Joint Council for Qualifications CIC

Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments (GCE & GCSE specifications)

1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025

This document provides subject teachers, senior leaders and heads of centre with a single, definitive source of generic guidance and instructions for GCE and GCSE qualifications.

Produced on behalf of:

AQA Questions matter · OCR Oxford Cambridge and RSA · Pearson · WJEC CBAC

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Foreword

This JCQ document applies to GCE and GCSE qualifications which have been accredited in England or Wales which include a proportion of non-examination assessment.

It provides subject teachers, senior leaders and heads of centre with a single, definitive source of generic guidance and instructions.

The regulators' definition of an examination is very narrow. In effect, a non-examination assessment (NEA) is classified as any type of assessment that **is not**:

- set by an awarding body;
- designed to be taken simultaneously by all relevant candidates at a time determined by the awarding body; and
- taken under conditions specified by the awarding body (including conditions relating to the supervision of candidates during the assessment and the duration of the assessment)

is classified as non-examination assessment (NEA).

'NEA' therefore includes, but is not limited to, internal assessment. Externally marked and/or externally set practical examinations taken at different times across centres are also classified as 'NEA'.

The principles for non-examination assessment as determined by the qualification regulators for England and Wales are:

- non-examination assessment should only be used where it is the only valid means of assessing essential knowledge and skills;
- non-examination assessment **must** strike a balance between valid assessment of essential knowledge and skills, sound assessment practice and manageability;
- any non-examination assessment should be designed to fit the requirements of the particular subject, including the relative weighting of written examinations.

Changes made to the content of this document since the previous version (1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024) are highlighted in yellow for easy identification.

1 Non-examination assessments: the basic principles

What are non-examination assessments?

Non-examination assessments measure subject-specific knowledge and skills that cannot be tested by timed written papers.

There are three assessment stages and rules which apply to each stage. These rules often vary across subjects. The stages are:

- task setting;
- task taking;
- task marking.

How do the awarding bodies monitor the management of non-examination assessments in centres?

Awarding bodies require each centre to have a non-examination assessment policy in place to:

- to cover procedures for planning and managing non-examination assessments;
- to define staff roles and responsibilities for non-examination assessments;
- to manage risks associated with non-examination assessments.

A JCQ Centre Inspector will ask the examinations officer to confirm that a policy is in place. Guidance provided in this document will help the head of centre to ensure that the centre's policy is fit for purpose.

Additionally, each centre must have available for inspection an internal appeals procedure relating to internal assessment decisions.

Which GCE and GCSE specifications are covered by these instructions?

These instructions apply to all GCE and GCSE specifications with one or more non-examination assessment component.

See Appendices 1 and 2 for instructions for the endorsements – Practical Skills (GCE A level Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics) and Spoken Language (GCSE English Language – England only).

For the conduct of externally set GCE and GCSE Art & Design components see the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations*. This document is available in an interactive format within the Centre Admin Portal (CAP), which can be accessed via any of the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites. The document is also available in PDF format on the JCQ website:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/ice---instructions-for-conducting-examinations

2 Managing non-examination assessments: task-setting

Who is involved in task-setting?

Where the awarding body is responsible for task setting, subject-specific tasks will be provided by the awarding body.

Where the centre is responsible for task setting, centres may:

- select from a number of comparable tasks provided by the awarding body; or
- design their own task(s), in conjunction with candidates where permitted, using criteria set out in the specification.

Where centres are responsible for task-setting, they **must** refer to the awarding body's specification to ensure that the assessment criteria can be met and that tasks are accessible to candidates.

In A level Geography the Ofqual Subject-Level Conditions and Requirements stipulate that each candidate undertakes a single independent investigation based on a question or issue defined and developed by the candidate. Centres may give general guidance but they **must not** provide candidates with a choice of titles or tasks from which candidates then choose.

Is it permissible to give candidates a copy of the marking criteria?

Yes. Candidates should be aware of the criteria used to assess their work. They will then know what they need to do to gain credit. Specifications describe the marking criteria in detail. It is perfectly acceptable for teachers to produce a simplified candidate-friendly version of the marking criteria, provided that it is not specific to the work of an individual candidate or group of candidates.

3 Managing non-examination assessments: issuing of tasks

When are awarding body set-tasks issued to centres?

Centres **must** consult the relevant awarding body's specification and/or website to obtain the date for the issuing of tasks. Awarding bodies issue tasks well in advance to allow time for planning, resourcing and teaching in centres.

What action should be taken if the wrong task is given to candidates?

The centre **must** make arrangements for candidates to complete the correct task and should take great care to ensure that they do so. Awarding bodies will do all they can to protect candidates' interests, but in some cases, it may not be possible to accept work based on the wrong task.

4 Managing non-examination assessments: task taking

4.1 Supervision

Where appropriate to the component being assessed, the following arrangements apply unless the awarding body's specification says otherwise.

