



Centre Policy 2021 – Teacher Assessed Grades for GCSE and BTEC

Statement of Intent

Sir William Romney's school is committed to providing a process of awarding grades in 2021 which is:

- Reasonable
- Carefully considered
- Objective
- Fair
- Justifiable
- Based on a range of evidence

As professionals, we will act with our usual standard of integrity and remain evidenced based in every decision. We will work within clear boundaries and provide accurate and, most importantly, fair judgements.

This policy will summarise all internal practices aimed to achieve the aims stated above.

All staff will read, understand and implement the Centre policy and any applicable OFQUAL/JCQ guidance.

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 JCQ 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

The Head of Centre, Kelly Hopson:

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

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- provide training and support to 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 in the school
- be responsible for ensuring staff have a clear understanding of the internal and external quality assurance processes and their role within it.
- ensure all staff conduct assessments under the appropriate levels of control with reference to guidance provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications.
- ensure that a Head of Department Checklist is completed for each qualification the School are submitting.

Leaders of Learning and Heads of Subject will:

- provide training and support to their staff.
- ensure an effective approach within and across departments in their Learning Area and authenticate the preliminary outcome from single teacher subjects.
- 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 JCQ.
- ensure teachers have the information required to make accurate and fair judgments.
- ensure that a Head of Department Checklist is completed for each qualification that they are submitting in their Learning Area.
- securely store and be able to retrieve sufficient evidence to justify their decisions.

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 JCQ, 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.
- 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.

The SENCO will:

- ensure that students receive any appropriate exam access arrangements.
- support those students with SEND and their teachers to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by the process of Centre Assessed Grading.

The Examinations Officer will:

- be responsible for the administration of our final teacher assessed grades.

Training, support and guidance

All staff will be supported through the process of determining Centre Assessed Grading. It is the responsibility of the Centre as a whole to determine grades and therefore no one staff member will be identified as being responsible for any awarded grade. Stringent line management support and moderation processes will be in place to create a collaborative responsibility.

Details of centre training:

- 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 JCQ and the awarding organisations.
- Support meetings have taken place at Learning Area (faculty), Department and whole staff levels.
- Centre moderation and feedback guidance has been produced and issued to all staff alongside a centre timeline for the determination of centre assessed grades.

There are a number of single person departments at the Centre and these have all agreed bespoke methods for validating their judgements. These include collaboration with neighbouring centres both inside and outside our MAT. Records of these meetings will be maintained and monitored by the leader of learning to ensure they remain in line with our overarching processes.

Particular care has been taken in the support for newly qualified teachers and those less experienced at assessing GCSE level work. Heads of subject have ensured that NQTs are appropriately trained and confident with the implementation of mark-schemes. No NQT will have sole responsibility for the marking of assessments for their class but will work alongside Heads of subject to ensure their judgements are accurate and in line with the rest of the department. As with all teaching staff, any marking completed by NQTs will be subject to the processes outlined in the section 'Internal and External Quality assurance' to ensure that it is accurate and reliable.

The use of appropriate evidence

The centre will use a range of carefully considered evidence to determine centre assessed grades. Notice will be taken of 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 stored and made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals.

When determining a grade, Teachers and Heads of subjects will predominantly consider evidence gathered during two defined 'Assessment Windows.' This evidence will have been subject to the most stringent of controls and monitoring and is therefore the most reliable evidence base to form final judgements. Heads of subject will ensure that evidence gathered in these windows covers as broad a range of Assessment objectives as possible.

Primary Evidence will include:

- student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by our awarding organisation(s), including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers.
- 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.
- mock exams taken during the 2 assessment windows
- non-exam assessment work (often referred to as coursework), even if this has not been fully completed.

For a small minority of students it may be necessary for a range of 'secondary evidence' to be considered. This will only be used in situations where a primary evidence base is unavailable or not reflective of teacher assessment elsewhere- for example due to ongoing student absence that has led to assessments not being completed in the appropriate controlled conditions. Any evidence that is not deemed 'primary evidence' will be subject to quality assurance from Leaders of Learning and the senior leadership team.

Secondary Evidence may include:

- mock exams taken elsewhere in the course of study.
- internal tests taken by pupils outside of the two assessment windows we have devised.

