

Guidance on the Teacher Assessed Grades process for summer 2021

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Updates since initial publication are highlighted

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1. Introduction

In February 2021, the Department for Education (England) and Ofqual set out the arrangements for awarding vocational and technical qualifications (VTQ) in 2021.

Given the broad range of qualifications in the VTQ landscape, the government acknowledges that they cannot all be subject to the same awarding arrangements. For some VTQs results may be determined using alternative approaches to awarding, including the use of **Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs)**. This is because the issue of results to learners for these qualifications must be prioritised even where exams and internal assessments do not take place. For VTQs that assess occupational or professional competency or act as a licence to practise, it would not be safe to award these qualifications using alternative evidence such as teachers' judgement. Results will be issued on the basis of evidence from exams and other assessments.

This document explains how you can determine a TAG and the process you should use to make your judgements for the following qualifications. We also provide information on the process to submit the TAG to us on our support centre:

- [Digital Employability Entry Level and Level 1](#)
- [Life and Living Skills](#)
- [Using ICT \(Entry 3\)](#)

Some centres deliver these qualifications across the same academic timeline as a GCSE. This is to enable learners to achieve an alternative qualification to a GCSE or other general qualification for their progression and take it over the same timeline as a GCSE. The ongoing disruption caused by the pandemic may impact learners' ability to complete sufficient units to achieve a qualification by the end of the year.

Adult learners who take these qualifications may have a greater benefit from the experience of taking the assessment to help with progression into employment.

Examinations and moderation will continue to be available. Centres should continue to deliver teaching and learning for as long as possible, to cover as much of the qualification content as possible since it is important for progression. We encourage you to continue to complete and submit units for moderation and to take exams, **considering a TAG as a last resort** when assessment cannot be completed.

When assessment cannot be completed, a **unit-level TAG** is available for units due to be completed between **1 August 2020** and **31 August 2021**.

Unit-level TAGs are available to learners certificating this summer and those who are part way through their qualification but who planned to take assessment for some units by 31 August 2021.

This year the disruption to teaching, learning and assessment has been greater compared to last year. The emphasis this year is to base a TAG on what the learner has achieved and not, as last year, on what the learner would have achieved if teaching, learning and assessment had not been disrupted.

We need to make sure that end users value these results as equivalent to those achieved at any other time. TAGs need to be realistic and based on sufficient evidence and there needs to be effective processes to determine TAGs and to quality assure them.

Key terms:

Assessment - refers to the internal assessment relevant to the unit or to the exam for Digital Employability Entry Level 3 and Level 1 Unit 1 Know the basics of using digital technologies.

Banked units – moderated assessments and / or external exams for which we have already issued a unit result.

Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) - a teachers'/assessors' professional judgement, based on evidence, of the standard/level/grade a learner is performing at. They can be at unit level or qualification level. We require unit-level TAGs for these qualifications.

Protected characteristics - are defined by the 2010 Equality Act as, age; disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

2. Scope

a) Qualifications

This guidance covers the following qualifications:

