

Centre Policy for determining teacher assessed grades in Summer 2021: St. John's, Marlborough

Background

St. John's, Marlborough is a registered exam centre.

Every school must have a Centre Policy that matches its own circumstances. Our policy is based on a template produced by JCQ.

This policy takes account of [JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs for summer 2021](#), which is referred to as the JCQ guidance throughout the policy.

This policy applies to the following qualifications we are offering in summer 2021:

- A-levels
- AS levels
- GCSEs
- Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

The principles of the policy also apply to other qualifications:

- Level 2 technical awards offered by BTEC, OCR and Eduqas/WJEC
- Level 3 vocational qualifications offered by BTEC, OCR and Eduqas/WJEC
- Level 2 Certificate in Further Maths
- Level 3 Certificate in Mathematical Studies (Core Maths)

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Record of amendments

21.04.21 Added comment re separation of duties to 3rd bullet in section 13.3 (Version 1.1)

I Statement of intent

I.1 Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure that teacher assessed grades (TAGs) are determined fairly, consistently, free from bias and effectively within and across subject teams.
- To ensure the operation of effective processes with clear guidelines and support for staff.
- To ensure that all staff involved in the processes clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.
- To support teachers to take evidence-based decisions in line with Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance.
- To ensure the appropriate consideration of historical centre data in the process of determining TAGs.
- To support a high standard of internal quality assurance in the determination of TAGs.
- To support our centre in meeting its obligations in relation to equality legislation.
- To ensure our centre meets all requirements set out by the Department for Education, Ofqual, JCQ and exam boards for Summer 2021 qualifications.
- To ensure the process for communicating to candidates and their parents/carers how grades will be determined is clear, to give confidence in our processes.

2 Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

This section gives details of the roles and responsibilities at St. John's.

2.1.1 Head of Centre

Our Head of Centre, Mr I Tucker:

- will be responsible for approving this policy for determining TAGs;
- has overall responsibility for the school as an examinations centre and will ensure that clear roles and the responsibilities of all staff are defined;
- will confirm that TAGs represent the academic judgements made by teachers;
- will ensure that the checks in place ensure that TAGs are line with the guidance on national standards provided by the exam boards;
- will ensure a robust internal quality assurance process is implemented before TAGs are submitted to the exam boards.

2.1.2 Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Faculty, Subject Leaders

Our Senior Leadership Team, Heads of Faculty and Subject Leaders will:

- provide training and support to our other staff;
- support the Head of Centre in the quality assurance of TAGs;
- ensure an effective approach to marking and grading within and across departments;
- authenticate grades for subjects taught by a single teacher;
- be responsible for ensuring staff have a clear understanding of the internal and external quality assurance processes and their role within them;
- ensure that all teachers within their department make consistent judgements based on student evidence when determining grades;
- ensure teachers have the information required to make accurate and fair judgements;
- ensure that a Subject Leader Checklist is completed for each qualification that they are responsible for.

2.1.3 Teachers

Our teachers will:

- ensure they attend standardisation meetings and all training relevant to the grading process;
- ensure that the TAG they assign to each student is a fair, valid and reliable reflection of the assessed evidence available for each student;
- make judgements based on what each student has been taught and what they have been assessed on, as outlined in the section on grading in the main JCQ guidance;
- contribute to an Assessment Record for each subject, that includes the nature of the assessment evidence being used, the level of control for assessments considered, and any other evidence that explains the determination of the final teacher assessed grades. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be recorded;
- ensure evidence is retained to justify their decisions.

2.1.4 SENCo

The SENCo will

- ensure that all assessment of need has been carried out to provide access arrangements (reasonable adjustments) for all students who are entitled to these;
- ensure applications for access arrangements have been lodged with the examination boards as appropriate.

2.1.5 Examinations Officer

Our Examinations Officer will:

- ensure that access arrangements are implemented in the March and May assessment periods;
- collate all requests from parents and students for special consideration and ensure that this information is shared with subject leaders;
- be responsible for the administration of our final teacher assessed grades and for managing the appeals process;
- securely store the assessment evidence on which assessment decisions have been made.

