



POLICY DOCUMENT FRONTPAGE

Centre Policy for Awarding Grade 2021

CURRENT POLICY

APPROVED BY ALEC HUNTER LOCAL GOVERNING BODY

THIS POLICY IS REGULARLY REVIEWED FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES



Centre Policy for determining teacher assessed grades – summer 2021: ALEC HUNTER ACADEMY

Statement of intent

This section outlines the purpose of this document in relation to our centre.

Statement of Intent

This section provides details of the purpose of this document, as appropriate to our centre:

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure that teacher assessed grades are determined fairly, consistently, free from bias and effectively within and across departments.
- 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 guidance.
- To ensure the consideration of historical centre data in the process, and the appropriate decision making in respect of, teacher assessed grades.
- To support a high standard of internal quality assurance in the allocation of teacher assessed grades.
- 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 of Education, Ofqual, the Joint Council for Qualifications and awarding organisations for Summer 2021 qualifications.
- To ensure the process for communicating to candidates and their parents/carers how they will be assessed is clear, in order to give confidence.



Roles and responsibilities

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the personnel in our centre who have specific roles and responsibilities in the process of determining teacher assessed grades this year.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section gives details of the roles and responsibilities within our centre:

Head of Centre

- Our Head of Centre, Mr Lawn, will be responsible for approving our policy for determining teacher assessed grades.
- Our Head of Centre has overall responsibility for the school as an examinations centre and will ensure that clear roles and responsibilities of all staff are defined.
- Our Head of Centre will confirm that teacher assessed grade decisions represent the academic judgement made by teachers and that the checks in place ensure these align with the guidance on standards provided by awarding organisations.
- Our Head of Centre will ensure a robust internal quality assurance process has been produced and signed-off in advance of results being submitted.

Senior Leadership Group and Heads of Curriculum Area

Our Senior Leadership Group and Heads of Curriculum Area will:

- provide training and support to our other staff.
- support the Head of Centre in the quality assurance of the final teacher assessed grades.
- ensure an effective approach within and across departments and authenticating the preliminary outcome from single teacher subjects.
- be responsible for ensuring staff have a clear understanding of the internal and external quality assurance processes and their role within it.
- ensure that all teachers within their department make consistent judgements about student evidence in deriving a grade.
- ensure all staff conduct assessments under the appropriate levels of control with reference to guidance provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications.
- ensure teachers have the information required to make accurate and fair judgments.
- ensure that a Head of Department Checklist is completed for each qualification that they are submitting.

Teachers/SENCo

Our teachers and SENCo will:

- ensure they conduct assessments under our centre's appropriate levels of control and have sufficient evidence, in line with this Centre Policy and guidance from the Joint Council for Qualifications, to provide teacher assessed grades for each student they have entered for a qualification.
- ensure that the teacher assessed grade 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.



- produce an Assessment Record for each subject cohort, 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.
- securely store and be able to retrieve sufficient evidence to justify their decisions.

Examinations Officer

Our Examinations Officer will:

• be responsible for the administration of our final teacher assessed grades and for managing the post-results services.



Training, support and guidance

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

Training

This section provides details of the approach our centre will take to *training*, *support* and *guidance* in determining teacher assessed grades this year

- Teachers involved in determining grades in our centre will participate in any centre-based training and receive training, guidance and support from senior and middle leaders, to help achieve consistency and fairness to all students.
- Teachers involved in determining grades in our Centre will attend department-based training and moderation sessions to help achieve consistency and fairness for all students
- Teachers will make use of the training materials and support that has been provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications and the awarding organisations.
- Teachers will engage fully with any offer of training or reciprocal support from other schools within the academy trust or other recognised contacts.

Support for Newly Qualified Teachers and teachers less familiar with assessment

This section provides details of our approach to training, support and guidance for newly qualified teachers and teachers less familiar with assessment

- We will provide additional support 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.



Use of appropriate evidence

This section of our Centre Policy indicates how our centre will give due regard to the section in the JCQ guidance entitled: *Guidance on grading for teachers*.

A. Use of evidence

This section gives details in relation to our use of evidence.