Invigilators and display of the JCQ *Unauthorised items poster* and the JCQ *Warning to candidates* are **not** required.

Candidates **do not** need to be directly supervised at all times. The use of resources, including the internet, is not tightly prescribed. Centres **must** always check the subject-specific requirements issued by the awarding body.

The centre **must** ensure that:

- there is sufficient supervision of every candidate to enable work to be authenticated;
- the work that an individual candidate submits for assessment is their own.

Work may be completed outside of the centre without direct supervision, provided that the centre is confident that the work produced is the candidate's own. Candidates may normally:

- have unlimited access to electronic and printed resources;
- use the internet without restriction;
- work in groups.

Where candidates work in groups, the teacher should keep a record of each candidate's contribution so that it is possible to attribute assessable outcomes to individual candidates (see section 4.5).

Centres **must** ensure that candidates understand what they need to do to comply with the regulations for non-examination assessments. This is outlined in the JCQ document *Information for candidates – non-examination assessments*:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

Centres **must** ensure that candidates:

- understand that information from all sources must be referenced;
- receive guidance on setting out references;
- are aware that they must not plagiarise other material.

4.2 Advice and feedback

As appropriate to the subject and component, centres should advise candidates on aspects such as those listed below before work begins:

- sources of information;
- relevance of materials/concepts;
- structure of the response (e.g. chapter titles and content);
- techniques of data collection;
- techniques of data presentation;
- skills of analysis and evaluation;
- health and safety considerations, including the use of equipment;
- potential ethical considerations;
- security of their work.

Centres **must not** provide model answers or writing frames specific to the task (such as outlines, paragraph headings or section headings).

What advice and feedback can teachers give to candidates during the task-taking stage?

Unless specifically prohibited by the awarding body's specification, teachers may:

- review candidates' work and provide oral and written advice at a **general** level;
- having provided advice at a general level, allow candidates to revise and re-draft work.

General advice of this nature **does not** need to be recorded or taken into account when the work is marked.

If teachers give any assistance which goes beyond general advice, for example:

- provide detailed specific advice on how to improve drafts to meet the assessment criteria;
- give detailed feedback on errors and omissions which limits candidates' opportunities to show initiative themselves;
- intervene personally to improve the presentation or content of work;

then they **must** record this assistance and either take it into account when marking the work or submit it to the external examiner.

Annotations should be used to explain how marks were applied in the context of the additional assistance given (see section 6.1).

Teachers **must not** provisionally assess work and then allow the candidate to revise it.

In all subjects teachers **must not** provide any type of assistance which is explicitly prohibited in the awarding body's specification. Assistance **must not** be given if there is no means to record it and to take account of it in the marking.

Failure to follow this procedure constitutes malpractice.

4.3 Resources

What resources are allowed?

In many subjects, candidates will use source material, including the internet and AI, when researching and planning their tasks. Candidates **normally** have unrestricted access to resources. Centres **must** refer to the JCQ document *AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications:*

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice

as well as the awarding body's specification and/or associated documentation published by the awarding bodies and the regulator.

Some subjects require candidates to produce the work for assessment in formally supervised sessions. Unless the awarding body's specification says otherwise, for all formally supervised sessions:

- the use of resources is always tightly prescribed and normally restricted to the candidate's preparatory notes;
- access to the internet **is not** permitted;
- candidates **are not** allowed to use their own computers or other electronic devices, e.g. mobile phones.

Are candidates allowed to introduce new resources in-between formally supervised sessions?

No. Candidates **are not** allowed to augment notes and resources between sessions. When work for assessment is produced over several sessions, the following material **must** be collected and stored securely at the end of each session (and **not** be accessible to candidates):

- the work to be assessed;
- preparatory work.

Additional precautions need to be taken if the centre permits candidates to use computers to store work. This may involve collecting memory sticks for secure storage between sessions or restricting candidates' access to a specific area of the centre's IT network.

How should sources be acknowledged?

The work submitted for assessment **must** include references where appropriate. To facilitate this, each candidate should keep a detailed record of their own research, planning, resources etc. The record should include all the sources used, including books, websites and audio/visual resources.

Guidance is given in the JCQ document *Information for candidates – non-examination assessments*:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

Centres **must** refer to the JCQ document *AI Use in Assessments: Protecting the Integrity of Qualifications*:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice

4.4 Word and time limits

Word limits as detailed in awarding bodies' specifications and subject-specific documentation are for guidance only.

Centres should refer to awarding bodies' specifications as to whether minimum and/or maximum time limits are mandatory.

Where limits are for guidance only, centres should discourage candidates from exceeding them.

4.5 Collaboration and group work

When is group work permitted?

Unless the awarding body's specification says otherwise, candidates are free to collaborate when carrying out research and preparatory work.

