

**ncfe.**

**Quality  
Assurance  
Policy for  
Awarding  
for 2020-21**

**Version 3 - May 2021**

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## Version Control

This is version 3.0 of the NCFE Quality Assurance Policy for Awarding for 2020-21 document. Updates to this version are highlighted.

Update history (Version 3.0 – 27 May 2021)

- Update on TAG strategy submission timescales
- Update results timescales for B1 qualifications when results are submitted as standard (without a TAG)

## Introduction

The purpose of this policy published on 1 April 2021 is to set NCFE's approach to Quality Assurance for alternative awarding arrangements 2021. It confirms our approach to External Quality Assurance (EQA), what is required of centres and what NCFE will do to support this process. This includes what we require of centres in relation to Internal Quality Assurance and preparing for your review and what you can expect from NCFE in relation to External Quality Assurance.

Following the outcome of the Ofqual consultation on '[Alternative arrangements for the award of VTQs and other general qualifications in 2021A](#)', qualifications awarded this year have been categorised as those that can be awarded through teacher assessed grades and those that cannot.

### **Determining whether a qualification can be awarded through a teacher assessed grade**

We have reviewed our portfolio of qualifications against the criteria which Ofqual has set out, and you can find out which qualifications can and cannot be awarded through a teacher assessed grade using [Ofqual's qualification explainer tool here](#).

### **Which qualifications can not be awarded through teacher assessed grades?**

#### **Category A qualifications**

Ofqual's expectation is that teacher assessed grades should not be used to award qualifications where it is not possible to award safely, reliably, and validly if the knowledge, skills, and behaviours have not been demonstrated and assessed.

This includes most occupational, licence to practise, professional and continuing professional development qualifications, and some other Ofqual-regulated vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) that are not typically used to support progression.

**NCFE customised awards also cannot be awarded through teacher assessed grades.**

### **Which qualifications can be awarded through teacher assessed grades?**

#### **Category B1 qualifications**

Ofqual's expectation is that teacher assessed grades should be used to award qualifications that are primarily taught alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A Levels – including vocational qualifications that are important for progression to further study or employment.

#### **Category B2 qualifications**

Qualifications that are not like GCSE or A Levels in their structure, such as Functional Skills and Skills for Life, will continue remotely. They can be awarded through a teacher assessed grade only where assessments cannot take place on public health grounds or remotely.

For Functional Skills qualifications, we have worked closely with Ofqual and the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) to develop a common approach to determine when a learner can be awarded through a teacher assessed grade and more information can be found on the Functional Skills page of our [website here](#).

These arrangements apply to both certificating and non-certificating learners, who were expecting to sit assessments between 1 August 2020 and 31 August 2021.

Where possible, these arrangements should allow learners taking qualifications to access a result, which may include using a teacher-assessed grade or alternative approach to awarding, where appropriate.

## **Teacher assessed grading guidance**

For general guidance around how to approach teacher assessed grades and the process you should go through when awarding a grade, please go to our [approach-to-awarding.pdf \(ncfe.org.uk\)](#).

For qualification specific information about adaptations and teacher assessed grading evidence requirements, please go to the qualification addenda available on [QualHub](#).

## **Mid-flight learners**

Any learners completing partial qualifications this academic session (mid-flight / non-certificating learners) would submit any components as standard or through teacher assessed grades on our portal. Your allocated EQA will review these alongside any other completed qualifications in your EQA review.

## Quality Assurance arrangements

### Quality assurance of qualifications which can not be awarded through Teacher Assessed Grades

Qualifications in Ofqual category A will predominantly be assessing occupational skills and therefore the following applies:

- external assessment should continue, including those with adaptation where applicable.
- Internal assessment can continue and be adapted if needed, or assessment may need to be delayed.

### What we need from you

For qualifications that can **not** be awarded through teacher assessed grades, the EQA process will remain unchanged. NCFE aim to conduct all reviews remotely wherever possible, and therefore we encourage you to start to prepare for your EQA review in the usual way. If you have not already done so you should contact your allocated EQA to arrange a review. You can also begin to update your [EQA Review Centre Guidance Document](#) in preparation.

For centres that have qualifications with Direct Claim Status (DCS), EQA activity will remain the same in terms of the number of reviews required to maintain your DCS status.

For centres that are new to NCFE, you will receive notification of your allocated EQA and their contact details once you register learners with us.

### What you can expect from NCFE

Where qualifications have been adapted, your EQA will review evidence in line with the published adaptation guidance. Centres must ensure that they communicate with their EQA in preparation for the review so that they know which learners have completed via adaptation and which have been able to complete without using adaptations. This will enable your EQA to give clear guidance on the evidence which needs to be made available, and which learners they need to sample to fulfil the review requirements.

If you have a mixture of Category A and Category B qualification your EQA will use the information you provide in preparation for the review to ensure both are sampled during the same review.

### Quality assurance of qualifications which can be awarded through teacher assessed grades

Qualifications in Ofqual category B1 will be most similar to General Qualifications and therefore:

- teaching, learning and internal assessment can continue
- external assessments are cancelled
- teacher assessed grades will be submitted to NCFE by centres using a range of sources of evidence

Qualifications in Ofqual category B2 are not similar to General Qualifications and therefore:

- Functional Skill and EDSQ external assessments should continue where possible and can be delivered in line with public health guidelines
- where assessments are unable to continue due to public health reasons, centres will be required to apply to use a teacher assessed grade and provide evidence to demonstrate normal assessment arrangements are not safe
- teacher assessed grades will be submitted to NCFE by centres using a range of sources of evidence where eligible.

As centres will be aware, we already operate robust external quality assurance arrangements which help us ensure the fairness and validity of the qualifications we award and centres' compliance with the requirements we set out.

