

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1157
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/02139/21
Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

Dear Janet,

13 April 2021

Thank you for your email dated 25 March regarding the Petition P-05-1157, Allow schools to assess students how they see fit, including the use of open book assessments from Ibrahim Sheikh. I also note that you have written to Qualification Wales and WJEC.

I recognise that this is an extremely stressful time for students, teachers and parents alike. I know that for many young people, particularly those in exam years, the current situation is both difficult and challenging. I would like to assure you, and the petitioner, that in developing alternative assessment arrangements for qualifications, learner well-being and progression has been at the heart of our decision making.

The Centre Determined Grade model has been developed in close collaboration through the Design and Delivery Advisory Group of head teachers and college leaders supported by expert advice from Qualification Wales and WJEC. This has been an iterative process, reflecting both the changing course of the pandemic and a shifting policy landscape, but significant emphasis has been placed on making information available to learners, schools and colleges at the earliest opportunity in order to support them in making their preparations.

In this context, on 23 March, Qualifications Wales published the final, updated version of their [guidance](#) for centres, providing further detail on the types of evidence they may wish to draw on in determining grades using the Centre-Determined Grade model for the award of GCSE, AS and levels in 2021. This guidance sets a framework within which schools and colleges can operate, to ensure a consistent and transparent approach is taken. This approach is further underpinned by WJEC Qualification Assessment Frameworks which support each qualification.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

A key aspect that schools and colleges will be expected to decide is the assessment evidence that they will use in order to determine grades. It is important to stress that this can include a broad range of material including mock exams, adapted past papers, non-examination assessments or assessment materials that a school or college has developed itself, to provide a holistic range of evidence on which to determine a learner's grade. Whilst assessment evidence must come from work completed by the learner, on adapted specification content (i.e. less the assessment content WJEC removed at the start of the academic year in light of the disruption to teaching and learning), during the course of study for the qualification, there are also clear expectations learners are only assessed on content they have had the opportunity to cover.

The number of pieces and type of evidence required to support judgements are not prescribed, since this will vary by qualification and how key themes and skills are organised in assessments. Prescription would also not provide the flexibility required to allow for variation in context between centres.

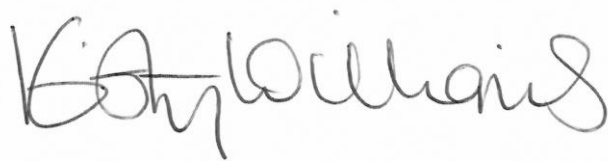
Schools and colleges will also be expected to have processes in place to make sure their judgements to determine grades are as fair and objective as possible and there will be guidance and training available to support them with this. There will also be internal quality assurance processes in place to ensure grade decisions are consistent and WJEC will provide external quality assurance to check the processes that schools and colleges are using are appropriate.

The guidance is intended to support centres develop a sound rationale and evidence base for the award of Centre Determined Grades, so that they can be sure that they have determined the correct grade for a learner and can justify the grade awarded should there be a request for a review of the grade or an appeal.

Further information on the Centre-Determined Grade model and what it means for teachers and learners is available on the [Qualifications Wales](#) and [WJEC](#) websites including the following [mythbuster](#), which is a useful resource that the petitioner may be interested in reading..

I hope this provides some assurance about the arrangements that are being made.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams'.

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