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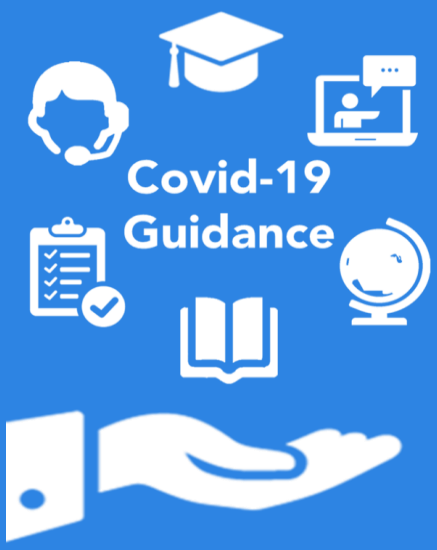
A City & Guilds Group Collaboration

Alternative Assessment Arrangements for 2021

Category B1 Vocational Qualifications (VRQs)

Information for Heads of Centre, Heads of Department and Tutors on the determination of Teacher Assessed Grades for Qualifications in Category B1

Version 1.2, June 2021



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Version control

Version 1.2, June 2021

Section	Changes
All	Removal of information about other qualification categories, to focus on the 'B1' qualifications where TAGs are permitted.
1.5	Clarification of eligibility of 'mid-flight' learners for TAGs
2.4	Clarification over eligibility of learners for TAGs for B1 qualifications, including removal of 'decision tree' from previous version (1.1)
4.1	Further detail on submission of CPA forms
4.2	Detail added on centre evidence submission requirements

Foreword

David Phillips, Managing Director City & Guilds

Dear Customers,

We understand that the ongoing pandemic, and restrictions, continue to disrupt teaching, learning and assessment thereby causing uncertainty about this year's results. We have created a series of communications and guidance documents to help alleviate some of the concerns, and to provide support for you and your learners over the coming months.

The issuing of results for qualifications will be regulated by the newly developed Vocational Contingency Regulatory Framework (VCRF). The VCRF will allow for assessments to be taken as normal, using agreed adaptations, or where necessary for alternative assessment arrangements.

We are working closely with UK Regulators and other Awarding Organisations to develop clear timeframes and detailed guidance for you, to help ensure that all eligible learners, with evidence of meeting the requirements can receive results under these arrangements.

Arrangements will vary according to the types of qualification and how they are delivered and assessed. We will ensure that the available arrangements:

- are practical, manageable and do not create unnecessary burden,
- maintain the integrity of our qualifications,
- support the issue of valid and reliable results, and
- do not advantage or disadvantage any one learner over another.

To support you through the new process, we have produced guidance for different types of qualifications which should assist your next steps. This information is the start of series of communications and will be updated regularly, to include:

- Important news on our COVID19 webpages
- FAQs to support your questions
- Timelines for activities
- Administrative details for submission of results
- Step-by-step guide to underpin the submission process

Our dedicated Customer Support team will be on hand to answer your questions and queries, and their contact details can be found at the end of this document.

David Phillips

Section 1 General Information

1.1 Introduction

In May of this year, Ofqual issued the VTQ Contingency Regulatory Framework (VCRF) covering certificating and non-certificating learners who were expecting to take assessments **between 1 August 2020 and 31 August 2021**.

The VCRF defines the two qualification categories (Category A or B) that VTQs can be placed into, depending on their purpose and design. These categories determine how results will be issued for learners due to take assessments in the above period. For 'Category B' qualifications only, this includes issuing results for examinations and internal assessments based on teachers' judgements of learners' performance, referred to as Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs).

Assessments for these qualifications can still go ahead as normal, or with the use of permitted adaptations, in line with public safety measures. Where learners are unable to do so TAGs can be submitted for the majority of assessments. Our sector-specific assessment adaptations guides detail the assessments where a TAG is not applicable and may need to be delayed.

1.2 Scope and purpose

This guidance only applies to VRQs listed in **Category B1** that are not Technical Qualifications. A full list of our qualifications in this category is available here (in the 'Qualification category lists' drop-down).

For Technical Qualifications, please see specific guidance on our website here

Alternative guidance for qualifications listed in **Category B2** is available on our website:

- Functional Skills
- ESOL Skills for Life

For **Category A** qualifications, TAGs are not permitted; in some instances, permitted adaptations may be used.

This document supports Head of Centres, Head of Departments and all tutors and centre staff using TAGs for VRQs in 2021. It details the process for determining TAGs, including gathering and reviewing evidence to determine grades, and internal quality assurance requirements.

Additional guidance on the submission process, external quality assurance requirements and release of results, will be issued in due course. This guidance may be updated over time. The version number of this document will be updated, and a version change table will indicate any changes made.

