

Assessment and Grading Policy



Formby High School
Determined to Achieve

Aims

This policy sets out the expectations across Formby High School of how the assessment and grading of students will be carried out for the Summer 2021 series. It will explain the principles and parameters for how students will be assessed to ensure that the process is fair, consistent and objective. It will also outline the process for grading students to ensure that grades are credible, as well as how we intend to ensure that the overall process of assessment and grading is made manageable and not overly burdensome for teachers and students.

Policy Statements

- We will aim to ensure our centre meets all requirements set out by the Department of Education (DfE), Ofqual, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and awarding organisations for Summer 2021 qualifications.
- We believe that students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding they have acquired.
- They will do this through completing in-class assessments, not examinations.
- Students will have adequate opportunities to demonstrate and evidence the standard at which they are currently working and their grades will fairly reflect this.
- We will adopt a school-wide approach, ensuring consistency across all subjects whilst accepting that each subject is different and flexibility will be required.
- Students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), will be given the necessary advice and guidance during the process and those who are entitled to access arrangements will receive the full level of support to which they are entitled.
- To mitigate the impact of lost learning opportunities during the Covid-19 pandemic, students will be supported and well-prepared for assessments by their teachers.
- There will be clear communication to students and their parents/carers about they will be assessed.
- We will put in place effective processes and ensure that each staff member involved in the processes clearly understands their role and responsibilities, and has been adequately prepared.
- Our assessment and grading process will be manageable and not unduly burdensome for teachers and students, with clear guidelines and support available.
- We have a collective responsibility to ensure our grades are credible and to guard against unnecessary inflation.
- We aim to ensure that teacher assessed grades are determined fairly, consistently, accurately and free from bias within and across departments.
- There will be consideration of historical centre data during the process and in any decisions made in respect of teacher assessed grades.
- We will ensure there is a high standard of internal quality assurance in the allocation of teacher assessed grades.

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Centre:

- The Head of Centre, Mr Dominic Mackenzie, will be responsible for implementing and upholding this policy for determining assessed grades.
- As Headteacher, the Head of Centre has overall responsibility for the assessed grades process.

- The 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.
- The Head of Centre will confirm that 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.
- The Head of Centre will ensure a robust internal quality assurance process has been produced and signed-off in advance of results being submitted.
- The Head of Centre will sign and submit the Head of Centre Declaration for each subject submitting assessed grades.

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will:

- Co-ordinate the design and implementation of a programme that will allow for the fair, consistent and manageable delivery of assessed grades within the relevant timescales.
- Publish an assessment timetable for staff, students and parents.
- Provide the relevant support to Curriculum / Subject Leaders, teaching staff and other staff involved in the assessed grades process.
- Ensure appropriate procedures are in place to internally standardise / validate the grades awarded by subject teachers.
- Support the Head of Centre in the quality assurance of the assessed grades and comparison of grades with previous cohorts.
- Advise parents, students and teachers on appeals and support the Head of Centre and Examinations & Data department throughout the appeals process.
- Report all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice.

Subject / Curriculum Leaders will:

- Work with the Examinations & Data Department to ensure accurate student entries with the examination board, including, where relevant, correct tiers of entry.
- Ensure subject teachers understand their role and responsibilities within the assessment process.
- Decide on what content and skills they wish to assess students and design their assessment programme accordingly.
- Ensure effective administrative arrangements for revision resources and assessment papers.
- Ensure all subject teachers conduct assessments under the appropriate levels of control with reference to guidance provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications.
- Co-ordinate the marking, standardisation and moderation processes for the completed assessments.
- Co-ordinate the completion of and marking, standardisation and moderation processes for all non-examination assessment (NEA).
- Provide support and training to NQTs and teachers less familiar with the assessment framework in their subject.
- Ensure subject teacher have a clear understanding of the internal and external quality assurance processes and their role within it.
- Ensure appropriate procedures are followed so that all teachers within their subject area make consistent judgements about student evidence in deriving a grade.
- Arrange for the creation of portfolios containing evidence for each student that might include NEA, completed assessments and any other relevant evidence.
- Ensure that students who are absent during the Assessment Phase are given the opportunity to sit any assessments missed as part of the 'safety net'.

- Ensure that a Subject Leaders Checklist is completed for each qualification where they are submitting grades.
- Compare assessed grades to historic performance within the subject area and provide explanation and justification for any significant deviation.
- Confirm that the grades awarded for students within their subject area are accurate, fair and evidence based.