Where the specification permits, some assignments may be undertaken as part of a group. The specification may place a restriction on the maximum size of the group. It **must** be possible to attribute assessable outcomes to individual candidates.

Where an assignment requires written work to be produced, each candidate **must** write up their own account of the assignment. It is acceptable for all members of the group to record the same data. However, each candidate **must** use their own words to describe how the data was obtained and draw their own conclusions. Where an artefact or a performance is required, candidates may collaborate, but their responses **must** be their own and their individual contributions **must** be clearly identified. The contribution of each individual candidate **must** be clear from both the work itself and, if applicable, the record forms.

Should all members of a group get the same mark?

No. Group work is permitted but group assessment is not. Individual members of the group will have made different contributions and the work of each candidate **must** be individually assessed.

How is credit apportioned to individual candidates?

The centre is responsible for monitoring group work and ensuring that each candidate's contribution can be separately assessed.

4.6 Authentication procedures

How is candidates' work authenticated?

Teachers **must** be sufficiently familiar with the candidate's general standard to judge whether the piece of work submitted is within his/her capabilities.

Where required by the awarding body's specification, the following procedures apply.

All candidates **must** sign a declaration to confirm that the work they submit for final assessment is their own unaided work.

Teachers **must** sign a declaration of authentication after the work has been completed confirming that:

- the work is solely that of the candidate concerned;
- the work was completed under the required conditions.

Electronic signatures are acceptable. Typed names will be taken as being as binding as a handwritten signature.

Signed candidate declarations **must** be kept on file until the deadline for requesting a review of results has passed or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later. They may be subject to inspection by a JCQ Centre Inspector.

What if the teacher has doubts about the authenticity of the work?

If teachers are unable to confirm that the work presented by a candidate is their own and has been completed under the required conditions:

- **do not** accept the candidate's work for assessment;
- record a mark of '0' (zero) for internally assessed work.

If teachers are concerned that malpractice may have occurred or are unable to authenticate the work for any other reason, they **must** inform a member of the senior leadership team (see section 9).

If, during the external moderation process, it is found that the work has not been properly authenticated, the awarding body will set the mark(s) awarded by the centre to '0' (zero).

4.7 Presentation of work

1 Allow candidates to word process written work.

The regulations detailed in section 14 of the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting examinations* do not apply to non-examination assessments.

2 Instruct candidates to insert the following details on each page as a header or footer:

- 5 digit centre number;
- candidate number;
- component code.

3 Allow candidates to use the spell/grammar check when they are producing work electronically.

4 Encourage candidates submitting handwritten work to use black ink and write legibly.

5 Candidates must submit work on A4 paper unless the specification states otherwise.

6 Include copies of presentations, charts, artefacts, photographs, letters, videos, audio recordings, transcripts of interviews and witness statements from supervising teachers where appropriate.

7 Consider insuring valuable or fragile materials against loss or damage. **Awarding bodies are not liable for the loss of work or damage that occurs during moderation or in transit. Do not** include items of real or sentimental value such as photographs or certificates.

8 Obtain informed consent at the beginning of the course from parents/carers if videos or photographs/images of candidates will be included as evidence of participation or contribution.

9 Remove bulky covers and folders **before** work is sent for moderation or external marking.

10 Ensure that each candidate's work is securely fastened and that the awarding body's cover sheet is fully completed and attached to the work.

11 If candidates' work is to be submitted electronically, ensure that it meets the awarding body's specified requirements.

4.8 Keeping materials secure

When is secure storage of candidates' work required?

Where candidates are producing work over a period of time under formal supervision, their work **must** be stored securely between sessions.

Once any work is handed in by the candidate for formal assessment it **must** be stored securely.

Where work is submitted by post, centres should take precautions to ensure that the package in which the work is despatched is robust and securely fastened.

What constitutes secure storage?

Where work is stored in hard-copy format, secure storage is defined as a securely locked cabinet or cupboard.

Where candidates are producing artefacts (e.g. Art & Design), secure storage may be defined as a classroom, studio or workshop which is locked or supervised from the end of one session to the start of the next.

What constitutes secure storage of digital content?

The centre **must** keep secure the work that candidates have submitted.

Where work is stored electronically, centres are required to restrict access to this material and to utilise appropriate security safeguards such as firewall protection and virus scanning software. An effective back-up strategy **must** be employed so that an up-to-date archive of candidates' evidence is maintained.

Centres should consider encrypting any sensitive digital media to ensure the security of the data stored within it. Centres **must** refer to awarding body guidance to ensure that the method of encryption is suitable.

Are teachers allowed to take work home to mark?

Yes, if they take sensible precautions regarding its security.

Are candidates allowed to use work for other purposes?