1.3 Differentiating from Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs)

Centres should be aware that the approach for determining TAGs this year is different to that used to determine Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs) last year.

CAGs were a **prediction** (using sources of trusted evidence) of the grade that learners would most likely have achieved had they sat their assessment as normal.

TAGs must be determined based on **actual assessment evidence** covering the knowledge, understanding or skills that would normally have been assessed (i.e. the evidence must be valid and authentic for that particular assessment).

Centres must familiarise themselves with the information provided in this document, as it supersedes any previously issued guidance.

1.4 Adaptations

We have put in place general and qualification specific adaptations that can assist centres in delivering assessments safely and rigorously, including remote invigilation for on-demand evolve onscreen exams.

For further information on the specific assessment adaptations available for these qualifications, please see our website here.

1.5 'Mid-flight' learners

Some learners may be registered on a qualification who are not due to achieve the qualification in the 2020/2021 academic year as they are not on the final year of a course. These are termed 'mid-flight' learners. For these learners, teaching, training and assessments should continue as normal where possible to do so. Centres can submit a TAG for the assessment components they were due to complete this academic year, as long as the evidence has been generated between 01 August 2020 and 31 August 2021.

Section 2 Qualification categories

2.1 Categories

Ofqual has assigned categories to qualifications on the VCRF, as explained below. You can find more information on the VCRF and these qualification categories on the Ofqual website here.

Category B is then further sub-divided into B1 and B2 category qualifications. This is explained in the following section.

You will find a list of VRQs on our website here, which indicates:

- which categories they are in
- whether a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) can be used.

2.2 Category A qualifications

Qualifications in this category test occupational or professional knowledge and/or skills, or proficiency in a skill area. Students must be assessed on their competency in these areas so that they can be effective and safe within the workplace.

Some of the exams or assessments that students will take may be adapted so that they can take place in line with public health guidance.

Some exams or assessments may have to be delayed if it is not possible to adapt them in a way that complies with public health guidance without undermining confidence in the qualification.

TAGs are not permitted for Category A qualifications.

2.3 Category B1 qualifications

Qualifications in this category are used to support progression to further or higher study or into employment. They are used instead of, or alongside, GCSEs and A levels. TAGs are permitted and can support progression for certain assessment components where they:

- cannot be delayed, and/or
- cannot be completed as normal or by using permitted adaptations.

For some qualifications that also support progression into employment, it may be the case that some assessment components must continue for the awarding of the qualification to remain valid (e.g. the assessment of occupational skills may need to be delayed if the assessment cannot be accessed by a student).

This guidance document relates to **Category B1** qualifications only.

2.4 Category B2 qualifications

Qualifications in this category are typically either short-course qualifications, qualifications typically delivered on a 'roll-on/roll-off' basis, or which may be smaller than those in B1 (for example, Entry Level or Award sized qualifications) or at lower Levels (such as Entry or Level 1).

Assessments for qualifications in this category are usually on-demand and should continue where it is viable to do so – where it is not, they should be delayed. Due to the duration and size of the qualification, it may not be possible to ensure sufficient valid evidence is available to support a TAG. As such, while TAGs

are permitted for these qualifications, they must only be considered as a **last resort** and requests to use them will be subject to approval by City & Guilds.

Alternative guidance for qualifications listed in **Category B2** is available on our website:

Functional Skills

ESOL Skills for Life

Section 3 Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) process

3.1 Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for B1 qualifications

Centres should continue teaching and learning as far as is possible, where it is safe to do so.

Where exams or internal assessments cannot be taken, teacher judgement can be used to determine learner grades. TAGs will be determined at component level and will be subject to internal and external quality assurance prior to release of results.

We will support centres throughout to ensure that the process used to determine grades meets our quality assurance requirements.

Where assessments can take place as normal, standard procedures remain in place and can continue to be used throughout this period e.g. results upload via the Walled Garden.

3.2 TAG timeframes for B1 qualifications

Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) are available to learners due to complete an assessment between **1 August 2020** and **31 August 2021**.

