Chair advised that the same comment as before had been made:-

*'AS levels may now count to A level. Potential major. need data on AS results and if any basis from previous years on this category'  
-and as it had been discussed that the impact be recorded as minor.*

The Chair then read the second comment:-

*'This group are likely to have been 'hit' twice by COVID disruption. For themselves and for the people who they are responsible for. When at home they may not be able to engage in study because of their caring responsibilities.*

*This will make it more difficult for these people to show their abilities in assessments.*

*Note – some teenagers who would normally be considered to have dependents may have taken on this role for younger siblings while parents need to work outside of the home.'*

The panel member who made the comment acknowledged that there was nothing CCEA could do.

**Recommendation:**

The Chair recommended that unless anyone had anything further to add that the impact be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel

**Summary**

The Chair advised that there was nothing further to report from Sections 2&3 as everything had previously been covered.

The Chair summarised the final recommendations of the panel: from the nine areas under review minor impacts were now concluded in all nine areas in relation to the outcomes following discussion on Option 7 – Head of Centre Guidance Summer 2021.

The Chair advised that under the area of additional considerations the issues had already 'been closed out:-.

*AS levels may now count to A level. Potential major, need data on AS results and if any basis from previous years on this category.'*

*Candidates who are in more than one of the groups: disabled, with dependents, older; will have greater negative impact from COVID disruption.'*

The Chair confirmed that both these issues had been covered in the discussion and that assurance had been given that there was no additional bias and that minor impact had been agreed and recorded across all sections.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking the panel for their time and contribution.

RL Bryans

25/03/21