We recognise that this is a challenging year, so we intend to provide as much information as possible to help you prepare and offer as much support as we can.

We will continue to operate external quality assurance arrangements through the remainder of the current session and have adapted our approach to supporting centres and teachers as you prepare and submit teacher assessed grades to us, as summarised in the table below.

<p><b>Step 1</b></p>	<p><b>Confirmation of Teacher assessed grading strategy by each centre</b></p> <p>You must complete a teacher assessed grading strategy before you can submit any TAGs on our portal. To do this you must complete <a href="#">this form</a>. The deadline for this has now passed, so please complete this as soon as possible.</p> <p>This form asks centres to answer a series of questions to gain clarification and confidence in the way in which you will prepare, collate evidence for and submit teacher assessed grades to us – including for example how you will conduct internal quality assurance. We have aligned to other awarding organisations as far as possible. If you have produced a Teacher Assessed Grading Policy for your General Qualification (GQ) awarding organisation, you will be asked to confirm this within the form and may be asked to submit this as additional evidence to support your strategy.</p> <p>This form will also include your Head of Centre (HoC) declaration which needs to be agreed, signed, and dated prior to any teacher assessed grades being submitted. This form declares that all practices outlined in the strategy will be followed throughout the teacher assessed grading process.</p>
<p><b>Step 2</b></p>	<p><b>Focussed review of centres teacher assessed grading strategy</b></p> <p>Once you have submitted your teacher assessed grading strategy to us, we will review it against our and Ofqual's requirements. We will provide centres with feedback and additional guidance within 5 working days to ensure that your approach is compliant.</p> <p><b><u>You should not submit teacher assessed grades to us until we have confirmed that we have approved your strategy and HoC declaration.</u></b></p>

<p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p><b>EQA preparation, advice, and support for centres</b></p> <p>EQA activity will continue largely as planned throughout the spring and summer term, with EQAs supporting, advising, and challenging centres on the evidence you are preparing, and your approach to teacher assessed grades before – and after – submission to us.</p> <p>We have invested in additional EQA resource to ensure that centres can access the support you need to prepare valid teacher assessed grades for your learners.</p>
<p><b>Step 4</b></p>	<p><b>Centre submission of grades to NCFE</b></p> <p>We have made changes to our Portal that will enable you to submit teacher assessed grades to us; unlike last year, you are able to submit grades through our main portal rather than a separate one.</p> <p>The submission of grades during the teacher assessed grade window will also include those that are a mid-flight learner, fail or not yet achieved (NYA).</p> <p>You should not submit teacher assessed grades to us until you have had your centres TAG strategy approved.</p>
<p><b>Step 5</b></p>	<p><b>Post teacher assessed grade submission EQA review</b></p> <p>In addition, our external quality assurance team will also complete risk-based reviews of grades submitted by centres. As a result of these desk-based reviews, we may require further information or engagement with you before confirming learner results.</p> <p>As ever, we will reserve the right to conduct formal investigations where we are concerned about a centre’s practice – and may hold back results whilst we do so.</p>
<p><b>Step 6</b></p>	<p><b>Continued EQA activity into 2021/22</b></p> <p>As usual, centres should retain the evidence you have collated to underpin each of the teacher assessed grades you submit to us this year. This evidence may be required as part of EQA sampling during 2021/22.</p> <p>Where we identify concerns, we continue to reserve the right to conduct formal investigations and to withdraw certifications if necessary. Please refer to our <a href="#">Malpractice Policy</a> for more information.</p>

### **Step 1: Production of teacher assessed grading strategy by each centre**

We’re aware that you are likely to have developed an approach to teacher assessed grades for the qualifications that you deliver and updated your policies and procedures to reflect this. If you haven’t already done this, we recommend that you begin by reflecting your approach in all your existing documentation. This will form the basis of your centre teacher assessed grading strategy.



We will then request that you complete [this form](#) which will be used to confirm your centre's strategy and provide us with any supporting documents you may have. **The deadline for completion has now passed. Centres who have not yet completed the form must return this immediately.** This form will confirm:

- Head of Centre contact details
- Roles and responsibilities of those involved in the centre teacher assessed grading process
- Training, support, and guidance to be delivered in the centre
- Evidence that will be used to generate teacher assessed grades
- Approach to awarding teacher assessed grades
- Internal quality assurance
- Comparison of teacher assessed grades
- Access arrangements and special considerations
- Addressing disruption/differential learning loss
- Objectivity
- Recording of decisions and retention of evidence and data
- Authenticating evidence
- Confidentiality, malpractice, maladministration, and conflicts of interest
- External quality assurance
- Appeals
- Head of Centre declaration; this is vital to confirm that all our and Ofqual's criteria have been covered before the centre submits teacher assessed grades.

Detailed guidance on what is covered in each section of the form and what we expect you to include can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Where centres offer a mixture of general qualifications and vocational qualifications, we expect the centre's strategy to be aligned. The required centre teacher assessed grading strategy created for general qualifications can be submitted as additional evidence to support your strategy if requested.

## **Step 2: Focussed review of teacher assessed grading strategy**

NCFE will complete a desktop review of each centre's submitted teacher assessed grading strategy and will also take into consideration a centre's risk profile. The risk profile is based on several factors, including historic Direct Claims Status (DCS), assessment and internal quality assurance performance scores from previous EQA reviews and any recorded instances of malpractice or maladministration.

We will contact centres where we have queries, concerns or require further information surrounding the approach taken to any aspect of the process.

Each section of the strategy will be considered as part of the review process to ensure we are confident in a centre's approach to the determination of teacher assessed grades.

NCFE will provide feedback to centres on the outcome of the review via email to the centre contact responsible for the submission of the teacher assessed grading strategy. Feedback will be received within 5 working days of receipt of the completed form.