Qualification titles	OCR entry code
Entry Level 1 Life and Living Skills Qualifications:	
OCR Entry Level Introductory Award in Life and Living Skills (Entry 1)	10160
OCR Entry Level Award in Life and Living Skills (Entry 1)	10161
OCR Entry Level Extended Award in Life and Living Skills (Entry 1)	10162
OCR Entry Level Certificate in Life and Living Skills (Entry 1)	10163
OCR Entry Level Extended Certificate in Life and Living Skills (Entry 1)	10181
OCR Entry Level Diploma in Life and Living Skills (Entry 1)	10164
Entry Level 2 Life and Living Skills Qualifications:	
OCR Entry Level Introductory Award in Life and Living Skills (Entry 2)	10165
OCR Entry Level Award in Life and Living Skills (Entry 2)	10166
OCR Entry Level Certificate in Life and Living Skills (Entry 2)	10167
OCR Entry Level Extended Certificate in Life and Living Skills (Entry 2)	10182
OCR Entry Level Diploma in Life and Living Skills (Entry 2)	10168
Entry Level 3 Life and Living Skills Qualifications:	
OCR Entry Level Introductory Award in Life and Living Skills (Entry 3)	10169
OCR Entry Level Award in Life and Living Skills (Entry 3)	10170
OCR Entry Level Certificate in Life and Living Skills (Entry 3)	10171
OCR Entry Level Extended Certificate in Life and Living Skills (Entry 3)	10183
OCR Entry Level Diploma in Life and Living Skills (Entry 3)	10172
Using ICT	
OCR Entry Level Award in Using ICT (Entry 3)	01679
Digital Employability	
OCR Entry Level Award in Digital Employability (Entry 1)	05807
OCR Entry Level Award in Digital Employability (Entry 2)	05808
OCR Entry Level Award in Digital Employability (Entry 3)	05809
OCR Level 1 Award in Digital Employability	05810

b) Eligibility for a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG)

Learners may be eligible for a unit-level TAG for one or more units if they are unable to complete assessments due to be taken between 1 August 2020 and 31 August 2021 because of disruption caused by the pandemic. Learners must be on a programme of study leading to one of these qualifications and registered with us.

We encourage you to consider using TAGs only as a last resort. Moderation and exams remain available throughout the period and [adaptations](#) have been made to the assessment arrangements to help you and your learners complete assessments. You must consider the learner's situation. For example, TAGs will benefit learners:

- who need to have a qualification result this summer to progress to further study, and,
- when the size of qualification they are taking makes it impossible to complete it by 31 August 2021 (or by the planned end of their course of study).
- Or they are part way through their programme and there will not be time to reschedule the assessment for next year.

Learners who are using their qualification for entry into employment might benefit from the experience of being assessed and we encourage you to complete all the assessments.

If a result based on teachers' judgement is the only possible option for the learner, you must submit **a unit-level TAG** for the units they **would have expected to have taken assessment(s) for between 1 August 2020 and 31 August 2021**. This includes:

- first attempts at the assessment and any retakes
- fully completed units where the claim cannot be submitted to OCR for moderation.

You must **not** submit TAGs for any units your learners did **not** expect to complete during this period.

Where a TAG is needed the teaching and learning for the unit/s should continue for as long as possible, to cover as much of the unit content as possible. This is to support the learner when they progress. You should also consider continuing with internal assessment as partial assessment of a unit could support the basis for a TAG.

Where assessment can continue and you **are not planning to submit TAGs** then please submit work for moderation as normal. On-screen tests for Digital Employability Unit 1 can be scheduled and taken as usual (please note that remote invigilation is not permitted).

c) Combining TAGs and submitting work for moderation/ taking exams

If you are preparing TAGs and you have already submitted some claims to us these need to be processed before any learners involved can be considered for TAGs. If you have outstanding claims, contact us to check their progress before you complete and submit your TAGs.

We encourage you to continue teaching and learning as long as possible, to cover as much of the course content as possible. We recognise that marking and providing feedback to learners on work completed is a key part of teaching and learning, and you may continue to do this. We would also encourage you to discuss with learners the evidence that you will be using to determine their teacher assessed grade. You can confirm to the learner whether or not you intend to submit a TAG but you must make it clear that it is subject to your own internal quality assurance and may be subject to our external quality assurance checks.

d) Timelines

For all centres	
Up to 15 September 2021	Teacher Assessed Grades produced and submitted by centres
On demand	Processing, resolution of issues, results processed
Results released	Within 21 days of submission*

*If we have to contact you for further information or to sample learner work, then the turnaround time may be impacted.

3. How to determine a Teacher Assessed Grade for a unit or units

a) Getting ready to determine TAGs

To be involved in the assessment process each member of staff must be familiar with:

- this guidance on the process.
- the unit(s) and qualification(s) being assessed.
- Ofqual guidance, [Information for centres about making objective judgements](#).

