

# Ensure that centre assessment grades contribute towards final GCSE and A Level grades

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 4 Hydref 2021  
Petitions Committee | 4 October 2021

Reference: RS21/0837-4

Petition Number: P-06-1192

**Petition title:** Ensure that centre assessment grades contribute towards final GCSE and A Level grades.

**Text of petition:** We must support year 10 and year 12 students that have been negatively affected by the latest announcement on the grading measures set by Qualifications Wales.

Being a year 12 student who has put their blood, sweat and tears into continuing their study in this difficult period, I understand how devastating the announcement has been outlining that the hard work we have put in and will continue until the end of the year will NOT be counted towards our final GCSE/A-level grade. DO BETTER!!!



# 1. Relevant decisions regarding awarding of qualifications in 2021 and 2022

This petition refers to two aspects of a decision taken by the then Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams, in January 2021 and confirmed in her Direction to the regulator, Qualifications Wales, in February 2021, which affect arrangements for awarding qualifications in 2022. The new Minister for Education and Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles, explains the rationale in his letter to the Committee. The two aspects are as follows:

- 2021/22 Year 11 pupils who were due to take some individual GCSE units at the end of Year 10 in summer 2021 (but not complete the whole GCSE course) were not able to have these assessed. Therefore, they are unable to use the assessment of any units in 2021 towards their award of a GCSE in summer 2022, as would normally have been the case without the cancellation of exams due to the pandemic. However, pupils who completed their whole GCSE course by the end of Year 10 in summer 2021 were awarded GCSEs according to their centre determined grade.
- 2021/22 Year 13 pupils will not be able to use the centre determined AS level grade they received in Year 12 in summer 2021 towards their award of an A Level grade in summer 2022. However, they still have an AS level according to their centre determined grade.

Qualifications Wales, has answered the following two 'Frequently Asked Questions' on its website:

## **What will happen if I'm a Year 10 learner?**

If you have completed the course and were going to be entered for the whole GCSE course this year, then you can be awarded a grade determined by your school. However, it will not be possible to take just some units of a GCSE this year, and we will need to consider what the assessments arrangements will be for those subjects next year.

## **Will my AS grade contribute to my A level in summer 2022?**

We've considered whether there is any fair way of allowing AS results from this summer to contribute towards A levels in summer 2022, but unfortunately there isn't. Learners in Year 12 will be awarded an AS grade that teachers and lecturers will determine and will provide for progression into the A level course of study, and support UCAS

applications. A levels are usually awarded by putting marks achieved in all units together (including AS units). There isn't a fair way to use grades from the summer 2021 AS units.

## 2. Further background information

Continued disruption to pupils' attendance in school during 2020/21 due to the pandemic meant that, as in summer 2020, there were no exams in summer 2021.

The Welsh Government announced in January 2021 that centres (schools and colleges) would determine pupils' grades. The then Minister directed the regulator, Qualifications Wales, to work with stakeholders including the awarding body, WJEC, to operate a Centre Determined Grade (CDG) model. The Minister's Direction stated that Year 12 students' AS level grades in 2021 would not contribute to A levels awarded in 2022 and there would be no assessment of individual GCSE units taken by Year 10 in 2021 that could be used towards their GCSE grade in 2022.

The CDG model is similar to, although not the same as, the Centre Assessment Grade (CAG) system used in 2020. Centres' judgements in 2020 were focused on pupils' potential i.e. what they would have achieved had they sat the examinations. In 2021, centres have used a range of evidence, including non-exam assessments, mock exams and classwork, to judge a pupil's 'demonstrated attainment' and award them an appropriate grade.

Assuming there is no further substantial disruption, exams are set to return in 2022, with some changes to account for the disruption so far. WJEC have recently published details of these adaptations to A/AS levels and GCSEs in 2022.

The decision that AS grades awarded in 2021 will not contribute to A Levels awarded in 2022 is the same as in the previous year. AS grades awarded in 2020 did not contribute to A Levels awarded in 2021. As the Minister's letter explains, this is because the AS awarding process in 2021 is different to the anticipated A Level awarding process in 2022 (assuming exams are possible) and the decision that the two should not be combined.

Senedd Research's article of September 2021 gives further information on the awarding of qualifications during the pandemic.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.