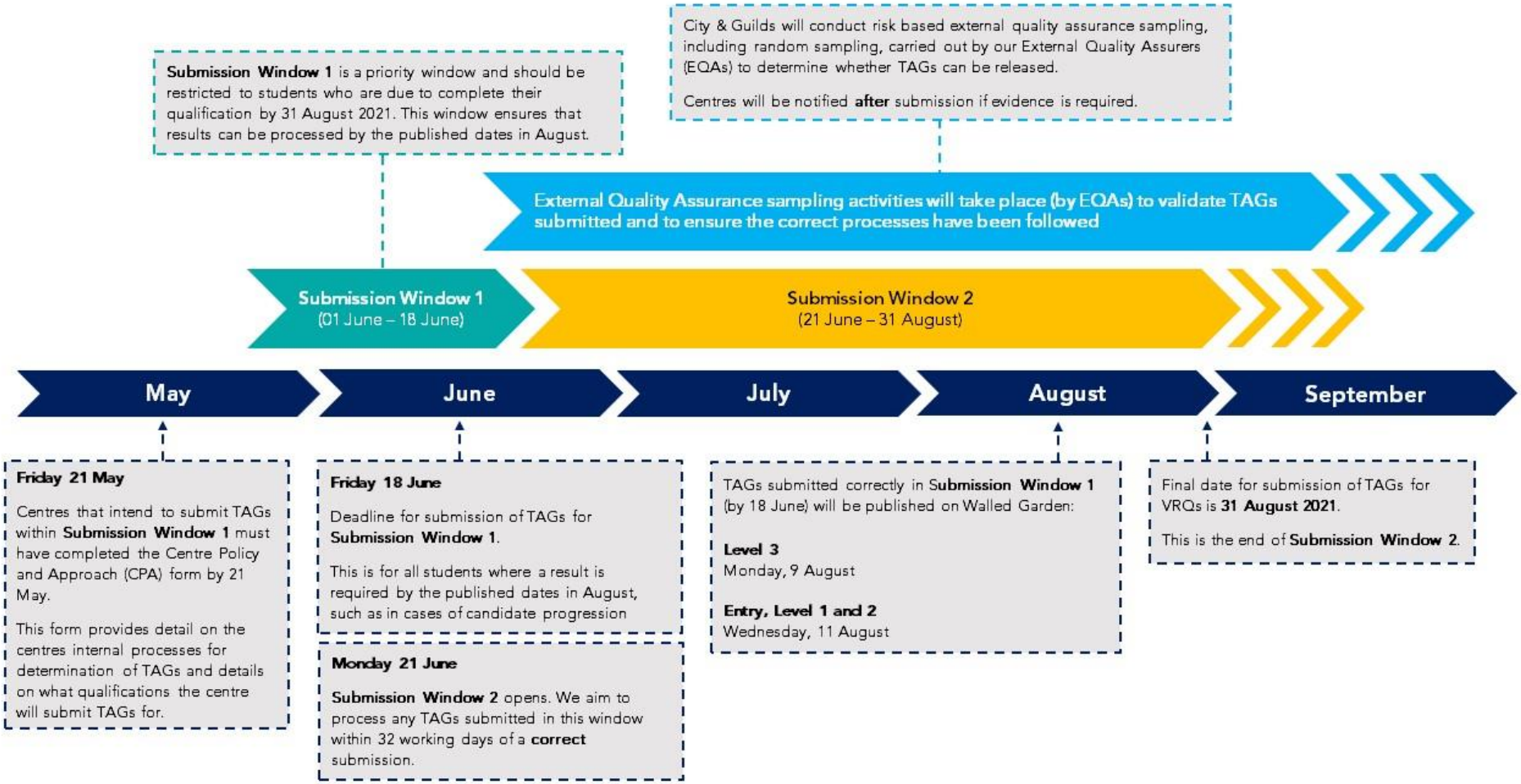
3.3 Eligibility for B1 qualifications

Assessment, either remotely or in person, is available to centres, where they can be taken in line with public safety measures. Adaptations to delivering some assessments have been made to support this.

In order to use TAGs for qualifications in **Category B1**, learners must:

- Have a valid registration for the qualification the centre wishes to submit a TAG for
- Be due to take assessments between 01 August 2020 and 31 August 2021
- Have a body of evidence that a tutor can use to form the basis of their judgement.

3.4 Category B1 Timeline



Section 4 Determining and Quality Assuring TAGs

4.1 Determining TAGs

We recommend that the following stages are followed when determining TAGs.

1. **Initial review**

Identify the teaching, learning and assessment that needs to take place for each learner to ensure there is sufficient, valid and authenticated evidence to support the determination of a **valid and reliable** TAG judgement.

2. **Collect evidence**

Centres must collect evidence of learner performance to support determination of TAGs, drawing on existing records and available evidence from any point in the course. Centres should take into consideration the various types of evidence that could contribute towards the determination of the TAG such as:

- Formative assessment
- Demonstration and performance of skills-based activities
- Previous/other assessments
- Results of any completed optional/mandatory centre assessments from year one or year two
- Relevant evidence from any centre-assessed components that have not been fully completed or submitted
- Overall learner performance
- Classwork/homework
- Internal tutor assessment and progress data
- Any other records of learner's performance over the course of study.

Tutors can use evidence of a learner's performance from any point in the course of study, provided they are confident that it reflects the learner's own work.