You should only make judgements for learners that you have some experience of teaching the subject and/or unit to.

Your judgement in relation to each Learner should be made as late in the course as possible to allow the learner to produce evidence covering as many units as possible. You must remain contactable for two weeks after you submit TAGs to us in the event you are selected for our external quality assurance checks or we have some general queries.

You must consider:

- what standard or level (Entry 1, Entry 2, etc) the learner is performing at based on what they have been taught and what they have achieved over the course of study.
- if there is sufficient evidence of performance at the level of a 'pass' to support a TAG for the unit or units they planned to take.

You will make a holistic judgement based on the evidence you have of each learner's performance to determine a TAG for the unit or units they planned to complete.

Some of these qualifications allow a 'spiky profile' of the level of units to be taken and you are to take this into consideration when determining TAGs. There needs to be evidence that the learner can perform at the level of the qualification they are working towards. This might already be evidenced through banked units.

There are no constraints on the minimum number of units or guided learning hours/credits which a learner must have covered, as long as the TAG is based on evidence.

The evidence you use can:

- be of different types
- come from across the course of study
- vary between your learners on the same course, depending on what they managed to achieve.

b) What units/content have learners been taught?

Consider the following for the qualification you have been teaching. Depending on how you deliver the qualification you might need to consider this for each individual learner rather than at cohort level:

- Identify the units that have been fully taught and which have been partially taught
- Has what you have taught been covered deeply or superficially because of the impact of the pandemic? Which topics have you taught in depth and which did you intend to revisit?
- Which units or parts of units have you not been able to teach to your learners because of the impact of the pandemic?

The evidence used to make your judgement must only include assessment of the knowledge, skills and understanding that have been taught.

c) What evidence should be collected?

Consider what evidence of learner performance you may have collected over the course of study.

Evidence types A-E cover all the potential types of learner evidence which can be used to support assessments:

	Types of evidence	Examples
A	Banked units	Moderated assessments and / or external exams for which we have already issued a result.
B	Centre-marked attempts at the live/practice assessments.	<p>Internal assessments that have been completed but not OCR moderated, or that have been partially completed <u>and</u> taken under our normal conditions for assessment or taken using our permitted published adaptations. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - teacher observation records in a form which would normally be submitted for moderation - work for assessment done at home that has been validated by the teacher/assessor. - Learner work produced in response to practice or sample papers and assignments. - Evidence from work experience where relevant to the qualification that has been validated by the teacher/assessor. <p>Digital Employability: A previous attempt at the examined unit where it is close to a Pass (with supplementary evidence of performing at the level)</p>
C	Formative assessment results. Formative assessment is defined as assessment undertaken to check learning has taken place and assess progress towards the required level.	<p>Learner work produced in centre-devised tasks as part of homework or classwork that reflects the learning outcomes and assessment criteria, but it has not been taken following our conditions for assessment (such as supervision)</p> <p>Tracker of achievement and attainment over the course. This cannot be used in isolation, as by itself it would not support the external quality assurance process/appeal review.</p> <p>Activities that happen during the delivery of the qualification before summative assessment takes place might provide evidence of skills.</p>

	Indirect evidence through demonstration of skills completed during the delivery of the qualification, which can be validated	For example, learners who have to start up/shut down a device or search the internet may have evidence for IT units. The learners have not been formally assessed. The teacher/assessor must be able to produce an appropriate witness testimony to support these regular activities.
D	Any other work which the learner has completed towards the qualification (such as work they have done in class or at home independently).	<p>Witness testimonies from somebody who is not a teacher or assessor such as a parent or carer on a demonstration of a task relevant to the qualification.</p> <p>Evidence from work experience that is relevant to the qualification that has not been validated by the teacher/assessor.</p> <p>Diagnostic tests (tests which determine the level the candidate is performing at) where there is a close match between the skills being tested through the diagnostic test and the OCR unit.</p>
E	Learner work demonstrating the skills needed for relevant units that has been completed in support of another qualification.	Learner work produced in practice tasks that reflects the learning outcomes and assessment criteria, which has been undertaken for a different qualification, e.g. Functional Skills.

d) Extra factors for you to consider when you are collecting evidence

Private candidates, or learners who have moved centres, are likely to have evidence produced with a tutor or other educational provider. You can use any evidence that is available from these sources that you are able to authenticate as the learner's own work.

