



Assessment and grading in 2022

Summary of Ofqual/DfE announcements

30 September 2021

Introduction

Ofqual and the Department for Education have published the outcome of the recent consultation on adaptations to exams in 2022, as well as outlining further information on grading in 2022 and the launch of a new consultation on contingencies. This paper provides a brief summary of the key points and covers the following areas:

- Outcome of the [consultation on adaptations](#) to exams in 2022
- New [consultation on contingency arrangements](#) (Teacher Assessed Grades) & contingency arrangements [guidance for VTQs](#)
- The [grading profile](#) in 2022 and 2023
- Timing of [results days](#)

Outcome of the consultation on adaptations to exams in 2022

Summary of decisions:

1. The DfE's policy intention of providing advance information is that it will support students' revision rather than a reduction in subject content. It has been decided that this information should be released by **7 February 2022 at the latest**. DfE has also decided to retain the flexibility to deploy advance information at other points ahead of 7 February 2022 if circumstances require. At least a week's notice will be given if it is decided that advance information will be released earlier than 7 February 2022.
2. Exam boards will provide advance information about the focus of the content of the exams for all GCSE, AS and A level subjects (except GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography) for the summer 2022 exams. The advance information will meet the principles set out in the consultation document.



3. There will be optional topics and content in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography. Ofqual will require exam boards to change how they assess these subjects to reflect the expected changes to the way the subject content is assessed, as proposed in the consultation.
4. Centres will be allowed to deliver practical work in GCSE biology, chemistry, physics, combined science, geology and astronomy, AS level biology, chemistry, physics and geology, and AS and A level environmental science by demonstration. Ofqual encourages centres to continue to make available hands-on practical activities for their students wherever possible. This does not require changes to the assessment arrangements that the exam boards have in place for each of these specifications.
5. Centres will be allowed to assess the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) across the minimum number of practical activities required to enable students to demonstrate their competence in A level biology, chemistry, physics and geology.
6. Exam boards can carry out remote monitoring of centres' application of the CPAC.
7. Students taking GCSE, AS and A level art and design will be assessed on their portfolio only.
8. Students will be given a formulae sheet for GCSE mathematics in summer 2022. Exam boards will provide copies of the formulae sheet for use in teaching and to ensure that students are familiar with it prior to the exams. Clean copies of the formulae sheet will be provided in the exams.
9. Students will be given a revised equation sheet for GCSE physics and combined science in summer 2022, covering all the equations required in the subject content. Exam boards will provide copies of the equation sheet for use in teaching and to ensure that students are familiar with it prior to the exams. Clean copies of the equation sheet will be provided in the exams.
10. The adaptations in place for summer 2022 will be echoed for the November 2022 series.

Commentary

Much of this reflects the original plan for adaptations to exams in 2021, which were of course replaced with TAGs. Perhaps the most significant point to note is that advance information will



be released **no later than 7 February 2022**. While we would have preferred this to be slightly earlier, we do appreciate there is the risk that releasing advance information too early could lead to curriculum narrowing. That said, we have been clear with the DfE and Ofqual that in many schools there has already been de facto curriculum narrowing as a result of pandemic disruption to education. The DfE's policy intent is that the release of advance information is primarily to inform revision. We believe that releasing the information in early February will allow for this as well but also go slightly beyond it by providing some time for schools to teach content that pupils will be examined on but might have missed due to the pandemic.

This might of course require teachers to reorganise aspects of the curriculum following 7 February, so our advice to school and Trust leaders is to consider how you can support teachers to achieve this and to manage workload. For example, perhaps meeting time in the week of 7 February can be repurposed to provide time for teachers to consider how the curriculum and revision period might respond to the published advance information. The extent to which this is necessary may depend on the extent of disruption the school has faced.

