

**QUALITY
ASSURANCE**

Quality Assurance (QA) of the 2021 Teacher Assessed Grades



BC6F

Context: 2020



- In **2020 Centre Assessed Grades** were awarded for Year 13 and 11 due to the impact of the first lockdown. This was done at relatively short notice, however, **marks were quality assured (Qaed) by Heads of Department, SLT line managers and the Head of Centre (Headteacher)** to ensure the grades were reliable, reflective and credible.
- Once the grades were submitted to exam boards, this process initially included the application of an algorithm to moderate grades to reflect the historical context of the school. This was quickly removed due to the significant problems of this system and the impact it was having on teacher judgements.
- **At BC & BC6F we were very careful to ensure that the grades were truly representative** of the work completed by students up to the March lockdown and the progress they continued to make there after. When the algorithm was applied to our results, **we did not have any marks downgraded** and saw a handful increased – increases were awarded to students automatically.
- There was an **appeals process** similar to the one planned for this summer; **we had a very small number of enquiries**, however, having been fully investigated, **no changes needed to be made.**

Context: 2021



- We have been **anticipating the possibility of a repeat of the 2020 situation** this year because of the ongoing impact of Covid. Initially we planned for reductions in course content, which was outlined by each exam board and we also maintained a record of assessment materials which could be used as evidence in the event of a student requiring special consideration if they had to isolate due to a Covid case. Records have been more thorough and detailed than in previous years.
- In January 2021 the DfE announced that summer exams would not be running as normal.
- **Since January** we have monitored DfE, JCQ and exam board announcements updating schools on the specific details of:
 - * Assessment and marking
 - * Quality assurance – in school and by the exam boards
 - * Results and appeals

Context: 2021 since January



Since January BC and BC6F staff have been receiving training sessions looking at:

- **Evidence** which can be used to support TAGs (**mocks, coursework, assessments, sample exam questions and substantial pieces of classwork and homework**) and creating a timeline for this.
- Ensuring that work is **suitably weighted** in subject areas that students have covered thoroughly, with students knowing what they will be assessed in to give them the **best possible chance to show what they are capable of** (without over informing them, making assessments unreasonably easy).
- **Marking assessed work** – taking into consideration the **conditions the work is done under** (exam / homework or timed / untimed), whether students have been able to have their **access arrangements**, using official **mark schemes** and **grade boundaries**, cross checking marking to avoid any risk of bias and standardising marks.
- Considering the honesty and **integrity of all work and the marking process**.
- Ensuring that data is submitted accurately for quality assurance before submission to the exam boards.

The TAG process



- **Students** are currently completing a range of additional **assessments / coursework / portfolios** to add to a range of other work completed in Years 10 and 11 (listed on slide 4 and explained in more detail on slide 9).
- **Teachers** are working hard **marking**
- **Departments are QAing** this **marking** before **teachers input the data** (and other supporting evidence) into TAG spreadsheets.
- We are NOT using an algorithm or formulae **to generate TAGs**, teachers will make a **decision based on the data they have and the context it has been produced in for each individual student; this allows them to consider specific individual circumstances** e.g. illness, anxiety, pieces missing for a reason, access to / lack of suitable access arrangements and take them all into account. Teachers have been asked to add notes into their spreadsheet to support this process.
- **Teachers will then discuss grades** with Heads of Department - grades may be queried and key factors considered e.g. if students had access to extra time etc. and adjustments can be made.
- **This QA discussion will be repeated** between heads of department and SLT line managers and SLT line managers and Exam Leads.

Why is it QA so important?



There is a greater emphasis on QA of grades this year than last year; the Government are keen to avoid headlines about grade inflation and schools feel it is really important that the media don't detract from the hard work students have done in these extraordinary circumstances by telling them it was easy to get the grades they got, or suggesting they're unrealistic!

We are doing more than even before to **ensure that the TAGs** we submit to the exam boards **are justified and reflect the work, progress and ability of the students** who will be receiving them on results days (Y13 – 10th August, Y11 – 12th August).

This includes focussing on:

- **Assessed pieces covering a range of work and ways of working** to be taken into consideration: This caters to students who perform better both in and out of exams conditions, or on longer or shorter tasks.
- Assessed pieces are being **blind marked and marked by teachers who don't teach that group** to reduce bias.
- Teachers have used new **exam board training resources** to give them more detailed insights into exam marking, (a high proportion of departments have teachers who in a normal year would be marking for the exam boards which has also provided their departments with additional training).
- To finalise TAGs there are **4 levels of QA** to ensure they are reliable and accurate.

School QA



Schools / colleges have to upload marks to the exam boards no later than June 18th.

To ensure these TAGs are accurate we are focussing on:

- **Reassurance that marking is accurate:** Assessed pieces done since January have been standardised in department meeting times to ensure that marking is accurate and compares between classes / grade for grade. Exam board mark schemes and grade descriptions have been used.
- **Moderation of grades:** As well as standardising marks within our departments, arrangements are being made for selections of work to be moderated between the two schools in the Trust. There is also a Quality Assurance Principal Examiner for OCR GCSE History teaching at BC who can offer us guidance.
- **Representative data:** TAGs are being drawn together from a range of pieces of work; this work will be weighted depending on how significant it is and teachers will draw them together to create a TAG.
- **TAGs will be check** by teachers & their head of department, then the head of department will check with their SLT line manager and then SLT will check with Jo Cooper & Heidi Gale (BC) or Jo Cooper & Faye Parker Dennis (BC6F) before asking the exams team to upload them to exam boards (before they are sent they will be re-checked to ensure uploading was accurate).