If further evidence is required as part of the desktop review, centres will be required to collaborate fully with NCFE to ensure that their teacher assessed grading strategy is approved for Summer Awarding 2021.

### **Step 3: EQA preparation, advice, and support for centres**

Following a desktop review of the centre's teacher assessed grading strategy, NCFE will continue to undertake planned EQA reviews for centres and will advise on the preparation of evidence required for teacher assessed grade submissions and EQA sampling. The review will follow the same format as a standard EQA review with feedback being given during the review and in the EQA report.

#### **What we need from centres**

We need centres to communicate with their allocated EQA continuously throughout the TAG awarding process, this will ensure that the quality assurance of grades can be verified smoothly through your EQA review.

If special consideration / reasonable adjustments need to be applied, then centres need to take this into consideration.

#### **Prepare for your EQA review**

EQA reviews will be conducted as close to the usual format as possible and will predominately take place remotely for the remainder of this session.

In usual circumstances, centres would receive the EQA sampling plan for the review indicating which learners have been selected for each qualification directly from learner registration information or submitted grades. During this time, we must ensure that this sample includes learners who have been and/or who are being proposed will be awarded through a teacher assessed grade. We therefore request that centres liaise with their allocated EQA to provide this detail, your EQA will then create a sampling plan that incorporates samples of each activity.

Centres will be required to update policies and procedures detailing their teacher assessed grading processes as summarised in Step 1. These will need to be available as part of your EQA review to support any discussions and rationale around teacher assessed grades. If your centre offers both GQ and VTQ the documentation produced overall will be acceptable.

Collaboration between the centre and EQA is crucial in ensuring that the required sampling plan is formulated. This will reduce the potential for further scrutiny later in the awarding process.

Please refer to our [EQA Review Centre Guidance Document](#) for further support in preparing for your EQA review.

If you have not yet booked your EQA review for this session you are encouraged to contact your allocated EQA as soon as possible.

#### **Internal Quality Assurance**

Internal quality assurance should continue as per your centre's assessment and internal quality assurance strategy. This practice is expected to be extended for all assessments that have been adapted or awarded through a teacher assessed grade as part of the VTQ Contingency Regulatory Framework (VCRF).

For qualifications and/or components of a qualification that do not usually require IQA (e.g. externally assessed qualifications), centres must ensure the above is applied for the purpose of awarding teacher assessed grades.

The purpose of internal quality assurance is to provide Assessors with confidence in the teacher assessed grades they have awarded, to ensure fairness and objectivity of decisions and to ensure consistency in the application of assessment criteria and standards.

#### **Step 4: Centre submission of grades to NCFE**

Centres must not submit any teacher assessed grades until they have had their centre teacher assessed grading strategy approved.

Centres will be required to identify on the NCFE portal which grades, both for internal units and external components have been submitted as teacher assessed grades. Please refer to the updated Portal user guide for further information on this which will be published on the website. This will allow NCFE to distinguish grades appropriately and support EQA activity.

We require that you have internal processes in place and appropriate evidence to confirm they are in line with previous qualification outcomes or provided a rationale as to why results may not be in line with previous years' results data.

Centres as always are encouraged to upload final learner grades as soon as they are confirmed; this will support the timeliness and review of grades submitted and this year will include both teacher assessed grades and those achieved in the usual way. **Centres must also ensure that they submit mid-flight learner grades, fails, and not yet achieved (NYA).**

#### **Step 5: Post-submission EQA review**

##### **What you can expect from NCFE**

Our external quality assurance model will continue to support centres throughout the summer 2021 awarding process with as little disruption as possible. We have adapted our standard approach to incorporate the quality assurance of teacher assessed grades at each stage.

EQA reviews will be completed following our standard external quality assurance process but will include discussions around teacher assessed grades for sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the report. This will ensure we have reviewed the processes you have in place to quality assure teacher assessed grades as well any grades awarded with adaptation. Your EQA will review each centre submitted teacher assessed grading strategy and will also take into consideration a centre's risk profile. The risk profile is based on several factors, including historic Direct Claims Status (DCS), assessment and internal quality assurance performance scores from previous EQA reviews and any recorded instances of malpractice or maladministration.

The table below shows how your EQA will complete an EQA report, so centres know what to expect.

