



# **Full Centre Policy in relation to the awarding of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) 2020 / 2021**

## **Context / Overview**

As part of the JCQ requirements for the awarding of A, AS and GCSE qualifications this Summer ACRES has produced this Centre Policy to outline our Organisational context and clarify how we will ensure robust awarding of Teacher Assessed Grades. This document outlines ACRES' approach to the awarding of Teacher Assessed Grades in Summer 2021 for GCSE qualifications in Maths and English. Information will be informed by supporting information from JCQ, Ofqual and any further advice and guidance from AQA as the Awarding Organisation.

This policy will be used by all staff involved in the awarding of TAGs this year and its content will underpin the implementation of all associated activities from the evidence gathering stages through to internal moderation, standardisation and Head of Centre approval.

This policy is written in accordance with the JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs for Summer 2021.

It is important to note that ACRES delivers these GCSE courses to adult learners in one academic year and so it is pertinent to take this into consideration when reviewing the depth and breadth (range) of evidence provided and the timescales within which this is delivered.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that ACRES does not have its own premises to deliver courses and as such relies on community colleges and community venues to do so, our risk assessment concluded that the safest and most consistent and effective way to deliver these courses this year would be predominantly online. Any exception to this would only be in the event of a need for any face to face mock examinations / assessments.

ACRES is a relatively small Adult and Community Learning provider who offer Maths and English GCSEs which fall into the scope of this requirement to adult students aged 19 plus. As a provider who has no teaching premises of its own and relies on Community College and Community venues to deliver teaching, learning and assessment our accredited programme has been delivered exclusively online during this academic year in light of public health restrictions and local and national lockdowns with many of our venues remaining closed for much of the year. Teaching, learning and assessment has been delivered, as is typical for adult



learners, in a consolidated one-year programme and has taken place using predominantly live online sessions with elements of asynchronous activity in homework beyond the virtual classroom.

A range of assessment activities have taken and continue to take place to enable a rounded evaluation of student attainment and to ensure a depth and breadth to assessment evidence and these will be detailed later in this policy. All assessment activity has taken place in an online setting.

Class sizes are small and overall, we have less than 10 students active in English GCSE (6) and less than 30 students in Maths GCSE (27) this year.

## **Rationale**

ACRES is required to submit teacher assessed grades for all GCSE entries for Summer 2021. This document is designed to enable all staff involved in this process to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and associated timelines to complete this undertaking.

This document will underpin, within the context above, all associated TAG activity for all students and staff concerned and will help to ensure a robust Head of Centre declaration when submitting TAGs for all GCSE qualifications this year.

The purpose of this Centre Policy is to:

- Ensure that Teacher Assessed Grades are determined objectively, fairly, consistently, free from bias and discrimination and thus awarded effectively and robustly across individual cohorts and specific groups of students and subjects
- Ensure that all staff involved in the process are aware of the processes and parameters within which we will award TAGs (in line with JCQ and Awarding Organisation guidance and requirements) and are given appropriate support, training and opportunities for discussion to enable effective and accurate implementation in determining the grades under these conditions
- Ensure that all staff involved in this process have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are aware of any associated timelines, guidelines or restrictions in accordance with these
- To support and develop tutors to enable them to embed a range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies which will enable them to make objective, evidence-based decisions using a wide range of evidence throughout the course and to ensure curriculum content is covered and appropriately evaluated in line with JCQ and Awarding Organisation guidelines



- Ensure that historical trend performance data is taken into account and reviewed when considering Teacher Assessed grades and the resulting organisational grade portfolio for the centre
- Establish, facilitate and ensure a high level of robust internal quality assurance / internal moderation which will provide objective and professional support and challenge to tutors in the determining of Teacher Assessed Grades, reviewing evidence as appropriate and who will act as the intermediary between the Tutor and Head of Centre to present TAG profiles for each cohort and subject, responding to appropriate levels of challenge from Head of Centre (HOC) prior to HOC approval of the Centre TAG profile and submission to the Awarding Organisation
- Ensure our processes and practice are free from bias and discrimination and take into account access arrangements as appropriate to ensure equality across our provision
- Ensure all Centre staff in all roles associated with the TAG process consistently meet the requirements of all regulatory bodies such as DfE, Ofqual, JCQ and Awarding Organisations, with the Head of Centre and Examinations Officer working together to ensure awareness of the latest guidance is up to date and subsequently cascaded to centre staff in a timely and appropriate manner, updating our students accordingly, to ensure all parties are kept apprised of requirements and how those impact on them in their role or as a learner and to ensure compliance with all regulatory and advisory guidance and timelines
- Ensure communication with students is timely, appropriate and provides up to date and relevant information in the context of their learning, disseminating information in the appropriate context and language for students and to keep them apprised of next steps and activities within the centre and outline centre, Awarding Organisation and JCQ requirements of them. In doing so will support learner confidence and engagement in the process providing a pathway for questions or concerns to be raised where necessary

## **Process - Who is involved and what are their roles and responsibilities?**

As a centre we have outlined clear roles and responsibilities for all staff and tutors involved in the awarding of Teacher Assessed Grades within teaching, learning and assessment, internal moderation and standardisation remits and within the requirements of the Exams Officer and Head of Centre roles and responsibilities. Learning and Development staff will also support any required development of teaching, learning and assessment practice and support tutors in the collation of supporting data to inform judgements when determining Teacher Assessed Grades prior to internal moderation and quality assurance.



Below is an overarching summary of the individual roles and responsibilities involved in the TAG process. Finer detail can be found in Appendix 1 of this document in the 'Roles and Responsibilities' section

**Tutors** - To ensure optimum delivery of the curriculum within the time available and to the point at which final TAG assessment judgements will need to be made, ongoing regular assessment activities will be embedded as standard practice to ensure robust assessment of student progress and attainment; to inform ongoing planning and delivery and to enable robust TAG judgements to be made.