3 Training and support

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the training and support that we will provide to those determining teacher assessed grades this year.

3.1 Training

This section provides details of the approach we will take to training in determining teacher assessed grades this year.

- Teachers involved in marking March and May assessments will attend centre-based training to help achieve consistency and fairness to all students.
- Teachers involved in determining grades in our centre will attend centre-based training to help achieve consistency and fairness to all students.
- Teachers will engage fully with all training and support that has been provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications and the awarding organisations.

3.2 Support for Newly Qualified Teachers and teachers less familiar with assessment

This section provides details of how we will support newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and teachers less familiar with assessment.

- We will provide mentoring from experienced teachers to NQTs and teachers less familiar with assessment.
- We will put in place additional internal reviews of teacher assessed grades for NQTs and other teachers as appropriate.

4 Use of appropriate evidence

4.1 Use of evidence

This section explains what evidence we will use to determine grades.

- Teachers making judgements will have regard to the Ofqual guidance on recommended evidence, and further guidance provided by awarding organisations.
- All candidate evidence used to determine teacher assessed grades, and associated documentation, will be retained and made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals.
- We will be using student work produced in the March and May assessments, conducted under exam conditions, which are based on exam board materials, in particular past exam questions, with modifications if appropriate, as our primary source of evidence.
- We will also use non-exam assessment (NEA) work (often referred to as coursework), as a primary source of evidence, even if this has not been fully completed, in courses where such work forms part of the usual assessment.
- We may use the results of mock exams taken in September 2020 (Year 13) or November 2020 (Year 11) as a secondary source of evidence.
- We may use the results of internal tests taken by students during the course as a tertiary source of evidence, where the primary or secondary sources of evidence are absent or inconsistent.

We provide further detail in the following areas:

4.1.1 March and May assessments

- We will use these assessments to give students the opportunity to show what they know, understand and can do in areas of content that have been taught.
- We will use these assessments to support consistency of judgement between teachers and classes by giving everyone the same assessment to complete.
- Assessments will principally use past paper questions so that examination board mark schemes can be used to ensure marking is consistent.
- Questions may be modified to ensure they are focused on areas of the specification that have been taught.
- We will advise students of the content to be assessed in each of the March and May assessments to ensure that students can focus their preparation purposefully.
- These assessments will provide the strongest evidence of each student's current performance because they are being taken as close as possible to the end of the course.

4.1.2 NEA

- We will take a consistent approach in each subject with NEA so that all students are treated fairly.
- The progress through NEA is managed differently in each subject so that in some cases it will be appropriate for NEA to be completed, whereas in others partial completion will be better.

4.1.3 Mock exams

- We will use the outcomes of these assessments as indicators of each student's performance when students are absent from March and May assessments or where there is significant inconsistency in the evidence from these two assessments.

4.1.4 Internal tests

- We will use the outcomes of internal tests when primary and secondary evidence are unavailable.
- Internal tests can take several forms including short answer responses and essays.
- Internal tests conducted under high control will provide stronger evidence than those conducted under low control.

4.2 Appropriateness of evidence

We will ensure the appropriateness of evidence and balance of evidence in arriving at grades in the following ways:

- We will prioritise March and May assessments, because they provide evidence produced under high control.
- We will ensure that we are able to authenticate the work, particularly NEA, as the student's own, especially where that work was not completed within school.
- We will consider the specification and assessment objective coverage of the assessment.
- We will consider the depth and breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills assessed, especially higher order skills within individual assessments.

4.3 Communicating with students and parents

We will ensure that students are notified of the evidence used to determine TAGs.

- We will inform students and their parents of the assessment evidence we are using.
- In cases where we use evidence other than March and May assessments and NEA, we will inform students and parents that we have done so.

5 Determining TAGs

5.1 Determining TAGs based on evidence

- Teachers will determine grades based on evidence primarily from the March and May assessments and NEA.
- Teachers will reach holistic grading decisions by comparing the appropriate evidence against the JCQ subject grade descriptors and the exam board exemplification for each grade.
- Our teachers will record how the evidence was used to arrive at a fair and objective grade, which is free from bias.
- Our teachers will produce an Assessment Record for each subject cohort and will share this with their Head of Department. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be shared.

