

Together we can do great things

Gyda'n gilydd, gallwn wneud pethau mawr

Headteacher/Prifathro Mrs S Parry



22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students/Annwyl Rieni, Gwarchodwyr a Myfyrwyr

### **Centre-Assessment Approach for Qualifications in 2021**

In November 2020, the Education Minister announced that there would be no summer examination series for students taking GCSEs, AS levels or A levels in 2021. In January 2021, it was confirmed that these qualifications would be awarded using Centre Determined Grades. This means that individual examination centres, such as schools and colleges, would determine the actual grades awarded for each qualification.

The Assessment Approach is designed to outline how the school, as an examination centre, will apply the 'Guidance on Alternative Arrangements for Approved GCSEs, AS and A levels' provided by [Qualifications Wales](#), the examination regulator, to help determine grades in 2021. By sharing its approach, the school is seeking to offer clarity and confidence to students, staff and families. Furthermore, it provides an overview on the decisions teachers will make; how teachers will make these decisions; and identify the evidence teachers will be utilising to support the decision-making process. While this letter is designed to provide a 'high-level' understanding of the approach, our Centre Assessment Policy will be made available to parents/carers and students after the Easter break.

### **Centre-Determined Grades**

A Centre Determined Grade is the grade awarded by the school, as an examination centre, on the basis of attainment which has been demonstrated in the areas of the qualification content that a student has covered. For each qualification, teachers will make use of WJEC Assessment Frameworks which include descriptors for key grades to support the accurate distribution of awards. Each grade awarded by the school must be underpinned by robust evidence to demonstrate a student's attainment across key themes and skills.

These will vary per qualification, as determined by the requirements of each WJEC Qualification Assessment Frameworks. It will not be possible or permitted for teachers, or the school, to attempt to issue a Centre Determined Grade based on professional prediction or the potential of a student. Teachers will be required to apply their professional judgement and decide whether the knowledge and skills demonstrated meets the usual standard for a specified grade.

In determining grades, the school will be required to make 'best-fit' judgements. This means that students are not required to demonstrate all aspects of a grade descriptor to be awarded the grade; students should be awarded a grade which supports evidence of attainment across sufficient breadth of content, within the specified qualification, as determined by WJEC; and may achieve the same grades by demonstrating different combinations of knowledge, skills and understanding. This ensures that strengths in some areas counterbalance shortcomings in others. As a result, the 'best-fit' grade may be awarded.

Where there is insufficient evidence, or where evidence suggest attainment is below that required of the lowest grade for a qualification (ie. G grade at GCSE; E grade at AS/A level) then a student will be awarded a Centre Determined Grade of U.

### **The evidence used for Centre-Determined Grades**

Centre Determined Grades will be generated using evidence of work completed by a student, using the adapted specification content. In determining a grade, the following types of evidence will be used in each qualification

#### **1. Adapted past-paper questions**

The school will make use of WJEC adapted past-papers when setting tasks to help determine a grade for each qualification. There are recognised benefits of using these materials. The adapted past-papers have already been externally quality assured; are fully supported by clear mark schemes; and are familiar to both students and staff. Teachers will ensure these past-papers, which will form a key part of the evidence, will be incorporated within their delivery of teaching and learning, in replacement of other activities undertaken in lessons.

#### **2. Non-Examination Assessment**

Non-examination assessment exists in many qualifications. The weighting towards the overall grade is, in most cases, much lower than unseen elements. Where non-examination assessment remains part of an adapted qualification, teachers will use the performance of students in this element to help contribute towards the determination of a grade. However, teachers will need to consider the weighting of the element, in light of the qualification as a whole, to ensure that the grade awarded accurately reflects the overall standard. For example, in a qualification where the weighting of non-examination assessment is equivalent to 20% of the overall grade, teachers will take this into account against the other evidence provided when determining the grade.

#### **3. Other contributing evidence**

There are two other types of contributing evidence may be used to support the determination of a grade. These include

- a. Teachers may use evidence from previously completed WJEC past-paper questions, which have been externally quality assured, with a published mark scheme, and where they have been completed under controlled conditions; and
- b. Assessments undertaken prior to the publication of the centre approach eg. Mock Examinations (also known as 'Pre-Public Examinations') and/or other assessed work may only be used to help confirm a judgement.

However, this evidence may not be used in isolation to determine grades since, at the time of completion, it is possible that students would not have been aware of the importance of these tasks. This is designed to ensure fairness and equity to all students.

### **Quality Assurance Processes**

In line with usual practices, WJEC will require internal processes to be undertaken to promote consistency. The school will undertake quality assurance processes, within subjects and across subjects, to ensure the grades determined are valid, reliable, equitable and fair, while seeking to avoid discrimination.

## **Recording Decisions**

The school will keep a record to document clearly the rationale for grade decisions. This will include clarity of explanation which students and their parents/carers will understand. Decision records will detail who assessed the evidence and when; the decision taken; identification of any reasonable adjustments or special considerations applied; and where the evidence is safely stored. On submission of a Centre Determined Grade, the school will be required to make an overall declaration in relation to the processes carried out.