Subject Teachers will:

- Continue to teach course content, including reviewing and revising previously taught content, throughout the Teaching Phase.
- Where relevant, oversee the completion of NEA tasks.
- Share with students the broad topics and / or areas of the course on which they will be assessed.
- Prepare students for the assessments to be sat in lessons and provide any necessary support during this phase.
- Works with the SENDCo to ensure any access arrangements for eligible candidates are applied to assessments.
- Ensure they conduct assessments under appropriate levels of control.
- Mark any assessments completed by students in accordance with the marking criteria agreed with their Curriculum / Subject Leader and engage in any relevant standardisation / moderation.
- Ensure there is sufficient supervision to enable the work of a candidate to be authenticated.
- Where relevant, ensure students sign a declaration confirming the work they submit for NEA is their own unaided work.
- Where relevant, keep signed candidate declarations for NEA on file until the deadline for requesting reviews of results has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later.
- Sign the teacher declaration of authentication confirming the assessment and grading requirements have been met.
- Ensure that the assessed grade they assign to each student is a fair, valid and reliable reflection of the evidence available.
- Produce an assessment portfolio for each student they teach, containing evidence for each student that helps to explain the determination of the final assessed grades.
- Provide an explanation of the grade they have awarded to each student based on the grade descriptors provided by JCQ and the awarding bodies.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) will:

- Oversee the provision of access arrangements for students with SEND.
- Communicate with parents of students with SEND regarding access arrangements.
- With the Examinations & Data Department, coordinate all provision for students entitled to access arrangements.
- Inform subject teachers of any access arrangements for eligible candidates which need to be applied to assessments.
- Work with subject teachers to ensure requirements for access arrangement candidates requiring the support of a facilitator (reader or scribe) in assessments are met.
- Ensure that access arrangement facilitators are fully trained in their role.

Examinations & Data Department will:

- Signpost teaching staff to relevant JCQ and awarding bodies publications regarding the assessed grades process.
- Work with Subject / Curriculum Leaders to ensure accurate student entries with the awarding bodies, including, where relevant, correct tiers of entry.
- Carry out tasks where these may be applicable to the role in supporting the administration / management of the assessed grades process.
- Work alongside the SENDCo to coordinate and deliver arrangements for students entitled to access arrangements for assessments.
- Maintain assessment data within SIMS.
- Create summary mark sheets for each teaching group.
- Arrange for the accurate uploading of assessed grades into the awarding body portals within the relevant timeframes.
- Manage the publication of results and post-results services.
- Support the Head of Centre and SLT with all arrangements relating to appeals.

Year Group Leaders will:

- Ensure expectations are reinforced during assemblies prior to the Teaching Phase and Assessment Phase, and will be ongoing via Class Charts and ParentMail.
- Work closely with support staff to ensure high levels of attendance during the Teaching Phase and Assessment Phase.
- Liaise with Curriculum / Subject Leaders and SENDCo to ensure students absent for assessments are given the opportunity to catch up as part of the 'safety net'.
- Work with students to promote good mental health and well-being during the Assessment Phase.

Students

- Check and confirm personal details and subject entries as presented on 'Statement of Entry' and promptly reporting any discrepancies to the Examinations & Data Manager.
- Follow all rules and regulations whilst completing assessments and sign declarations for NEA that authenticate work as their own.
- Ensure they do not disclose to their peers the content of assessments completed during lessons.

Training, Support and Guidance

This section of our policy outlines the training, support and guidance that will be provided to those determining assessed grades this year.

Training

- Teachers involved in determining grades in our centre will attend any centre-based or departmental training to help achieve consistency and fairness to all students.
- Teachers will engage fully with all training materials and support that has been provided by the Senior Leadership Team, JCQ and the awarding bodies.
- Sufficient time will be provided in the regular meeting cycle and INSET days to ensure teachers are able to access training materials and confidently carry out the processes of assessing and grading.

Support for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) and teachers less familiar with assessment

- We will provide mentoring from experienced teachers to NQTs and teachers less familiar with the assessment framework in their subject.
- We will put in place additional internal reviews of teacher assessed grades for NQTs and other teachers as appropriate.
- This support will be coordinated by the Curriculum / Subject Leader.

Use of Appropriate Evidence

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

Use of evidence

This section gives details in relation to our use of evidence. All items listed are what can be taken into account when determining grades.