Where TAGs are submitted for a whole cohort, the type of evidence used will ideally be the same for all learners. In some cases however that might not be possible, e.g where learners have missed some teaching or assessments.

While we have identified potential sources of evidence, we will not prescribe the evidence that centres must use, as it is important that tutors consider the specific circumstances that teaching, learning and assessment has taken place under, for the learners in their cohort. Ultimately, it is their judgement of a learner's performance and they should use whichever evidence best supports that.

Centres may be required to provide samples of evidence that was used to determine the TAG, along with assessment and IQA records, as part of our external quality assurance monitoring and sampling.

Evidence for occupational skills/standards will need to be demonstrated. If there is insufficient evidence available, the completion of the assessment should be delayed. Centres may need to prioritise learners' needs for progression.

Centres should make sure that learners are aware of the evidence that will be used to form the basis of their final grade.

3. Evaluate the quality of evidence

Centres should consider the quality and subsequent weighting of evidence when using it to determine TAGs. Weighting should be established by considering factors such as:

- The conditions the evidence was produced under (e.g. a sample exam sat under exam conditions)
- The content covered
- The learning outcomes and assessment criteria covered
- How closely it aligns with the design/format of the summative assessment
- Whether it has been internally quality assured
- Whether it has been authenticated.

Please note that the above list is not in hierarchical order. We recommend that consideration of these evaluation points are captured in the assessment / IQA records for each learner.

4. Assign grades

When sufficient evidence has been gathered and evaluated, tutors will be asked to make a judgement on each learner's performance based on the range of evidence that has been gathered.

In coming to decisions, tutors should use their professional judgement to balance the range of evidence available for each learner. Centres should aim to use high-quality evidence that clearly relates to the specification, in terms of both content and assessment. The judgement **must** be based on **actual evidence** rather than using the evidence to predict potential performance.

5. Internally quality assure grades

Centres must ensure that TAGs are subject to internal quality assurance to ensure all staff involved have a common understanding of the process and are making consistent and valid assessment judgements. This will involve effective standardisation activities, and monitoring and sampling at each stage of the process (e.g. evidence collection, review of evidence and assessment of evidence).

These activities could include agreeing on the weighting of evidence for an assessment, common understanding of grade descriptors and collectively working through the evaluation of evidence and grade determination process.

This should also include looking at comparative centre data for assessments/qualifications from previous years to sense check performance levels. This will only apply where TAGs are being submitted at cohort level, and even then we recognise that it may prove difficult to find a comparable cohort. However, where possible, TAGs must be cross-checked against results for previous cohorts at the centre who took assessments for the same qualification in previous years to provide an indication that TAGs overall are not overly lenient or harsh by comparison with those results from previous years. Where there are significant differences in grade distributions from previous years these must be explained using the Component grade variation report, which must be submitted along with the TAGs.

All TAGs should be agreed by all tutors/IQAs involved in the determination process prior to submission.

City & Guilds will request evidence of IQA processes as part of our evidence sampling.

