

# Severn Vale School

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Centre Policy for determining  
teacher assessed grades in Summer 2021

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## 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.
- ensure the operation of effective processes with clear guidelines and support for staff.
- ensure that all staff involved in the processes clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.
- support teachers to take evidence-based decisions in line with Joint Council for Qualifications guidance.
- ensure the consideration of historical centre data in the process, and the appropriate decision making in respect of, teacher assessed grades.
- support a high standard of internal quality assurance in the allocation of teacher assessed grades.
- support our centre in meeting its obligations in relation to equality legislation.
- 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.
- 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, Richard Johnson will

- be responsible for approving our policy for determining teacher assessed grades.
- have overall responsibility for the Severn Vale 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 Leadership Team and Subject Leaders

Our Senior Leadership Team and Subject Leaders will:

- provide training and support to our other staff.
- support the Head of Centre in the quality assurance of the final teacher assessed grades.
- ensure an effective approach within and across departments and authenticating the preliminary outcome from single teacher subjects.
- 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.
- 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 teacher assessed grades. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be recorded.
- ensure that clear records are kept for each qualification that they are submitting including:
  - an assessment record
  - a training log
  - a subject internal quality assurance log
- securely store and be able to retrieve sufficient evidence to justify their decisions.

### SEnCo

Our SEnCo will:

- ensure that where access arrangements or reasonable adjustments have been agreed we will make every effort to ensure that these are in place when assessments are being taken.
- ensure all teachers have read and understood the document: [JCQ – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020](#) to ensure consistency in the application of Special Consideration.

## **Teachers**

Our teachers will:

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

## **Examinations Officer**

Our Examinations Officer, Jane McDonnell, will be responsible for

- the safe and secure storage of assessment materials at the end of the assessment process
- the administration of our final teacher assessed grades
- for managing the post-results services.

## Training, support and guidance

The training and support of teaching staff is essential to the effective implementation of our approach to the awarding of grades. We will ensure that:

- teachers engage fully with all training and support that has been provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications and the awarding organisations.  
teachers involved in determining grades in our centre attend any centre-based training to help achieve consistency and fairness to all students.
- where applicable, the expertise of Exam Board trained staff is used support colleagues during the assessment process.
- departments record details of training completed.

Over and above this provision, we will ensure there is additional training, support and guidance for newly qualified teachers and teachers less familiar with assessment. This will include:

- mentoring from experienced teachers to NQTs and teachers less familiar with assessment.
- additional internal reviews of teacher assessed grades for NQTs and other teachers as appropriate.

## Use of appropriate evidence

In order to effectively grade students, departments will have read and ensure that due regard is given to the JCQ guidance entitled: Guidance on grading for teachers.

- 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 securely and made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals.
- We will be using 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.
- We will use non-exam assessment work even if this has not been fully completed.
- We will use student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that follow the same format as awarding organisation materials, and have been marked in a way that reflects awarding organisation mark schemes.
- We will use internal tests taken by pupils.
- We will use mock exams taken over the course of study.
- We will use records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects such as music and PE.

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 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

- 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.**
- Our teachers will record how the evidence was used to arrive at a fair and objective grade, which is free from bias.
- Our teachers will complete an Assessment Record for each class and will share this with their Subject Leader. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be shared.

## Internal quality assurance

Effective quality assurance of teacher assessed grades is essential to ensure consistency, fairness and objectivity of the decisions taken.

- We 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, we will ensure that our centre carries out an internal standardisation process.
- We will ensure that 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
- We will conduct internal standardisation across all grades.
- We will record details of internal standardisation on a subject internal quality assurance log.
- We will ensure that the Assessment Record will form the basis of internal standardisation and discussions across teachers to agree the awarding of teacher assessed grades.
- Where necessary, we will review and reflect on individual grading decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our awarding organisations.
- Where appropriate, we will amend individual grade decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our awarding organisations.
- Where there is only one teacher involved in marking assessments and determining grades, then the output of this activity will be reviewed by that department's line manager:
  - Business Studies – Kirsten Prescott
  - Citizenship – Stefan Horton
  - Computer Science – Stefan Horton
  - Media – Kirsten Prescott
  - RS – Stefan Horton
- 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 teacher assessed grades to results for previous cohorts

As part of our internal quality assurance we will ensure a full comparison of teacher assessed grades at a qualification level to results by previous cohorts in our school taking the same qualification. We will also compare the teacher assessed grades to the projections of likely performance for the 2021 cohort based on FFT data.

- We will compile information on the grades awarded to our students in past June series in which exams took place.
- We will compile information on the grades projected by the FFT based on the 2021 cohort's prior attainment.
- We will review all teacher assessed grades in comparison to subject prior performance using analyses in school and via the FFT and SISRA analysis tools.
- 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.

If our initial teacher assessed grades for a qualification are viewed as overly lenient or harsh compared to results in previous years then the following process will be implemented:

- We will review data with the relevant Subject Leader.
- We will identify where the data deviates from expected levels.
- We will discuss possible explanations for the deviation.
- If the explanations given explain the deviation then the process will be complete and the evidence summarised in the QA commentary document.
- If the explanations given do not fully explain the deviation then we will complete further analysis, including subject residual performance across the school for the identified students.
- Where this does not fully resolve questions, we will sample the work using an exam board trained member of staff if possible from within the school. Where this is not possible we will liaise with a school locally to find a suitably trained member of staff to complete a further standardisation.
- The outcome of this additional standardisation will be used to update the grades to be submitted.

## Access Arrangements and Special Considerations

### Reasonable adjustments and mitigating circumstances (special consideration)

- 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 will remove that assessment from the basket of evidence and alternative evidence obtained.
- Where illness or other personal circumstances might have affected performance in assessments used in determining a student's standard of performance, we will take account of this when making judgements.
- We will record, as part of the Assessment Record, how we have incorporated any necessary variations to take account of the impact of illness or personal circumstances on the performance of individual students in assessments.
- 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/differential lost learning

- Teacher assessed grades will be determined based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed for each student.
- Contingency arrangements will be made to ensure that students who are unable to take assessments in school due to Covid-enforced absence will have the opportunity to sit papers at home.

## Objectivity

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

Senior Leaders, Subject Leaders and the Head of 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
- any evidence of 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

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 Subject Leaders maintain records that show how the teacher assessed grades 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 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.
- 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 in a secure centre-based system that can be readily shared with our awarding organisation(s).
- Paper based back-ups will be kept in the event cyber attack or electronic system failure

## Authenticating evidence

- 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.
- Overwhelmingly this will be addressed through the requirement for the completion of key assessed activities in school.
- All "ongoing assessments" completed in term 4 after the return of students following lockdown will be completed in "exam conditions" in classrooms.
- All "terminal assessments" will be completed in the Sports Hall in full exam conditions.
- Where assessments are completed outside of school due to specific circumstances, the work completed will be reviewed to ensure its standard is in line with previous work completed by the student.
- If there are clear discrepancies between work previously completed by the student and the work completed independently, then we will require the student to complete an additional assessment covering similar assessment objectives.

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

- 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

- 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

- 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 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**.
- 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

- All staff involved have been made aware of the specific arrangements for the issue of results in Summer 2021.
- 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

- 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.