- Heads of Curriculum Area and teachers making judgements will have regard to the Ofqual Head of Centre guidance on recommended evidence, and further guidance provided by awarding organisations.
- We will assess students on content that has been taught.
- All candidate evidence used to determine teacher assessed grades, and associated documentation, will be retained, where possible, and made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals.
- There are, however, instances when the work was returned to students earlier in the year
 and is therefore not available. In these instances, following the JCQ guidance, the marks
 can still be used in determining the final grade.
- We will be using student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by our awarding organisation(s), including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers, as appropriate to each subject.
- We will use non-exam assessment work (often referred to as coursework), even if this has not been fully completed, in subjects where this applies.
- We will use student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that follow the same format as awarding organisation materials, and have been marked in a way that reflects awarding organisation mark schemes.
- We may use substantial class or homework (including work that took place during remote learning), where appropriate.
- We may use formal exams and internal assessments taken over the course of study.
- We may use records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects such as music, drama, and PE.
- We will combine and/or remove elements of questions where, for example, a multi-part
 question includes a part which focuses on an element of the specification that hasn't been
 taught.



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

- Following the Ofqual guidance, we will consider when the assessments were taken, as more recent evidence is likely to be more representative of student performance, although there may be exceptions.
- We will consider the level of control under which an assessment was completed, for example, whether the evidence was produced under high control and under supervision or at home.
- We will ensure that we take into consideration whether we are able to authenticate the work as the student's own, especially where that work was not completed within the school. In instances where teachers feel a piece evidence is less representative of student performance, we will balance this against other evidence that is more representative (eg done under more controlled conditions (eg with more unseen material) or more recent assessments) when determining the grade.
- We will consider the limitations of assessing a student's performance when using assessments that have been completed more than once, or drafted and redrafted, where this is not a skill being assessed.
- 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.



Determining teacher assessed grades

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to awarding teacher assessed grades.

Awarding teacher assessed grades based on evidence

We give details here of our centre's approach to awarding teacher assessed grades.

- Our teachers will determine grades based on a range of evidence which is commensurate with the standard at which a student is performing, i.e. their demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills across the content of the course they have been taught.
- 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 Curriculum Area. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be shared.
- Our grades will be based on a holistic, objective judgement of the evidence.
- We will consider the quality of the work in relation to the assessment materials used, as well as the grade descriptors and grading exemplification available to help reach a final grade.



Internal quality assurance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to ensure internal standardisation of teacher assessed grades, to ensure consistency, fairness and objectivity of decisions.

Head of Centre Internal Quality Assurance and Declaration

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:
 - Arriving at teacher assessed grades
 - Marking of evidence
 - Reaching a holistic grading decision
 - Applying the use of grading support and documentation
- We will conduct internal standardisation across all grades.
- We will ensure that the Assessment Record will form the basis of internal standardisation and discussions across teachers to agree the awarding of teacher assessed grades.
- Where necessary, we will review and reflect on individual grading decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our awarding organisation(s).
- Where appropriate, we will amend individual grade decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our awarding organisation(s).
- 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 Head of Curriculum Area or an appropriate designated member of staff if the teacher concerned is the Head of Curriculum Area.
- We will also encourage all Heads of Curriculum Area to seek external verification of a sample of their grading decisions, either from the other 3 secondary schools within our multi-academy trust or from other recognised contacts, particularly in single teacher subjects.
- In respect of equality legislation, we will consider the range of evidence for students of different protected characteristics that are included in our internal standardisation.



Comparison of teacher assessed grades to results for previous cohorts

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach we will take to compare our teacher assessed grades in 2021 with results from previous cohorts.

Comparison of Teacher Assessed Grades to results for previous cohorts

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

- We will compile information on the grades awarded to our students in the three most recent June series in which exams took place (2017 2019) and will share this data with Heads of Curriculum Area for their reference.
- Following the JCQ guidance, after the initial grading decisions have been made, the centre will review the aggregate cumulative grade distribution for each subject.
- If outcomes are much higher than in previous years, or much lower, the reasons for this will be considered.
- We will consider the size of our cohort from year to year.
- We will consider the ability profile of our cohorts from year to year, notably in option subjects.
- We will consider the stability of our centre's overall grade outcomes from year to year.
- We will consider both subject and centre level variation in our outcomes during the internal quality assurance process.
- It is possible that, following this review, the school may need to reflect on the grading standard that teachers have applied in one or more subjects and make adjustments to ensure that, following the Ofqual guidance, the school has not been overly harsh or lenient in their assessment of the 2021 cohort compared to previous years in which exams took place
- Following the JCQ guidance, any application of historical insights would be applied consistently to students within a subject.
- In the event of significant divergence from the qualifications-levels profiles attained in previous examined years, we will prepare a succinct narrative which will address the reasons for this divergence. This commentary will be available for subsequent review during the QA process.