Before the submission of work for formal assessment, centres **must** remind candidates to always keep their work secure and **not** to publicise their work such as posting it on social media. The JCQ document *Information for candidates – social media* **must** be brought to the attention of candidates:

https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

Centres **must** also be aware of the need to authenticate candidates' work as detailed in section 4.6. During the period from the submission of work for formal assessment until the deadline for requesting a review of results, copies of work may be used for other purposes, e.g. in a competition, provided that the originals are stored securely by the centre. Any material which **is not** required for moderation purposes (or any subsequent review) may also be freely used by the candidate. This applies to artefacts in Design & Technology where only photographic evidence is needed for moderation and any subsequent review. Where original work is used for moderation, as in Art & Design, a teacher **must** be present if, during this period:

- assessed work is exhibited;
- a candidate takes assessed work to an interview;
- the work is removed from secure storage for any other reason.

When can marked work be removed from secure storage?

Internally assessed work that **is not** required for the moderation sample and work returned to centres after moderation **must** be stored securely until all possible post-results services have been exhausted. If post-results services have not been requested, internally assessed work may be returned to candidates after the deadline for requesting a review of results for the relevant series. If post-results services have been requested, internally assessed work may be returned once the review of results and any subsequent appeal has been completed.

5 Non-examination assessments: task marking – externally assessed components

5.1 Conduct of externally assessed work

The format of external assessment will vary according to the specification and the component.

Some components, for example, may have a Visiting Examiner. Other components will require candidates' work to be despatched to an examiner or uploaded electronically. Details of the subject-specific arrangements will be found in the awarding body's specification and/or administration guide.

Externally assessed components will be conducted within a window as specified by the awarding body.

5.2 Submission of work

Centres **must** pay close attention to the completion of the attendance register (if applicable). Failure to do so will impact upon an awarding body's ability to deliver an accurate set of results.

A copy of the attendance register **must** be kept until the deadline for requesting a review of results has passed.

Where candidates' work needs to be despatched to an examiner or uploaded electronically, this **must** be completed by the date specified by the awarding body.

6 Non-examination assessments: task marking – internally assessed components

6.1 Marking and annotation

Teachers are responsible for marking work in accordance with the marking criteria detailed in the relevant specification and associated subject-specific documents.

Teachers **must not** use artificial intelligence as the sole means of marking candidates' work.

Teacher annotation should be used to provide evidence to indicate **how** and **why** marks have been awarded. This will facilitate the standardisation of marking within the centre and enable the moderator to check that marking is in line with the assessment criteria.

Annotate the work

- Follow guidance in the relevant specification and associated subject-specific documents.
- Provide evidence to support the marks. Identify the assessment criteria that have been met.
- Be clear and unambiguous.
- Use key phrases from the criteria. For example, awareness of values, uses a variety of techniques, selects appropriate data.
- Insert annotations at the appropriate point in the work – in the margin or in the text – or write comments on the cover sheet to show clearly how credit has been awarded.

Award marks

- If some work was done in groups, award marks that reflect the contribution of each individual candidate.
- If the candidate has received feedback and guidance over and above that allowed by the specification, take this into account. Apply the principle of best fit and use annotation to explain how marks have been applied in the context of the additional assistance given and document the details.

Complete documentation

- Record the feedback and guidance that has been given.
- Enter marks as specified by the relevant awarding body.

What is the correct procedure if a candidate submits little or no work?

Candidate submits no work whatsoever

When marks are submitted to the awarding body the candidate **must** be recorded as absent and **not** awarded a mark of '0' (zero).

Candidate submits very little work

If some work has been produced, it **must** be assessed against the assessment criteria. The appropriate mark **must** be awarded. If none of the work submitted is worthy of credit, a mark of '0' (zero) **must** be given.

Is the centre required to tell candidates what marks they have been awarded?

Yes. The centre **must** inform candidates of their centre assessed marks as a candidate can request a review of the centre's marking **before** marks are submitted to the awarding body.

What is the correct procedure for a candidate requesting a review of the centre's mark?

Any review **must** be undertaken **before** marks are submitted to the awarding body. Candidates **must** be given sufficient time to allow them to review copies of material, as necessary, and reach a decision. The centre **must** also allow sufficient time for the review to be carried out, to make any necessary changes to marks and to inform the candidate of the outcome, all **before** the awarding body's deadline. The review **must** be conducted by an assessor who has appropriate competence, has had no previous involvement in the assessment of that candidate for the component in question and has no personal interest in the outcome of the review. The reviewer **must** ensure that the candidate's mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre.

Centres **must** also make it clear to candidates that any centre assessed marks are subject to change through the moderation process.

Centres **must** inform the awarding body if they do not accept the outcome of a review.

The awarding bodies have produced a set of Frequently Asked Questions which may be found within the *Notice to Centres Informing candidates of their centre assessed marks* at:

https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments

What is the correct procedure where a teacher has a personal interest in a candidate?

