



Bury Church of England Policy

FOR GCSES FOR SUMMER 2021

Statement of intent

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

Head of Centre

Our Head of Centre, Simon Braithwaite, will:

- be responsible for approving our policy for determining teacher assessed grades.
- have overall responsibility for the school as an examinations centre and will ensure that clear roles and responsibilities of all staff are defined.
- 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.
- ensure a robust internal quality assurance process has been produced and signed-off in advance of results being submitted.

Senior Leaders with Assessment Responsibilities

Senior leaders Maria Brothers (Deputy Head, Curriculum) and Ben Redmond (Lead Practitioner, Assessment) will:

- ensure a robust internal quality assurance process has been produced
- be responsible for ensuring staff have a clear understanding of the internal and external quality assurance processes and their role within it.
- ensure an effective approach within and across departments and authenticating the preliminary outcome from single teacher subjects.
- Review departmental approaches to ensure:
 - An Assessment Planning form (see below) is completed and signed off for each qualification.
 - All teachers within each department make consistent judgements about student evidence in deriving a grade.
 - All staff within each department conduct assessments under the appropriate levels of control with reference to guidance provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications.
 - Teachers have the information required to make accurate and fair judgments.

Heads of Department and Senior Leaders with departmental links

Our Heads of Department, supported by their senior leadership team link, will:

- provide training and support to our other staff.
- support the Head of Centre and senior leaders with assessment responsibilities in the quality assurance of the final teacher assessed grades.
- 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.
- complete the Assessment Planning form for each subject they manage, which sets out the range of evidence that will be used to reach grading decisions in that subject and provides a clear justification for this methodology.

Teachers/ Specialist Teachers / SENCo

Our teachers, specialist teachers and SENCo will:

- ensure they conduct assessments under our centre's appropriate levels of control and have sufficient evidence, in line with this 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.

- Follow the subject Assessment Plan as closely as possible when determining the evidence to use in making judgements. 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

Training and guidance will be provided to teachers to assist with making their judgements as follows:

- Teachers involved in determining grades in our centre will attend any centre-based training to help achieve consistency and fairness to all students.
- Teachers will engage fully with all training and support that has been provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications and the awarding organisations.
- We will provide mentoring 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.
- Time has been set aside from our CPD programme to allow Heads of Department to support their teams in standardising their grades.

Use of Evidence

Teachers making judgements will have regard to the Ofqual Head of Centre guidance on recommended evidence, and further guidance provided by awarding organisations.

All candidate evidence used to determine teacher assessed grades, and associated documentation, will be retained and made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals.

The following range of evidence will be considered, as appropriate to each subject

- student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by the exam board, including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers
 - elements of questions may be removed where, for example, a multi-part question includes a part which focuses on an element of the specification that hasn't been taught.
- non-exam assessment (NEA) work (often referred to as coursework), even if this has not been fully completed
- student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that follow the same format as exam board materials and have been marked in a way that reflects exam board mark schemes - this can include:
 - substantial class or homework (including those that took place during remote learning)
 - internal tests taken by pupils
 - mock exams taken over the course of study

- records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects such as music, drama and PE
- records of each student's progress and performance over the course of study. Markbooks for previous years' work can be included without needing the physical assessment upon which that was based.
- additional forms of evidence, as allowed by the exam board guidance for specific subjects

Use of Assessment Materials

We will make use of these assessment materials to:

- give students the opportunity to show what they know, understand or can do in an area of content that has been taught but not yet assessed.
- give students an opportunity to show improvement, for example, to validate or replace an existing piece of evidence.
- support consistency of judgement between teachers or classes by giving everyone the same task to complete.

Appropriateness of Assessment Evidence

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

- 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 are able to authenticate the work as the student's own, especially where that work was not completed within the school or college.
- 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

When determining their teacher assessed grades, our teachers will:

- determine grades based on 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.
- Follow the subject Assessment Plan as closely as possible when determining the evidence to use in making judgements. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be recorded.

Internal Quality Assurance

This section gives details of our approach to internal standardisation, within and across subject departments.

Before Grades are Awarded

Before teachers begin gathering evidence and making their judgements, it will be ensured that:

- all teachers involved in deriving teacher assessed grades read and understand this Policy document.
- 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

After grades have been awarded

After grades have been awarded, a process of quality assurance will begin. This process will be led initially by the Senior Leaders with Assessment Responsibilities.