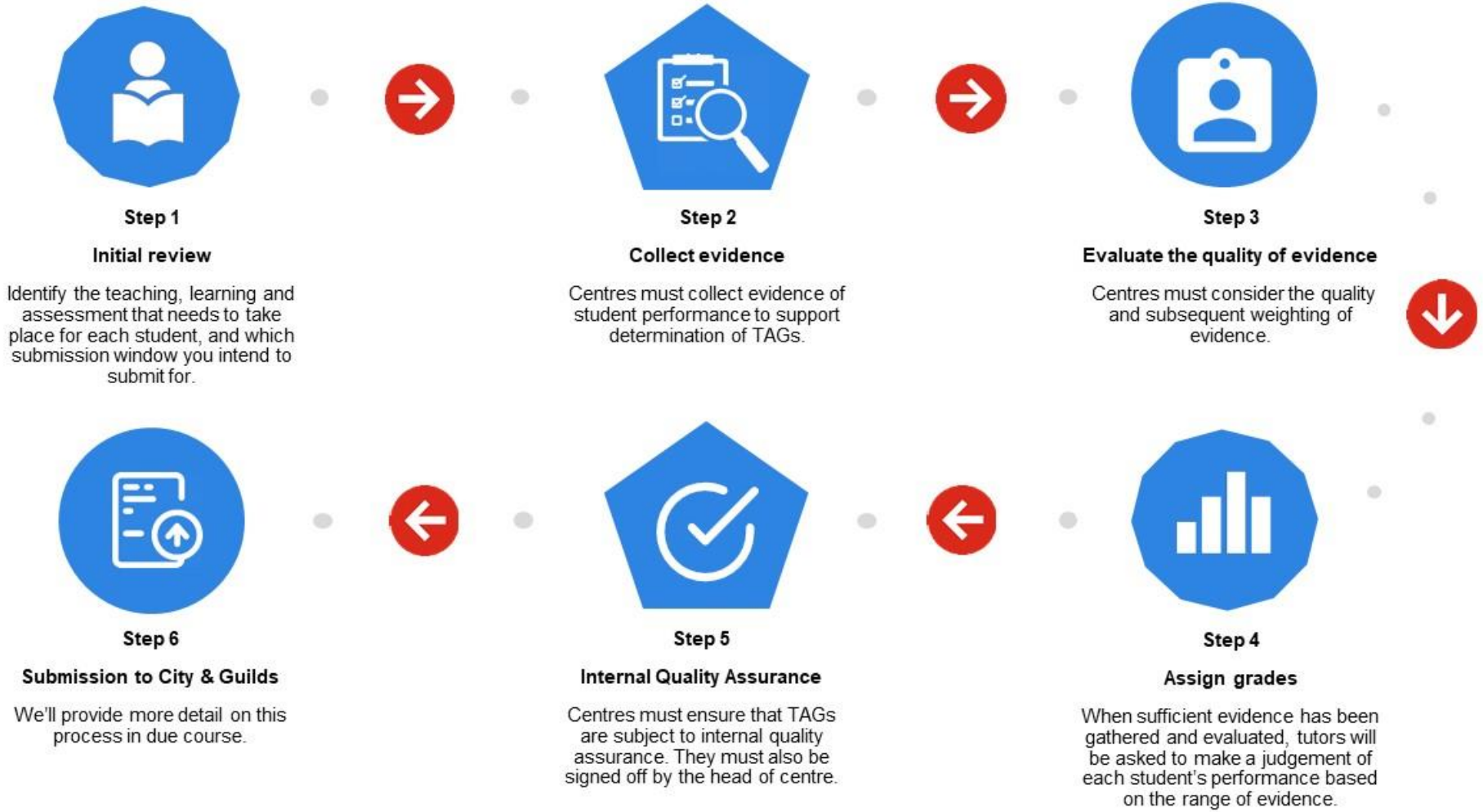
Centres must be confident that work produced is the learner's own and that the learner has not been given inappropriate levels of support to complete it, either in the centre or at home.

TAGs must therefore be authenticated and signed off by the Head of Centre as part of the submission process. This will be via the Head of Centre Declaration within our CPA form (See section 5.3) and at the point of submission on Walled Garden.

6. Submission to City & Guilds

Centres will submit TAGs to City & Guilds and may be asked to provide a sample of evidence used to demonstrate how the TAGs have been determined and that they have followed the correct process. Evidence which is used to support a TAG must be retained by the centre until **12 months** after the date of the issue of the result, or the conclusion of any appeal in relation to that result, whichever is later.

4.2 Overview of the TAG process



4.3 External quality assurance

We will undertake monitoring and sampling of TAGs as part of our external quality assurance activities this year to confirm the validity and reliability of results. This will involve looking at:

- Internal quality assurance processes
- The process followed for the determination of grades
- Learners evidence samples
- Centre outcomes and volumes compared to previous years, where possible.

Further information on the external quality assurance process that will be completed by City & Guilds will be published in due course.

4.4 Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

Where learners are eligible for access arrangements for assessments, centres must ensure that these are in place for any alternative arrangements.

Any judgements should take account of likely achievement with the access arrangement in place, with input from specialist tutors, where appropriate. If access arrangements were not in place, for example where work is completed remotely, centres should take this into account when determining the TAG.

4.5 Extenuating circumstances

Centres do not need to make applications to City & Guilds for special consideration this year. However, where illness or other personal circumstances might have temporarily affected performance, for example in practice exams, centres should bear that in mind when making their judgements and record this.

4.6 Sharing TAGs with learners

Centres should avoid sharing details of TAGs with learners and/or parents/carers until results are released, however where appropriate centres may share details of the evidence that has been used to determine the TAG.

4.7 Regulatory guidance

Centre staff involved in the determination of TAGs should familiarise themselves with the relevant regulatory guidance on making objective judgements.

Judgements must not be influenced by pressure from learners and/or parents/carers.

Section 5 Information required from centres

5.1 Centre Policy and Approach (CPA) form

This year, we will require centres to provide further detail around their process for determination of TAGs and the internal quality assurance (IQA) procedures relating to this. This is for **B1 qualifications** only.

This will be an online form to complete at centre level, called the **'Centre Policy and Approach' (CPA)** form, which covers the centres approach for all VRQ qualifications within category B1. It requires centres to provide us with an overview of their processes, and to ensure we have confidence in the approach to determining TAGs.