## **Review of Centre Determined Grades and Appeals**

At the time of writing, the process of reviewing centre grades and the appeals processes has not been finalised. However, it is anticipated that

1. The school will be required to submit Centre Determined Grades to WJEC by the specified date of 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021. By this point, students will have been informed of the grades awarded. Where a student is satisfied with the grades determined by the school, there is no further action.

2. There will be an opportunity for students to request a review of the centre's judgement of their grade and/or correct any factual errors. The process undertaken by the school will be similar to the internal moderation process. Where a review has been requested, it will be considered by a member of staff who was not the original assessor. The Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team will also review that the school's processes have been followed, in terms of associated decision-making records etc. New or additional evidence will not be considered as part of the review process. Where a review has been upheld, the Centre Determined Grade will be amended.

The WJEC will implement a process to permit students to appeal a Centre Determined Grade on the grounds of procedural error only, where a review of grade has been unsuccessful. Similarly, Qualifications Wales will also implement an Examination Procedures Review Service. At each stage of the review/appeal process, students will need to be aware that a centre determined grade may be improved or be lowered.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty and Data Processing**

In developing an approach to centre determined grades in 2021, the school has taken steps to ensure it meets its Public Sector Equality Duty. This is a legal requirement and forms part of the Equality Act (2010), which ensures due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act (2010);
2. Advance equality and opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
3. Foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not.

The school will ensure it meets data protection and processing regulations. This may result in modifications to existing policies and practices. However, it is anticipated that joint examination regulators may coordinate this to provide assurances that data is handled appropriately and for the intended purpose.

## **Next steps**

After the Easter break the next half-term is 7 weeks in duration, running from 12<sup>th</sup> April to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021. During this half-term we will calendar the assessments for students in years 10, 11, 12 and 13 so that the assessments are spread over a period of time. This will allow time for teachers to prepare students in advance and students will not be assessed on anything that has not been taught. These tasks represent the opportunities for students to provide evidence of their skills and understanding and will take place during their normal timetabled lessons in a controlled environment.

After Easter, class teachers will communicate further details about these assessments and exactly when they will happen. Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 will be informed of the following:

1. Their subject assessment dates
2. The topics that will be covered in each assessment. Please note that students must not be provided with the assessment to view in advance
3. The need to ensure that all work completed in assessment activities is their own and that if this is not the case then this would be considered malpractice
4. Their right to their usual access arrangements if appropriate

Where NEA remains part of an adapted qualification, teachers will use the performance of students in this element to contribute towards the determination of a grade alongside the adapted past paper assessments. Teachers will consider the weighting of the NEA, in relation to the qualification as a whole as per the specification. In some subjects, work on NEA has been ongoing for some time already and this may continue throughout the coming weeks. Subject teachers will communicate with students about the deadlines related to NEA in the subjects where it is applicable.

## **After May half-term**

Students will have completed all assessment activities by 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021. We are still awaiting confirmation from Welsh Government on the official leaving date for Years 11 and 13. We will communicate this as soon as we receive the information.

After the May half-term break, the school will undertake a rigorous standardisation and quality assurance process to ensure the grades determined are valid, reliable, equitable and fair.

The school will be required to submit CDGs to WJEC by 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021. Prior to this point, students will be informed of their provisional CDGs. Students can request a review of the school's judgement of their grade. The school will conduct a review, however new or additional evidence cannot be considered as part of the process. Please note any grade adjustments could be up or down. We will provide more information on this process in due course.

The school is also making contingency plans for the months ahead. We may need to apply flexibility to our arrangements if we go into a further lockdown, or students are required to isolate during the 7-week assessment window. We may need to make alternative arrangements to accommodate changing circumstances.

The WJEC has provided the following timeline of key dates for students:

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
Your school or college will tell you how you will be assessed and graded for your qualification	By Easter
You will receive your provisional Centre Determined Grades and you will have the opportunity to ask for your grades to be reviewed. Your school or college will explain the process they will use and tell you the outcome of any review.	In June
Your school or college will submit the <b>provisional</b> Centre Determined Grades to WJEC.	By 2 July
AS and A level Results Day	10 August
You will have the opportunity to appeal your AS or/and A level result to WJEC	10 August – 7 September
GCSE Results Day	12 August
You will have the opportunity to appeal your GCSE result to WJEC	24 August – 21 September *
You will have the opportunity to appeal to Qualifications Wales for an Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS)	Post results day

*(\*provisional date)*

Please note that the procedures outlined above apply only to WJEC qualification. Students studying BTEC and other qualifications will receive their results on the August results day (10<sup>th</sup> August for A Level and 12<sup>th</sup> August for GCSE).

### **Student wellbeing**

We understand that this is an anxious time for students and parents. However, the work that students have been doing over the course of study, both in school and remotely will have prepared them for these assessments and we still have time to prepare, both in school with teachers to guide on home study.

Our teachers and your pastoral team are all here to support you. Make sure you speak to them if you have any questions or just need some support. We have a range of wellbeing and support services available in school.

We wish you a happy and healthy Easter break and look forward to seeing our students back in school on 12<sup>th</sup> April.

Thank you for reading/Diolch am ddarllen,

Mrs Sarah Parry,  
Headteacher

