

Great Marlow School Centre Policy

FOR A / AS LEVEL AND GCSE TEACHER ASSESSED GRADES
SUMMER 2021



Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy is:

- *To ensure that TAGs are determined fairly, consistently, effectively and free from [bias](#) 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 (JCQ) guidance.*
- *To ensure the consideration of historical centre data in the process.*
- *To support a high standard of internal quality assurance in the allocation of TAGs.*
- *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, JCQ and awarding organisations for Summer 2021 qualifications.*
- *To ensure the process for communicating to candidates and their parents / carers how students will be assessed is clear.*

Roles and Responsibilities

Our Head of Centre:

- will be responsible for approving our policy for determining TAGs.
- has overall responsibility for Great Marlow School as an examinations centre and will ensure that roles and responsibilities of all staff are clearly defined.
- will confirm that TAG 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.
- will ensure a robust internal quality assurance process has been produced and signed-off in advance of results being submitted.

Our Leadership Team and Heads of Department:

- will provide training (15th March, 22nd & 29th April, 9th June) and support to other staff .
- will support the Head of Centre in the quality assurance of the final TAGs.
- will ensure an effective approach within and across departments
- will authenticate the TAGs from single teacher subjects (eg. Psychology A level)
- will be responsible for ensuring staff have a clear understanding of the internal and external quality assurance processes and their role within it.
- will ensure teachers make consistent judgements about student evidence in deriving a grade.
- will ensure all staff conduct assessments under the appropriate levels of control with reference to guidance provided by the JCQ.
- will ensure teachers have the information required to make accurate and fair judgements.
- will ensure that an MS Form checklist is completed by Heads of Department for each qualification that they are submitting.

Our Teachers:

- will ensure they conduct assessments under our centre's appropriate levels of control
- will ensure they have sufficient evidence, in line with this Centre Policy and guidance from JCQ, to provide TAGs for each student they have entered for a qualification.
- will ensure that the TAG assigned to each student is a fair, valid and reliable reflection of the assessed evidence available.
- will 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](#).
- will 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 TAGs. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be recorded.
- securely store and be able to retrieve sufficient evidence to justify their decisions.

Our Examinations Officer:

- will ensure they conduct assessments under our centre's appropriate levels of control
- will be responsible for the administration of our final teacher assessed grades and for managing the post-results services.

Training

- *Teachers involved in determining grades 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 JCQ and the relevant awarding organisations.*

Support for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and teachers less familiar with assessment

- *Heads of Department will provide guidance to NQTs and teachers less familiar with assessment.*
- *Heads of Department will put in place internal reviews of TAGs for NQTs and other teachers as appropriate.*

Use of appropriate evidence

Teachers making judgements will have regard to the [Ofqual Head of Centre guidance on recommended evidence](#), the JCQ guidance entitled: [Guidance on grading for teachers](#) and the guidance provided by awarding organisations. All candidate evidence used to determine TAGs, and associated documentation, will be retained and made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals.

Heads of Department will select from a range of evidence as appropriate to their course specification. Subject areas usually will decide to use some, and not all, of the following possible evidence sources:

- *Student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by our awarding organisations, including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers.*
- *Non-exam assessment work, 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 awarding organisation materials, and that have been marked in a way that reflects awarding organisation mark schemes.*
- *Substantial class or homework (including work that took place during remote learning).*
- *Internal tests / assessments taken by students.*
- *Mock / internal 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.*

In addition, subject areas may decide to use additional assessment materials where appropriate. Reasons might include:

- *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.*
- *To give students an opportunity to show improvement, for example, to validate or replace an existing piece of evidence.*
- *To support consistency of judgement between teachers or classes by giving everyone the same task to complete.*

Our centre will ensure the appropriateness of evidence and balance of evidence in arriving at TAGs 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.*
- *To authenticate work that was not completed within the school or college, we will ask students to confirm that the work is their own. Completion of the work will also be observed by a staff invigilator by use of PC / laptop camera. Where a teacher suspects that the work produced / submitted is not the work of the student this will be investigated.*
- *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, including higher order skills, within individual assessments.*

