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GUIDANCE ON EXAMINING

Glossary

The assessment process, from putting together question papers through to students receiving the grades, is a complex one.

This means there are lots of technical terms and jargon associated with the process. To make it a little clearer, here's a quick guide to some of the terms you are most likely to come across.

A Level	General Certificate of Education Advanced Level, also known as a GCE. Qualifications taken, after GCSEs, in a range of subjects, usually at the end of a two year course, by 18 year olds.
Assessment	The evaluation of the understanding, skills and knowledge gained by a student on a course.
Awarding	The process of deciding the grade boundaries of a particular exam.
Cambridge Assessment	Operates and manages Cambridge University's three exam boards and carries out leading-edge academic and operational research on assessment in education.
The Cambridge Approach	A set of principles for designing, administering and evaluating assessment, followed by the University's three exam boards.
Chair of Examiners	The examiner responsible for a subject.
Chief Examiner	The examiner responsible for a specification.
Comparable outcomes	The system which aims to ensure that students of similar ability get the same grade in one year as they would have received had they sat an examination in a previous year.
Examination	Usually an external (i.e. assessed by an exam board) written assessment, in the form of a question paper. It can also be internal (i.e. assessed by a teacher) or done by observation by a visiting examiner, e.g. in music or drama.
Examiner	A person who sets and/or marks an exam paper.

GCSE	General Certification of Secondary Education. Qualifications taken in a range of subjects, usually for students aged 16.
Grade boundary	The minimum mark that a student must attain to receive a particular grade.
Linear assessment	Assessments where all examinations are taken at the end of the course.
Mark	The score that a student receives for a response to a question.
Mark scheme	Instructions guiding examiners on how marks must be awarded, developed in partnership with the question paper.
Marker	A person who marks an exam.
Modular assessment	A course split into different units, or modules, with an exam at the end of each unit.
OCR	Leading UK exam board, Oxford Cambridge and RSA
Ofqual	The exams regulator for England (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation)
Question paper	The questions designed to test in a written exam how well students have acquired the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification.
Raw mark	The total unadjusted number of marks scored in an exam.
Script	Paper completed by a student during an exam.
Specification	A outline of what is to be studied within a particular course (also known as a syllabus).
Standardisation	The process of ensuring all examiners are marking to the same standard.
Syllabus	A outline of what is to be studied within a particular course (also known as a specification).
Team leader	A person in charge of a team of examiners or markers.
UMS	Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). The UMS balances out differences between exams to ensure students get the correct grade, no matter when they took a particular unit.
Unit	The individual parts of an assessment that are joined together to form the whole assessment.
Validity	Ensuring the exam assesses what it was designed to assess.