The CPA form is located on our website **here** under the 'Centre Policy & Approach (CPA) form' drop-down menu.

For **Submission Window 1**, centres must have submitted their CPA form no later than 21 May. For Submission Window 2, centres must submit their CPA form at least **five working days** in advance of submitting TAGs for their learners.

Centres must detail the following:

- The process used to determine TAGs
- How centres will ensure sufficient range and appropriate use of evidence
- Robust IQA procedures, including effective internal standardisation
- How centres will ensure TAGs are checked against results for previous cohorts to ensure parity
- Evidence retention policy.

Our Quality team will review the information provided to ensure it meets requirements.

5.2 Evidence submission requirements

Centres may be required to submit a sample of evidence to City & Guilds for assessment components they submit TAGs for. City & Guilds will conduct external quality assurance sampling of evidence which will be carried out by one of our External Quality Assurers (EQAs) to determine whether TAGs can be released.

Evidence will not be required at the point of submission of TAGs, it will be requested following submission. If centres are going to be sampled, they will be contacted by our Quality Delivery team and provided with detail on which learner evidence must be provided. It is important to ensure that any evidence requests are actioned within 48 hours of the request being made to ensure there is no unnecessary delay to publication of results. Centres should ensure that a member of staff is available to be contacted and can upload the evidence required. For **Window 1 Submissions,** it is expected that a member of staff is available to respond promptly to requests for evidence or further detail on the submission until **at least the end of July**, either from our Quality Team or an allocated EQA.

Where evidence samples are requested, centres must upload all the following, for each evidence sample, which demonstrates how they have determined the TAGs:

- All learner evidence used to determine the TAG
- All assessment and marking records (that demonstrate how the TAGs have been determined and that they have followed the correct process)
- Any tutor/assessor observation records
- Declaration of authenticity for all learners
- IQA record form for the component / qualification

Centres will also need to provide the following information were applicable to the cohort / learner:

- Personal interest form (this is a declaration where an assessor has a personal relationship to student(s), such as parent, carer or guardian)

We have created a set of template forms centres can use for the TAG/CDG process and when submitting evidence to City & Guilds, available to download from our website in the 'Template Forms' dropdown on the following page:

TAG System Guides - Assessment arrangements 2021 - Covid-19 | City & Guilds (cityandguilds.com)

Centres will be required to upload a minimum of six candidates per qualification, from across the performance range, and across the assessment components that they are submitting TAGs for. For cohorts above 100, this sample will increase to 12. For cohorts smaller than 6, all learners will be submitted.

City & Guilds will specify which learners they wish to sample, following submission of TAGs.

Following external quality assurance, City & Guilds may determine that the evidence submitted is not sufficient to support a TAG for a learner or cohort of learners. In this instance, we may request further evidence to support the TAG submission or may advise the centre that the assessment of learners should continue where possible (including through the use of permitted published adaptations) to allow sufficient valid evidence to be generated, or that assessments may need to be delayed until later in the academic year.

5.3 Head of Centre Declaration

A declaration by the Head of Centre, which confirms the centre will follow the guidance/requirements within these documents will be required as part of the Centre Policy and Approach (CPA) form for VRQs and is also confirmed during the submission process on Walled Garden.

This declaration will include confirmation that a centre will:

- Only enter TAGs for learners who are eligible
- Ensure TAGs are a true representation of each learner's performance
- Adhere to the process defined by City & Guilds i.e. make judgements using sufficient evidence
- Internally quality assure any decisions made for TAGs
- Monitor how the volume of learners achieving compares with previous years (i.e. 2020, 2019 and 2018).

If the Head of Centre is unavailable to do this, it may be delegated to someone with authority to act on their behalf.

Section 6 Submission windows

There will be two windows in which TAGs can be submitted for Qualifications in Category B1. These are different to other qualifications such as Functional Skills which has several windows.

Please note; there is no requirement for centres to make 'eligibility bookings' for Category B1 qualifications, this is different to Category B2 (e.g. Functional Skills) where bookings are required.

6.1 Window 1

The **first submission window** (Window 1) is a priority window and should be **restricted** to learners who are **due to complete their qualification by 31 August 2021.** This window ensures that results can be processed by the published dates in August which is important for learners who are due to progress onto further education, employment etc. The deadline and result release dates for this window aligns to our Technical Qualifications.

TAGs for learners are who are not due to complete their qualification by 31 August 2021 should be submitted in Window 2. Please **do not** submit TAGs in the first submission window if they are not required a result by 31 August. This will ensure we can prioritise those learners and plan our EQA activity accordingly.

