



Joint Council for  
Qualifications <sup>CIC</sup>

# Worked examples to assist with determining grades

JCQ SUPPORTING GUIDANCE ON THE AWARDING OF GRADES  
FOR A/AS LEVELS FOR SUMMER 2021

DATE PUBLISHED : 26/03/21

## Worked examples to assist teachers in making grading decisions for GCSEs, AS and A Levels in summer 2021

Teachers should make holistic decisions on the grades determined for each student, taking into account: the grade descriptors; the guidance on using grade descriptors in the JCQ 2021 Guidance document (both available on the [JCQ website](#)); and the exemplar material available from awarding organisations. The process used must comply with the Centre Policy.

The evidence used to make grading decisions should be consistent across the class or cohort and align with the Centre Policy. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to adapt this approach for individual students. The examples included here are intended to exemplify the judgements that are less straightforward due to a range of factors. For most judgements, teachers may go through a similar process but will not have to take into account specific factors for each student.

They are not meant to be prescriptive and are provided as examples of how a teacher might approach grading the performance of a particular student. Where marks are included it is solely to illustrate the teacher's process and must not be taken as an indication of any notional mark needed for a grade. There is no indication included of how demanding each assessment is, so no such inferences should be made for these examples, although teachers will know this for any assessments they have set. Where grades are assigned to individual pieces of evidence, these usually relate to the notional grade boundaries published by the awarding organisation for a specific assessment.

Although these examples show the judgements teachers might make in specific circumstances, as outlined in our *Guidance on grading for teachers* section in the main [JCQ Guidance](#), teachers are not making such decisions in isolation. The grades assigned are then subject to the centre's internal quality assurance processes and signed-off by the Head of Centre.

**The following table indicates what each worked example is used to illustrate:**

	Accounting for contextual factors in evidence	Replacing evidence due to exceptional circumstances	Marks available but no work	Partially completed NEA	Minimal evidence available	Private candidate
Student 1	X	X				
Student 2	X	X	X			
Student 3	X			X		
Student 4	X		X			
Student 5	X				X	
Student 6	X					X

### **Student 1**

**Step 1:** The teacher considers what has been taught and what evidence is available across the whole class/cohort.

**Step 2:** The teacher selects the evidence for the class/cohort that has been collected over the course of study on a range of specification content. As well as assessments taken under a high level of control, the teacher includes a substantial classroom assessment and a substantial homework task as they assess skills not assessed as deeply elsewhere.

**Step 3:** When evaluating the evidence in line with Centre Policy and the JCQ guidance, the teacher pays particular attention to the student's

performance in the mock exam and the additional assessments where they are confident that the student has not received any support. The mock exam was based on a past paper with published grade boundaries, so that gives the teacher confidence in the grade that has been assigned, although it is not as recent a piece of evidence as others. The teacher considers, in line with the Centre Policy, that because the additional assessments are recent, they are a strong indicator of the student's current performance.

**Step 4:** The teacher notes that for Student 1, the additional assessment 1, taken in May, took place without appropriate access arrangements in place. In line with the JCQ guidance and Centre Policy the teacher uses an alternative assessment where the student is provided with the appropriate access arrangements as outlined in JCQ's Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments document.

For Student 1 the evidence is as follows:

Evidence	Grade/Mark	Comments
Mock exam (Oct 20)	7	
Substantial classroom assessment (Dec 20)	20/25	
Substantial homework task (Jan 21)	19/25	
Additional assessment 1 - awarding organisation materials (May 21)	32/45	Replaced with another additional assessment; new mark = 36/45
Additional assessment 2 - awarding organisation materials (May 21)	37/45	

**Step 5:** The teacher uses the grade descriptors and exemplars to underpin the judgement, and taking all the evidence into account, following the Centre Policy, the student is assigned a grade 8. In this example, the student has been awarded a higher grade than that achieved in the mock

exam taken in October 2020 because the performances in the subsequent assessments demonstrated the features of grade 8 performance, as illustrated in the grade descriptors and grading exemplification.

## **Student 2**

**Step 1:** The teacher considers what has been taught and what evidence is available across the whole class/cohort.

**Step 2:** The teacher selects the evidence for the class/cohort that has been collected over the course of study on a range of specification content.

The teacher doesn't have the physical evidence for the substantial classroom assessment or the mock exam but has a record of their marks alongside those of the rest of the class. The teacher has a copy of the assessment materials provided to the students as well as the mark scheme.

**Step 3:** When evaluating the evidence in line with the Centre Policy and the JCQ guidance, the teacher is confident that all pieces of evidence are authentically the student's work. It is noted that several of the pieces of evidence have published grade boundaries so those are used to assign grades to the relevant pieces.

**Step 4:** The teacher knows that although the class was taught all the content in the assessments, Student 2 was absent for a prolonged period and missed teaching due to valid reasons. In line with the JCQ guidance and the Centre Policy, the teacher decides that there is a sufficient range of evidence without the past paper, where content assessed was taught during the student's validated prolonged absence. Therefore this piece of evidence is removed and the student is informed.

For Student 2 the evidence is as follows:

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Grade/Mark</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Substantial classroom assessment (Oct 20)	17/30	
Mock exam (Nov 20)	C	Discount this piece
NEA (Feb 21)	B	

Full past paper (April 21)	B	
Additional assessment - - awarding organisation materials (May 21)	42/70	

**Step 5:** The teacher uses the grade descriptors and exemplars to underpin their judgement, and taking all the evidence into account, following the Centre Policy, the student is assigned a grade B.