Tutors will then be required to engage in moderation and standardisation activity with internal moderators, approved by ACRES' Examinations Officer and Head of Centre.

**Internal Moderators** - ACRES will deploy an Internal Quality Assurance moderator to work with tutors in agreeing a robust grading for each student and cohort. One Internal Moderator will be allocated to each subject and will have the necessary experience and subject matter expertise in the relevant discipline to provide appropriate support and challenge to tutors when agreeing TAGs to ensure robust, objective evidence-based judgements are made.

The Internal Moderator will engage with tutors in the support and challenge activity to ensure robust TAGs and will then work with the Examinations' Officer and Head of Centre to agree final TAG submissions having presented and considered a range of objective evidence and evaluative judgements.

**External Specialist Assessor** - ACRES will employ the services of an External Specialist Assessor to assess additional learning support needs in the context of exams access arrangements. Assessments will be conducted with students and the results of these assessments will inform any adaptations and adjustments to both classroom (online) and assessment based activity eg provision of extra time.

**ACRES' Examinations Officer (EO)** - The EO will work with the Head of Centre to ensure compliance with all of Ofqual's and the Awarding Organisation's requirements in relation to the awarding of TAGs this summer.

In doing so the EO will ensure timely and informative communication with staff and students, as appropriate, ensuring all those involved are aware of their roles and responsibilities and that students are kept informed of the process and any requirements of them at all times.

The EO will coordinate external specialist assessor activities and assessments and will arrange any resulting access arrangements required as appropriate, liaising with



the tutors to ensure this is embedded as normal practice in teaching, learning and assessment as normal ways of working as well as in any specific assessment setting.

The EO will engage in the analysis of final internal moderation submissions with the Head of Centre prior to working with the Head of Centre to submit all relevant data to the Awarding Organisation. They will ensure regular monitoring of Ofqual and AO updates in relation to this to ensure compliance and delivery timescales are met.

**Head of Centre (HOC)** - The HOC will work with the EO to ensure compliance with all of Ofqual's and the Awarding Organisation's requirements in relation to the awarding of TAGs this summer.

In doing so the HOC will ensure timely and informative communication with staff and students, as appropriate, via the EO, ensuring all those involved are aware of their roles and responsibilities and that students are kept informed of the process and any requirements of them at all times.

The HOC will manage all final internal moderation submissions with the EO and Internal Moderators prior to working with the EO to submit all relevant data to the Awarding Organisation. The HOC will also ensure regular monitoring of Ofqual and AO updates in relation to this to ensure compliance and robustness, ensuring all submitted grades are objective, supported by a range of evidence and evidence-based judgements and are free from bias and discrimination.

The HOC will then submit a Head of Centre Declaration when they are satisfied that all internal moderation and standardisation has taken place effectively resulting in submission of robust awarding for all students.

## **Training, support and guidance**

This section outlines the mentoring, support and guidance that we will provide to those determining teacher assessed grades this year.

All tutors employed at ACRES receive mentoring support in the context of the provision they offer, the platform this is delivered on (whether face to face or online), any specific areas for professional development identified and any further support or training required in the implementation of any processes in relation to the robust derivation of Teacher Assessed Grades.

- Mentoring and support this year has taken the form of one to one or small group meetings remotely using online video platforms, telephone support and



the cascading and sharing of targeted information relevant to the awarding of Teacher Assessed Grades such as extracts from JCQ, Ofqual and Awarding Organisation guidelines to ensure a robust, fair, objective and consistent approach to the awarding of the grades for all students

- Teachers will be expected to engage fully with all training and support that is provided by the Centre and any relevant material cascaded from JCQ, Ofqual and the Awarding Organisation
- Tutors and all staff involved in the TAG process will be expected to engage in all initiatives deemed appropriate including webinars and subject specific content in addition to those initiatives mentioned above to ensure all staff have a clear understanding of expectations within their role and how and why they will deploy this to ensure robust awarding of teacher assessed grades
- The Head of Centre and Exams Officer will ensure they are continually up to date with the latest guidelines from JCQ, Ofqual and/or the Awarding Organisation and will take responsibility for ensuring all relevant information is cascaded and understood by all relevant staff through emails, phone support, team meetings, group meetings and the sharing of relevant specifications and guidance documents as appropriate, signposting to further support (e.g. webinars or sample assessments etc) where relevant
- The Head of Centre and Exams Officer will ensure they attend all relevant webinars and read all relevant guidance material to ensure robust management of the Teacher Assessed Grade process

### **Support for Newly Qualified Teachers and teachers less familiar with assessment**

ACRES do not currently employ any Newly Qualified Teachers and current tutors are familiar with assessment.

However, where feedback, mentoring or observations of teaching, learning and assessment / moderation activity etc identify a need for further development mentoring support and other interventions will be implemented.

We will provide ongoing mentoring support in relation to assessment and specifically this year to teaching, learning and assessing in a remote online platform which was new to all staff from March 2020.

Group sessions and one to one support will be provided in delivering online learning and in embedding, implementing and recording any assessment and student progress tracking evidence, targeted where necessary to further dif

Further to the ongoing mentoring support, robust internal moderation is in place to ensure all tutors continue to be supported in line with their experience in assessing



learning and progress with appropriate levels of control in place to provide appropriate challenge and review of evidence to support rounded assessment across a range of sources with varying levels of control, each used to support and inform judgements.

Mentoring and support will be provided by Learning and Development mentors, Internal Moderators, Exams Officer and Head of Centre as appropriate.

## **Determining Teacher Assessed Grades**

### **Objectivity 'v' Subjectivity**

As mentioned above, the process we have in place, supported by clear roles and responsibilities in relation to teaching, learning and assessment and internal moderation and standardisation will ensure that all evidence used to inform TAGs is objective, based on evaluative data and evidence based judgements, and is not subjective in any way.