Exam Board QA



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Exam boards are placing a huge emphasis on schools having **robust quality assurance** in place:

- Schools have completed a **policy document** outlining all of the process we will be following has been uploaded to the JCQ so they can check our systems are acceptable to them – if this raises any concerns, there will be a virtual visit from one exam board to discuss and correct any concerns.
- Schools have to provide **evidence of specific staff training** (listed in the JCQ policy document), as well as evidence of planning for balanced assessments leading into TAGs and standardisation of marking using exam board mark schemes.
- Schools will also be asked to send them **samples of marked student work (exam boards will choose 5 per subject) with a 48 hour turn around.**
- Exam boards will be **quality assuring the work schools send in.** If this raises concerns they may quality assure the whole sample and will be visiting the school.
- There will also be **random quality assurance visits.**
- Exam boards will also **consider the historic marks context of the school** – however, the JCQ have said that this is not to suppress grades, it may require schools to explain any significant changes e.g. where there is an especially small year group compared to previous years!

FAQs: What can be counted?



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Work from Year 10 and Year 11 / Year 12 and Year 13 which demonstrates the level students are working at – this is being carefully selected to be balanced and reflect the level students are currently working at.

- Year 10/12 mock + end of topic assessments from Year 11/13 + (fully or partially) completed coursework + Year 11/13 mocks.
- Portfolio work from across both years of study culminating in a final piece of work for Art / Photography.
- BTEC / CN subjects include coursework assignments or compulsory assessments which are completed in college, as well as practice exam papers and mocks.

Work will be weighted to reflect how significant it might be in influencing the final TAG

- Year 10 / 12 work will carry less weight than Year 11 / 13 work because of how much progress students make over time.
- Full exams will carry more weight than shorter practice questions.
- Finished / partially finished coursework will carry a prescribed percentage of weight e.g. coursework may represent 20% of a normal final grade.
- Work done in school / under timed conditions will carry a different weighting to work done at home / without time limits.

FAQs: Ensuring the accuracy of TAGs



- **Marking is quality assured** by using exam board **questions, mark schemes & grade boundaries** – marking will also be **moderated between staff and between schools**.
- Individual situations can be considered when compiling TAGs.
- **TAGs will come from a balanced evaluation of marks**
 - e.g. **student X** has ten pieces of work feeding into a final TAG – of those ten pieces, two are at grade 5, six are at grade 6 and two are at grade 7 – an overall TAG of 6 can be expected. The two grade 7 pieces will be further considered for their weighting and could raise the overall grade to 7, or not, depending on their context.
 - e.g. **student Y** has 11 pieces of work feeding into a final TAG – the earlier work is in the C/B range, while the later work is in the A range, including coursework and two sets of mock exams – this allows the TAG to be a grade A overall (but only just, so this is noted on the TAG spreadsheet)
 - e.g. **student Z** has worked consistently at a grade 5 but just got a 4 in their last mock because they were stressed – this doesn't put their 5 at risk! Similarly, if they had aced their last mock and got a 7, it couldn't automatically push them up to a 7.
- **Once teachers input them, TAGs will be reviewed 3 times** before they're uploaded to the exam boards and then they will be checked for accuracy before we submit them.

What next?



- **Students will continue to focus on completing their courses.**
- Students will be receiving **feedback on the Progress Checks** they have just done in April / May. Students can discuss any disappointing marks with staff and may decide to have another go at a similar assessment. Similarly, students may have done very well in these assessments and may want to do an additional assessment to support the case for a higher overall grade.
- Teachers are allowed to tell students what their Progress Check results were and results for individual assessments they do over the coming weeks. They are **NOT allowed to tell students or parents/carers what their TAG is** (please don't ask) – the most recent data we have shared with home includes current and predicted grades, however, neither of these are the final TAG.
- Students and parents/carers can come into school on **results days: Y13 – 10th August, Y11 – 12th August** in chosen time slots (to allow for social distancing); any uncollected results will be posted home on results day.
- **We anticipate the vast majority of work being completed by May 28th** with students not expected to return to lessons after half term. Some may be requested to come in on a case by case basis up to June 14th but they will have plenty of notice if this is necessary.

Summer Appeals



There is an **appeals process for TAGs**, however, there are clear guidelines for what the exam boards would consider as reasonable appeals.

- As quality assurance of grades in school is thorough and exam boards are also going to be sampling students' work to add an additional level of quality assurance, appeals should primarily focus around mistakes in inputting TAG data, or if students have clear evidence of teacher bias. .
- In the first instance appeals should come to the school:
y11appeals@bramcote.college
y13appeals@bramcote.college

These appeals will come through to Jo Cooper.

A Level / Level 3 Btec appeals will be investigated first, as this may have a bearing on university places. Other appeals will be followed up after those, with all being completed by the end of September.