This section gives details of the approach our centre will follow if our initial teacher assessed grades for a qualification are viewed as overly lenient or harsh compared to results in previous years.

- 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 to 1 scale.
- Senior leaders reviewing the teacher assessed grades will request a written rationale, as detailed above, for this divergence.
- We will use data modelling tools, such as Alps Connect, to gain an understanding of whether the teacher assessed grades for a particular subject represent progress broadly in line with that made in recent years.
- We will bring together other data sources that will help to quality assure the grades we intend to award in 2021.

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 only compare like-for-like courses if an examination board or qualification type has changed, this may invalidate comparison with previous years.
- Private candidates will be excluded from comparisons

Access Arrangements and Special Considerations

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to provide students with appropriate access arrangements and take into account mitigating circumstances in particular instances.

Reasonable adjustments and mitigating circumstances (special consideration)

This section gives details of our approach to access arrangements and mitigating circumstances (special consideration).

- Where students have agreed access arrangements or reasonable adjustments (for example a reader or scribe) we will make every effort to 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 being offered to the student, we will apply special consideration (using the <u>JCQ A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020)</u> or, if this would still result in the adjusted mark for that element being out of line with other evidence for that student, that element would be excluded from the portfolio of evidence.



- Where evidence is provided and verified to demonstrate that illness or other personal circumstances might have affected performance in assessments used in determining a student's standard of attainment, we will take account of this when making judgements.
- 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 ensure all teachers are briefed on JCQ guidance as per: <u>JCQ A guide to the special consideration process</u>, with effect from 1 September 2020



Addressing disruption/differential lost learning (DLL)

B. Addressing Disruption/Differentiated Lost Learning (DLL)

This section gives details of our approach to address disruption or differentiated lost teaching.

- Teacher assessed grades will be determined based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed for each student.
- We commit to make suitable adjustments to our grading methodology for any student whose preparation for an assessment which would ordinarily be included in the evidence base, or completion of the assessment itself, has been disrupted further due to reasons beyond their control, such as self-isolation.
- Where possible, arrangements will be made for students in these circumstances to complete further assessments if time permits or alternative sources of evidence will be sought to replace those which cannot be included in the evidence base.
- Our centre is aware that students do not have to have completed a mandated amount of content or demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding across every area of the specification as they would normally.
- We understand that, while there is no set requirement for the minimum amount of
 content that students must have been taught, our Head of Centre will confirm that
 students have been taught sufficient content to form the basis for a grade.



Objectivity

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the arrangements in place to ensure objectivity of decisions.

Objectivity

This section gives a summary of the arrangements in place within our centre in relation to objectivity.

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

Senior Leaders, Heads of Curriculum Area and Centre 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, including hidden forms of bias)
- 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 should be valued for its own merit as an indication of performance and attainment
- teacher assessed grades should not be influenced by candidates' positive or challenging personal circumstances, character, behaviour, appearance, socio-economic background, or protected characteristics
- unconscious bias is more likely to occur when quick opinions are formed

Our internal standardisation process will help to ensure that different perspectives play a part in the quality assurance process. Teachers are required, where possible, to exchange scripts with another colleague from within their department team, as coordinated by the Head of Subject, to avoid marking the work of their own students. Moreover, our recommendation to all subject teams to seek external sources of verification for their judgements will help to provide reassurance that decisions will be objective and the risk of unconscious bias affecting outcomes will be minimised.



Recording decisions and retention of evidence and data

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our arrangements to recording decisions and to retaining evidence and data.

C. Recording Decisions and Retention of Evidence and Data

This section outlines our approach to recording decisions and retaining evidence and data.

- We will ensure that teachers and Heads of Curriculum Area maintain records that show how the teacher assessed grades process operated, including the rationale for decisions in relation to individual marks/grades.
- We will ensure that evidence is maintained across a variety of tasks to develop a holistic view of each student's demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills in the areas of content taught.
- We will put in place recording requirements for the various stages of the process to ensure the accurate and secure retention of the evidence used to make decisions.
- We will comply with our obligations regarding data protection legislation.
- We will ensure that the grades accurately reflect the evidence submitted.
- We will ensure that evidence is retained electronically or on paper in a secure centre-based system that can be readily shared with our awarding organisation(s).
- We recognise that evidence from some previously assessed work may no longer be available to be retained, in which case the marks may nonetheless still contribute to determining the final grade.