This will be verified in a number of ways throughout the process with tutors having clear guidelines set out to determine what is objective and appropriate evidence to use and what is subjective and not appropriate within teaching, learning and assessment activity. This will be agreed in collaboration between tutors, mentors, assessors, EO and HOC, resulting in an evidence based matrix of assessment tracking to embed in teaching, learning and assessment.

This will be further supported by appropriate review and challenge with tutors by internal moderators in the moderation and standardisation process to ensure only objective evidence is used to inform grades. Any subjective evidence will be challenged and removed. Ultimately this will be verified by the HOC prior to submitting the HOC declaration.

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Staff will fulfil their duties and responsibilities in relation to relevant equality and diversity legislation to ensure decisions are objective and fair and free from bias or discrimination

Senior support staff, leaders and Internal Moderators (where appropriate) will:

- Identify and explore any sources of unfairness and bias / discrimination and ensure individual needs have been taken into account in determining the TAG and conclude if further action is necessary to review the TAG or not, taking appropriate action if the grade and supporting evidence is to be reviewed
- Ensure tutors know how to minimise bias in questions and marking and recognise hidden forms of bias, addressing these where applicable
- Review teacher assessed grades, identifying any indication of bias / discrimination and challenge this without exception

To ensure objectivity, all staff involved in determining teacher assessed grades will be made aware that:

- unconscious bias can skew judgements inappropriately and must be challenged constructively and addressed
- the evidence presented should be valued for its own merit as an indication of performance and attainment
- teacher assessed grades should not be influenced by candidates' positive or challenging personal circumstances, character, behaviour, appearance, socio-economic background, or protected characteristics
- Unconscious bias is more likely to occur when quick opinions are formed and so it is vital that sufficient time is allowed to review evidence and portfolios of learning and assessment objectively and timely

These aspects will be verified and challenged as appropriate and where necessary in Internal Moderation meetings between tutors and Internal Moderators and between Internal Moderators and Head of Centre.



## **Use of appropriate evidence**

In line with the JCQ guidelines 'Guidance on Grading for Teachers' we have ensured that our Head of Centre and Exams Officer read these guidelines in full (along with any other supporting documentation or Awarding Organisation material / webinars etc) and ensure these resources are signposted and/or issued to all relevant staff, tutors and Internal Moderators to ensure and monitor compliance. A copy of these guidelines is accessible to all staff involved in the process and pertinent extracts signposted specifically where appropriate.

The Exams Officer, in conjunction with the Head of Centre, is responsible for ensuring all information and support resources are provided and understood. This typically takes the form of whole TAG team meetings) with targeted agendas (when discussing key source material such as the Guidance for Grading document or targeted emails if appropriate to the content being shared (e.g., latest updates for example and short bulletins)

Emails are retained as evidence to support information sharing trails and questions / support as a result and all meetings are minuted and retained as supporting evidence.

Further detail on the use of appropriate evidence can be found in Appendix 1 of this document.

## **What constitutes robust evidence and ensures an appropriate range is used?**

Based on information and guidance derived from Ofqual and AO communications ACRES' Head of Centre has worked with tutors, Teaching, Learning and Assessment mentors, ACRES' Exams Officer and IQAs to derive an assessment tracking tool which focuses on a range of evidence and assessment criteria. This assessment and progress tracking tool will be embedded as standard practice within teaching, learning and assessment and will act as robust recording of a range of evidence providing a depth and breadth to objective assessment as would ordinarily have taken place in the course planner. The tool will be designed so as not to create extra work for tutors and will form an integral part of each session and session / assessment evaluation, becoming their core planning and assessment tracking tool, whilst resulting in an objective overview of individual student progress and achievement on what has been taught and assessed in a variety of ways.



## Relevant Evidence

As mentioned above ACRES' staff, tutors, Internal Quality Assurers, EO and HOC have worked collaboratively to create and agree principles of implementation and the embedding of an assessment tracking tool. The EO has worked closely with tutors and will continue to do so, to ensure that all relevant and agreed evidence sources, as defined by Ofqual and the Awarding Organisation, are used and objectively evaluated. This process will be verified via the internal moderation process and HOC discussions prior to sign off. It will be made clear and will be robustly monitored that subjective evidence, i.e that which is not based on objective data, will not be used to influence the TAG or any assessment criteria.

We will ensure that tutors making judgements and all other relevant staff involved in the TAG process will have regard to the Ofqual Head of Centre guidance on recommended evidence and will also take into account further guidance provided by the Awarding Organisation

All candidate evidence used to determine teacher assessed grades, and all / any associated / relevant documentation, will be retained by the Tutor / Centre to be readily available for the purposes of external quality assurance requirements and any appeals

We will use a range of evidence and student work to form our evidence base to support each tutor assessed grade, to include assessment materials provided by our awarding organisation, including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers as well as online assessment tools and methods and marked work in and beyond the virtual classroom

We will use non-exam assessment (NEA) work, where applicable, (English GCSE) and will ensure these results are shared with the candidates prior to the awarding of a Teacher Assessed Grade as advised by the Awarding Organisation to allow time for any appeal prior to the awarding of the TAG element

We will use student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, follow the same format as awarding organisation materials, and that have been marked in a way that reflects awarding organisation mark schemes

We will use in-class and homework activities / assessments to inform the portfolio of evidence for each student and the resulting TAG, including internal assessments taking in online sessions or set as homework



We will use evidence from mock exams taken online in controlled conditions (please note it has not been possible to conduct face to face mock exams due to local and national lockdowns and community college and venue closures)

We will use a range of initial, formative and summative assessments to evaluate student progress in line with content taught to support the overall TAG judgement.

