



ST ALBANS
SCHOOL

Centre Policy

Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs)

Summer 2021

For A/AS Levels, GCSE and IGCSE

Centre Policy for determining teacher assessed grades – summer 2021: St Albans School

Statement of Intent

This section provides details of the purpose of this document, as appropriate to our centre:

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 Joint Council for Qualifications 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 grading process is clearly communicated to candidates and their parents.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section gives details of the roles and responsibilities within our centre:

Head of Centre

- Our Head of Centre, the Headmaster, will be responsible for approving our policy for determining teacher assessed grades.
- Our Head of Centre has overall responsibility for the School as an examinations centre and will ensure that clear roles and responsibilities of all staff are defined.
- Our Head of Centre will confirm that teacher assessed grade decisions represent the academic judgement made by teachers and that checks are in place to ensure that these align with the guidance on standards provided by awarding organisations.
- Our Head of Centre will ensure that 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

The Deputy Head – Teaching and Learning, Assistant Head – Data and Curriculum, 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 and consistent approach within and across departments and authenticate the preliminary outcome from single teacher subjects,
- ensure that staff have a clear understanding of the internal and external quality assurance processes and their role within it,
- ensure that all teachers within departments make consistent judgements about student evidence in determining 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 judgements,
- ensure that a Head of Department Checklist is completed for each qualification for which they are submitting grades.

Teachers / Head of Learning Support

Our teachers and the Head of Learning Support 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 that they have entered for a qualification,
- ensure that the teacher assessed grade assigned 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, which includes the nature of the assessment evidence being used, the level of control for the assessments that are

considered, and any other evidence that explains the determination of the final teacher assessed grades and records any necessary variations for individual students,

- submit collated evidence and associated documentation for each candidate to the Examinations Officer for secure storage and retrieval as required until the end of the period for appeals

Examinations Officer

Our Examinations Officer will:

- be responsible for the administration and submission of our final teacher assessed grades and for managing the post-results services.
- securely store and be able to retrieve evidence and associated documentation to justify grading decisions until the end of the period for appeals.

Training

This section provides details of the approach our centre is taking to training, support and guidance in determining teacher assessed grades this year.

- Heads of Department were asked to read the provisional centre approach with the JCQ, Ofqual and exam board information over the Easter holidays.
- Teachers involved in determining grades in our centre attended training on Tuesday 13th April to help achieve consistency and fairness to all students. The briefing was recorded for those who could not attend the live event.
- Further training for Heads of Department will be provided on 13th May.
- Teachers will engage fully with all training and support that has been provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications and the awarding organisations.
- Teachers will be required to complete a document to confirm they have attended training, read the relevant documents (including the Centre Policy) and will act according to the guidelines throughout the process of awarding grades.

Support for Newly Qualified Teachers and teachers less familiar with assessment

This section provides details of our approach to training, support and guidance for newly qualified teachers and teachers less familiar with assessment.

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

A. Use of evidence

This section gives details in relation to our use of evidence.

- Teachers making judgements will have regard to the Ofqual 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.
- Evidence used to determine grades will be focused on the three assessment points in April/May but will also draw on evidence from across the course. The assessment points (AP1, AP2, AP3) will ensure controlled conditions to strengthen the authenticity of responses and will include provision for all access arrangements.

GCSE

Evidence for all exam boards (except CAIE) will be provided in the form of a portfolio consisting of:

- AP1 (except D&T and Drama)
- AP2
- AP3 (except English Language and Music)
- NEA (where applicable)
- Mock exam
- One further summative assessment from the course of study of the department's choosing and/or class performance marks (practical subjects only)

N.B. Art portfolios will consist of sketch books only.

A Level

Evidence for all exam boards (except CAIE) at will be provided in the form of a portfolio consisting of:

- AP1 (except D&T)
- AP2
- AP3 (except Music)
- NEA (where applicable)
- Two further summative assessments from the course of study of the department's choosing and/or class performance marks (practical subjects only)

NB Art portfolios will consist of sketch books only.