- substantial class or homework (including work that took place during remote learning).
- records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects such as music, drama and PE.

Heads of Subject will be asked to detail the evidence base for each awarded grade and this will be quality assured for appropriacy by the Leader of Learning and Senior Leadership.

The centre will ensure the appropriateness of evidence and balance of evidence in arriving at grades by considering the following:

- 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.
- being able to 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.
- 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.
- the specification and assessment objective coverage of the assessment.
- the depth and breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills assessed, especially higher order skills within individual assessments.

Determining teacher assessed grades

We give details here of our centre's approach to awarding 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 produce an Assessment Record for each subject cohort and will share this with their Head of Department. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be shared.

Internal and external quality assurance

Effective Quality assurance processes are the key to our confidence in fair and accurate grading.

These processes are detailed below:

- 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 for each key piece of assessment evidence that will be used to come to an overall judgement. Detailed below:

Sampled Second Marking will be the method used across subjects.

Step 1—First marking. Teachers will mark assessments prior to the moderation meeting. Assessments will be unnamed to limit the chance of subconscious bias. Teachers will assign marks and where appropriate will support with short annotations that directly reference the mark scheme.

Step 2—Getting a sample. A sample from no less than 5 candidates from each marker within a department will be selected for moderation. These should cover a range of total marks awarded. These 5 pieces of work will be given to another member of the team to 'second mark'. (Or a colleague in a partner school as outlined in 'Single person departments')

Step 3-Second Marking. Teachers will now review the first markers' marks and comments for the sample. They will check that marks given for the sample are in line with the mark schemes and decide if they feel the marks given are accurate.

Agreeing or disagreeing on a mark. Second markers will consider the total marks given for a whole paper, not individual questions when deciding if they agree. If a moderator agrees on the total mark given for a paper they will add their initials to the front of the paper next to the total marks given. There will be a tolerance of 2 marks when agreeing on the total mark for a paper. If a moderator disagrees with the total mark given for one paper in the sample and the disagreement is more than 2 marks but less than 5% of the total marks for the paper they will discuss this with the original marker and seek to come to an agreement on marks-an average between the two staff may be appropriate.

If the moderator disagrees on a number of total marks given in the sample or if the disagreement on one paper is significant enough to cause a concern (a difference of 5% of the total marks—4 marks on an 80 mark paper-or more) then the sample will be given to a second moderator who will determine if:

- a) They agree with the first marker and therefore the mark doesn't change.
- b) They agree with the second marker and therefore the marks change .
- c) They feel an average between the two markers is appropriate.

Making changes to marks. Any changes made to numerical marks will be added to the front of the paper and anywhere else that the number has been communicated. This will be initialled by all parties involved in the process.

Ensuring accuracy beyond the sample. Any patterns of inaccuracy will be addressed with the original marker who will adjust their marks for other papers accordingly.

A follow up sample from this member of staff will be looked at to ensure that necessary adjustments have been made, this will usually be by the head of subject.

Single Person Departments. Where possible, single person departments will seek out colleagues in other schools to support with their moderation process. In these circumstances it is likely that the process outlined above may need to be adapted and this should be outlined explicitly in the minutes of any moderation meetings that take place. Where it is not possible to establish a moderation process with other schools, Heads of Subject will clearly communicate to their Leader of Learning how they are able to ensure that marking is accurate and consistent.

Subjects where marking is objective. In subjects where marking is predominantly objective and marks are awarded for specific answers moderation will still take place. This will take the form of procedural checking rather than academic judgement to ensure that the mark scheme has accurately been applied. This will ensure that Heads of department are confident that marks awarded are accurate.

Maintaining records of the moderation process. By initialling the pieces seen in the sample, staff will evidence that work has indeed been moderated. In addition to this, Heads of Subject will minute moderation meetings. These minutes will not identify specific staff, students or candidate numbers but will outline the process followed and if markers were in agreement or in the event of disagreement, what actions were taken to rectify this.

Standardising overall grades

Teachers will use the robustly moderated evidence base, along with the subject level grade descriptors provided by JCQ, to come to an overall grade for each student that they teach. This will then go through a series of checks to ensure that we are confident that the grades can be justified by the evidence gathered.