Authenticating evidence

D. 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 checking mechanisms will include:

- Online plagiarism checks of work that has been completed during periods of remote learning
- Senior leadership 'drop ins' to ensure that assessed work is being completed under the conditions agreed by the Centre
- Checks that students' work produced remotely matches each candidate's overall performance in the qualification.
- Reminders to students about malpractice when producing work at home.
- A signed declaration from each student confirming that all the work being submitted is their own
- Where teachers are not confident that the work intended to be used as evidence is the student's own or that the student has received inappropriate levels of support, they will raise the issue with their Head of Curriculum Area. They will, in consultation with the Deputy Headteacher, investigate the issue and may decide to exclude this piece of work from the evidence or to balance the evidence against other evidence where there is greater confidence that it has been done under more controlled conditions (e.g. with more unseen material) when determining the grade.
- 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.



Confidentiality, malpractice and conflicts of interest

Confidentiality

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to ensure the confidentiality of the grades our centre determines, and to make students aware of the range of evidence on which those grades will be based.

A. 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 requirement to share details of the range of evidence on which students' grades will be based, while ensuring that details of the final grades remain confidential.
- Relevant details from this Policy, including requirements around sharing details of evidence and the confidentiality requirements, have been shared with parents/carers.
- Although students and parents/carers may be aware of grades awarded for previous
 assessments and examinations, which were not confidential at the time, these grades predated this process, which incorporates moderation at various levels, and should not
 therefore be considered as an indication of the final grade which may be submitted.

Malpractice

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to prevent malpractice and other breaches of exam regulations, and to deal with such cases if they occur.

B. 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.

- Our general centre policies regarding malpractice, maladministration and conflicts of interest have been reviewed to ensure they address the specific challenges of delivery in Summer 2021.
- All staff involved have been made aware of and given access to these policies.
- 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
- o improper assistance to students
- o failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work
- o over-direction of students in preparation for common assessments



- allegations that centres submit grades supported by evidence that they know to be inaccurate
- 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
- o failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made and teacher assessed grades.
- The consequences of malpractice or maladministration as published in the JCQ guidance: <u>JCQ Suspected Malpractice</u>: <u>Policies and Procedures</u> and including the risk of a delay to students receiving their grades, up to, and including, removal of centre status have been shared with all relevant staff.

Conflicts of Interest

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to address potential conflicts of interest.

C. 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 - <u>General Regulations</u> for Approved Centres, 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021.
- We will also carefully consider the need to separate duties and personnel to ensure fairness in later process reviews and appeals.



Private candidates

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to working with Private Candidates to arrive at appropriate grades.

A. Private Candidates

This section details our approach to providing and quality assuring grades to Private Candidates.

- Our arrangements for assessing Private Candidates to arrive at appropriate grades are identical to the approaches utilised for internal candidates.
- Where it has been necessary to utilise 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.
- We will provide Private Candidates with opportunities to complete suitable assessments to ensure that we have sufficient evidence on which to base a teacher assessed grade.
- If we do not feel that the evidence supplied by a Private Candidate, combined with the results from our assessments, is robust or detailed enough to arrive at a judgement, we will make clear to the candidate that we are unable to submit a grade for them.
- 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.

External Quality Assurance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the arrangements in place to comply with awarding organisation arrangements for External Quality Assurance of teacher assessed grades in a timely and effective way.

A. 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 have been properly kept and can be made available for review as required.
- All student evidence, on which decisions regarding the determination of grades are based, has been retained wherever possible, and can be 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
 can respond promptly and fully to enquiries, including attendance at Virtual Visits should
 this prove 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 result in further action by the awarding organisations, including the withholding of results.

Results

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to the receipt and issue of results to students and the provision of necessary advice and guidance.

A. Results

This section details our approach to the issue of results to students and the provision of advice and guidance.

- All staff involved have been made aware of the specific arrangements for the issue of results in Summer 2021.
- 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 below).
- 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.
- Parents/carers will be made aware of arrangements for results days.



Appeals

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to Appeals, to ensure that they are handled swiftly and effectively, and in line with JCQ requirements.

A. Appeals

This section details our approach to managing appeals, including Centre Reviews, and subsequent appeals to awarding organisations.

- 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 have been briefed on the process for, and timing of, such reviews, and will be available to ensure their prompt and efficient handling.
- Students have been appropriately guided as to the necessary stages of 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.
- Appropriate information on the appeals process will be provided to parents/carers.