- Departments have submitted proposals stating exactly which evidence they intend to use for each cohort and provide a rationale as to why this evidence has been selected.
- The assessment points in April/May are all based on tasks that reflect the specification, follow the same format as awarding organisation materials, and will be marked in a way that reflects awarding organisation mark schemes. Some of these include exam board papers, others are designed by departments based on previous years' exam paper questions.
- We have combined and/or removed 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 each piece of evidence was completed, for example, whether the evidence was produced under high control and under supervision or at home. We are prioritising evidence that has been completed in School under controlled conditions. In most cases we will not use evidence from home except in exceptional circumstances. If this evidence is required, we will ensure that we are able to authenticate the work as the student's own.
- We will consider the specification and assessment objective coverage of the evidence.
- We will consider the depth and breadth of knowledge, understanding and skills assessed, especially higher order skills, within individual assessments.
- We will consider the weighting attached to each topic, task and skill in the overall assessment of the specification when examination boards determine grades in normal years

Use of appropriate evidence for Pearson IGCSEs

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

B. Use of evidence	
Outline of assessment approach	Please select a minimum of one option (Yes/No)
We will use unseen materials provided by Pearson on the secure release date and will be marked by Pearson	No
We will use unseen materials provided by Pearson on the secure release date and will be marked by our centre.	Yes
We will use unseen materials provided by Pearson (after the release date) taken and supervised in centre and marked in centre. Supplemented with at least two pieces of extra evidence – including for example the use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.	Yes
We will use unseen materials provided by Pearson (after the release date) taken in non-supervised conditions and marked in centre. Supplemented with at least two pieces of extra evidence – including for example the use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.	No
We will use other evidence – including for example the use of past papers, in class tests, homework, and, where relevant, non-examined assessment.	Yes
<p>This section gives details in relation to our use of evidence. Please provide further details where evidence other than unseen assessments provided by Pearson will be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers making judgements will have regard to the guidance provided by Pearson. • 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 Pearson, including 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 Pearson materials, and have been marked in a way that reflects Pearson’s 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. • We will use mock exams taken over the course of study. 	

Awarding teacher assessed grades based on evidence

We give details here of our centre's approach to awarding teacher assessed grades.

- When determining the Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG), teachers will reflect the standard at which the student is performing now, not their potential. (This is in contrast to the system last year.)
- TAGs will be judged on holistic evidence. The choice of additional summative assessments will be decided by departments and will be consistent across the cohort, except in exceptional cases. These assessments should have been done in School under controlled conditions.
- The grade will indicate the student's demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills.
- It should be no easier or harder for pupils to achieve a particular grade compared to previous years – the performance standard for a grade has not changed.
- The JCQ document of worked examples has been shared with teachers and this will form the basis of our approach to awarding holistic grades.
- As far as possible, the sources of evidence will be consistent across a class or cohort of students, and we will document the rationale for any instances where consistent evidence is not used for a whole class or cohort.
- We will make pupils aware of the sources of evidence that will form the basis of the grades submitted, although pupils will not be told the final grade that is submitted to the exam board.
- An explanation of the centre approach was given in an online meeting for pupils and parents on Monday 19th April.
- Departments will communicate clearly to pupils on the specifics of the grading process at subject level once proposals have been agreed by the Head of Centre.
- Teachers will inform pupils of the marks from each assessment but will not share grades with pupils and parents.
- GCSE mock exam data will be reviewed and measured against the standards set by the exam boards. They may need to be re-graded in line with the grade descriptors set by exam boards.
- Teachers must not be put under pressure by pupils or parents to submit higher grades than the evidence supports. We are obliged to keep records of any such cases and exam boards may interpret them as malpractice.
- Each department should submit a departmental record template and a Head of Department checklist. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be shared with the rest of the Department and with the Head of Centre.
- Our teachers will record how the evidence was used to arrive at a fair and objective grade, which is free from bias.