New consultation on contingency arrangements

Consultation closes at 11:45pm on 13 October 2021

Teacher Assessed Grades have been selected as the contingency plan in the event that nationally exams cannot go ahead as planned. The consultation, therefore, does not ask whether TAGs should be the contingency, rather it focuses on aspects of delivering TAGs. In particular, it proposes there should be tighter guidance on the evidence which can be used to support TAGs than was used in 2021. The principles that would underpin this guidance are outlined in the consultation document:

a. Where a specification includes NEA, centres should support students, wherever possible, to complete that assessment in line with arrangements announced by Ofqual for 2022 and the timescales set by exam boards.

b. In addition to completing any NEA, centres should plan assessment opportunities for TAGs in advance, to a timetable that secures some evidence early in the academic year (for example, before Christmas) to protect against further disruption. Those assessments should provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding across the full range of content they have been taught. Teachers will want to guard against the risk of over-assessment and think about opportunities to schedule specific assessment opportunities



which would provide evidence from a significant proportion of the specification. A sensible pattern could be to plan to assess students once in each of the second half of the autumn term, the spring term, and the first half of the summer term.

c. When carrying out assessments that could be used towards TAGs, centres should assess students in ways that are as useful as possible for students expecting to take exams next summer by creating assessment opportunities that replicate, in full or part, exam board papers (past papers could be used, in full or part, where appropriate). Such assessments will also help to inform teaching and learning.

d. The conditions in which the assessments are undertaken should be similar to those students will experience when they take their exams in the summer (for example unseen papers, closed book, timed and with supervision). This will both help ensure that the work is authentic and prepare students for exams in the summer. Those controls may be provided within a classroom rather than exam hall setting.

e. Each assessment should only cover subject content that students have been taught at the time of the assessment and not include questions on topics they are yet to study. The range of planned assessments should mean that students are prepared to be assessed on the full range of content they will have been taught.

f. Centres may wish to aim for a total assessment time that does not significantly exceed the total exam time for the specification.

g. Students should be told before they take the assessment that their performance in the assessment would be used to inform their TAG if exams were cancelled, to ensure they have time to prepare. They should be told the aspects of the content the assessment will cover, but not the specific questions.

h. Students in the same centre cohort should be assessed using the same approach where possible and all the assessments taken should be used to determine the TAG (not just those in which students performed best). The centre will make the final judgement about what is to be used and will need to document the rationale for any instances where consistent evidence is not used for a whole class or cohort.

i. The same reasonable adjustments that will be made for disabled students taking exams in the summer should, where possible, be applied to the assessments – and records made of the adjustments and the reasons for them. The reason why any reasonable adjustment was not made must be recorded.



j. Where disruption to education does not allow for assessments or NEA to be completed as set out above, centres should arrange to collect evidence that provides equivalent confidence of authenticity and of equivalent breadth where possible. If this does not prove possible, however, centres may also need to collect evidence that is not based on such assessments for either a whole cohort or for individual students and/or mark partially completed NEA.

k. Where disruption necessitates such approaches, centres should record those decisions and the disruption experienced for inclusion in a centre policy, should awarding be based on the TAGs that resulted from that evidence.

l. Teachers should mark the work and carry out any internal standardisation of the marking, in line with exam board guidance where appropriate. Students should be provided with feedback, which could include marks or comments, but teachers must not determine a TAG unless exams are cancelled nor tell their students what their TAG might be.

m. The original student work must be retained by the teacher – students could be given copies if this would help support their learning.

Commentary

Because this draft guidance has been released as part of the consultation, centres can begin to plan for how they will gather evidence to support a TAGs contingency. This puts schools in a slightly better position than last year because they will be able to begin gathering evidence much sooner. For example, it should make it easier for schools to use mock exam evidence. Importantly though, the guidance stipulates considerations such as “*The same reasonable adjustments that will be made for disabled students taking exams in the summer should where possible be applied to the assessments – and records made of the adjustments and the reasons for them. The reason why any reasonable adjustment was not made must be recorded.*” Therefore, schools wishing to use evidence drawn from mock exams should keep this in mind and make sure necessary arrangements are in place. This stands for all that is specified above, including that assessments should be done in conditions similar to exams and that pupils should know in advance whether an assessment could form part of a TAG.

You may also wish to note the DfE has updated the [joint contingency plan](#) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



Contingency arrangements guidance for VTQs

The DfE has published [guidance](#) for VTQ contingencies. Similar to the approach outlined above for GCSE & A Level, the contingency for many VTQs and other general qualifications will be Teacher Assessed Grades. These include VTQs such as many of those approved for inclusion in the 2022 performance tables, other BTECs and Cambridge Nationals and Technicals, and other general qualifications that are not GCSEs, AS and A levels, such as the International Baccalaureate, Pre-U, and Core Maths.