### **Additional Assessment Materials**

Where appropriate we will use additional assessment materials to create and enable further opportunities to evidence progress and attainment and to monitor ongoing progression and further consolidation of knowledge and skills.

We will use additional assessment materials to support consistency of judgement between tutors and different cohorts of students where appropriate through the setting of common assessments /activities for all students studying Maths GCSE for example where we have two tutors teaching multiple cohorts.

### **Appropriateness and Balance of Evidence**

We will ensure appropriateness and balance of evidence by:

- Considering the level of control under which an assessment was completed and ensuring we adopt an appropriate range of high, medium/high, medium and low control activities and assessments which when pulled together in to the overarching evidence portfolio per student and cohort(s) all support and substantiate the resulting Teacher Assessed Grade
- Ensuring we are able to authenticate the work as the student's own, especially where that work was not completed within the online setting. We will provide appropriate challenge to authenticate work and ensure any concerns are mapped to typicality of the student profile with any unusual / unexpected results / levels of work being validated as part of a wider evidence base, implementing further assessment activity if concerns remain
- Considering the limitations of assessing a student's performance when using assessments that have been completed more than once and ensuring these form part of a wider evidence base if this is the case
- Considering the specification and assessment objective coverage of the assessment / activity
- Considering the depth and breadth of knowledge, skills and understanding assessed

## **Robust Evidence**

### **What constitutes robust evidence and ensures an appropriate range is used?**

Based on information and guidance derived from JCQ, Ofqual and Awarding Organisation communications ACRES' Head of Centre has worked with tutors, Teaching, Learning and Assessment mentors, ACRES' Exams Officer and IQAs to derive an assessment tracking tool which focuses on a range of evidence and assessment criteria. This assessment and progress tracking tool will be embedded within ongoing teaching, learning and assessment and will act as the core tracking tool to record robust evidence of a range of assessment activities, mapping a trajectory of progress and providing a depth and breadth to objective assessment recording as would ordinarily have taken place in the course planner. The tool will be designed so as not to create extra work for tutors and will form an integral part of each session and session / assessment evaluation, resulting in an objective overview of individual student progress and achievement on what has been taught and assessed in a variety of ways. A copy will be attached to this document for reference.

## **Relevant Evidence**

As mentioned above ACRES' staff, tutors, Internal Quality Assurers, EO and HOC have worked collaboratively to create and agree principles of implementation and the embedding of an assessment tracking tool. The EO has worked closely with tutors and will continue to do so, to ensure that all relevant and agreed evidence sources, as defined by Ofqual, JCQ and the Awarding Organisation, are used and objectively evaluated. This process will be verified via the internal moderation process and Head of Centre discussions prior to sign off of the Teacher Assessed Grade profile. It will be made clear in all communications (and will be robustly monitored and challenged if applicable) that subjective evidence, i.e., that which is not based on objective data nor evidence based, will not be used to influence the TAG or any assessment criteria. In doing so we will:

- Determine grades based on evidence which is commensurate with the standard at which a student is performing, i.e., their demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills across the content of the course they have been taught
- Ensure our tutors record how the evidence was used to arrive at a fair and objective grade, which is free from bias and discrimination
- Ensure tutors maintain an Assessment Record for each of their cohorts and share this with their mentor or Internal Moderator as appropriate, including any variations for the differentiation for any student(s)

## **Internal Moderation / Internal Quality Assurance**

This section gives details of our approach to internal moderation and standardisation of our Teacher Assessed Grades to ensure consistency, fairness and objectivity within and across different cohorts of students. In doing so we will:

- Ensure that all teachers involved in deriving teacher assessed grades read and understand this Centre Policy and any associated supporting documents and have the opportunity to ask questions to clarify understanding and highlight any concerns so these can be addressed proactively and timely
- Ensure that we carry out internal moderation and standardisation processes where there is more than one cohort of students within a subject and / or more than one tutor responsible for the teaching, learning and assessment of one subject and qualification
- Ensure our tutors and Internal Moderators are provided with training and support to ensure they take a consistent approach to:
  - Determining Teacher Assessed Grades
  - Marking of students' work and other evidence / assessment activities
  - Reaching a holistic grading decision established from a wide range of evidence
  - Applying the use of grading support and documentation
- Conduct internal moderation and standardisation across all grades / students and cohorts
- Ensure that the overarching Assessment Record and supporting evidence will form the basis of internal moderation and standardisation and discussions with other tutors within the same subject area and Internal Moderators to agree the awarding of grades consistently, objectively and fairly, free from bias or discrimination and taking into account any additional learning support / access arrangement needs as appropriate
- Where necessary, review and reflect on individual grading decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our Awarding Organisation and/or where internal moderation / standardisation activity identifies a need to review evidence / recommendations
- Where appropriate, following a review as described above, amend individual grade decisions to ensure alignment with the standards as outlined by our Awarding Organisation or in light of internal quality assurance validations of grades
- In respect of equality legislation, consider the range of evidence for students of different protected characteristics that are included in our internal standardisation and moderation



## **Authentication**

A range of measures will be put in place to verify and authenticate students' work as their own. This, together with a wide-ranging, evidence-based assessment portfolio, will ensure any anomalies / unexpected results are flagged and explored further to verify the student's own work or to explore where support from a third party may be apparent. Any concerns will be explored by the tutor in the first instance and it is the responsibility of the tutor to flag to the internal moderator, the EO, mentor or HOC if they have any concerns over authentication. Any concerns will then be explored through the moderation process with a detailed review of the range of evidence to date including results of assessments, home work and in class work.