The evidence you collect must relate to the qualification and its units. You should use evidence which demonstrates learners' achievements fully, to make sure that their TAG represents their performance.

If the learner has a number of units where the content has been taught but there is not evidence to cover all aspects of the units, you may still determine a TAG for these units. You should aim to include evidence that assesses the learner's ability across a reasonable range of subject content over as much as they have been taught, reflecting as wide a range as possible of different learning outcomes.

Consider evidence from specialist Teachers and other educational professionals such as special education needs coordinators (SENCOs) who have worked with the Learner, where appropriate.

Additionally:

- there is no requirement for any units to have been fully taught or assessed

- there are no additional restrictions on the number of pieces of evidence, or number of different types of evidence.

Part of the evidence of learner work that you collect must be in a tangible form that can be reviewed by others, such as written work or audio/visual recordings. This is so that sampling (which is part of the external quality assurance process) and review (which is as part of a potential appeals process) could take place if required.

If there is insufficient evidence available:

- The learner might need to complete some work that you can internally assess. We encourage you to complete assessment and have it moderated but we do not require you to submit it for moderation. (You would need to retain it as evidence in case you are selected for external quality assurance or in the event of an appeal.)
- Where there are optional units in a particular skill area (e.g. numeracy), you could use different units, from that area, towards the qualification where there is evidence the learner has demonstrated they have some or all of the relevant skills/knowledge. You should only use units you have experience of delivering.

If you provide additional opportunities for individual learners to produce evidence, then you should consider whether you should make these assessment opportunities available for the whole cohort.

You will need to communicate the details of what evidence you use to make your judgement to each learner so they know what evidence you will use. Informing learners about what evidence is going to be used will help them to understand the process.

If you decide there is not sufficient evidence for a TAG this should be recorded and retained by the centre. We do not require you to submit that information to us.

e) Retention of evidence and quality assurance records

You do not need to submit the evidence of learner work used in your decision-making with your TAGs. However, we may request it during our external quality assurance process.

You must retain a copy of all the evidence you have used for each learner and your records showing your internal quality assurance of the judgements. Evidence must be kept for a **minimum of six months** after the release of results, or the conclusion of any appeal, whichever is later.

The following should be retained for each TAG submission:

- total number of learners for whom a unit has been claimed
- the types of evidence used for each unit and learner to support the process
- the evidence used to support the TAG for each learner
- if the TAGs have been standardised (where applicable).

You must also keep records of learner enrolment on to the course/qualification, attendance records and records of which units a learner intended to take and when a learner intended to complete their study programme for six months after the release of results.

We will not require you to record your internal quality assurance decisions in a particular format. We will provide a template that you must use when submitting TAGs to us.

f) The quality of evidence and determining the TAG

You have to have sufficient evidence to support a TAG. On the basis of what learners have been taught, consider the strength and reliability of evidence that you have:

- Under what conditions was the evidenced produced? Was it supervised, who supervised it? Does it show what the learner can do themselves / what they can do with a permitted level of help?
- How recent is the evidence? recent evidence may be more representative of learners' current performance, however, you should consider the context in which the work was created, e.g. assessment that was disrupted due to centre closures or illness could be less representative than a piece of homework from earlier in the course completed when they were well and prepared
- Do you have banked units for that learner? Do banked units provide the evidence that the learner can perform at the level of the qualification they are working towards (they are at the same level)? Do the banked units provide evidence of the same or similar skills or knowledge in units that have not been assessed?