<b>Section 1</b>	Completed as standard.
<b>Section 2</b>	Completed as standard.
<b>Section 3</b>	Additional questions for teacher assessed grades: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has the delivery team adapted their approach for teacher assessed grades?</li> <li>• Are all relevant staff familiar with teacher assessed grading process?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have all staff involved in teacher assessed grades completed training, including avoidance of bias, understanding of evidence etc?</li> <li>• Has the centre held any additional team meetings or standardisation sessions in support of teacher assessed grades?</li> <li>• How has the team ensured that the amendments to centres policies have been adhered to through the teacher assessed grading process?</li> </ul> <p>Evidence of the above will be required to support discussions and will be recorded in the report.</p>
<b>Section 4</b>	<p>Additional questions for teacher assessed grades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the centre recruited any new staff to support with resource during the pandemic?</li> <li>• What training have Assessors/IQAs completed to ensure they are competent in the teacher assessed grading process?</li> <li>• Throughout the pandemic how has the centre adapted to online learning for the purpose of assessment?</li> </ul> <p>Evidence of the above will be required to support discussions and will be recorded in the report.</p>
<b>Section 5</b>	<p>Qualifications which include an externally assessed component and are awarded through TAG will also be sampled during the EQA review, and require evidence to be presented in line with the sampling plan provided.</p>
<b>Section 6</b>	<p>Additional questions for teacher assessed grades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has your IQA sampling plan /strategy been amended for teacher assessed grading?</li> <li>• How has IQA standardisation been approached differently for teacher assessed grading?</li> <li>• How have any special assessment requirements been applied within the teacher assessed grading process?</li> <li>• Have IQA records accurately recorded judgements and commentary against teacher assessed grades?</li> <li>• Have external assessment only qualifications been included in your IQA sampling and standardisation?</li> </ul> <p>EQAs will make it clear in the report if they sampled teacher assessed grading or adapted evidence as part of the review and all discussions will also be recorded in the report.</p> <p>Your quality assurance approach should include a check of grades against previous cohorts at the centre who took the assessment for the same qualification in previous years. You know the level at which your learners are working and how that compares with the outcomes your learners have received in previous years. You should use this knowledge and the supporting data to check that the grades you submit reflect the evidence that underpins them.</p> <p>EQAs will ask centres to discuss the above. Questions to confirm this could include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much does the data differ from previous cohorts?</li> <li>• Were you expecting a change in attainment?</li> <li>• What actions have you taken that might explain any change in data (up or down)?</li> <li>• What evidence do you have to support the data?</li> <li>• What support have staff had to ensure the data is reliable?</li> </ul> <p>Centres can access a report that will show their historical data for NCFE qualifications on the results screen in the portal. For more information about where to access this report, please see page 43 of the <a href="#">Portal User Guide</a>.</p>
<b>Section 7</b>	<p>Learner sample sizes will remain the same, but the learners chosen for sampling will be based on the information received from the centre. For example, if 50% are TAG and 50% are adapted, learners will be chosen using the same percentages to ensure sufficient sampling is carried out across the cohort of learners.</p> <p>When recording learner sampling the EQA will make it clear in the units sampled box whether the learner was teacher assessed grading or adapt to allow for a clear audit trail.</p>
<b>Section 8</b>	Completed as standard
<b>Section 9</b>	Completed as standard
<b>Section 10</b>	Completed as standard
<b>Section 11</b>	Completed as standard
<b>Section 12</b>	Completed as standard

For centres that have Direct Claims Status (DCS) and have already received their annual EQA review, a streamlined process will take place to ensure centres are supported through the teacher assessed grading process. If your centre has:

Category A qualifications, or grades that have been completed in line with the standard requirements of the qualification, and not generated through a teacher assessed grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results will be issued either straight away, or in line with current Service Level Agreements (SLAs)</li> </ul>
Category B1 qualifications which have been completed using a teacher assessed grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once your teacher assessed grading strategy has been approved by the EQA team you will be able to submit teacher assessed grades on the portal</li> <li>• We will sample your submitted teacher assessed grading results for both internal units and external components for consistency</li> <li>• All TAG results will be held by NCFE until results release day</li> </ul>

<p>Category B2 qualifications which have been completed using a teacher assessed grade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All results will be held by NCFE until your centre teacher assessed grading strategy has been approved by the EQA team</li> <li>• We will sample your submitted teacher assessed grading results for consistency</li> <li>• Once approved, results will be issued in line with our usual SLAs</li> </ul>
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- For centres that have existing DCS, and who are due an EQA review to maintain DCS this year, the above process and timescales within the table will still apply. The submission and review of your centre teacher assessed grading strategy (if applicable) will be completed as a desktop review and incorporated into your annual EQA review. The EQA will also request a sample of teacher assessed grading learner evidence, which will be included as part of the sampling plan you receive. **This will include both internal units and external components, where applicable.**
- Where a centre does not have DCS, we will carry out an EQA review and apply our standard risk-based sampling strategy. The submission and review of your centre teacher assessed grading strategy (if applicable) will be completed as a desktop review and incorporated into your annual EQA review. The EQA will also request a sample of teacher assessed grading learner evidence, which will be included as part of the sampling plan you receive. **This will include both internal units and external components, where applicable.** If it is found that a centre's teacher assessed grading strategy has not been followed, is insufficient, or that the underlying evidence for the sample of teacher assessed grades submitted was insufficient, the EQA may then request to see additional evidence. The EQA may widen the sample to include other learners beyond the initial sample requested. In this situation, submitted grades may not be approved until suitable evidence has been provided.
- In line with our EQA process, NCFE will approve submitted teacher assessed grades during the review and grades will be banked. If the teacher assessed grades are not agreed by the EQA the centre will be informed and further evidence to support the grading may be required or grades may be rejected and amended by the centre.
- If further evidence is required to support teacher assessed grades, centres will be informed of this during their EQA review. If possible, further evidence will be reviewed on the day of the review however, where this is not possible a timescale to send this evidence will be agreed between the centre and EQA with time to feedback included.
- Our EQAs will also complete risk-based reviews of grades submitted by centres. These reviews will be completed following the teacher assessed grading submission window closing. As a result of these desk-based reviews, we may require further information or engagement with you before confirming learner results.
- Prior to the release of results, as part of our QA process, we will carry out a check on whether your teacher assessed grades appear to be significantly out of line with past performance (be that higher or lower). Where necessary, you may be asked to provide an explanation for any significant variation from past performance.
- As usual, we reserve the right to conduct investigations where we are concerned about a given centre's practice. If an investigation were to take place, NCFE may need to hold results whilst we do so, we would contact the centre if we were to do this.
- It is important that any teacher assessed grade results issued this year are based on evidence of performance and do not undermine the validity of the qualification.

## **Enquires about results for internal assessment decisions**

EQAs will provide feedback on whether the learner evidence presented is sufficient and the grade or pass mark is in line with the required criteria. If not, the assessment decision may be rejected until sufficient evidence can be obtained. If the centre and the EQA cannot reach an agreement on this, they can follow our [enquiries about results policy](#) as a last resort.

An enquiry about the decisions of an internally marked assessment allows you the opportunity to question if the assessment criteria, adaptation and/or teacher assessed grading guidance was fairly, reliably, and consistently applied during the external quality assurance process. We will appoint a member of staff who was not involved in the original assessment decision to conduct the enquiry.