This process will involve:

- Generation of a random sample of students from across achievement grades and for students of different protected characteristics (in respect of equality legislation).
- Comparison of the range of grades awarded to our students in past June series in which exams took place (e.g. 2017 - 2019).
- Comparison of the cohort with previous years with regard to size and KS2 profile of the cohort, stability of grades and performance within each subject area, including the removal of subjects that are no longer offered from whole school data.

This process 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, an internal standardisation process has been carried out.
- the Assessment Record will form the basis of internal standardisation and discussions across teachers to agree the awarding of teacher assessed grades.
- grading decisions and the evidence upon which they are based are reviewed, and if necessary amended, 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, grading will be reviewed by an appropriate member of staff within the centre.

Following the completion of this process, we will prepare a succinct narrative on the outcomes of the review against historic data which, in the event of significant divergence from the qualifications-levels profiles attained in previous examined years, which address the reasons for this divergence. This commentary will be available for subsequent review during the QA process.

Access Arrangements and Special Considerations

As part of the process of generating teacher assessed grades, a range of access and special considerations will be factored into the grades awarded.

The centre will:

- record, as part of the Assessment Record, and provide to teachers, any necessary variations to take account of the impact of illness or personal circumstances on the performance of individual students in assessments.

- will ensure all teachers have read and understood the document: JCQ – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020

Individual teachers will ensure that:

- they have read and understood the document: JCQ – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020
- where students have agreed access arrangements or reasonable adjustments (for example a reader or scribe),
 - every effort has been made to ensure that these arrangements are in place when assessments are being taken, or
 - where an assessment has taken place without an agreed reasonable adjustment or access arrangement, the evidence will either be removed, or the grading adjusted to account for the lack of access arrangements.
- illness or other personal circumstances that might have affected performance in assessments used in determining a student's standard of performance, is considered when making judgements.
- when student has suffered an unusual degree of disruption due to COVID-related absence, in comparison to the rest of the class:
 - judgements are adjusted appropriately, based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed for each student, and
 - a COVID evidence form is completed for that student.

Objectivity

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

Senior Leaders, Heads of Department 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 and hidden forms of bias; and
- 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; and

Our internal standardisation process will help to ensure that there are different perspectives to the quality assurance process.

Recording decisions and retention of evidence and data

The following measures will be in place to ensure justifications for decisions is recorded:

- Heads of Department will complete the Assessment Planning form for each subject they manage. This document will:
 - set out the range of evidence that will be used to reach grading decisions in that subject and provide a clear justification for this methodology
 - 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
- Teachers will maintain records in SIMS Assessment Manager that show range of data used in forming their judgements.
- Teachers will follow the methodology set out on the Assessment Planning form as much as possible, ensuring that the grades accurately reflect the evidence submitted
- Teachers will record in SIMS Assessment Manager where they have felt necessary to deviate from the methodology set out in the Assessment Planning form

The following measures will be in place to ensure evidence used for decisions is retained:

- Teachers 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.
- Teachers will comply with our obligations regarding data protection legislation.
- Teachers 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).

Authenticating evidence

This section 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 mechanisms will be in place to ensure that teachers are confident that work used as evidence is the students' own and that no inappropriate levels of support have been given to students to complete it, either within the centre or with external tutors. This will be achieved by:
 - Trial examinations were completed under JCQ regulations
 - Where possible, at least one piece of evidence used should be based on an exam paper that is not publicly available
 - Work completed not under direct teacher supervision should have additional measures in place to allow teachers to authenticate it, such as:
 - Restricted timeslots during which the work should be completed and task monitoring, managed through remote learning software, such as Teams and Satchel One.
 - Pupils' answers can be checked for blocks of text available online to identify plagiarism.
 - Comparison of grades achieved are in line with previous achievement and target grades.
 - Use of a viva to test student understanding of suspicious written responses.
 - Report suspicions to a colleague in the department to obtain a second opinion
- 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 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.

- 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/guardians.

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 these policies, and have received training in them as necessary.
- 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;
 - improper assistance to students;
 - failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work;
 - over direction of students in preparation for common assessments;
 - allegations that centres submit grades not 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; and
 - failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made and teacher assessed grades.
- The consequences of malpractice or maladministration as published in the JCQ guidance: JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures and including the risk of a delay to students receiving their grades, up to, and including, removal of centre status have been outlined to all relevant staff.

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

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 has been retained 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 and Appeals

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, including the issuing of A/AS and GCSE results in the same week.
- 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/guardians have been made aware of arrangements for results days.

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.
- Learners 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.