For Window 1, the deadline for submission of TAGs and any required evidence is **18 June 2021** to ensure that results can be released as follows:

Submission Window 1 01 June – 18 June 2021	**Qualification level**	**Results available on the Walled Garden***	**Results available to learners**
	Level 3 or above	Monday, 9 August	Tuesday, 10 August
	Entry, Level 1-2	Wednesday, 11 August	Thursday, 12 August

**Where TAGs have been submitted correctly*

6.2 Window 2

The **second submission window** (Window 2) is for learners who are due to complete their qualifications **after** 31 August 2021 (or any learner that you weren't able to submit in time for submission window 1) and who will not require results by our published results dates.

We will aim to process results for Window 2 submissions within **32 working days** of a correct submission. However, we cannot guarantee this will always be possible and may also depend on any external quality assurance activity we need to take.

Submission Window 2 21 June – 31 August 2021	**Qualification level**	**Results available on the Walled Garden***
	Entry, Level 1-2	within **32 working days** of a correct submission
	Level 3 or above	

**Dependent on whether TAGs have been submitted correctly and/or any external quality assurance activity is required.*

Section 7 Further advice and guidance

Please visit our COVID-19 web pages here for all the latest information on the qualifications you deliver.

General guidance

For all general queries relating to arrangements for 2021, contact our Customer Support team who are available Monday to Friday 8 am to 6 pm excluding UK public holidays.

centresupport@cityandguilds.com

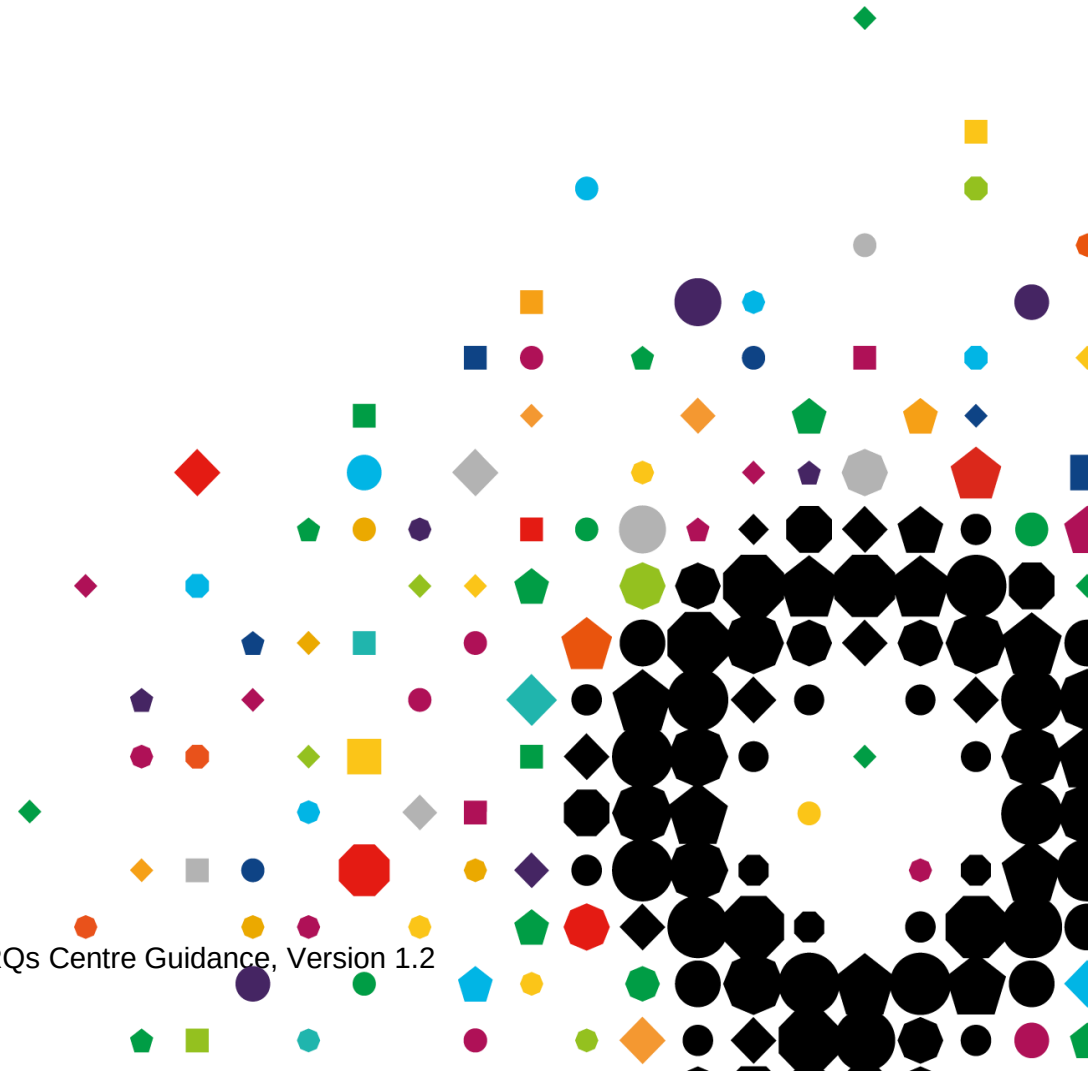
01924 930 800

Quality assurance and submission

For all other queries relating to these arrangements for Category B1 qualifications, contact our Quality team who are available Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5 pm excluding UK public holidays.