Internal quality assurance

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

- We will ensure that all teachers involved in determining teacher assessed grades read and understand this Centre Policy document.
- Each department will have internal standardisation arrangements so that judgements are consistent. Standardisation and moderation will be carried out (an example of how this may be carried out has been shared with Heads of Departments).
- The guidelines in the exam board materials should be carefully considered and followed closely. Teachers should read grade descriptors carefully to ensure we have not been overly generous or unduly harsh in our judgements.
- All TAGs should be reviewed and signed off by an additional subject teacher (Head of Department or someone deputised by them)
- Quality assurance will be ongoing throughout the TAG process.
- The marking of the evidence from the three assessment points in April/May will take account of the system that has been agreed within the department after reading the relevant guidelines from JCQ and the exam boards. Departments will document the process undertaken.
- Departments will undertake an overview of the quality assurance process as a final check before submission.
- The School will identify where teachers have conflicts of interest and provide appropriate alternative assessment and moderation opportunities.
- All teachers will be provided with training and support to ensure that they take a consistent approach.
- The Assessment Record will form the basis of internal standardisation and discussions between teachers to agree the awarding of teacher assessed grades.
- The Head of Centre and SLT members 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).
- The Head of Centre will review and sign off all grading decisions.

Comparison of Teacher Assessed 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 set for the current specifications took place (2017 - 2019).
- We will consider the grades for this year's cohort compared to those for cohorts from recent years when exams have taken place (2017, 2018 or 2019) at the appropriate qualification level – for all GCSE subjects or all A level subjects combined. The Assistant Head – Data and Curriculum will provide the data. (Private candidates will be excluded from such comparisons.)
- We will consider the size of the cohorts and 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 from year to year 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 qualification-level 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 that 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 include grades from international GCSEs because we have previously offered these.
- We will bring together other data sources (such as ALIS and MidYIS) that will help to quality assure the grades we intend to award in 2021.

Access Arrangements, reasonable adjustments and mitigating circumstances (special consideration)

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

- Extra time and access arrangements will be accommodated throughout the process of assessments in April/May.
- Where a previous assessment has taken place without an agreed reasonable adjustment or access arrangement, we will remove that assessment from the basket of evidence and find alternative evidence.
- Information on access arrangements has been communicated to all teachers via email and to all Heads of Faculty and some Heads of Departments in the Academic and Pastoral Leaders meetings.
- Information for pupils has been sent via email and meetings were held by the Head of Learning Support with pupils on 22/3/21 to explain the arrangements in further detail.
- The Head of Learning Support will have input into the grading decisions taken for pupils with recognised Learning Support needs.
- We will run data checks to check for inconsistencies of grading between different groups, and review LS pupil grades with input from the LS Department.
- Where illness or other personal circumstances might have affected performance in assessments used in determining a pupil's level and grade, 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 pupils in assessments.
- To ensure consistency in the application of Special Consideration, we will ensure all Heads of Departments have read and understood the document: [JCQ – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020](#)
- Evidence of special circumstances has been collated from tutors and pastoral teams and parents were asked to let tutors and Heads of Section know about any further issues in the letter during the Easter holidays, and in the briefing on 19th April.

Addressing Disruption/Differentiated Lost Learning (DLL)

This section gives details of our approach to address disruption or differentiated lost teaching in the circumstances of the past two years taking account of the spread of and response to Covid-19.

- 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 to ensure objectivity.

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

Senior Leaders and Heads of Department and 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
- potential 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; and
- 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:

- Ofqual guidance to help make objective assessments and how to avoid conscious or unconscious bias or discrimination has been circulated to Heads of Departments.
- Introductory training on unconscious bias was given to all teachers on 13th April 2021.
- Teachers will read and take account of the Ofqual guidance on making objective judgements.
- 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.
- We will run data checks to check for inconsistencies in relation to gender and race and learning needs with a view to identifying potential unconscious bias.
- Anomalies and inconsistencies will be reviewed (and amended if necessary) by the Head of Centre.