6 Internal quality assurance

6.1 Internal quality assurance

This section gives details of our approach to internal standardisation, within and across subject departments.

- We will ensure that all teachers involved in deriving teacher assessed grades read and understand this Centre Policy document.
- In subjects where there is more than one teacher and/or class in the department, we will ensure that our centre carries out an internal standardisation process.
- We will ensure that all teachers are provided with training and support to ensure they take a consistent approach to:
 - Marking of assessment evidence
 - Reaching a holistic grading decision
 - Applying the use of grading support and documentation
 - Arriving at teacher assessed grades
- We will conduct internal standardisation across all grades.
- Where necessary, we will review and reflect on individual grading decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by the exam boards.
- Where appropriate, we will amend individual grade decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by the exam boards.
- Where there is only one teacher involved in marking assessments and determining grades, then the output of this activity will be reviewed by an appropriate member of staff within the centre.
 - This will be the Vice Principal, Mrs S Wilson.
- When necessary we will moderate the marking of one or more teachers to monitor the quality of marking and/or grading in that subject.

7 Comparison of teacher assessed grades to results for previous cohorts

7.1 Comparison of Teacher Assessed Grades to results for previous cohorts

7.1.1 This section gives details of our internal process to ensure a comparison of teacher assessed grades at qualification level with results for previous cohorts in our centre taking the same qualification.

- We will compile information on the grades awarded to our students in the last three summer series in which exams took place (2017 - 2019).
- We will compile historical data giving appropriate regard to potential mixtures of A*-G and 9-1 grades in GCSEs. Where required, we will use the Ofqual guidance to convert legacy grades into the new 9-1 scale.
- We will consider the size of our cohort from year to year.
- We will consider the stability of our centre's overall grade outcomes from year to year.
- We will compare subject and centre-level performance statistics for initial TAGs with this historical data.

7.1.2 This section gives details of the approach our centre would follow if our initial teacher assessed grades for a qualification are viewed as significantly different from results in previous years.

- We will bring together other data sources that will help to quality assure the grades we intend to award in 2021.
- We will moderate grading judgements across subject teachers when there is significant divergence from the distribution of grades in previous years.
- We will prepare a succinct narrative on the outcomes of the review against historic data which, in the event of significant divergence from the distribution of grades in previous years, addresses the reasons for such divergence. This commentary will be available for subsequent review during the QA process.

7.1.3 This section gives details of changes in our cohorts that need to be reflected in our comparisons.

- We will omit subjects that we no longer offer from the historical data.
- We will consider significant changes in the nature of the students entered for particular subjects.

8 Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

8.1 Access arrangements

- Where students have agreed access arrangements or reasonable adjustments (for example a reader or scribe) we will ensure that these arrangements are in place when assessments are being taken.
- Where an assessment has taken place without an agreed reasonable adjustment or access arrangement, we will remove that assessment from the basket of evidence and obtain alternative evidence.

8.2 Special consideration

- Where illness or other personal circumstances might have affected a student **at the time of the March and May assessments**, we will take account of this when making grade judgements.
- Special consideration cannot be given for circumstances affecting a student when they are not taking assessments.
- We will record, as part of the Assessment Record, how we have incorporated any necessary variations to take account of the impact of illness or personal circumstances on the performance of individual students in assessments.
- To ensure consistency in the application of Special Consideration, we will follow the guidance given in: [JCQ – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020](#)

9 Addressing disruption/differential lost learning (DLL)

9.1 Addressing Disruption/Differentiated Lost Learning (DLL)

- Teacher assessed grades will be determined based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed for each student.
- We are conscious that most students in years 11 and 13 have been taught the same content and covered almost the whole specification in every subject.
- When a student's attendance at school and at online lessons has been disrupted by COVID-19 we will take their individual circumstances into account and consider all available evidence in order to award a grade.
- Students must have completed enough of any course for us to be able to award a grade and if we do not have evidence of engagement with a course, we will not be able to award a grade.