Centres **must** make every effort to avoid situations where a candidate is assessed by a person who has a close personal relationship with the candidate. For example, members of their family (which includes step-family, foster family and similar close relationships) or close friends and their immediate family (e.g son/daughter).

Where this cannot be avoided, the centre **must** declare the possible conflict of interest to the relevant awarding body and submit the marked work for moderation whether or not it is part of the moderation sample. Further details are given in section 5 of the JCQ document *General Regulations for Approved Centres*. This document is available in an interactive format within the Centre Admin Portal (CAP), which can be accessed via any of the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites. The document is also available in PDF format on the JCQ website:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

6.2 Internal standardisation

Teachers **must** indicate on candidates' work, or on the cover sheet, the date when the work was marked.

It is important that all teachers involved in the assessment of a component mark to common standards. Centres must ensure that the internal standardisation of marks across assessors and teaching groups takes place. The following sequence is an example of good practice.

Obtain reference materials at an early stage in the course

Obtain exemplar material provided by the awarding body and use the centre's own archive material.

Hold a preliminary trial marking session prior to marking

- Include all the teachers involved in assessment.
- Compare standards through cross-marking a small sample of work.
- Agree a common understanding of the assessment criteria.

Carry out further trial marking at appropriate points during the marking period

- Repeat the trial marking/cross-marking exercise.
- Ensure that any discrepancies in marking are resolved.

After most marking has been completed

- Hold a further meeting to make final adjustments or assign responsibility for comparing marks to the teacher responsible for internal standardisation.

Make final adjustments to marks prior to submission

- If there are inconsistencies, ensure that the teacher(s) concerned make(s) adjustments to their marks.
- The teacher responsible for internal standardisation checks the new marks.

Retain work and evidence of standardisation

- Retain evidence that internal standardisation has been carried out.
- Keep candidates' work in secure storage until after the closing date for review of results for the series concerned or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later (see section 4.8).

6.3 Consortium arrangements for centre assessed NEA components

A consortium is a group of centres from which candidates are taught and assessed together. If the centre is part of a consortium, follow these steps:

1 Nominate a consortium co-ordinator who will liaise with the awarding body on behalf of all the centres.

2 Inform the relevant awarding body that the centre is part of a consortium by submitting Form JCQ/CCA *Centre consortium arrangements for centre-assessed work*, using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP).

The Centre Admin Portal (CAP) can be accessed via any of the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites.

Submit a separate form for each specification that is being taught and assessed jointly

Submit a new application for each examination series.

3 Submit the form **by no later** than the published deadline.

4 Follow the procedures for internal standardisation described in section 6.2 **as a consortium**, i.e. include all the teachers involved in assessment from all centres in the consortium.

5 Submit marks as detailed in section 6.4 of this document. Each centre in the consortium submits marks for its own candidates.

6 Submit a single sample of work for moderation as specified by the awarding body.

The awarding body will allocate the same moderator to all centres in the consortium.

If marks need to be adjusted, the adjustment will be applied across the consortium.

7 Retain all candidates' work from all the centres in the consortium until after the closing date for review of results for the series concerned or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later.

If the consortium requests a review of moderation, the work **must** be available from all the centres as the original sample will be required for a review of moderation.

6.4 Submission of marks and work for moderation

1 Set internal deadlines that will allow the centre to accommodate any candidate requests for reviews of marking and to meet the deadline for the submission of marks and candidates' work, as published by the awarding body. This will enable the awarding body to meet the deadlines for completion of moderation and release of results. Awarding bodies may refuse to accept marks and work submitted after the deadline.

2 Follow the awarding body's instructions regarding the submission of marks. This is normally done electronically. **It is the responsibility of centres to carefully check the marks they are submitting to an awarding body to minimise errors. Marks for all candidates, not just the sample submitted, must be checked by the centre for both addition and transcription errors before submission.**

3 Submit supporting documentation required by the awarding body.

Is it possible to obtain an extension to the deadline for submission of marks?

Where a centre has been affected by circumstances beyond its control, it may, in exceptional cases, be possible to grant a short extension. This is at the discretion of the awarding body. The centre **must** contact the awarding body as soon as possible to request an extension.

The timely release of examination results will be put at risk if the deadlines for submission of marks and samples are not adhered to.

6.5 Storage and retention of work after submission of marks

Moderation sample

- Keep a record of those candidates (candidate name and number) whose work was included in the sample. This information may be needed if a review of moderation is made.
- Moderators normally return work direct to centres, but work submitted electronically is not returned.

Marked work

- Retain marked work under secure conditions until after the deadline for review of results or until any appeal, malpractice or other results enquiry has been completed, whichever is later. This applies to all work – whether or not it was part of the moderation sample.
- Where work is being stored electronically, take steps to protect it from corruption and have a back-up procedure in place.
- If retention is a problem because of the nature of the work, retain some form of evidence such as photos, audio or media recordings.