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- Robust mechanisms, will be in place to ensure that tutors are confident that work used as evidence is the students' own and that no inappropriate levels of support have been given to students to complete it, either within the centre or with external tutors
- It is understood by all staff involved in the awarding process that Awarding Organisations will investigate instances where it appears evidence is not authentic. We will follow all guidance provided by the Awarding Organisation to support these determinations of authenticity

## **Sufficient content of Curriculum**

As mentioned in the context above, ACRES offers and delivers a one year GCSE programme for adult learners aged 19+. The existing Scheme of Learning (SoL) is shared across all tutors delivering each qualification as a basis for their course planning and associated assessment routines. The SoL provides a planning tool to ensure the full extent of the curriculum is covered and provides regular opportunities



for ongoing assessment, progress tracking and feedback. The course will be delivered to the normal planned end date (and beyond if any make up sessions are required) to ensure full coverage of the curriculum as per any other exam year and will provide sufficient time for consolidation of assessment evidence to support TAGs which will then be subject to moderation, standardisation and finally sign off by the HOC.

## **Access Arrangements and Special Considerations**

This section gives details of our approach to access arrangements and mitigating circumstances (special consideration) and outlines the approach we will take to provide students with appropriate access arrangements and take into account mitigating circumstances in particular instances. In doing so we will:

- Where students have agreed access arrangements or reasonable adjustments (for example a reader or scribe) make every effort to ensure that these arrangements are in place when assessments are being taken
- Where an assessment has taken place without an agreed reasonable adjustment or access arrangement, remove that assessment from the portfolio of evidence and establish alternative evidence where the reasonable adjustment has been accommodated
- Where illness or other personal circumstances might have affected performance in assessments used in determining a student's standard of performance, take account of this when making judgements
- Record, as part of assessment tracking how we have incorporated any necessary variations to take account of the impact of illness or personal circumstances on the performance of individual students in particular assessments

## **Addressing Disruption**

We will ensure that Teacher Assessed Grades are determined based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed for each student in line with JCQ and Awarding Organisation guidelines. Overall, no learning has been lost as all lessons have been conducted remotely in online sessions and so the adverse effect of any missed learning by individual students, through their own personal circumstances, has been mitigated through the provision of and access to missed work and assessments where relevant.

## **Comparison of Teacher Assessed Grades to results for previous cohorts**

We will review trend data of results in previous years within our Centre and compile information on the grades awarded to our students in past Summer series in which exams took place (not including 2019/2020 academic year when Centre Assessed Grades were awarded) and review our TAG profile for this year in relation to this, challenging any unusual characteristics that may be evident and ensuring any anomalies are supported with clear rationale and supporting evidence if so.

- In doing so we will consider the size and make up of our cohort from year to year.
- We will also consider the stability and consistency of our centre's overall grade outcomes from year to year, exploring any variances and providing justifications where appropriate.
- We will consider both subject and centre level variation in our outcomes during the internal quality assurance process and Internal Moderators and Head of Centre will provide two layers of supportive challenge to verify grades and explore evidence criteria and rationales for decisions where appropriate to enable confident and robust Head of Centre approval on final submission of Teacher Assessed Grades, particularly if there are any notable variances from typicality and trend performance data
- We will prepare a succinct narrative on the outcomes of the review against historic data which, in the event of significant variance from the qualifications-levels profiles attained in previous examined years, address the reasons for this. This rationale will be available for subsequent review during both internal and external quality assurance processes.

If, following the review of historical performance trend data it is apparent the proposed Teacher Assessed Grades could potentially be overly harsh or lenient we will:

- Compile a more detailed analysis of trend performance data to establish reasons for any variance
- Collate other data sources that will help to quality assure the grades we intend to award in 2021 and conduct further moderation and standardisation to validate the final proposed outcome

In reviewing our Teacher Assessed Grade profile for the awarding of Summer 2021 grades we will conduct a robust analysis of historical trend data (excluding those results determined by Centre Assessed Grades in the 2019/2020 academic year)





We will report on any significant changes or context that would be pertinent or relevant to note or 'justify' any changes to typicality. At this stage we already know that our portfolio is unchanged in that we continue to offer only Maths and English GCSES and our trend data will continue to reflect this and no subjects will be omitted.

It would be pertinent to note that all trend data would be based on face to face, classroom-based delivery with only some online homework-based activities being conducted online in comparison to this year's cohort exclusively learning online in remote virtual classrooms.

Any variances from typical grading profiles will be reviewed by Internal Moderators, ACRES Exams Officer and Head of Centre to enable further scrutiny of the grade profiles and the evidence used to support TAG judgements prior to any submission to the Awarding Organisation. Any variances proved to be valid will be supported by a clear rationale as to why this is the case supported by robust evidence and criteria to support / quantify any variances.

## **Recording of decisions and retention of evidence and data**

We will ensure that all our tutors, Internal Moderators, Exams Officer and Head of Centre maintain records that show how the Teacher Assessed Grades process operated, including the rationale for decisions in relation to individual marks/grades

We will ensure that evidence is maintained across a variety of tasks to develop a holistic view of each student's demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills in the areas of content taught

We will put in place recording requirements for the various stages of the process to ensure the accurate and secure retention of the evidence used to make decisions

We will comply with our obligations in relation to General Data Protection Regulations

We will ensure that the grades accurately reflect the objective evidence submitted

We will ensure that evidence is retained electronically or in paper format in a secure centre-based system that can be readily shared with our Awarding Organisation on request and will be readily available upon request for sight of any assessment evidence.

## Confidentiality

This section details the measures in place in our centre to maintain the confidentiality of grades, while sharing information regarding the range of evidence on which the grades will be based.

- All staff involved have been made aware at every opportunity of the need to maintain the confidentiality of Teacher Assessed Grades
- All tutors have been briefed and regularly reminded of the requirement to share details of the range of evidence on which students' grades will be based, while ensuring that details of the final Teacher Assessed Grades remain completely confidential and must not be shared with any students or related parties and not with any member of staff who is not directly involved in the Teacher Assessed Grade process
- Relevant details from this Policy, including requirements around sharing details of evidence and the confidentiality requirements, have been shared with tutors, students and other associated staff on a number of occasions in emails and in meetings and professional discussions

## Malpractice

This section of our Centre Policy outlines the measures in place to prevent malpractice, maladministration and other breaches of exam regulations, and how we will deal with such cases if they do occur, in line with JCQ and Awarding Organisation guidelines and requirements.