10 Objectivity

10.1 Objectivity

Staff will fulfil their duties and responsibilities in relation to relevant equality and disability legislation.

Senior Leaders and Subject Leaders will consider:

- sources of unfairness and bias (situations/contexts, difficulty, presentation and format, language, conditions for assessment, marker preconceptions);
- how to minimise bias in questions and marking;
- how to minimise bias in teacher assessed grades.

To ensure objectivity, all staff involved in determining teacher assessed grades will be made aware that:

- unconscious bias can skew judgements;
- the evidence presented for assessment should be considered on its own merit;
- TAGs should not be influenced by candidates' personal circumstances, character, behaviour, appearance, socio-economic background, which could lead to positive or negative bias or protected characteristics;
- unconscious bias is more likely to occur when quick opinions are formed.

All teachers involved in assessment and grading decisions will complete the JCQ training module on Objectivity and Awarding.

II Recording decisions and retention of evidence and data

II.1 Recording Decisions

- We will ensure that teachers and subject leaders maintain records that show how the teacher assessed grades process operated, including the rationale for decisions in relation to grades for selected standardised assessment evidence.
- We will put in place recording requirements for the various stages of the process to facilitate the accurate and secure retention of the evidence used to make decisions.
- We will comply with our obligations regarding data protection legislation.

II.2 Retention of Evidence and Data

- We will ensure that evidence of processes is retained electronically in a secure system that can be shared with the exam boards.
- Assessment marks and TAGs will be stored in SIMS.
- We will ensure that assessment evidence from the March and May assessments and NEA is retained on paper in a secure system, so that evidence can be shared with exam boards in case of external QA or appeals.

12 Authenticating evidence

12.1 Authenticating evidence

This section of our Centre Policy details the mechanisms in place to ensure that teachers are confident in the authenticity of evidence, and the process for dealing with cases where evidence is not thought to be authentic.

- Robust mechanisms will be in place to ensure that teachers are confident that work used as evidence is the students' own and that no inappropriate levels of support have been given to students to complete it, either within the centre or with external tutors.
- The principle means of ensuring assessment evidence is authentic is conducting March and May assessments under examination conditions. (See section 4.1)
- It is understood that awarding organisations will investigate instances where it appears evidence is not authentic. We will follow all guidance provided by awarding organisations to support these determinations of authenticity.

13 Confidentiality, malpractice and conflicts of interest

13.1 Confidentiality

This section details the measures in place in our centre to maintain the confidentiality of grades, while sharing information regarding the range of evidence on which the grades will be based.

- All staff involved have been made aware of the need to maintain the confidentiality of teacher assessed grades.
- All teaching staff have been briefed on the need to share details of the range of evidence on which students' grades will be based, while ensuring that TAGs remain confidential.
- This sharing will be managed centrally, rather than by individual teachers or subject leaders.
- Relevant details from this Policy, including details of evidence being used and the confidentiality requirements, are shared with students and parents/carers.

13.2 Malpractice

This section details the measures in place in our centre to prevent malpractice and, where that proves impossible, to handle cases in accordance with awarding organisation requirements.

- All staff involved have been made aware of the specific types of malpractice which may affect the Summer 2021 series including:
 - breaches of internal security;
 - deception;
 - improper assistance to students;
 - failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work;
 - over-direction of students in preparation for assessments;
 - allegations that centres submit grades that they know to be inaccurate, without appropriate evidence;
 - centres enter students who were not originally intending to certificate a grade in the Summer 2021 series;
 - failure to engage as requested with awarding organisations during the external Quality Assurance and appeal stages;
 - failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made and teacher assessed grades;
 - parents or students attempting to influence a teacher's judgement of the TAG.
- The consequences of malpractice as published in the JCQ guidance: [JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures](#) and including the risk of a delay to students receiving their grades, up to, and including, removal of centre status have been outlined to all relevant staff.

13.3 Conflicts of Interest

This section details our approach to addressing conflicts of interest, and how we will respond to such allegations.