Awarding TAGs

- *Teachers will determine TAGs 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.*
- *Teachers will record how the evidence was used to arrive at a fair and objective grade, which is free from bias.*
- *Teachers will share relevant assessment data with their Head of Department for collation into a Departmental Assessment Record (departments will determine the format of this). Any necessary variations for individual students will also be shared.*

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Summer-2021-Grade-Descriptors-GCSE.pdf>

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Summer-2021-Grade-Descriptors-A-AS-Levels.pdf>

Head of Centre Internal Quality Assurance and Declaration

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

- *We will ensure that all teachers involved in deriving TAGs 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 by Wednesday 9th June 2021. INSET & Twilight time has been allocated on this day.*
- *We will ensure that all teachers are provided with training and support to ensure they take a consistent approach to:*
 - *Arriving at TAGs*
 - *Marking 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 departments have an Assessment Record that forms the basis of internal standardisation and discussions amongst teachers to agree the awarding of TAGs.*
- *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 the relevant line manager.*
- *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 TAGs to results for previous cohorts

- *We will compile information on the grades awarded to our students in past June series in which exams took place (e.g. 2017 - 2019).*
- *We will consider the size of our cohort from year to year.*
- *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.*
- *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, address the reasons for this divergence. This commentary will be available for subsequent review during the QA process.*

Access Arrangements and Special Considerations

- *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, we may choose to remove that assessment from the basket of evidence and possibly also obtain alternative evidence.*
- *To ensure consistency in the application of Special Consideration, we will ensure all teachers have read and understood the document: [JCQ – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020](#)*

Addressing Disruption / Differentiated Lost Learning

- Teacher assessed grades will be determined based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed for each student.
- Director of Learning (Year 11) and Head of Sixth Form – to produce a detailed list of students (in the appropriate year group) for the Examinations Officer and Heads of Department so that if there is a requirement for an individual student the range of evidence which is to be considered is differentiated.

Objectivity

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

Senior Leaders and Heads of Department 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*
- *bias in TAGs*

To ensure objectivity, all staff involved in determining TAGs will be made aware that:

- *unconscious bias can skew judgements*
- *unconscious bias is more likely to occur when quick opinions are formed*
- *the evidence presented should be valued for its own merit as an indication of performance and attainment*
- *TAGs should not be influenced by candidates' positive or challenging personal circumstances, character, behaviour, appearance, socio-economic background, or protected characteristics*

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

- *We will ensure that teachers and Heads of Departments maintain records that show how the TAGs 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 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).*

Authenticating evidence

- *Mechanisms will be in place to ensure that teachers are confident that work used as evidence is the student's own and that no inappropriate levels of support have been given to students to complete it, either within the centre or with external tutors.*
- *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

- *All staff involved have been made aware of the need to maintain the confidentiality of TAGs.*
- *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.*

Malpractice

- *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](#) (p46) 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. For example if a student has an anomalous result/ piece of work the HoD/ class teacher would need to investigate this work and evidence discounted if appropriate*
 - *over direction of students in preparation for common assessments*
 - *submission of grades supported by inaccurate evidence*
 - *entering students who were not originally intending to certificate in Summer 2021 series*

- *failure to engage with awarding organisations during the External Quality Assurance and appeal stages*
- *failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made and TAGs.*
- *The consequences of malpractice or maladministration as published in the JCQ guidance: [JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures](#) (from the risk of a delay to students receiving their grades to the removal of centre status) have been outlined to all relevant staff.*

Conflicts of Interest

- *To protect the integrity of assessments, all staff involved in the determination of grades must declare any conflict of interest, such as relationships to students, to our Examinations Officer 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 to separate duties and personnel to ensure fairness in later process reviews and appeals.*

External Quality Assurance

- *All staff involved have been made aware of the awarding organisation requirements for External Quality Assurance as set out in the [JCQ Guidance](#) (p13).*
- *All necessary records of decision-making in relation to determining grades have been properly kept and can be made available for review as required.*
- *Wherever possible, student evidence for 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 TAGs 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

- *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.*
- *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 have been made aware of arrangements for Results' Days.*

Appeals

- *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 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 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.*