## **Step 6: Continued EQA activity into 2021-22**

### **Retrospective sample**

Centres in line with current Ofqual guidance are required to keep all evidence used in the determination of a teacher assessed grade until 6 months after either the results issue date, or the conclusion of any appeal in relation to that result, whichever is later.

Any learners certificated via DCS should have evidence retained for sampling at the next EQA review.

Where a centre has determined a teacher assessed grade for a learner on a qualification with DCS the same guidance stands, and evidence should be retained.

It is expected that centres will have learners they are not certificating this summer where a teacher assessed grade has been awarded for a unit or part of a qualification. This evidence should be retained to support EQA activity during the 2021/22 session.

For learners who are deferring due to not being able to complete part of their qualification, learner evidence will need to be retained for any teacher assessed grade submitted in this session as it will support the final EQA review of assessment.

As usual, we reserve the right to conduct investigations where we are concerned about a given centre's practice.

### **Centre risk rating**

At the end of the academic year, each centres risk profile will be updated following the outcome of the alternative awarding arrangements and reviewed to help identify those centres which may require additional scrutiny and support.

The risk profile is based on several factors, including historic Direct Claims Status (DCS), assessment and internal quality assurance performance scores from past EQA reviews and any recorded instances of malpractice or maladministration.

The risk rating will not dictate changes to grades, nor will NCFE amend any submitted teacher assessed grades. Rather, it will be used to identify the level of EQA support required, including requiring further EQA reviews in the 2020-21 session and beyond.

### **Assessment Data**

At the end of the academic year, as part of our ongoing QA processes we will carry out a check on whether your teacher assessed grades appear to be significantly out of line with past

performance (be that higher or lower). Where necessary, you may be asked to provide an explanation for any significant variation from past performance and this may be used to inform the EQA process in the next academic year. This will, along with updated risk information inform the EQA process next year in terms of what we will sample and when.

Any concerns may lead to a compliance investigation with the potential for issued certificates to be revoked.

### **Timescales for review**

For qualifications that can not be awarded through a teacher assessed grade (category A), we will issue results following our standard processes following a certification claim and EQA sign off.

EQA review	Available now and ongoing throughout the year.
Results released with DCS	Released on demand once a certificate claim has been submitted.
Results released with no DCS	Released following an EQA review and successful sign off of certificate claims; EQAs have 3 working days to sign off certification claims.



For qualifications that can be awarded through a teacher assessed grade (category B)

Centre submits teacher assessed grading strategy	Deadline 7 May 2020 – if not completed, this should be completed immediately
NCFE review teacher assessed grading strategy and provides feedback	Within 5 working days of submission
EQA review of teacher assessed grading evidence	From 1 May until 30 July 2021 for B1 From 1 May until 31 August for B2  Dates should be planned in with your allocated EQA. It is a requirement that your centre teacher assessed grading strategy is approved prior to your review taking place.
Teacher assessed grading portal opens	19 April 2021 26 May for T Levels
Teacher assessed grading portal deadline to guarantee results by results release days below	18 June 2021 *
EQA review of teacher assessed grading evidence must be completed by	30 July 2021 for B1 31 August 2021 for B2
TAG results released to centres	Level 3 B1 qualifications: no later than 9 August 2021 Entry Level to Level 2 B1 qualifications: no later than 11 August 2021
TAG results released to learners (B1 qualifications)	10 August 2021 – for Level 3 12 August 2021 – for Entry Level to Level 2
Teacher assessed grading portal closes to all centres	31 August 2021
Results completed without TAGs released to centres / learners (B1 qualifications)	Rolling release following successful EQA review and approval
Results completed as standard released to centres / learners (B2 qualifications)	Rolling release following successful EQA review and approval
Late TAG process	From 1 September 2021
Appeals deadline	17 September for B1 TAG or 30 calendar days from the date of results release for B2 TAG

If you are delivering both category A and B qualifications in the same sector, you will have one EQA review, but your results will be issued as per the tables above.

18 June 2021 is also the deadline for submitting non-TAG final grades for the Synoptic Project on our V-Cert Level 1 / 2 Technical Award qualifications below:

- 603/2650/5 NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Health and Fitness
- 603/2963/4 NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Engineering
- 603/2955/5 NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Business and Enterprise
- 603/2960/9 NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Performance Skills
- 603/2964/6 NCFE Level 1/2 Technical Award in Art and Design

\*18 June is the deadline for all T Level TAGs to be submitted

## Qualifications completed without using a Teacher Assessed Grade

Centres claiming certificates without using TAGs must follow the below:

Category A qualifications	<p>No cut-off date for certificate claims.</p> <p>However, any centre wishing to receive results and certificates on or around results release days, must have final certificate claims approved by their EQA on or before 30 July.</p> <p>If DCS is held for the qualification final claims need to be submitted by 3pm on 30 July.</p>
Category B1 qualifications	<p>No cut-off date for certificate claims.</p> <p>However, any centre wishing to receive results and certificates on or around results release days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• must submit unit grades via the portal (using our standard processes) <b>no later than 27 July</b></li><li>• your EQA review will follow</li><li>• Once your EQA has completed the review and banked these unit grades, you can then submit your final certification claims</li><li>• Certification claims must be made by <b>3pm on 30 July</b>. Please do not submit any certification claims until the EQA has concluded their review.</li></ul> <p>If DCS is held for the qualification, final claims need to be submitted by 3pm on 30 July.</p>
Category B2 qualifications	<p>No cut-off date for certificate claims due to a roll-on roll-off nature.</p>

## **Additional information and support**

Four principles have driven our response to the pandemic and have shaped the changes we have made to our qualifications, assessments, and operational processes:

- Supporting learning progress
- Maintaining rigour and robustness
- Streamlining and supporting centres
- Working in partnership for the benefit of learners.