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 process of determining teacher assessed grades operated, including the rationale for decisions in relation to individual marks and grades.
- We will ensure that evidence is collected from a variety of tasks to develop a holistic view of each pupil'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 organisations.
- The following evidence from each department will be collated and submitted in paper form to the Exams Office by 9th June:
 - A copy of the departmental policy for assessment and grading.
 - A portfolio of evidence (in the form of paper scripts) for each pupil including scripts for AP1, AP2 and AP3 and other evidence if available. (If digital copies are needed for external QA purposes, administrative support will be provided).
 - Records of any circumstances relevant to the determination of grades.
 - Records of marks for each pupil
 - Departmental Assessment Record.
 - A signed cover sheet from each pupil which should be attached to the front of the portfolio.

Authenticating evidence

This section of our Centre Policy details the mechanisms in place to ensure that teachers are confident in the authenticity of the evidence used in determining the grades, and the process for dealing with cases where evidence is not thought to be authentic.

- Our plan in normal circumstances is to mostly use evidence that has been generated in controlled circumstances on the School site so that teachers are assured of its authenticity.
- In exceptional circumstances, we may have to find alternative evidence for pupils who were unable to undertake the assessments in the normal way. In these circumstances we will only use alternative evidence where teachers are confident that work used is the pupils' own and that no inappropriate levels of support have been given to pupils to complete it, either within the centre or externally
- It is understood that awarding organisations will investigate instances where it appears evidence is not authentic.

Confidentiality

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 pupils' grades will be based, while ensuring that details of the final grades remain confidential.
- Relevant details from this Policy, including the requirements concerning sharing details of evidence and the confidentiality requirements, have been shared with parents/guardians.

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 will be 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 will be 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,
 - centres submitting grades supported by evidence that they know to be inaccurate,
 - centres entering 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](#), including the risk of a delay to students receiving their grades, and extending up to, and including, removal of centre status will be outlined to all relevant staff.

Conflicts of Interest

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 conflicts of interest, such as family relationship to pupils 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 in order to ensure fairness in later processes of reviews and appeals.
- External QA will be used where the conflict of interest involves a Head of Department.

Private Candidates

This section details our approach to providing and quality assuring grades to Private Candidates.

- Our aim is that our arrangements for assessing Private Candidates to arrive at appropriate grades will be the same as the approaches utilised for internal candidates as far as possible.
- We will accept private candidates who are former pupils of the School, but only if they sit assessments in the School environment that can be authenticated.
- NEAs will be used where available.
- The Exams Officer has sent a letter from the Deputy Head – Teaching and Learning to all those not on the current School roll who have expressed an interest in entering as candidates this summer explaining our rationale.
- They will have opportunity to sit assessments at the same time as the rest of the cohort but will be invigilated separately to maintain COVID safety.
- If private candidates cannot sit the assessments in School with the rest of their cohort for good reasons, we will show flexibility in line with the JCQ guidance and any divergences from our approach for internal candidates will be recorded on the appropriate class/student documentation.
- In undertaking the review of cohort grades in comparison with our centre results profiles from previous examined years, the grades determined by our centre for Private Candidates will be excluded from our analysis.

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 will be properly kept and made available for review as required.
- All evidence on which decisions on the determination of grades have been made will be retained and made available for review as required.
- Instances where evidence used to decide teacher assessed grades is not available, for example where the material has previously been returned to pupils 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 will be able to 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 or 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 Level 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 pupils.
- Arrangements will be in place for the provision of all necessary advice, guidance and support, including pastoral support, to students on receipt of their results.
- Such guidance will include advice on the appeals process in place in 2021.
- Appropriate staff will be available to respond promptly to any requests for information from awarding organisations, for example regarding missing or incomplete results, to enable such issues to be swiftly resolved.
- Parents/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 will be 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 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.