- Evidence gathered during the Assessment Phase will provide a starting point in determining assessed grades.
- 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 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 NEA work (often referred to as coursework), even if this has not been fully completed, that has been marked and internally moderated.
- Where the above assessment evidence does not allow an assessed grade to be determined or where further evidence is required to make a final judgement between two grades, other evidence as outlined below may be taken into consideration:
 - Substantial class or homework (including work that took place during remote learning).
 - Internal tests taken by students.
 - Pre-Public Examinations taken over the course of study.
 - Records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects such as Music, Drama and PE.
- All candidate evidence used to determine assessed grades, and associated documentation, will be retained and made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals.
- The evidence used will be retained in each student's assessment portfolio.

The centre is conscious that historic assessment data generated over the last two years may provide a less accurate indicator of the grade at which a student is working as the information may have been gathered at an early stage in the course before the student's skills, knowledge and understanding fully developed and, at the time, the student would not have been aware that the assessment task may contribute to his/her final grade.

Assessment materials used during the Assessment Phase will:

- 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 and in areas of the course that they have been historically assessed.
- Give students an opportunity to show improvement, for example, to validate or replace an existing piece of evidence.
- Support consistency of judgement between teachers or classes by giving everyone the same task to complete.
- Allow teachers to 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 hasn't 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, and the extent of in class preparation and teacher support that the student received.
- We will ensure that we are able to authenticate the work as the student's own, especially where that work was not completed within the school or college.
- We will consider the 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 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.

Awarding teacher assessed grades based on evidence

This section of our policy outlines the approach our centre will take to awarding assessed grades.

- 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.
- Where the evidence available for a student does not support the awarding of a grade, the student should be graded unclassified (U).
- The grades awarded will be derived solely based on student performance and no reference will be made to predicted grades or target grades.
- Teachers will record how the evidence was used to arrive at a fair and objective grade, which is free from bias.
- Teachers will produce an assessment portfolio for each student they teach, containing evidence that helps to explain the determination of the final assessed grades, and will share this with their Subject Leader.
- Teachers will be guided by the JCQ's and awarding organisations' grade descriptors and exemplification materials when determining grades.
- Teachers will provide a written explanation of the judgement reached that will be retained within each student's assessment portfolio.
- Within subject area moderation will enable the consistent interpretation and of the JCQ's and awarding organisations' grade descriptors and exemplification materials.
- Where evidence gathered during the Assessment Phase and, if relevant, through NEA, does not enable a grade to be accurately determined, other evidence will be brought into consideration.
- Any necessary variations for individual students will also be shared.

Internal Quality Assurance

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

- All teachers involved in deriving assessed grades will read and understand this policy document.
- In subjects where there is more than one teacher and/or class in the department, we will ensure that our centre carries out an internal standardisation process.
- We will ensure that all teachers are provided with training and support to ensure they take a consistent approach to:
 - Arriving at teacher assessed grades
 - Marking of evidence
 - Reaching a holistic grading decision
 - Applying the use of grading support and documentation
- This training and support will be primarily provided by the Curriculum / Subject Leader with assistance from the SLT line manager.
- We will conduct internal standardisation across all grades.
- The student assessment portfolio will form the basis of internal standardisation and discussions across teachers to agree the awarding of assessed grades.
- Where necessary, we will review and reflect on individual grading decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our awarding bodies.
- Where appropriate, we will amend individual grade decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our awarding bodies.
- 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 Assessed Grades to Results for Previous Cohorts

This section of our policy outlines the approach we will take to compare our assessed grades in 2021 with results from previous cohorts taking the same qualification.

- The SLT will be responsible for conducting a comparison of assessed grades with previous cohorts.
- We will compile information on the grades awarded to our students in past June series in which examinations took place (e.g. 2017, 2018 and 2019) to enable comparison with the 2021 assessed grades.
- When comparing we will consider:
 - the size of our cohort from year to year.
 - any significant variations to the characteristics of the cohort this year to historic cohorts.
 - the stability of our centre's overall grade outcomes from year to year in each subject and for the whole school.
 - 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 any external quality assurance process.

- Where assessed grades for a qualification are viewed as overly lenient or harsh compared to results in previous years Curriculum / Subject Leaders will be requested to review and reconsider the recommended grades under the guidance of their SLT line manager.

Access Arrangements and Special Considerations

This section of our policy outlines the approach our centre will take to providing students with appropriate access arrangements and consider 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 have agreed access arrangements (for example a reader or scribe) we will make every effort to ensure that these arrangements are in place when assessments are being taken.
- A separate location for the completion of assessments will be provided for students entitled to additional time or the use of a facilitator for assessments.
- 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 student assessment portfolio, 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 JCQ document: A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020.

Addressing Disruption / Differential Lost Learning (DLL)

This section gives details of our approach to address disruption or DLL.

- Assessed grades will be determined based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed for each student.
- Students will receive a high level of preparation and support for the assessments they complete during the Assessment Phase.