- To protect the integrity of assessments, all staff involved in the determination of grades must declare any conflict of interest such as relationships with students to our Head of Centre for further consideration.
- Our Head of Centre will take appropriate action to manage any conflicts of interest arising with centre staff in accordance with the JCQ documents - [General Regulations for Approved Centres, 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021](#).
- We will also carefully consider the need to ensure reviews as part of the external QA process and appeals take account of potential conflicts of interest, in particular with regard to separation of duties and personnel.
- If an allegation is made that a conflict of interest has led to suspected malpractice, we will investigate this following the policy in section 13.2.

14 Private candidates

14.1 Private Candidates

- The only private candidates being entered for assessment are former students who are attempting to improve grades achieved in Summer 2020.
- Our arrangements for assessing Private Candidates to arrive at appropriate grades are identical to the approaches used for internal candidates.
- Where it has been necessary to use different approaches, the **JCQ Guidance on Private Candidates** has been followed and any divergences from our approach for internal candidates have been recorded on the appropriate class/student documentation.
- In undertaking the review of cohort grades in conjunction with our centre results profiles from previous examined years, the grades determined by our centre for Private Candidates have been excluded from our analysis.

15 External Quality Assurance

15.1 External Quality Assurance

This section outlines the arrangements we have in place to ensure the relevant documentation and assessment evidence can be provided in a timely manner for the purposes of External Quality Assurance sampling, and that staff can be made available to respond to enquiries.

- All staff involved have been made aware of the awarding organisation requirements for External Quality Assurance as set out in the **JCQ Guidance**.
- All necessary records of decision-making in relation to determining grades will be properly kept and made available for review as required.
- All student evidence on which decisions regarding the determination of grades are based will be retained and made available for review as required.
- Instances where student evidence used to decide teacher assessed grades is not available, for example where the material has previously been returned to students and cannot now be retrieved, will be clearly recorded on the appropriate documentation.
- All staff involved have been briefed on the possibility of interaction with awarding organisations during the different stages of the External Quality Assurance process and will respond promptly and fully to enquiries, including attendance at Virtual Visits should this be necessary.
- Arrangements are in place to respond fully and promptly to any additional requirements/reviews that may be identified as a result of the External Quality Assurance process.
- Staff have been made aware that a failure to respond fully and effectively to such additional requirements may constitute malpractice and could result in further action by the awarding organisations, including the withholding of results.

16 Results

16.1 Results

- All staff involved have been made aware of the specific arrangements for the issue of results in Summer 2021, including the issuing of A/AS and GCSE results in the same week.
- Arrangements will be made to ensure the necessary staffing, including exams office and support staff, to enable the efficient receipt and release of results to our students.
- Arrangements will be in place for the provision of all necessary advice, guidance and support, including pastoral support, to students on receipt of their results.
- Such guidance will include advice on the appeals process in place in 2021 (see section 17).
- Appropriate staff will be available to respond promptly to any requests for information from awarding organisations, for example regarding missing or incomplete results, to enable such issues to be swiftly resolved.
- Students and parents/carers will be made aware of arrangements for results days.

17 Appeals

17.1 Appeals

This section details our approach to managing appeals, including Centre Reviews, and subsequent appeals to exam boards.

- All staff involved have been made aware of the arrangements for, and the requirements of, appeals in Summer 2021, as set out in the **JCQ Guidance**.
- Internal arrangements will be in place for the swift and effective handling of Centre Reviews in compliance with the requirements.
- All necessary staff will be briefed on the process for, and timing of, such reviews, and will be available to ensure their prompt and efficient handling.
- Students (and their parents/carers) will be appropriately guided as to the necessary stages of appeal.
- Students (and their parents/carers) will be guided as to the valid grounds for submitting an appeal.
- Arrangements will be in place for the timely submission of appeals to awarding organisations, including any priority appeals, for example those on which university places depend.
- Arrangements will be in place to obtain the written consent of students to the initiation of appeals, and to record their awareness that grades may go down as well as up on appeal.