ACRES has a specific Malpractice and Maladministration policy. The policy is reviewed at least annually or as and when required (whichever is sooner) and has been reviewed to ensure it reflects any specific challenges or aspects in relation to the awarding of Teacher Assessed Grades in Summer 2021.

We will ensure that:

- All staff involved have been made aware of these policies, and have received training in them as necessary
- All staff involved have been made aware of the specific types of malpractice which may affect the Summer 2021 series including:
  - breaches of internal security
  - deception
  - improper assistance to students



- failure to appropriately authenticate a student's work
- over-direction of students in preparation for common assessments
- allegations of submitting grades not supported by evidence, that are known to be inaccurate
- entering students who were not originally intending to certificate a grade in the Summer 2021 series
- failure to engage, as requested, with Awarding Organisations during the External Quality Assurance and appeal stages
- failure to keep appropriate records of decisions made and resulting Teacher Assessed Grades
  - We will also ensure that all staff involved in the Summer 2021 Awarding process are aware of the consequences of malpractice or maladministration (as published in the JCQ guidance document 'JCQ Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures) and the possible risk of delay to students receiving their grades through to the ultimate risk of removal of Centre status.

## **Conflict of Interest**

In order to ensure no conflict of interest the HOC will ensure the ACRES' 'Conflict of Interest statement' principles are applied and adhered to ensure no situation arises in which a person or organisation is involved in multiple interests, financial or otherwise, and serving one interest could involve working against another.

To mitigate this risk ACRES conducts annual Conflict of Interest declarations which all staff are required to sign to declare they are not involved / aware of any conflict of interest in the context of their role and responsibilities. In addition to this annual check ACRES also monitors any potential/direct conflicts of interest in relation to examinations and specifically again this year in relation to the awarding of Centre / Teacher Assessed Grades.

In readiness for any exam series / awarding of qualifications by other means such as TAGs, ACRES' staff involved in the examinations process are asked to make a declaration as to whether they have any potential conflict of interest at that time (eg a child taking examinations or undertaking a qualification subject to a TAG in the college, a friend / relative taking an examination or being awarded a TAG with ACRES etc) Tutors are asked to declare any conflicts of interest with any of their students.



Declarations are reviewed and any potential conflicts of interest are alerted by the Exams Officer to the Head of Centre and actioned/mitigated appropriately. Any conflict of interest will be reported to the Awarding Organisation as appropriate.

In order to ensure no conflict of interest the Head of Centre will ensure the ACRES' 'Conflict of Interest statement' principles are applied and adhered to, to ensure no situation arises in which a person or organisation is involved in multiple interests, financial or otherwise, and serving one interest could involve working against another.

To mitigate this risk ACRES conducts annual Conflict of Interest declarations which all staff are required to sign to declare they are not involved / aware of any conflict of interest in the context of their role and responsibilities. In addition to this annual check ACRES also monitors any potential/direct conflicts of interest in relation to examinations and specifically again this year in relation to the awarding of Centre / Teacher Assessed Grades.

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Declarations are reviewed and any potential conflicts of interest are alerted by the Exams Officer to the Head of Centre and actioned/mitigated appropriately. Any conflict of interest will be reported to the Awarding Organisation as appropriate.

In summary:

- To protect the integrity of assessments, all staff involved in the determination of grades must declare any conflict of interest such as relationships with students to our Head of Centre for further consideration
- Our Head of Centre will take appropriate action to manage any conflicts of interest arising with centre staff in accordance with the JCQ documents - '[General Regulations for Approved Centres, 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021.](#)'
- We will also carefully consider the need to separate duties and personnel to ensure fairness in later process reviews and appeals.



## **Private candidates**

After consideration ACRES has made the strategic decision not to accept Private Candidates this year.

We were approached by a student to consider them as a Private Candidate but after investigation and consideration as to the range of assessment data and evidence available we concluded we would not be in a position to award a robust Teacher Assessed Grade and consequently declined to accept the student as a Private Candidate, providing a clear rationale to them for our decision.

## **External Quality Assurance**

ACRES recognises its responsibility to comply with all Awarding Organisation requirements including that of external quality assurance. We will ensure, as is standard practice at ACRES, that we have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the relevant documentation and assessment evidence is in place and will be readily available for any required external quality assurance purposes. As well as the portfolios of evidence being retained and readily available and accessible, we will also ensure that all relevant staff such as Head of Centre, Exams Officer, Internal Quality Assurers and Tutors are readily available too should they be required for any meetings or discussion. Tutors have been made aware of the need to be available from the end of the TAG submission window to the time immediately prior to Results Day. The Head of Centre and Exams Officer or designated deputies will be available at all times and post results day in the event of any appeals or Subject Access Requests.