Extracts and exemplar work

- Awarding bodies will retain the work of some candidates for archive and standardisation purposes.
- For information on copyright please see paragraphs 6.12 to 6.15 of the JCQ document *General Regulations for Approved Centres*. This document is available in an interactive format within the Centre Admin Portal (CAP), which can be accessed via any of the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites. The document is also available in PDF format on the JCQ website:

  http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations

6.6 External moderation – the process

The purpose of moderation is to ensure that the standard of marking is consistent across all centres.

Sample selection

- The awarding body (or the moderator acting on its behalf) specifies the sample which will include work from across the range of attainment at the centre.

  It is the responsibility of centres to ensure that moderators receive the correct samples of work to review.

Sample submission

- For most components, the centre submits a sample of work either to the moderator or directly to the awarding body, according to instructions.
- For some components, the moderator visits the centre to mark the sample of work.

Sample assessment

- The moderator assesses work in the sample using the published marking criteria and referencing centre marks and comments.

Mark comparison and adjustment

- Moderator marks are compared with the centre marks for the sample of work.
- The moderator may request some or all of the remaining work if further evidence of the centre's marking is needed.
- If the differences between the moderator's marks and the centre's marks exceed the allowed tolerance, but the moderator broadly agrees with the centre's rank order, adjustments may be applied to the centre's marks.
- If the moderator significantly disagrees with the centre's rank order (perhaps because internal standardisation has not been carried out effectively) the awarding body may ask the centre to re-consider its marks. Alternatively, the moderator's marks may be applied to all candidates in the centre and, in some circumstances, a charge may be made.

Feedback to centres

- The final moderated marks are issued to centres electronically when results are published.
- Feedback forms are also issued to centres.

6.7 External moderation - feedback

What sort of feedback can centres expect?

Feedback enables centres to take remedial action, if necessary, before the next examination series. The feedback given is intended to be constructive, objective, supported by fact or judgement, and sufficiently detailed to explain any differences between the centre's assessments and the agreed standard for the component.

Feedback will cover the following aspects:

Centre set tasks

- Were they appropriate to the content of the specification?
- Feedback forms are also issued to centres.

Candidate responses to awarding body briefs

- Were candidates' responses appropriate to the content of the specification and the brief itself?

Centre assessments

- Were candidates assessed accurately against the marking criteria and in relation to the agreed standard for the component?
- If there were **significant** inaccuracies in the marking, the report will highlight where within the marking range the inaccuracies were located and whether the assessment was unduly harsh or unduly generous.
- The report will explain the reasons why the marking was inaccurate using the Assessment Objectives and marking criteria.

Centre administration

- Were the assessments conducted within the requirements of the specification?
- Were the assessments submitted within the requirements of the specification?
- Were the assessments submitted on time?

Reports **do not** comment on the quality of the work itself **or** include the moderator's personal opinion.

7 Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments

The JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025* provides detailed information. This document is available in an interactive format within the Centre Admin Portal (CAP), which can be accessed via any of the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites. The document is also available in PDF format on the JCQ website:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration

Awarding bodies have developed their specifications to be compliant with equality legislation.

In principle, if a candidate has an access arrangement as part of their normal way of working within the centre and meets the published criteria for the arrangement, then it will normally be permitted for written examinations and non-examination assessments. **Centres must complete online applications for access arrangements in advance of timetabled written examinations and non-examination assessments.**

Information on the application of access arrangements in the Practical Skills Endorsement of a GCE A level Biology, Chemistry, Geology and/or Physics specification may be found at:

https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments/reasonable-adjustments-for-gce-a-level-sciencesendorsement-of-practical-skills/

How can centres prepare themselves to cater for candidates with access arrangements?

The SENCo **must** ensure that all relevant staff are aware of those candidates who will require access arrangements when completing non-examination assessments.

8 Special consideration and loss of work

The JCQ document *A guide to the special consideration process* provides detailed information. This document is available in an interactive format within the Centre Admin Portal (CAP), which can be accessed via any of the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites. The document is also available in PDF format on the JCQ website:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration

8.1 Absence

If candidates are absent will they be eligible for special consideration?

Short-term occasional absence	
• The candidate was unexpectedly absent for one or more formally supervised sessions.	**Not eligible** for special consideration. The candidate should be given an opportunity to make up the missed time.

Absence on the day of an external examiner visit	
• The candidate was absent for an acceptable reason on the day of an external examiner visiting.	**May be eligible** for special consideration. Advice **must** be sought from the awarding body at the time of the candidate's absence as to possible alternative assessment arrangements.

