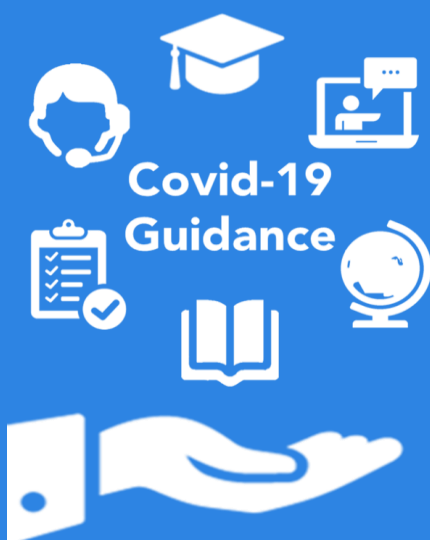


# Alternative Assessment Arrangements for 2021

## Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs)

Internal quality assurance guidance for centres

Version 1.0, May 2021



# Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs)

## Internal quality assurance guidance for centres

### Introduction

Where Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) are used for eligible learners, it is important that the approach taken by all centre staff in determining them is consistent and that their judgements are subject to additional scrutiny before they are submitted.

Centres delivering our qualifications are already required to have robust and effective internal quality assurance (IQA) processes in place, and the same applies to the use of TAGs.

We are requiring that centres using TAGs this year provide evidence of their intended IQA approach and include IQA records as part of the evidence submission for external quality assurance.

This document provides advice and guidance for centres on the key aspects of effective internal quality assurance for the TAG process.

We would additionally direct you to read the following Ofqual guidance to support the determination and IQA of TAGs:

[Ofqual: Information for centres about making objective judgements](#)

This guidance also applies to Centre Determined Grades (CDGs) in Wales and Northern Ireland.

### Determining TAGs

The process for determining TAGs (as outlined in our qualification-specific [guidance](#)) is as follows:

- Initial review
- Collecting evidence
- Evaluating the quality of this evidence
- Assigning grades

Centre IQA activities should be planned accordingly to ensure consistency of approach and common understanding at each stage.

Each learner's TAG should be determined by their specific performance in relation to the relevant assessment component / qualification.

Centres should also review comparative qualification data from previous years (where available) as part of a high-level overview of cohort performance and grade distribution, although trying to 'match' previous cohorts should not be the starting point for the determination process.

Each TAG must be signed off by the Head of Department / IQA / Lead assessor / Head of Centre and subject to internal quality assurance.

### Internal quality assurance

Effective IQA for the TAG process means supporting your assessors in taking a consistent approach to:

- Determining teacher assessed grades
- Marking supporting evidence
- Reaching a holistic grading decision
- Applying the use of access arrangements

- Documenting assessment decisions and tutor/assessor evidence
- Using comparative centre data

This helps us to have confidence in your approach, and the final outcomes of the process. We require you to outline your IQA process as part of your eligibility approval booking or centre policy and approach (CPA) form submission (depending upon the type of qualification). Additionally, IQA records will need to be submitted along with learner evidence for any learners sampled during our external quality assurance activities.

Where any areas for potential improvement, or gaps in the approach to IQA for TAGs are identified, we will provide specific support to centres through our EQAs/Moderators, to help address these.

### **IQAs / Lead assessors**

Internal quality assurance activities relating to TAGs should be led by centre IQAs / Lead assessors.

They, along with all centre staff involved in the process, must familiarise themselves with the requirements in our qualification-specific TAG guidance.

IQA records detailing the scope and outcome of each activity must be retained. These will be submitted for external review as part of our quality assurance sampling activities.

### **Assessor judgements**

IQAs / Lead assessors should support assessors by standardising assessment judgements.

This is to ensure that:

- Assessors consistently make valid decisions
- Assessors make the same decisions when given the same learner work or evidence
- All learners are assessed fairly.

This happens through initial standardisation and sampling throughout the process. It is important to remember that 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 for that particular assessment). They are **not** a prediction of the grade that learners would most likely have achieved had they sat their assessment as normal.

No assessor should be marking in isolation, with TAG judgements going unchecked, to ensure fairness and objectivity to all learners. All assessors will need to complete a standardisation activity and be subject to sampling by IQAs/Lead assessors. Where there are issues with the accuracy of their judgements even after feedback, they should be stopped, and their TAG judgements re-determined by the IQA/Lead assessor. All TAGs must be signed off by the relevant Head of Department, IQA or Lead Assessor.

The process for determining TAGs, the IQA process, the final grades (including an overall high-level review looking at comparative centre data) must all be approved and signed off by the Head of Centre as part of the submission process. IQA records for learners sampled as part of external quality assurance must also be included in the submission.

## Standardisation

Standardisation is an essential part of effective internal quality assurance, ensuring that all assessors are making consistent and valid assessment TAG judgements. IQAs and/or Lead Assessors are responsible for devising and leading standardisation activities.

Our recommended internal standardisation process is as follows:

- Standardisation should be undertaken for each assessment where TAGs are being used and must include all assessors involved in the process.
- Standardisation should take place using the learner evidence that you are using to determine TAGs.
- Standardisation samples should be comprised of sufficient learner evidence to meet the requirements to determine a TAG.
- A sample of learner work should be chosen that gives a representation of the range of performance expected, which all assessors will mark individually with the aim of awarding a grade.
- Assessors then collectively discuss any discrepancies in awarding grades and come to a consensus in interpreting the standards, assessment criteria or mark schemes. This discussion will be facilitated by the IQAs / Lead Assessors.
- If there is any disagreement, IQAs / Lead Assessors have the final decision. There should not be an 'agreement to disagree', a final grade must be agreed.
- Assessors are encouraged to keep notes during standardisation and develop shared reference material to support them in maintaining the agreed standard throughout the TAG process.
- Once the standard has been agreed, for written evidence further common pieces of evidence should be marked to confirm closer agreement has been reached. For practical assessments centres could use recorded practical assessments that assessors will mark or could have initial assessments dual assessed.

## Internal evidence sampling

We recommend that a robust IQA approach to TAGs involves further sampling of assessors following standardisation.

The sampling approach centres take should reflect a number of factors including:

- the category of qualification (e.g. are TAGs mandatory, or an option where normal assessment cannot take place?)
- the assessment component being graded (e.g. is it normally internally or externally marked/assessed?)
- the experience and confidence of assessors (e.g. familiarity of assessors with a qualification or assessment component)
- the volume of candidates (e.g. are they individual TAGs or a whole cohort?)

Dependent on consideration of these, and any other relevant risk factors, a centre may decide either that a sampling approach is suitable, or that all assessor judgements should be reviewed. Their centre TAG IQA policy should make their selected approaches clear.

All TAGs must be signed off by the relevant head of department / IQA / Lead Assessor / Head of Centre before submission. The sampling approach centres take must therefore support confidence in this sign-off and IQA records should evidence this. Centres must retain IQA records of sampling that is completed, including any feedback provided to assessors and subsequent action taken to address this.

## **IQA records submission**

As part of our external quality assurance activities, for a selection of centres we will review samples of learner evidence, at assessment component level. This includes centre IQA records for those learners. These must indicate

- Learner details
- Assessor(s) details
- Sign-off by head of department / head of centre or equivalent
- IQA details
- Date of standardisation activity
- Assessment component sampled (Technical only)
- Assessment decision made
- Date of sampling
- Any feedback / actions to assessors.

We have designed a TAG IQA record template that centres can use, or they can submit their own, provided the relevant details are included.