



Robert
May's
School

RMS Centre Specific Policy for GCSEs for Summer 2021

Statement of intent

This section outlines the purpose of this document in relation to our centre.

Statement of Intent

The purpose of this policy is:

- *To ensure that teacher assessed grades are determined fairly, consistently, are free from bias and conducted 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 make evidence-based decisions in line with Joint Council for Qualifications guidance. Please see link to [JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs for Summer 2021](#).*
- *To ensure the consideration of historical centre data in the process, and the appropriate decision making in respect of, teacher assessed grades. Historical data for each department from 2017 to 2019 inclusive will be supplied and can also be gathered from Sisra, the school's data analysis tool.*
- *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. This includes consideration of access arrangements.*
- *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

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the personnel in our centre who have specific roles and responsibilities in the process of determining teacher assessed grades this year.

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre

Our Head of Centre, Mrs Joanna West, will:

- *be responsible for approving our policy for determining teacher assessed grades.*
- *has overall responsibility for the 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.*

Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Department

Our Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Departments 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 and following the department assessment record.*
- *ensure teachers have the time and information required to make accurate and fair judgments.*
- *ensure that a Head of Department Checklist and declaration is completed for each qualification that they are submitting.*

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 Centre Policy and guidance from the Joint Council for Qualifications, to provide teacher assessed grades for each student they have entered for a qualification. [Use this link for the grade descriptors provided by JCQ.](#)*
- *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.*
- *Deploy policies and practices that support fair and objective access arrangements for those students who are eligible.*
- *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 on the [template provided](#), 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.*
- *securely store and be able to retrieve sufficient evidence to justify their decisions.*

Examinations Officer

Our Examinations Officer (Mrs Lynn Vickers) will:

- *be responsible for the organisation and running of internal examinations (PPETs)*
- *be responsible for the timely administration of our final teacher assessed grades and for managing the post-results services.*
- *will provide further training for staff where necessary, supported by the Head of Centre and senior leaders.*

Training, support and guidance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the training, support and guidance that our centre will provide to those determining teacher assessed grades this year.

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 Joint Council for Qualifications and the awarding organisations.*

Support for Newly Qualified Teachers and teachers less familiar with assessment

- *We will provide mentoring from experienced teachers to NQTs and teachers less familiar with assessment.*
- *We will put in place additional internal reviews, led by Heads of Department, of teacher assessed grades for NQTs and other teachers as appropriate.*

Use of appropriate evidence

This section of our Centre Policy indicates how our centre will give due regard to the section in the JCQ guidance entitled: *Guidance on grading for teachers*.

A. 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.*
- *We will be using 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.*
- *We will use non-exam assessment work (often referred to as coursework), 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 substantial class or homework (including work that took place during remote learning).*
- *We will use internal tests taken by pupils, including PPETs.*
- *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, drama and PE.*

We provide further detail in the following areas:

Additional Assessment Materials

- *We may use additional 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.*
- *We may use additional assessment materials to give students an opportunity to show improvement, for example, to validate or replace an existing piece of evidence.*
- *We may use additional assessment materials to support consistency of judgement between teachers or classes by giving everyone the same task to complete.*
- *We may combine and/or remove elements of questions where, for example, a multi-part question includes a part which focuses on an element of the specification that has not been taught.*

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 in school.*
- *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 student performance where the assessment has been taken at a different time to the rest of the cohort, e.g. missing the original PPET through illness.*
- *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.*
- *We will consider access arrangements carefully to ensure that all students including EHCP holders and those who have specific learning/health related needs and arrangements are fairly and objectively considered.*

Determining teacher assessed grades

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to awarding teacher assessed grades.

Awarding teacher assessed grades based on evidence

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.*
- *Our teachers will use historical data to ensure consistency of performance as requested by OfQual, comparing outcomes with the GCSE results in 2017-19 inclusive, analysing sub-cohort outcomes and individual outcomes to establish a fair and justifiable grade for each student*
- *Our teachers will use current and historical grade descriptors published by JCQ and examining bodies to gain a balanced understanding of a student's performance*
- *Our teachers will take account of access arrangements and individual students' learning needs in order to reach an objective and fair grading judgement.*

Internal quality assurance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to ensure internal standardisation of teacher assessed grades, to ensure consistency, fairness and objectivity of decisions.

Head of Centre Internal Quality Assurance and Declaration

Internal quality assurance

- *We will ensure that all teachers involved in deriving teacher assessed grades read and understand this Centre Policy document. Records of this will be held centrally.*
- *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*
 - *understanding access arrangements and individual students' specific educational needs, where they have an EHCP and/or where a student has specific previously identified special educational needs*
- *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 teams of 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 the link line manager in the first instance.*
- *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, giving consideration to access arrangements, any special educational needs, and any other ways of working that have been habitual for individual students.*

Comparison of teacher assessed grades to results for previous cohorts

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach we will take to compare our teacher assessed grades in 2021 with results from previous cohorts.