Joined the course at a late stage (See section 11, for candidates who move centres)	
• The candidate was absent for some formally supervised sessions due to joining the course at a late stage.	**Not eligible** for special consideration. The candidate should be given an opportunity to make up the missed time, if feasible.

Longer-term absence when work is being submitted in a series prior to certification (Not applicable to linear specifications)	
• The candidate was absent for an acceptable reason when their peers undertook the assessment. • There will be another assessment opportunity prior to the series in which the candidate certificates.	**Not eligible** for special consideration. The candidate should submit the assessment in a subsequent examination series.

Longer-term absence when work is to be submitted in the certification series	
• The candidate was absent for acceptable reasons when their peers undertook the assessment and was unable to complete the work at a later date. • As this is the candidate's certification series there will be no further assessment opportunity to complete the work.	**May be eligible** for special consideration provided the published criteria are met.

What are the criteria for a candidate who has been absent to be eligible for special consideration?

- The candidate has covered the whole course and has been fully prepared for the relevant assessment.
- The candidate was unable to complete the relevant assessment **during the certification series** at the same time as their peers for an acceptable reason, i.e. a temporary injury, illness or other indisposition (where the assessment was scheduled for a restricted period of time).
- The centre has taken all reasonable steps to try to accommodate the candidate in completing the assessment, including the consideration of a short extension.
- The centre can clearly set out why the assessment could not be completed in the certification series by means of an agreed extension.
- The candidate meets the published criteria for enhanced grading.
- The centre supports the application for special consideration.

Are there any circumstances in which the awarding body will accept a reduced quantity of work?

Yes, provided that **all** the following criteria are met:

- The specification requires completion of more than one piece of work.
- All pieces of work are assessed against the same criteria.
- The candidate has completed at least one piece of work and each required assessment objective has been covered at least once.

8.2 Loss of work

What are the criteria for a candidate whose work has been lost to be eligible for an adjustment?

Candidate responsible for loss	
The loss is a consequence of negligence on the part of the candidate.	**Not eligible** for any adjustment.

Centre responsible for loss	
The loss is not a consequence of negligence on the part of the candidate. The centre can verify that the work was completed or partially completed and had been monitored whilst it was in progress.	**May be eligible** for an adjustment..

What is the procedure for requesting an adjustment for a candidate whose work has been lost?

Report the loss	Submit Form 15 – JCQ/LCW to the relevant awarding body: **https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments** AQA and OCR centres **must not** submit Form 15 – JCQ/LCW. Applications **must** be submitted online using AQA Centre Services or OCR Interchange as appropriate.
If the work had been marked before it was lost or damaged	Submit the mark in the usual way. Submit Form 15 – JCQ/LCW to the moderator and the awarding body by the deadline for submission of marks. AQA and OCR centres **must not** submit Form 15 – JCQ/LCW. Applications **must** be submitted online using AQA Centre Services or OCR Interchange as appropriate**.**
If the work had **not** been marked before it was lost or damaged	Submit an estimated mark on Form 15 – JCQ/LCW for consideration by the awarding body. Base the estimate on the teacher's assessment of the work actually seen. Estimates **must not** be submitted on mark sheets, only on Form 15 – JCQ/LCW. **Do not** attempt to estimate marks for unseen work. Estimated marks **will not** normally be accepted after the issue of results. AQA and OCR centres **must not** submit Form 15 – JCQ/LCW. Applications **must** be submitted online using AQA Centre Services or OCR Interchange as appropriate.
If only part of the work is lost	Seek further guidance from the awarding body.

9 Malpractice

To prevent both candidate and centre malpractice, teachers **must** familiarise themselves with the JCQ document *Notice to Centres - Sharing NEA material and candidates' work*:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments

This may help to prevent candidate and centre malpractice.

For detailed guidance on dealing with suspected malpractice centres should refer to the JCQ document *Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures*:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice

Candidates **must not:**

- submit work which is not their own;
- make available their work to other candidates through any medium;
- allow other candidates to have access to their own independently sourced material;
- assist other candidates to produce work;
- use books, the internet or other sources without acknowledgement or attribution;
- submit work that has been word processed by a third party without acknowledgement;
- include inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

Candidates are **not prohibited** from lending books or other resources to one another, provided these are not used as part of their own independently sourced material.

Candidates **must not** publicise their work, e.g. by posting it on social media. They **must** be made aware of the JCQ document *Information for candidates – Social Media*:

https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/information-for-candidates-documents

Head of centres and senior leaders **must** ensure that those members of teaching staff involved in the direct supervision of candidates producing work for assessment are aware of the potential for malpractice.

Teaching staff must be reminded that failure to report allegations of malpractice or suspected malpractice constitutes malpractice in itself.

Teaching staff **must:**

- be vigilant in relation to candidate malpractice and be fully aware of the published regulations;
- escalate and report any alleged, suspected or actual incidents of malpractice to the senior leadership team or directly to the awarding body.