If you are a centre, you should find all the information you need on our [Covid response hub](#).

If you have any questions, simply call us on 0191 239 8000 or email [customersupport@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:customersupport@ncfe.org.uk).

## Appendix A – Guidance on completing the teacher assessed grading strategy form


Key guidance points:

- The form should be completed by the Head of Centre as a statement of compliance to confirm that you have policies and procedures in place for the delivery of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for NCFE qualifications in 2021.
- The form should be completed at centre level and not per individual department or sector.
- The questions asked within this form are intended to provide a summary of your TAG Strategy and will be reviewed as part of our external quality assurance process.
- Your TAG strategy must be available for review on request. If you have an existing policy in place in relation to TAGs for GQ qualifications this can be used to support your TAG Strategy for NCFE.
- If you do not have an existing policy in place for TAGs you should ensure that all relevant centre documentation is updated to reflect the TAG process.
- This form needs to be completed and submitted to NCFE no later than 7 May 2021.
- Please ensure that you retain a copy of your completed responses.

### Section 1 - Centre Details

1. Centre Number \*

Please state your NCFE Centre number. (e.g. 012345)

2. Centre Name \* 

Please state the name of your centre as registered with NCFE. (e.g. The City Academy).

### Section 2 - Head of Centre Details

3. Head of Centre Name \*

Please state the name of your Head of Centre. This should be the person who has overall responsibility for the teacher assessed grading process in your centre (e.g. Ms Jane Smyth)

4. Head of Centre email address \*

Please state the email address for the Head of Centre. This will be the email address NCFE will use to contact your centre in relation to the teacher assessed grading process. (e.g. [JS@TCA.uk](mailto:JS@TCA.uk))

5. Head of Centre contact telephone number \*

Please state the contact phone number for the Head of Centre. This will be the phone number NCFE will use to contact your centre in relation to the teacher assessed grading process.

### Section 3 - Roles and Responsibilities

6. Roles and responsibilities of personnel within the centre including the Head of Centre, Assessors, and Internal Quality Assurers are defined in relation to the TAG process. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate that the roles provided have been defined within your centre policies in relation to teacher assessed grades. This may be, for example, documented within an organisation chart.

7. Please describe any changes to roles and responsibilities made in response to the TAG process. \*

Enter your answer

Please summarise any changes which have been made in terms of staff roles and/or staff responsibilities in response to your centre's teacher assessed grading process (e.g. SLT have taken on additional IQA responsibilities in this session).

Example answer:

The SLT has taken on additional roles to act as quality leads across subject areas for the duration of the TAG process. SLT have additional responsibilities in coordinating IQAs in each subject area.

Where past external assessment papers are potentially to be used as TAG evidence, Assessors have taken on the additional responsibility of marking learner responses and relating these to TAG evidence. Subject area IQAs have taken on the additional responsibility of sampling Assessor grading and mapping in this instance.

Where Assessors are less experienced, they have been monitored and mentored by an experienced colleague.

Additional standardisation activities as required have been scheduled into the responsibilities of subject IQAs. Standardisation has been subject-specific and cross-curriculum to ensure parity of grading.

The Examination Officer has the additional responsibility of entering TAG grades onto the NCFE portal following IQA sign off.

## Section 4 - Training, Support and Guidance

8. Centre-based training will be in place for all Assessors determining TAGs \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate if all Assessors will receive additional training regarding your centre's teacher assessed grading process. (e.g. Assessor familiar with timeline and concepts involved in awarding teacher assessed grades).

9. All staff determining TAGs will receive specific training on how to achieve objectivity in their decision-making \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate if all staff involved in awarding teacher assessed grades will receive training that ensures objective grading of evidence. (e.g. avoidance of bias, understanding of evidence requirements).

10. Please give details of the training to be given in relation to TAGs. \*

Enter your answer

Please summarise any training planned which will support understanding of the teacher assessed grading process. (e.g. training sessions planned with all departments in avoidance of bias prior to awarding of teacher assessed grades).

Example answer:

Staff training and inset is scheduled to review Ofqual guidance and NCFE/CACHE TAG processes.

We will discuss training materials & evidence requirements (including any EQA / NCFE feedback) in weekly meetings between Assessors / IQA and SLT. A weekly CPD slot will be used to explore objective assessment approaches including avoidance of bias.

For example, where Expert Witness Testimonies (EWT) have been used as a revised method by our centre, a standardised and consistent approach with regards planning, documenting and IQAing has been taken forward.

Where bias is detected additional training and individual support will be provided to ensure parity across the range of qualifications offered.

11. Specific arrangements are in place to support Assessors for those qualifications which are not normally internally assessed. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate if arrangements are in place to ensure that teacher assessed grades can be awarded for those qualifications which are not normally subject to internal assessments (i.e. qualifications which are normally awarded based on external assessments only – for example, Functional Skills)



## Section 5 - Appropriate Evidence

12. Assessors making judgements for TAGs will follow NCFE guidance. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate that all Assessors awarding teacher assessed grades will have read, and be working within any guidance issued by NCFE (e.g. Assessors will read published guidance, engage in discussion with IQA and EQA, undertake processes as applicable).

13. All learner evidence and associated documentation used to determine TAGs will be retained and be made available for the purposes of external quality assurance and appeals. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate that all learner evidence and associated documentation will be retained. All materials must be retained into the 21/22 session to ensure compliance. (e.g. learner work, teacher feedback, assessment tracking documents, IQA records).

