

Letter for learners in Wales

20 January 2021



Dear Learner

Assessment arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level grades in summer 2021

We wrote to you recently about changes to the assessment arrangements for GCSE, AS and A level qualifications. We now have more information to share with you about how grades will be decided this year.

What's changing?

If you are taking GCSE, AS or A Levels this summer (2021), your teachers or your lecturers will decide your grade. There will be no external assessment or exams.

How will GCSE, AS and A level grades be decided?

Your grades will be determined by your school or college based on a range of assessment information. This could include assessments you have completed during the course, including coursework. Your school or college will decide if they want to use adapted assessment materials provided by WJEC to help determine your grade. Your school or college will be able to consider how much course content you have covered when deciding what assessment information to use.

This is so you won't be assessed on anything you haven't covered. WJEC will advise your school or college and check that the way they intend to determine your grades is suitable. To allow as much time as possible for more learning to take place, your grades will be determined by your school or college in the summer term.

Will my AS grade in summer 2021 contribute to my A Level in summer 2022?

We've considered whether there is any fair way that AS results from this summer can contribute to A Levels in summer 2022, but unfortunately there is not. This is because A levels are usually awarded by putting marks achieved in all units together (including AS units). There isn't a fair way to use AS grades from the summer 2021 as part of the A Level in 2022. However, if you are taking AS levels this summer you will still be awarded an AS grade decided by your teachers or lecturers. You will be able to use this grade in your UCAS application to universities and to progress onto the A Level.

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What will happen if I'm a Year 10 student?

If you have completed the course and were going to be entered for the whole GCSE course this year, then you can be awarded a grade determined by your school. However, it will not be possible to take just some units of a GCSE this year, and we will need to consider what the assessments arrangements will be for those subjects next year.

What happens if I don't attend a school or college and would have entered as a 'private candidate'?

You will still be able to complete assessments as required by a school or college if they are willing to enter you for the qualification and determine your grade based on those assessments. The assessment materials provided by WJEC could be used for this. We are looking at alternative arrangements for learners who cannot do this, and more information will be available shortly.

What happens if I am studying for a vocational qualification?

Today's announcement does not include vocational qualifications. We are working with the awarding bodies offering Wales-only vocational qualifications on the way forward. We will continue to work with England and Northern Ireland to decide on the arrangements for qualifications offered across the UK. Ofqual are currently consulting on proposals about the qualifications offered across the UK until 29 January.

Will I be able to appeal my result?

If you want to challenge your grade, you will be able to appeal to your school or college. If you are not satisfied with the outcome and want to challenge the process used by your school or college to determine your grade, then you will be able to appeal to WJEC.

Support

If you're worried about what this means for you, it is important you speak with your teachers, lecturers and other adults that support you. We will publish more information as soon as we can on our website and your schools and colleges will also be able to give you more details soon.

If you're feeling worried or low and want to talk to someone about your feelings, there are some organisations that can help. You could get in touch with:

Meic Cymru - 080880 23456

Childline - 0800 1111

For more info, advice and support during the pandemic you can also go to www.childcomwales.org.uk/coronavirus/

We will be providing regular updates on our website. If you have any specific questions, contact us via email on communications@qualificationswales.org.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Philip Blaker', written in a cursive style.

Philip Blaker
Chief Executive