### **Student 3**

**Step 1:** The teacher considers what has been taught and what evidence is available across the whole class/cohort.

**Step 2:** The teacher selects the evidence for the class/cohort that has been collected over the course of study on a range of specification content. As this is a performance-based subject the teacher includes the marks the students achieved in classroom assessments, and makes a judgment about the grade which this level of performance represents. The NEA is partially completed but the teacher uses the mark scheme and previous grade boundaries to provide a grade for each student using the guidance in JCQ's [notice to centres on NEA for summer 2021](#) . The teacher also includes a substantial written homework task as an additional example of the skills normally assessed in the final exam.

**Step 3:** When evaluating the evidence, in line with the Centre Policy and the JCQ guidance, the teacher doesn't know if student 3 had support with the homework task, so reduces reliance on that in line with the Centre Policy. With regards to all other evidence, the teacher is confident that the work is authentic. The teacher considers, in line with the Centre Policy, that the recent evidence is likely to be more representative of the student's performance than the autumn assessment. As NEA is heavily weighted in this subject, particular emphasis is placed on that piece of evidence and on the classroom assessments, which assessed the same skills as the NEA.

**Step 4:** The teacher is confident that the student has been taught all the content assessed in the tasks included and informs the student of the evidence to be included.

For Student 3 the evidence is as follows:

Evidence	Grade/Mark	Comments
Mock exam (Nov 20)	4	
Substantial written homework task (Feb 20)	21/40	
Classroom performance marks (Sept – Dec 20 + March 21)	6	Grade average across tasks
Partially completed NEA (April 21)	6	
Additional assessment – awarding organisation materials (May 21)	37/60	

**Step 5:** The teacher uses the grade descriptors and exemplars to underpin their judgement, and taking all the evidence into account, following the Centre Policy, the student is assigned a grade 6.

#### **Student 4**

**Step 1:** The teacher considers what has been taught and what evidence is available across the whole class/cohort.

**Step 2:** The teacher selects the evidence for the class/cohort that has been collected over the course of study on a range of specification content. The teacher has not been able to collect physical evidence for three of the four assessments for Student 4, although there are marks for assessments the student completed, with one assessment outcome reviewed by a colleague in the department. The teacher has copies of the assessment materials set along with the mark schemes.

**Step 3:** The teacher is confident that the student didn't have any additional support with the tasks completed so weights them all equally. The mock

assessment was based on a past paper, so the published grade boundaries are used to help in providing a grade. The teacher considers, in line with the Centre Policy, that as the assessment carried out in April is more recent, it is a strong indicator of the student's performance.

**Step 4:** The teacher is confident that the student was taught all the content assessed in the tasks included and informs the student of the evidence to be included.

For Student 4 the evidence is as follows:

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Grade/Mark</b>
Substantial class assessment (Sept 20) ( <i>no physical evidence</i> )	6/15
Mock exam (Nov 20)	Grade 3
Substantial classwork (Dec 20) ( <i>no physical evidence</i> )	5/20
Additional assessment – awarding organisation materials (April 21) ( <i>no physical evidence</i> )	16/60

**Step 5:** The teacher uses the evidence gathered from the rest of the class to support the judgement for this student, following the Centre Policy. The grade descriptors and grading exemplification materials are then used as a basis for reviewing the one piece of physical evidence is available, to confirm that the correct standard is being applied. On this basis a grade 3 is assigned for the student. The decision is recorded in accordance with the school's processes.

### **Student 5**

**Step 1:** The teacher selects the evidence for the class/cohort that has been collected over the course of study on a range of specification content.

**Step 2:** This centre offers alternative provision. Student 5 has transferred recently from a different school. Despite making every effort to do so, the centre has been unable to collect any evidence from the student's



previous centre. The teacher discusses with the student the content they have been taught and selects relevant assessment materials for the student to evidence their learning. Therefore, the only evidence available is from the two assessments that have been carried out at the centre.

**Step 3:** The assessments were taken under supervision, so the teacher is content that there was a high level of control and that it was the student's own work. The student completed a past paper assessment, as the relevant content had been taught to them. As the past paper had published grade boundaries, the teacher feels secure in the judgement of the grade assigned to it.

**Step 4:** The teacher is confident that the student has been taught all the content assessed in the tasks included and informs the student of the evidence to be included.

For Student 5 the evidence is as follows:

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Grade/Mark</b>
Past paper (April 21)	Grade 6
Additional assessment - awarding organisation materials (May 21)	29/50

**Step 5:** Taking the above factors into consideration and cross checking the quality of the work with the grade descriptors and exemplification provided, and following the Centre Policy, the teacher decides to assign the student a grade 6.

## **Student 6**

**Step 1:** This student is a private candidate. In discussion with the teacher, the student confirms they have studied the full content of the specification, and the teacher verifies this information.

**Step 2:** The student provides the teacher with work that was marked and authenticated by a private tutor. The teacher also invites the student to take two assessments in school with their class to include in the evidence for this student.

**Step 3:** Within the complete collection of evidence there is good coverage of content and assessment objectives. Because the past papers are complete past papers the published grade boundaries are used to assign grades for those pieces of evidence. The teacher notes a slight difference in performance between the assessments conducted outside and within the centre. Therefore, they reduce the reliance on tutor set and marked materials and place more weight on the teacher set and marked evidence as these were taken with a high level of control.

**Step 4:** The student confirms they were taught all the content assessed in the tasks included.

For Student 6 the evidence is as follows:

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Grade/Mark</b>
Tutor marked essays x 2	17/30 21/30
Past paper 1 – set and marked by tutor (March 21)	B
Past paper 2 – set and marked by teacher (April 21)	C
Additional assessment – awarding organisation materials set and marked by teacher (May 21)	42/65

**Step 5:** The teacher scrutinises the full collection of evidence, checking the marking and grading of the tutor and paying attention to the range of skills, knowledge and understanding demonstrated. The teacher uses the grade descriptors and exemplification and decides to assign the student a grade C.