14. Please provide a summary of your TAG Strategy in terms of :

1. Assessment materials for TAGs (e.g. assignment briefs & sample papers)
2. Collection of evidence for TAGs (e.g. formative assessment & summative assessment)
3. Selection of evidence for TAGs (e.g. validity and reliability of evidence) \*

Enter your answer

Please summarise your centres approach regarding the 3 stated areas. This does not have to be an exhaustive commentary but should state key points and examples against each area. (e.g. assignment briefs have been modified to identify learning outcomes across units to define evidence that will support teacher assessed grades. Past external assessment papers will be completed by learners to provide supporting evidence for teacher assessed grades).

Example answer:

1. Where completed internal assessment of Learning Outcomes is not complete assignment briefs and tasks have been modified to indicate coverage across units to identify and define evidence drawn from other units. Past & sample NCFE external assessment papers have been identified and discussed for applicability in terms of providing coverage of evidence at Learning Outcome level.
2. Evidence will include – summative assessment at LO level, formative assessment examples, past/sample external assessment papers. Additional portfolios of learner

evidence will be collected by the assessor based on identified areas of incomplete evidence.

3. Assessors and IQAs will identify areas of evidence that are incomplete on a learner-by-learner basis (including reference to any published adaptations). Additional collected evidence will be discussed in terms of validity, reliability, sufficiency, and currency.

### Section 6 - Awarding teacher assessed grades

15. A process for awarding TAGs is in place within your centre. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate if a process for awarding teacher assessed grades is in place in your centre (e.g. responsibilities of Assessors and IQAs are defined in relation to teacher assessed grading, training is planned, guidance has been followed) which will allow TAGs to be fairly awarded.

16. Is your centre applying TAGs for GQ (General Qualifications) ? \*

Yes

No

Not Applicable

Please select Yes or No to indicate if your centre is applying for GQ teacher assessed grades.

17. If 'Yes' to Q16. Do you have a TAG policy in place for GQ in your centre ? \*

Yes

No

Please indicate if your centre has produced a teacher assessed grading policy in line with GQ guidance.

18. Please outline any changes made to the assessment and internal quality assurance process in your centre in response to TAGs. \*

Enter your answer

Please summarise any changes made to assessment and IQA process in response to teacher assessed grading 2021. This does not have to be an exhaustive commentary but should state any key areas which have been modified (e.g. sampling strategies have been revised to ensure that IQA takes place within the teacher assessed grading submission window, additional meetings between Assessors and IQAs have been scheduled).

Example answer:

1. Assessment timetables have been revised with reference to the TAG window & lost learning. This will be differentiated on an individual learner basis as applicable.
2. IQA strategy has been updated to mirror these dates and provide appropriate turnaround time for IQA feedback to assessors within the TAG window to allow for entry of grades onto the NCFE portal.
3. The IQA sampling plans have been expanded to allow for a higher percentage of assessment decisions to be sampled and additional standardisation meetings between subject IQA and Assessors have been scheduled.

19. We have read and understood NCFE and Ofqual guidance in regard to learner eligibility for TAGs in 2021. \*

- Yes  
 No

Please select Yes or No to indicate if all guidance for learner eligibility has been read. All staff involved in the award of TAGs should be aware of and understand published guidance (please see Section 4). You should ensure that any updated guidance from Ofqual and NCFE is disseminated to staff.

20. Only learners who are eligible, in line with NCFE and Ofqual guidance, will be awarded a TAG in 2021. \*

- Yes  
 No

Please select Yes or No to indicate that only learners who are eligible based on NCFE and Ofqual guidance will be awarded a teacher assessed grade.

## Section 7 - Internal Quality Assurance

21. An internal quality assurance process is in place in relation to TAGs for both internal and external assessments. \*

- Yes  
 No

Please select Yes or No to indicate that an IQA process is in place for award of teacher assessed grades (e.g. occupationally competent IQA is in place, standardisation meetings are booked, IQA strategy and sampling plan are documented, IQA feedback to Assessor documentation is available and understood).

Example answer:

In our centre, we are taking a 10-step approach to assessment and IQA in the TAG window, including reference to SLT to ensure consistency across subject areas.

1. Assessors, IQAs and SLT to meet to discuss the TAG process and timelines. Assessors and IQAs undertake ongoing standardisation meetings.
2. Subject IQAs to work with assessors prior to summative assessment of TAG to discuss reliability, validity, sufficiency, and currency of evidence in standardisation sessions.
3. Subject IQAs to work with SLT across subject areas to ensure a standardised approach in terms of evidence and IQA documentation.
4. Assessors to complete assessment of evidence including grading and feedback.
5. Subject IQAs to sample evidence based on sampling plan producing feedback and actions in regard to assessment decisions as applicable.
6. SLT to sample IQA documentation across areas and provide commentary and actions as applicable. Good practice to be disseminated across curriculum areas. Support provided where practice needs improvement.
7. IQAs feedback commentary and applicable actions presented to the assessor (with any changes based on SLT commentary made as applicable).
8. The assessor makes changes to assessment decisions (if applicable) based on IQA actions.
9. IQA signs off completed actions (if applicable).
10. Assessor submits grades to exams officer for input to NCFE portal.

22. Please provide a brief summary of your Centre's arrangements for internal quality assurance in regard to TAGs including standardisation within and across sectors. \*

Enter your answer

Please summarise your centre's approach to IQA in relation to teacher assessed grading 2021. This does not have to be an exhaustive commentary but should state any key areas of IQA process, including details of standardisation within and (as applicable) across subject areas.

## Section 8 - Comparison of teacher assessed grades to results for previous cohorts.

23. Internal processes are in place and evidence retained, to ensure a comparison of TAGs at qualification level for previous cohorts are taking place, including:

- details of the approach to be taken if TAGs are viewed as overly lenient or strict compared to results in previous years.
- details of any cohort changes that may impact on alignment to grades in previous years. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate that you have an internal process in place to demonstrate that previous qualification outcomes have been checked as part of the awarding process. You must also evidence any variations to teacher assessed grades and retain this for EQA review. Examples of this could include learner tracking data, IQA standardisation discussion, IQA feedback to Assessors.