We will ensure that:

- All staff involved have been made aware of the Awarding Organisation requirements for External Quality Assurance as set out in the JCQ guidance and any specific Awarding Organisation guidance
- All necessary records and evidence of decision-making in relation to determining Teacher Assessed Grades have been properly and securely retained and can be made available for review as required within the timescales demanded by the EQA and Awarding Organisation
- All student evidence on which decisions regarding the determination of grades has been based, together with any supporting materials to substantiate the grades, is retained and can be made available for review as required
- Any instances where student evidence used to support the Teacher Assessed Grade is not available (e.g., where the material has previously been returned to the student(s) and cannot now be retrieved for some reason) will be clearly

recorded together with a contextual overview as to why this is the case and what mitigation has been put in place to overcome this

- All staff involved have been briefed on the possibility that they may be required at any point following the submission of Teacher Assessed Grades in relation to external quality assurance activity and have been advised of the consequent need to be available for discussion with Awarding Organisations during the different stages of the External Quality Assurance process as and when required. All staff have been advised of the potential need to engage in EQA activity and that they must respond promptly and fully to enquiries, including attendance at Virtual Visits should this prove necessary
- Arrangements are in place to respond fully and promptly to any additional requirements/reviews that may be identified as a result of the External Quality Assurance process
- All relevant staff have been made aware that a failure to respond fully and effectively to such additional requirements may result in further action by the Awarding Organisations including the potential withholding of results
- All staff are reminded to advise the Examinations Officer and Head of Centre in advance of any potential issues with availability, where possible, so that contingency plans can be put in place and if there is no mitigation appropriate (e.g., ill health, etc) the Head of Centre and Examinations Officer will ensure appropriate cover to enable the EQA activity to proceed as required

## **Results**

We will ensure, through provision of timely advice and guidance, that all staff and students are aware of the approach to awarding Teacher Assessed Grades in Summer 2021 specifically in this case to the issuing of results. In doing so we will ensure that:

- All staff involved have been made aware of the specific arrangements for the issue of results in Summer 2021, including the issuing of A/AS and GCSE results in the same week (although we only deliver GCSE qualifications, we will point out that results this year will be issued within the same week and not one week apart as is typical of previous years)
- Arrangements are made to ensure the appropriate staffing is in place, including Head of Centre, Exams Officer (and their deputies in the event they are needed) and support staff, to enable the efficient receipt and release of results to our students
- Arrangements are in place for the provision of all necessary advice, guidance and support, to students on receipt of their results and that appropriate staff are available to fulfil this as mentioned in the bullet point above
- Guidance will include advice on the Appeals process, if required



- Appropriate staff are available to respond promptly to any requests for information from Awarding Organisations, for example regarding missing or incomplete results, to enable such issues to be swiftly resolved on behalf of the Centre and the Student(s)

## Appeals

ACRES has its own Appeals Policy which is reviewed annually or when required (whichever is sooner) and is available to all relevant staff and students. This policy is produced in line with JCQ and Awarding Organisation guidelines and details our approach to managing appeals, including Centre Reviews, and subsequent appeals to Awarding Organisations.

We will ensure that:

- All staff involved will be made aware of the arrangements for, and the requirements of, appeals in Summer 2021, as set out in in the JCQ and Awarding Organisation guidelines
- Internal arrangements are in place for the swift and effective handling of Centre Reviews in compliance with those requirements
- All necessary staff are briefed on the process for, and timing of, such reviews, and that they will be available to ensure prompt and efficient handling
- Students are appropriately guided as to what constitutes an appeal through to the submission of any appeal by signposting what actions they need to take, where to direct their appeal and when that must be submitted
- Arrangements are in place for the timely submission of appeals to Awarding Organisations, including any priority appeals which are critical to a learner's next steps and onward education / employment
- Arrangements are in place to obtain the written consent of students to the initiation of appeals and to explain and record their awareness of the risk that grades may go down as well as up on appeal

## Timeline

In order to ensure timely submission of evidence to review and be moderated ACRES has established a timeline of key activities and milestones which will enable us to deliver to the agreed timescales and to the appropriate depth and breadth of assessment as defined by Ofqual and the Awarding Organisation. An overview of the key milestones can be seen below:



## April 2021

23.04.2021 - Group meeting with HOC, EO, Internal Moderators and tutors to outline and clarify next steps and address any concerns/queries

## May 2021

w/c 03.05.2021 - Initial meeting between tutor and allocated Internal Moderator to review assessment tracking, assessment tracking spreadsheet completion, objective supporting data, emerging TAG, further support required etc

21.05.2021 - Final date for assessment tracking and spreadsheet to be completed

w/c 24.05.2021 - Internal moderation and standardisation of proposed TAGs to take place, to include sampling of students' work to ensure consistency of standard and assessment criteria and evidence base is applied fairly, robustly and consistently across the tutor groups and student cohorts and is based purely on objective data

w/c 31.05.2021 - Moderation meetings between internal moderators, Exams Officer and Head of Centre

## June 2021

11.06.2021 - Exams Officer and Head of Centre to complete a final review of grades and carry out a final sense/accuracy check prior to submission of grades to the Awarding Organisation in the required format and method.

18.06.2021 - Deadline for submission of Teacher Assessed Grades to AQA





## **Appendix 1 - JCQ Centre Policy Summary Document - Further Information**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The details below outlines each of the roles within our Centre and summarises their associated responsibilities:

#### **Head of Centre – Helen D’Silva**

ACRES’ Head of Centre (HOC) will:

- Take overall responsibility for the college as an Exams’ Centre and will ensure clear roles and responsibilities for all staff involved are clearly defined and implemented
- Work with ACRES’ Examinations Officer to ensure compliance with all of JCQ, Ofqual and Awarding Organisation requirements in relation to the awarding of TAGS this Summer
- Be responsible for approving the Centre’s policy and processes for the awarding of teacher assessed grades
- Ensure timely and informative communication with staff and students, as appropriate, via ACRES’ Examinations Officer, ensuring all those involved are aware of their roles and responsibilities at any given time and that students are kept informed of the process and any requirements of them at all times
- Ensure a robust Internal Quality Assurance policy has been approved, signed off and is implemented as an integral and critical part of the teacher assessed grade process prior to moderation, standardisation and submission of grades
- Manage all final moderation submissions with the ACRES’ Examinations Officer (EO) and Internal Moderators prior to working with the EO to submit all relevant data to the Awarding Organisation prior to Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021
- Ensure regular monitoring of JCQ, Ofqual and Awarding Organisation updates in relation to the awarding of teacher assessed grades to ensure compliance and robustness, ensuring all submitted grades are objective, supported by a range of evidence and evidence-based judgements and are free from bias and discrimination
- Submit a Head of Centre Declaration when they are satisfied that all internal moderation and standardisation has taken place effectively, resulting in the submission of robust awarding for all students which represents an internal quality assured academic judgement made by tutors and validated by moderators within the centre and that robust challenge and evaluation of these ensure that the submitted grade profile is aligned to and compliant with the guidance on standards as advised by the Awarding Organisation



## **Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Department**

As a small adult and community learning provider ACRES does not have Heads of Department. Support to tutors is provided from two line management channels with overarching responsibility for the quality of education within Business Development (informing the intent of the curriculum) and Learning and Development (support tutor development and quality improvement of teaching, learning and assessment) teams.

