

Results days

Centre guidance – what results mean and next steps

July 2020



About this guide

This guide has been produced by JCQ to help centres answer some of the most likely questions from students and their parents or guardians about GCE A level, AS and GCSE results this summer. It provides:

- A summary of the methodology used to award GCE A levels, AS and GCSE grades
- An explanation of why there might be differences between Centre Assessment Grades, rank orders and final awards
- Guidance on requests for Centre Assessment Grades and rank orders
- Some Q&As to help centres and students consider their next steps
- Suggested answers to other questions that centres might be asked

You might find this guide helpful for staff who engage with students and their parents or guardians around results days. Please copy sections into any newsletters or other correspondence you are preparing.

Methodology used to award GCSE and A level grades

GCE A, AS and GCSE level grades have been awarded by exam boards this summer through a methodology set by the regulators. Centres were asked to send exam boards two pieces of information for each subject. These were to be solely based on existing evidence:

- Centre Assessment Grades - the grades they believed students were most likely to achieve in their examinations
- Rank Orders - within each subject, the order of students, by performance, for each grade

The standardisation system also considers a school or colleges' results over time and students' prior attainment to determine whether the Centre Assessment Grades submitted were more generous or severe than predicted. This process allows for the standardisation of grades across schools and colleges to ensure that results are aligned across the cohort.

Differences between Centre Assessment Grades and final grades

It was not possible to standardise the way teachers generated their Centre Assessment Grades this summer, there simply was not the time. Instead, in the interests of fairness, it was necessary for exam boards to standardise the judgements of centres in order to make sure that, at a national level, grade distributions in summer 2020 were broadly in line with previous years.

Centres may experience some adjustments to their Centre Assessment Grades. The extent of any difference a centre might experience may vary between subjects because standardisation was conducted at a subject level, not at centre level. For example, the standardisation of GCSE English language was not affected by the standardisation of GCSE history.

Requests for Centre Assessment Grades and Rank Orders

Some students may ask if their final grades are different from the Centre Assessment Grades submitted to the exam boards. In order to manage expectations, centres may wish to develop proactive communications, or to plan in advance what information they might release. Several organisations have produced guidance in this area that you may wish to consider:

The Confederation of School Trusts has produced guidance in conjunction with solicitors Stone King, looking at options regarding data protection and the release of Centre Assessment Grades for 2020:

<https://cstuk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CST-guidance-on-releasing-centre-assessment-grades-final-July-2020.pdf>

ASCL has also provided guidance for results days 2020:

<https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Help%20and%20advice/Leadership%20and%20governance/ASCL-Results-day-guidance-July-2020.pdf>

Questions and answers to help centres and students consider their next steps

Students should be aware that the grades issued this year will enable them to progress to further or higher education or a career.

Some examples of questions and answers that might be helpful when advising students:

Question: *Are my results 'correct'?*

A: Centres will be well placed to know whether any individual students' results are inconsistent, or whether there appears to be a mistake across a cohort:

- If 'Yes' – there is no reason to suggest the grades are not correct.
- If 'No' – the centre is considering an appeal to the exam board (Ofqual will report on the appeals system for summer 2020).

Question: *I'm still not happy. Should I take exams this autumn, or next summer?*

- A: Centres will be best placed to advise their students and provide information about the autumn exam series.

Question: *I think I have suffered from bias or discrimination, or my centre did not take into consideration when determining my Centre Assessment Grade, the reasonable adjustments I would have had if I had taken the exams. How do I complain?*

- A: Students should raise any concerns with their centre, unless there is evidence of serious malpractice on the part of the centre, which should be directed to the relevant exam board.

Suggested answers to other questions students or parents might ask

Question: *Which teacher provided my (child's) grades?*

- A: The Centre Assessment Grades were agreed between all the teachers in a department, the Senior Leadership Team and signed off by the Head of Centre.

Question: *Why have the improvements the school predicted this year not been recognised in these final grades?*

- A: The regulators set the methodology for how grades would be awarded this summer. It is not possible using the standardisation system set by the regulators to make any adjustments to awards in this regard because of the risk of unfairness to all students in making such adjustments without a fair way of appraising such expectations.

Question: **England only:** *When is the autumn series and what qualifications are available?*

- A: JCQ has issued the dates for the autumn series <https://www.jcq.org.uk/jcq-announces-examination-dates-for-the-autumn-2020-series/> and it is intended that all qualifications will be available. In the autumn series assessment will be by examination only; there will be no non-exam assessment, with the exception of Art and Design qualifications.