You are trying to determine what level the learner is performing at (Entry 1, Entry 2 etc). If there is no evidence of the learner performing at the level you know they are capable of or if you think they could do better than the evidence indicates, the learner might need to complete work that you can internally assess. If that is not possible you might not be able to propose a TAG.

In some cases, you may consider that a learner is borderline between passing and failing the assessment. Where it is difficult to reach a definitive judgement, we recommend that you:

- discuss this as part of standardisation (see section 3g)
- use the assessment criteria, this guidance and any relevant supporting documentation, for example the assignments
- compare the evidence for that learner with other learners felt to be around the borderline but where it was possible to reach a decision on whether they would pass or not.

We also recommend that you record borderline decisions. These can then be reconsidered when the centre checks the overall profile of the Teacher Assessed Grades for the unit against previous performance.

g) Centre/internal standardisation of the TAG

Where there is more than one teacher/assessor responsible for teaching a unit, you should work together to standardise your judgement about the learner's TAG.

No formal standardisation is required when there is only one teacher/assessor who delivers/assesses the qualification. However, where it is possible to do so it is good practice for you to ask a suitable colleague to sense-check your decision-making as part of the centre's internal process.

At the start of the standardisation process, consider an initial sample of learners and make provisional judgements about whether each is performing at the required standard and that the evidence is sufficient to demonstrate achievement for the unit. Any learners who are felt to be on the borderline should be noted. Before judging any further TAGs, you should collaborate to discuss and compare these assessments, the evidence used, and the judgement applied so that you can agree on your decisions.

As a result of this process, you may want to revisit judgements reached about the initial sample of learners. You must also consider the historical achievement rates and past centre performance, where possible, in order to support your judgement.

You should then complete judgements for all learners. You may wish to continue to discuss any borderline decisions with colleagues.

You must record standardisation discussions/decisions as part of the evidence for TAGs.

h) Equality and avoiding discrimination

Your judgements about your learners' Teacher Assessed Grade should be objective and be made in an impartial, balanced and avoid unconscious bias. See Ofqual's guidance - [Information for centres about making objective judgements](#)

Your records should show how this has been managed for your judgements and internal quality assurance.

A learner's agreed reasonable adjustments and access arrangements should have been in place when the work you are using as evidence was generated. Where they were not, you should take that into account when coming to your judgement. This could include input from appropriate specialist teachers and other professionals.

Special Consideration will not apply for units where you are submitting a Teacher Assessed Grades because learners will not be completing assessment for moderation / taking exams. However, where illness or other personal circumstances might have temporarily affected performance, for example when completing some of the tasks in a moderated unit, you should bear that in mind when making your judgement. You may wish to give a learner another opportunity to generate the evidence.

Every effort must be made to ensure that vulnerable learners or those with special educational needs or protected characteristics are not disadvantaged.

Learners must not be systematically advantaged or disadvantaged by your assessed grades process due to any factor that does not relate to their knowledge, skills and abilities in relation to the subject (for example their behaviour, character, appearance, social background or any specific needs).

You must also manage any Conflicts of Interest (COI) within your centre to ensure such judgements are fair and objective.

4. Role of the Head of Centre

a) Head of Centre declaration

The Head of Centre must sign off all the Teacher Assessed Grades submitted by their centre.

We require a Head of Centre declaration to be signed and submitted with your TAGs. We require a separate declaration for each submission you make. Any false declaration will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

The declaration from your Head of Centre must confirm:

- Teacher Assessed Grades have been submitted only for units where learners expected to have completed or been awarded between **1 August 2020 to 31 August 2021**
- Teacher Assessed Grades have not been submitted for units that have already been claimed and are awaiting a result to be issued.
- You have sufficient valid evidence available for each learner that supports the award of a TAG
- You have completed an internally quality assurance process to demonstrate that all judgements have been standardised before submission of TAGs
- There was sufficient valid evidence available to underpin the judgements to be made by teachers before any TAGs were requested.
- That teachers took into account any access arrangements and reasonable adjustments that would be made to the assessment where a candidate would have been entitled to these in the normal course of assessment.
- That judgements were evidence-based and objective in respect of any candidate with a protected characteristic or any other factor (for example character, appearance, social background or special educational needs) that does not relate to their knowledge, skills and abilities in relation to the subject.
- That where more than one member of staff was involved in teaching an individual candidate for any component, they worked together to standardise their judgements and approach.
- You have compared the volume of achievement for submissions against previous years and the volume is in line with what would be expected normally.
- Only staff who have taught the candidate have judged the teacher assessed grade.
- All staff were briefed and familiar with the process and requirements as outlined in this document and associated materials to support the process
- You will adhere to the process defined by us in relation to TAG arrangements.

Once the process has been completed, the Head of Centre must complete a declaration and approve each single submission of Teacher Assessed Grades covering all learners whose assessments they plan to submit, including all units and levels.

b) Check against historical data

As part of a final check before submitting Teacher Assessed Grades to OCR, the Head of Centre must oversee a comparison between the proposed summer 2021 submissions and previous years. Historical data can provide a useful guide to the expected profile of results and will enable centres to check that they have not been overly harsh or lenient in their assessment of the 2021 cohort compared to previous years.

Any variance for any unit should be noted and explained as part of the submission. If the centre does not have any historical data, then OCR may contact the centre to request additional evidence.

5. Submitting Teacher Assessed Grades

You can engage in the process of determining and submitting TAGs to us up to 15 September 2021.

You can make more than one submission.

Learners must be registered for the correct qualification before you can submit their TAG/s to us.

You submit your TAGs to us by using a Request for Teacher Assessed Grades Form and claiming the units required. The Head of Centre declaration is included in our form:

- [Request for Teacher Assessed Grades Form: Life and Living Skills](#)
- [Request for Teacher Assessed Grades Form: Using ICT \(Entry 3\)](#)
- [Request for Teacher Assessed Grades Form: Digital Employability](#)

You must remain contactable for two weeks after you submit TAGs to us in the event you are selected for our external quality assurance checks or we have some general queries.

More information on the process to claim units and frequently asked questions (FAQs) can be found on [our support centre](#).

6. External quality assurance of Teacher Assessed Grades

We will carry out an external quality assurance process so we are satisfied that your centre's internal process is robust and leads to fair and accurate outcomes for the learners included in any alternative arrangement.

This will involve selecting a sample of centres and reviewing the evidence used to ensure there is sufficient evidence to support a TAG. We will also look at the centre's internal quality assurance processes.

We may request access to:

- All or some of the learner work used to support TAG judgements for up to three learners
- Records of your internal standardisation (if available) and quality assurance
- Learner enrolment and attendance records

If your centre is sampled, we will contact you to confirm the names of the learners whose work we want to see, what to submit and how to submit it to us electronically.

In general, the submission will be accepted in good faith where our review concludes:

- That the guidance has been followed.
- There is valid evidence upon which judgements have been based.
- TAGs look reasonable in the context of historic performance.

If we have concerns, we may ask for more information or ask you to review your submission. (We will not take action to change or adjust grades for any learner.)

You will have an opportunity to provide additional justification for the TAGs or to review and revise the submission.

If we have any outstanding concerns regarding an individual centre's submission we cannot process the results until we are satisfied with the validity of the centre's submission.

If you cannot provide information for a review when requested, this may also be investigated as suspected malpractice and may result in sanctions or penalties against the centre and/or individuals.

We follow the process of investigation outlined in the JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures 2020/21, available on the JCQ website [here](#) and which still applies in this situation.

Ultimately, where proposed Teacher Assessed Grades are not felt to be justifiable we cannot issue results. In these circumstances, you will have access to an appeal process about the procedures we have followed.

7. Appeals

There may be some learners who feel that their Teacher Assessed Grades do not properly reflect their ability.

Further details on post-results queries, including appeals will be provided soon.