Internal Quality Assurers / Internal Moderators will support this process in robustly validating and evaluating assessment evidence and professional judgements prior to submission to the Head of Centre for approval and submission. ACRES will deploy an Internal Quality Assurance moderator to work with tutors in agreeing a robust grading for each student and cohort. One Internal Moderator will be allocated to each subject and will have the necessary experience and subject matter expertise in the relevant discipline to provide appropriate support and challenge to tutors when agreeing TAGs to ensure robust, objective evidence-based judgements are made.

### **Learning and Development staff will:**

- Provide mentoring support and training to tutors in respect of teaching, learning and assessment strategies and evaluation throughout the duration of the course programme as appropriate to professional development and securing robust learner outcomes
- Support the Head of Centre and Exams Officer to ensure that all tutors conduct assessments under the appropriate level of control with reference to guidance provided by the JCQ and Awarding Organisation
- Support the Head of Centre and Exams Officer to ensure that all tutors are supported to ensure they have the information and skills required to make accurate, evaluative judgements based on robust assessment
- Support tutors to produce an Assessment Record for each subject cohort, that includes the nature of the assessment evidence being used, the level of control for assessments considered, and any other evidence that explains the determination of the final teacher assessed grades. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be recorded

### **Internal Quality Assurers / Internal Moderators will:**

- Engage with tutors in the support and challenge activity to ensure robust TAGs and will then work with the Examinations' Officer and Head of Centre to agree final TAG submissions having presented and considered a range of objective evidence and evaluative judgements



- Support and challenge tutors in the review and evaluation of Teacher Assessed grades to ensure robust and consistent judgements, based on academic attainment and assessment evidence are made across the 'department'
- Support the Head of Centre in the quality assurance of the final submitted teacher assessed grades
- Support the Head of Centre and Exams Officer in ensuring that all tutors have a clear understanding of the internal and external quality assurance processes and their role within those
- Ensure that any Internal Moderators review and comply with the Head of Department checklist as issued by JCQ and that this is completed and retained as supporting evidence to substantiate Teacher Assessed Grades

### **Tutors will:**

- Ensure optimum delivery of the curriculum within the time available and to the point at which final TAG assessment judgements will need to be made
- Conduct ongoing regular assessment activities which will be embedded as standard practice to ensure robust assessment of student progress and attainment; to inform ongoing planning and delivery and to enable robust TAG judgements to be made
- Engage in any professional development interventions (mentoring etc) to support high standards of teaching, learning and assessment
- Attend team meetings and organisational meetings with peers, internal quality assurers, mentors, Exams Officer and Head of Centre as appropriate to keep up to date with latest guidelines and required activities in the determining of teacher assessed grades
- Engage in moderation and standardisation activity with Internal Moderators to ensure robust, consistent, evidence-based judgements are made in the submission of the Teacher Assessed Grade
- Ensure they conduct assessments under our centre's appropriate levels of control and have sufficient evidence, in line with this Centre Policy and guidance from JCQ and Awarding Organisations to provide teacher assessed grades for each student they have entered for a qualification
- Ensure that the teacher assessed grade they assign to each student is a fair, valid and reliable reflection of the assessed evidence available for each student with judgements based on content taught and assessed
- Produce an Assessment Record for each subject cohort, that includes the nature of the assessment evidence being used, the level of control for assessments considered, and any other evidence that explains the determination of the final teacher assessed grades. Any necessary variations for individual students will also be recorded
- Securely store and be able to retrieve sufficient evidence to justify their decisions



## **External Specialist Assessor**

As a small provider ACRES outsources specialist assessor activity as and when required to support teaching, learning and assessment and to provide standardised scores to support exams access arrangements.

### **External Specialist Assessor will:**

- Work with ACRES' Exams Officer to assess additional learning support needs in the context of exams access arrangements
- Conduct assessments with students and provide feedback results of these assessments to inform any adaptations and adjustments to both classroom (online) and assessment-based activity e.g., provision of extra time

## **Examinations Officer (including SENCO responsibilities) – Lisa Warriner**

### **ACRES' Exams Officer / SENCO will:**

- Work with the Head of Centre to ensure compliance with all of JCQ, Ofqual and the Awarding Organisation's requirements in relation to the awarding of TAGs this summer
- Ensure timely and informative communication with staff and students, as appropriate, ensuring all those involved are aware of their roles and responsibilities and that students are kept informed of the process and any requirements of them at all times
- Coordinate external specialist assessor activities and assessments to assess additional learning support needs in the context of exams access arrangements and will arrange any resulting access arrangements required as appropriate, liaising with the tutors to ensure this is embedded as normal practice in teaching, learning and assessment as normal ways of working as well as in any specific assessment setting
- Engage in the analysis of final internal moderation submissions with the Head of Centre prior to working with the Head of Centre to submit all relevant data to the Awarding Organisation. They will ensure regular monitoring of JCQ, Ofqual and Awarding Organisation updates in relation to this to ensure compliance and delivery timescales are met
- Be responsible for the administration of our final teacher assessed grades and for managing the post-results services