However, "for VTQs that require students to demonstrate occupational or professional competence, including the occupational elements of those qualifications approved for inclusion in the 2022 performance tables, if exams and assessments cannot take place safely even with adaptations, then they will need to be delayed. These may be written or practical exams and assessments."

Also, there "are qualifications that are taken for mixed purposes and are unlike GCSEs and A levels in their qualification and assessment structure, such as Functional Skills qualifications (FSQs) and ESOL Skills for life.

Awarding organisations will continue to put in place adaptations relating to the delivery of exams and assessments where necessary. If the decision is made that it is no longer viable for exams and assessments to go ahead, it is our expectation that learners who are not able to safely access assessments in centres, or remotely, would be eligible for a TAG."

With regards to T Levels:

"The core component is largely knowledge-based with exams typically taken at the end of the first year, whereas the occupational specialism assessments are a practical test of occupational competence taken in the second year.

Core exams and assessments should, wherever possible, go ahead. However, if the decision is made that it is no longer safe for core exams and assessments to be taken by learners in provider settings in the 2021/22 academic year, TAGs would be used.

As occupational specialism assessments test competence, if they cannot take place safely as scheduled they will need to be delayed rather than adapted. In the unlikely event that students cannot take their occupational assessments at all this academic year, we will work to ensure that students are not disadvantaged and can still progress to the next stage."



The grading profile in 2022 and 2023

Ofqual has stated its aim is to return the grade profile to pre-pandemic standard in 2023, with 2022 being a transition 'midway' point between 2021 and 2019. Chief Regulator, Dr Jo Saxton, states, *"This approach will recognise the disruption experienced by students taking exams in 2022, over their course of study, and so provide a safety net for those who might otherwise just miss out on a higher grade. Results overall will be higher than in 2019, but not as high as in 2020."*

With regards to **predicting grades for UCAS applications**, Dr Saxton gives the following advice:

"For 2022, we recommend that teachers use the familiar 2019 standard as the basis for predicting their students' grades, giving borderline students the benefit of any doubt. So if a teacher believes a student is likely to be on the borderline between 2 grades, they predict the higher one."

Commentary

There were a range of views on this issue and no clear 'right' solution. Rather, it was right that Ofqual considered the relevant trade-offs and focussed on ensuring fairness to young people and maintaining public confidence. It is important to note that there is no pre-determined 'quota', only a broad position on the overall grade profile. This is because entry patterns and the quality of work itself can affect the grade profile – both of which we don't yet know. This is important as it challenges the misconception that grades are in some way arbitrarily locked in. We hope this provides confidence to pupils and the wider public that the grade profile will be as fair as possible in 2022. Ofqual has published a [blog](#) aimed primarily at students.

With this decision now made, and as advocates for young people, we think it is important that the system, including CST, works to support this message of fairness and confidence.



The timing of results days

There had been some discussion following summer 2021 about whether results days should permanently move from their traditional slots. After taking soundings from a range of stakeholders, it has been decided that results days will return to their normal position. This academic year that will be:

- AS and A levels being - 18 August 2022
- GCSEs - 25 August 2022

Feedback

As ever, we appreciate your feedback, particularly regarding the open consultation on contingencies (which closes on 13 October). Please feel free to email us at

executiveteam@cstuk.org.uk



Confederation of School Trusts

The Confederation of School Trusts (CST) is the national organisation and sector body for school trusts in England advocating for, connecting and supporting executive and governance leaders. We are a membership organisation of organisations. This means that the organisation – the Trust – is the member. Our mission is to build an excellent education system in England – every school part of a strong and sustainable group in which every child is a powerful learner and adults learn and develop together as teachers and leaders.

The Voice of School Trusts

Selflessness | Integrity | Objectivity | Accountability | Openness | Honesty | Leadership

Tel: 0115 917 0142

Email: admin@cstuk.org.uk

Address: Suite 10, Whiteley Mill

Offices, 39 Nottingham Road,

Stapleford, NG9 8AD



[@CSTvoice](https://twitter.com/CSTvoice)

cstuk.org.uk