Comparison of Teacher Assessed Grades to results for previous cohorts

- *We will compile information on the grades awarded to our students in the previous June series in which exams took place (e.g. 2017 - 2019 inclusive).*
- *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 consider the performance of students in specific data groups such as Disadvantaged, EHCP holders, Low Prior Attaining boys etc, to ensure grade stability.*
- *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-level/ profiles attained in previous examined years, which address the reasons for any divergence. This commentary will be available for subsequent review during the QA process.*
- *This will be completed at department level initially, with additional comments from the senior leadership team if there are whole cohort variances.*

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 bring together other data sources that will help to quality assure the grades we intend to award in 2021. These data sources could include an investigation into projected outcomes from the cohort's CATs tests in Year 7, SISRA and FFT data.*

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.*
- *We will use FFT and CAT data to aid our benchmarking of GCSE outcomes since we have little historical data to use with the KS2 scaled scores.*
- *We will compare carefully specific groups within the cohort, such as EHCP holders, low/medium/high prior attaining boys/girls, LAC and the disadvantaged.*

Access Arrangements and Special Considerations

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the approach our centre will take to provide students with appropriate access arrangements and take into account mitigating circumstances in particular instances.

Reasonable adjustments and mitigating circumstances (special consideration)

This section gives details of our approach to access arrangements and mitigating circumstances (special consideration).

- *Where students use agreed access arrangements or have 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, provided there is a valid, dated record of the reason and it is verifiable.*
- *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 20](#) and the recently updated policy: [Guide to spec con process 2021_FINAL.pdf](#).*

Addressing disruption/differential lost learning (DLL)

B. Addressing Disruption/Differentiated Lost Learning (DLL)

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

- Teacher assessed grades will **only** be determined based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed for each student. Please see the link on the previous page.
- Summarised guidelines for Special Consideration [Guidelines for Special Consideration](#).

Objectivity

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the arrangements in place to ensure objectivity of decisions.

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.*
- *how to minimise 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, hence minimize the occurrence of a single individual being solely responsible for the mark awarded.*
- *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; therefore time and training for teachers is factored in.*
- *the quality assurance process will regard an individual student's work from more than one fair and objective perspective.*

Recording decisions and retention of evidence and data

This section of our Centre Policy outlines our arrangements for recording decisions and to retaining evidence and data.

C. 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).*
- *We will ensure that all teachers involved in arriving at judgements on grades will sign a declaration attesting their compliance with this policy.*

Authenticating evidence

D. 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.

- *Robust mechanisms, which will include two sets of moderated PPETS, 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.*
- *If necessary we will request a signed declaration from the candidate stating that their work is their own.*
- *If a teacher suspects a candidate's work is not their own, they may request that the candidate completes the same/similar work under supervision in school.*
- *If a teacher suspects a candidate's work is not their own, they may run an advance search on the internet for key phrases which they have detected are not in the candidate's usual vocabulary, for example.*
- *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.*
 - *over-direction of students in preparation for common assessments;*
 - *allegations that centres submit grades not supported by evidence and 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. These consequences are expressly stated in all signed declarations by all teachers and Heads of Department who have contributed to making judgements on students' grades.*

Confidentiality, malpractice and conflicts of interest

Confidentiality

This section of our Centre Policy 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.

A. Confidentiality

This section details the measures in place at Robert May's School 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 and carers.*

Malpractice

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to prevent malpractice and other breaches of exam regulations, and to deal with such cases if they occur.

B. 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;*
 - *Discussing or negotiating grades directly with students and/or their family members*

Conflicts of Interest

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to address potential conflicts of interest.

C. 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 family 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.*
- *The Head of Centre will be sending out a Conflict of Interest form to Teaching staff involved in final grading:*

Criteria

- any members of centre staff who are taking qualifications at their own centre which include internally assessed components/units.
- any members of centre staff who are teaching and preparing members of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g. son/daughter) for qualifications which include internally assessed components/units.
- centre staff are taking qualifications at their centre which do not include internally assessed components/units.
- centre staff are taking qualifications at other centres.
- please use link to form and return to Lynn Vickers, Examinations Officer [20-21 Conflict of Interest Declaration](#).

Private candidates - This section of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to working with Private Candidates to arrive at appropriate grades.

A. Private Candidates
<p><i>This section details our approach to providing and quality assuring grades to Private Candidates.</i></p> <p><i>Not Applicable. Robert May's School does not have any private candidates for Summer 2021.</i></p>

External Quality Assurance

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the arrangements in place to comply with awarding organisation arrangements for External Quality Assurance of teacher assessed grades in a timely and effective way.

A. 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 found here on pages 13-14](#).*
- *All necessary records of decision-making in relation to determining grades have been properly kept secure by the Head of Department and the exams officer 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 of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to the receipt and issue of results to students and the provision of necessary advice and guidance.

A. 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 (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 of our Centre Policy outlines our approach to Appeals, to ensure that they are handled swiftly and effectively, and in line with JCQ requirements.

A. 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 p19](#) and p49-53.*
- *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 will 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-college 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/guardians and/or carers.*