Check 1- Teachers will meet with their HEAD OF SUBJECT/ Leaders of Learning to discuss the grades given to the students in their class. The purpose of this meeting will be to ensure that the grades reached are consistent with the evidence gathered and that the approach is consistent across all teachers within the subject.

Check 2 Heads of subject will use the evidence base and discussions with their team to rank order each student within a grade. This will allow for comparison between like for like outcomes and for any necessary adjustments following 'Comparison of grades to results for previous cohorts'.

Check 3 – We will also take part in a 'cross-trust' moderation and standardisation day to ensure that the awarding of grades is consistent with our partner schools.

- We will ensure that all teachers are provided with training and support to ensure they take a consistent approach to:
 - o Arriving at teacher assessed grades
 - o Marking of evidence
 - o Reaching a holistic grading decision
 - o Applying the use of grading support and documentation
- We will conduct internal standardisation across all grades.
- 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 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 an appropriate member of staff within the centre. This will be Rob Skipp.
- 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 grades to results for previous cohorts

This section gives details of our internal process to ensure a comparison of teacher assessed grades at qualification level to results for previous cohorts in our centre taking the same qualification.

- 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, addresses the reasons for this divergence. This commentary will be available for subsequent review during the QA process.

This section gives details of the approach our centre will follow if our initial teacher assessed grades for a qualification are viewed as overly lenient or harsh compared to results in previous years.

- We will compile historical data giving appropriate regard to potential mixtures of A*-G and 9-1 grades in GCSEs. Where required, we will use the Ofqual guidance to convert legacy grades into the new 9 to 1 scale.
- We will include grades from international GCSEs (for example, in mathematics) because we have previously offered these.
- We will bring together other data sources that will help to quality assure the grades we intend to award in 2021.

This section gives details of changes in our cohorts that need to be reflected in our comparisons.

- We will omit subjects that we no longer offer from the historical data.
- Our year 11 cohort this year at 77 students is approximately 30% smaller than the cohort in the previous three years. Any comparisons should be cautiously made with such a small data set.

Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

This section gives details of our approach to access arrangements 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 will be 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

This section gives details of our approach to address disruption or differentiated lost teaching.

- Teacher assessed grades will be determined based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed for each student.

Objectivity

This section gives a summary of the arrangements in place within our centre in relation to 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 such as situations/contexts, difficulty, presentation and format, language, conditions for assessment and marker preconceptions
- how to minimise bias in questions and marking and hidden forms of bias
- 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.

Assessment evidence, wherever the identity of the student can be usefully concealed, will be completed by the candidate using their candidate number as a marker rather than their name.

Recording decisions and retention of evidence and data

This section outlines our approach to recording decisions and retaining evidence and data.

- We will ensure that teachers and Heads of Departments 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 or on paper in a secure centre-based system that can be readily shared with our awarding organisation(s).

Authenticating evidence

This section of our Centre Policy 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.

- The primary evidence used to reach an overall grade for each student will have been completed in school under controlled conditions in one of our 2 assessment windows. This will ensure that all work gathered is that of the student and that no inappropriate levels of support were given to students to complete it, either within the centre or with external tutors.
- Suspicions of plagiarism will be investigated and any work deemed to be plagiarised will be disallowed as evidence toward an overall grade.
- When resorting to secondary evidence, teachers will meet with their Head of Subject/ Leader of Learning to ensure there is a reasonable confidence that the work is authentic. Where this confidence cannot be given, the evidence will not be used.

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 Maladministration, and conflicts of interest

This section details the measures in place in our centre to maintain the **confidentiality** of grades, while sharing information regarding the range of evidence on which the 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.

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:
 - o breaches of internal security;
 - o deception;
 - o improper assistance to students;
 - o failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work;
 - o over direction of students in preparation for common assessments;
 - o allegations that centres submit grades not supported by evidence that they know to be inaccurate;
 - o centres enter students who were not originally intending to certificate a grade in the Summer 2021 series;
 - o failure to engage as requested with awarding organisations during the External Quality Assurance and appeal stages;
 - o 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](#) including a risk of a delay to students receiving their grades, up to, and including, removal of centre status have been outlined to all relevant staff.

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

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.