Objectivity

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

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

The Head of Centre, the SLT and Curriculum / Subject Leaders 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, hidden forms of bias, and bias in teacher assessed grades.

To ensure objectivity, all staff involved in determining 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.
- 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.

To reduce the likelihood of unconscious bias, students' assessment papers completed during the Assessment Phase will be anonymised (identifiable by candidate number only) and, where possible, teachers will not mark the assessment papers for the students they teach.

Recording Decisions and Retention of Evidence and Data

This section of our policy outlines our arrangements to recording decisions and to retaining evidence and data.

We will ensure that:

- Teachers and Curriculum / Subject Leaders maintain records that show how the assessed grades process operated, including assessment evidence and the rationale for decisions.
- 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 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 comply with our obligations regarding data protection legislation.
- The grades accurately reflect the evidence gathered.
- The evidence is retained electronically or in hard copy in a secure centre-based system that can be readily shared with awarding bodies.

Authenticating Evidence

This section of our 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 appropriate levels of supervision and student declarations, will be in place to ensure that teachers are confident that work used as evidence is the students' own and that no inappropriate levels of support have been given to students to complete it.

It is understood that awarding organisations will investigate instances where it appears evidence is not authentic. We will follow all guidance provided by awarding bodies to support these determinations of authenticity.

Confidentiality, Malpractice and Conflicts of Interest

Confidentiality

This section of our 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.

- All staff involved have been made aware of the need to maintain the confidentiality of 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, will be shared with parents / guardians.

Malpractice

This section of our policy outlines the measures in place to prevent malpractice and other breaches of examination regulations and how to deal with such cases if they occur.

- All staff involved have been made aware of policies regarding malpractice, maladministration and conflicts of interest.
- All staff involved have been made aware of the specific types of malpractice which may affect the Summer 2021 series including:
 - breaches of internal security
 - deception
 - improper assistance to students
 - failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work
 - over direction of students in preparation for common assessments
 - allegations that centres submit grades not supported by evidence that they know to be inaccurate
 - centres enter students who were not originally intending to certificate a grade in the Summer 2021 series
 - failure to engage as requested with awarding bodies during the External Quality Assurance and appeal stages
 - failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made and assessed grades
- The consequences of malpractice or maladministration as published in the JCQ guidance: [*JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures*](#) and including the risk of a delay to students receiving their grades, up to, and including, removal of centre status have been outlined to all relevant staff.

Conflicts of Interest

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

To protect the integrity of assessments, all staff involved in the determination of grades must declare any conflict of interest such as relationships with students to the Head of Centre for further consideration. The Head of Centre will take appropriate action to manage any conflicts of interest arising with centre staff in accordance with the JCQ document [*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 of our Centre Policy outlines the arrangements in place to comply with awarding organisations' arrangements for external quality assurance of assessed grades in a timely and effective way.

- All staff involved have been made aware of the awarding bodies' requirements for external quality assurance as set out in the [JCO guidance](#).
- All necessary records of decision-making in relation to determining grades will be properly kept and made available for review as required.
- All student evidence on which decisions regarding the determination of grades have been made will be retained and made available for review as required.
- Instances where student evidence used to decide 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 bodies 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 bodies, including the withholding of results.

Results

This section of our policy outlines our approach to the receipt and issue of results to students and the provision of necessary 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 / AS Level, GCSE and Vocational & Technical Qualifications (VTQs) results in the same week.
- Arrangements will be made to ensure the necessary staffing, including Examinations & Data Office 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 for 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.
- Students and parents / carers will be made aware of arrangements for results days.

Appeals

This section of our policy outlines our approach to appeals, to ensure that they are handled swiftly and effectively, and in line with JCQ requirements.

- All staff involved in the appeals process 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.
- Students will be appropriately guided as to the necessary stages of appeal.
- Arrangements will be in place for the timely submission of appeals to awarding bodies, 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 all students and their parents / carers.

Contacts

Head of Centre / Headteacher	Mr D Mackenzie (Headteacher)
Senior Leadership Team	Mrs K Blanchard Mr S Cook Mr P Slater Mrs G Parkinson Mrs A Wake (Associate)
SENDCo	Mrs S Warwick
Examinations Manager	Mrs M Hiller
Director of Sixth Form	Mr M O'Shaughnessy
Sixth Form Progress Leader(s)	Mrs C Grant Mr D Rigby
Year 11 Achievement Leader	Mrs A Harrison-Forsyth
Year 10 Climate for Learning Leader	Miss K MacDougall