VRQ.Quality@cityandguilds.com

0300 303 53 52



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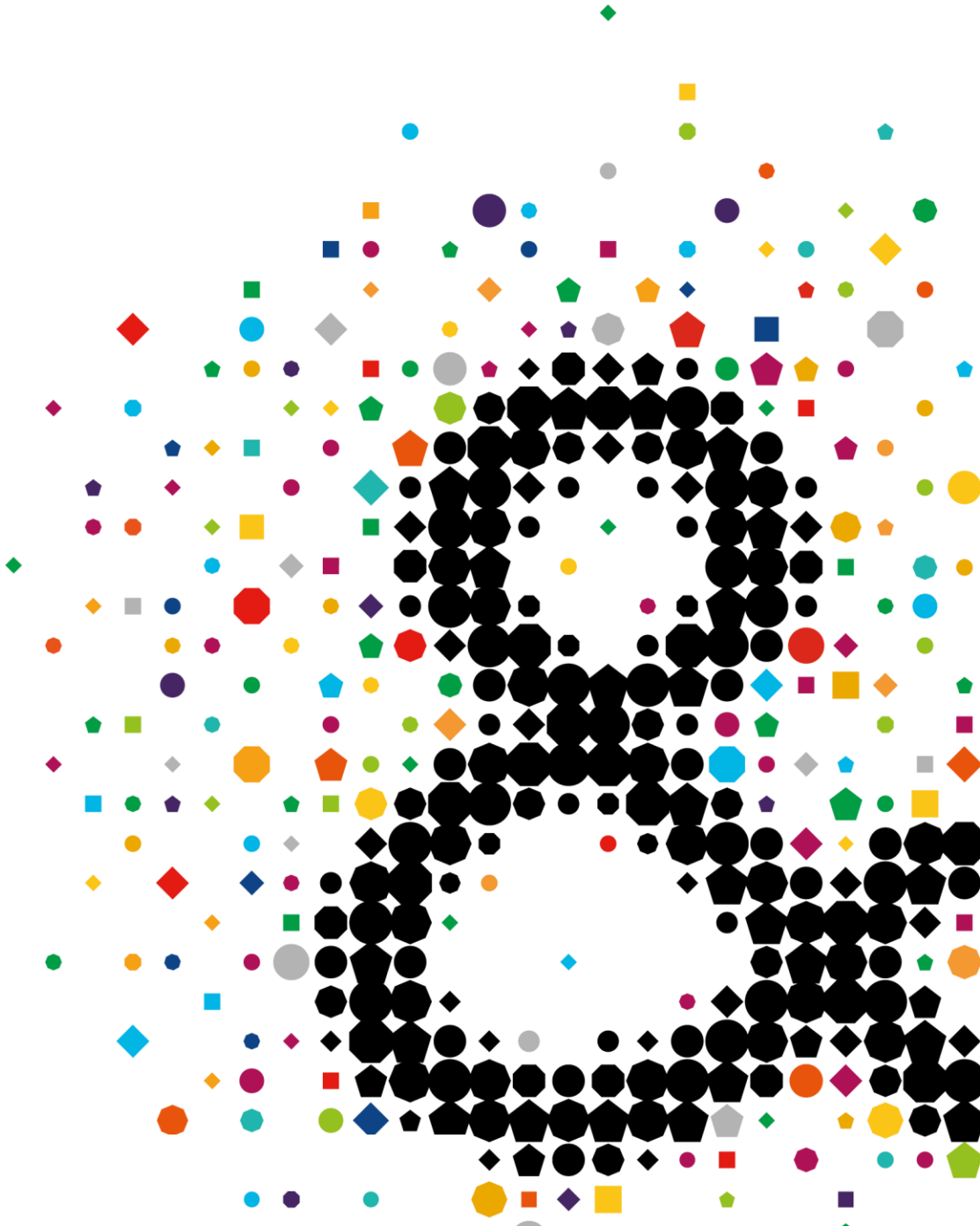
Giltspur House 5-6 Giltspur Street London EC1A 9DE
T +44 (0)20 7294 2468
F +44 (0)20 7294 2400

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