

Cowbridge Comprehensive School

Key Stage 4 and 5 Assessment and Qualifications 2021 Parent mail update. 26 January 2021

On Wednesday 20 January 2021, Welsh Government announced that the original plan for assessment had been discarded. We sent a letter home to you last week from Qualifications Wales describing this change. Schools will now provide the WJEC with Centre Determined Grades (CDGs) for GCSEs, AS and A Levels.

How the process will work

The WJEC examination board will provide schools with an Assessment Framework informing us what we will need to assess in terms of students' subject knowledge, skills and understanding. We expect to receive this framework at some point in the next few weeks. No timeline has yet been published by the WJEC or Qualifications Wales. The School will then be required to produce an Assessment Plan outlining how we intend to conduct this assessment. We will be required to share this plan with WJEC for approval, authorisation and quality assurance. Once our plan is approved, we will put in place a framework and timescale in school for the assessments to take place and share this with students and parents.

At the end of the process we will provide the WJEC with the CDGs for all relevant courses and qualifications. There will be no further intervention by the WJEC. No algorithm will be applied and there will be no external moderation of CDGs. The WJEC will award the qualification on results days (which may change from their usual dates).

Evidence which could be used for assessments

Non-examined assessments (NEAs), past papers, WJEC assessment materials and classwork could all be used for assessment. If students have already completed an NEA in a subject then this can still be used as part of the assessment (which would have been the case even if exams had been sat).

Timeline

We have not yet been informed as to when the process will be completed and the deadline for sending CDGs to the WJEC.

Work being currently completed at home

At the moment this will not form part of the assessment. This is because we need to consider things like the provenance of work completed at home and how this work is standardised in order to be fair to all students. However, if the current suspension of usual school activities extends into the Spring Term, then we may have to revisit this, but it is our intention to avoid this if at all possible. However, the work that students complete at home (whether online or on paper) will certainly help prepare them for their assessments. Students will be able to continue to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need to be able to do well in the assessments. Therefore it is vitally important for students to fully engage with their home/ digital learning but not to feel that every aspect of this will inform the CDG.

Qualifications covered by this announcement

This announcement only applies to WJEC GCSE, AS and A Level qualifications. We await further details on vocational qualifications, Skills Challenge and Extended Project Qualification. We also await information on qualifications covered by other exam boards.

CDGs will be provided for AS qualifications, but these will not contribute to a student's overall A Level grade in 2022.

Appeals process

Students will be able to appeal to the school in respect of their CDG and to WJEC if they feel that our processes were incorrect. However, we do not as yet have any information as to what this appeals process will look like or how it will work.

Ensuring accuracy

The accuracy of the CDG process will be addressed by: the WJEC approval of the school's Assessment Plan; use of exam board standardised assessment materials; use of past papers and NEAs with common mark schemes; internal standardisation of assessments; rigorous internal moderation procedures.

Final points

CDGS differ considerably compared to last year's Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs). For example, CAGs were, basically, predicted grades based on what teachers assessed to be the most likely grade a student would have achieved had they sat the 2020 exams.

CDGs are different as they will be based entirely on actual work completed and subject to the processes outlined above. CDGs are also different in form to the target grades or current grades on any reports sent home as these, also, are professional predictions. Whilst the last target grades or current grades on any reports may turn out to be the same as the CDG, there is no guarantee of this.

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