## Section 9 - Access Arrangements and Special Considerations

24. An approach to applying Special Considerations for TAGs is in place. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate that an approach to Special Considerations is in place and understood in relation to teacher assessed grades 2021.

25. Special considerations will be applied in line with the NCFE's Quality Assurance Policy for Alternative Awarding Arrangements 2020-21 document. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate that special considerations (as applicable) will be applied in line with NCFE guidance.

## Section 10 - Addressing Disruption / Differential Learning Loss

26. TAGs will be determined based on evidence of the learner's demonstrated knowledge and skills. \*

- Yes
- No

Please select Yes or No to indicate compliance with this condition. This indicates that teacher assessed grades will be awarded based on learner produced evidence and not through predicted performance.

27. Please provide a brief summary of how you have addressed disruption / differential learning loss in relation to TAGs. \*

Enter your answer

Please indicate the amount of learning loss and how your centre has addressed disruption/differential learning loss. This does not have to be an exhaustive commentary but should indicate key actions (e.g. remote learning was planned and undertaken by all learners during lockdown, additional sessions have been put in place to gather assessment evidence following return).

Example answer:

- Face to face teaching and learning has been reduced by 35% over the period due to COVID restrictions, as a centre we have been proactive in ensuring remote learning has been put in place across the cohort, adapting to suit all, with additional 121 time allocated when necessary.
- Remote learning was put in place and undertaken by learners during lockdown. Following the return to the centre, additional sessions have been put in place to gather evidence based on time lost with reference to GLH and TQT.
- Learner assessment plans have been updated to address individual learner circumstances and target key areas of learning loss and disruption.
- Assessment submission dates have been revised with regards to lost learning time and assessment scheduling with the TAG window.
- Assessment materials have been reviewed and revised to provide maximum available evidential coverage with reference to published adaptations in each subject. Where practical elements of the relevant courses have had to be reduced the relevant adaptations have been referred to and applied.

## Section 11 - Objectivity

28. An approach is in place to consider sources of unfairness and bias and how to minimise bias in assessment. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate that an approach is in place within your centre to ensure the objectivity of the assessment. (Please also see 8).

## Section 12 - Recording Decisions and Retention of Evidence and Data

29. Evidence will be retained for the purposes of external quality assurance review and potential appeals, in line with data protection legislation. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate that evidence will be retained in line with Data Protection Policy (e.g. Centre Data Protection Policy is current and reflects storage of evidence to support TAGs into 21/22 session).

## Section 13 - Authenticating Evidence

30. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that Assessors & Internal Quality Assurers are confident in the authenticity of learner evidence, and a process is in place for dealing with cases where evidence is not thought to be authentic. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate that you have an authentication process in place (e.g. learners and assessors sign and date submissions of evidence) and that it ensures that any issues with regards to authentication are investigated and resolved (e.g. a documented malpractice/maladministration policy is in place within the centre).

## Section 14 - Confidentiality, Malpractice & Maladministration and Conflicts of Interest

31. We confirm that Assessors will not disclose TAGs to learners, parents, or any other third parties until these are confirmed by NCFE. However, details of what evidence has been used to arrive at the TAG could be shared with learners. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate compliance. Teacher assessed grades should not be disclosed until they are confirmed by NCFE following EQA.

32. A policy is in place in regards to recording malpractice and maladministration in relation to TAGs. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate compliance. Please see also 13. Your centre malpractice/maladministration policy should be documented and updated to reflect the teacher assessed grading process as applicable.

33. A policy is in place in regard to recording and responding to allegations of Conflict of Interest in relation to TAGs. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate compliance. Your centre COI policy should be documented and updated to reflect the teacher assessed grading process as applicable.

## Section 15 - External Quality Assurance

34. Requests from NCFE or the regulator for access to evidence, premises, records, information, learners and staff for the purpose of external quality assurance or other monitoring activities will be complied with. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate compliance. This will include remote EQA review of teacher assessed grading evidence and documentation.

## Section 16 - Appeals



35. Arrangements are in place to conduct centre reviews of appeals and to support appeals in line with both JCQ and NCFE guidance. \*

Yes

No

Please select Yes or No to indicate compliance. Your centre appeals policy should be documented and updated as applicable in line with TAG 2021 guidance.

### Section 17 - Head of Centre Declaration

37. I confirm that all questions within this form have been answered accurately to the best of my knowledge. \*

Yes

No

38. I confirm that I am happy to be contacted by NCFE in regards to any queries resulting from submission of this form. \*

Yes

No

39. I understand that submission of TAGs to NCFE shall not be undertaken until approval of the centre TAG Strategy has been confirmed by NCFE. \*

Yes

No

40. I can confirm that all TAGs have been reviewed by the relevant head of department or equivalent or, where there is no such person in such a role, the head of centre or equivalent. \*

Yes

No

All centres should confirm the above statements in relation to the awarding of teacher assessed grades 2021.

41. Do you run Functional Skills Qualifications? \*

Yes

No

42. I confirm that I have explored all possible avenues to live test either in-person or remotely and with all available adaptations for the learners being put forward for TAGs. \*

Yes

No

43. I confirm that I will only enter TAGs for learners who are eligible and have the valid reason of safety concerns as to why they cannot access live assessment . \*

Yes

No

If the answer is Yes to Q41 the following two questions should be answered in relation to learners being awarded a teacher assessed grade for a Functional Skills qualification.

44. Head of Centre Name \*

45. Date \*



The Head of Centre is required to sign (by entering their name) and date this section as a confirmation of the declaration being made.