What should a centre do if it suspects malpractice?

Irregularities identified by the centre before the candidate has signed the authentication statement (where required)

- The centre should deal with the irregularity under its own internal procedures.
- There is no requirement to report the irregularity to the awarding body. The only exception to this is where the awarding body's confidential assessment material has been breached – (in such a case the breach must be reported to the awarding body).
- Details of any work which is not the candidate's own **must** be recorded on the record form.

Irregularities identified by the centre after the candidate has signed the authentication statement (where required)

- The head of centre **must** notify the relevant awarding body at the earliest opportunity using Form JCQ/M1.
- If malpractice is found, the awarding body will apply a penalty.

Irregularities identified by an examiner or moderator after the candidate has signed the authentication statement (where required)

- The awarding body will ask the head of centre to conduct a full investigation and report their findings.

What penalty is applied when candidate malpractice has occurred?

If a breach of the regulations on the part of the candidate is discovered after a candidate has signed the authentication statement, the awarding body may impose one of the following penalties:

- the piece of work will be awarded '0' (zero) marks;
- the candidate will be disqualified from that component for that examination series;
- the candidate will be disqualified from the whole subject for that examination series;
- the candidate will be disqualified from all subjects and barred from re-entering for a period of time.

10 Post-results services

For detailed information on post-results services centres should refer to the JCQ document *Post-Results Services: Information and guidance for centres*:

http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/post-results-services

The following post-results services may be requested.

Externally-assessed components

- Review of marking (Service 2)
- Priority review of marking (Priority Service 2)

Internally-assessed components

- Review of moderation (Service 3)

  This service is **not** available if no adjustment was made to the centre's marks as a result of the original moderation.

  A review of moderation is not available for an individual candidate.

What is the procedure for obtaining a review of moderation?

Initiate a review of moderation

- Submit a request for Service 3 – Review of moderation.
- The awarding body will provide details of where to send the sample where applicable.

Despatch moderation sample

- The original moderation sample **must** be sent for review.
- Where requested, the sample **must** be despatched within three working days of receiving confirmation from the awarding body that the request has been accepted.

Receive outcome of review

- Centres will be notified of the outcome.
- Feedback will normally be provided.

Why is the original moderation sample required?

This is a review of the original moderation to ensure that the assessment criteria have been fairly, reliably and consistently applied. **It is not a re-moderation of candidates' work.**

The awarding body will have trained its reviewers to conduct reviews of moderation accurately and consistently.

The sample of work submitted for review **must** have been stored securely. If there is evidence that work has been returned to candidates, the review will be cancelled.

What will happen if the centre fails to despatch the sample within three working days?

The outcome of the review may be delayed or cancelled.

11 Other issues

What happens if, after submission, it is discovered that the wrong task was given to candidates?

The centre **must** apply for special consideration. Awarding bodies do all they can to protect candidates' interests but, in some cases, it may not be possible to accept work based on the wrong task. **Centres must, therefore, take great care to ensure that they give candidates the correct task for the year of submission**. See section 3 for further information.

Can excluded pupils, distance learners (see Appendix 3), private candidates and those who do not attend a centre for whatever reason do non-examination assessments?

Centres should refer to the relevant specification and/or subject-specific guidance in the first instance. Where the specification is available to those outside of mainstream education, the centre which makes the entry/entries **must** arrange for supervision, authentication and marking as required.

Can a non-examination assessment mark be carried forward when a candidate re-takes a qualification?

Yes. When a candidate re-takes a qualification which includes non-examination assessment, the mark for the non-examination assessment component may be carried forward (re-used). (This will be the final post-moderation mark in the case of internal assessment.) The candidate's original UCI number **must** be used.

However, where a qualification consists entirely of non-examination assessment, the candidate **must** re-take at least one component.

Within the lifetime of the specification, there is no restriction on the time between the original attempt and the re-take, or on the number of occasions on which a mark may be carried forward.

If a candidate has two or more previous non-examination assessment marks, the most recent mark will be used, even if this is a lower mark.

If a candidate re-takes rather than carrying forward a non-examination assessment, the new mark will be used even if this is a lower mark.

A mark can only be carried forward where a grade, including 'Unclassified', has been awarded for the qualification.

A candidate wishing to carry forward a mark for the Speaking component in a GCSE MFL specification **must** be re-entered for the qualification at the same tier.

For candidates entered for unitised WJEC specifications, the centre should contact WJEC for advice.

Can previous non-examination work be enhanced and re-submitted when a candidate re-takes a qualification?

Yes, unless specifically prohibited by the awarding body's specification or where the awarding body sets a task which changes each year. As indicated above, the new mark will be used, even if it is lower than the previous mark.

If there is more than one task, all tasks **must** be submitted for assessment and/or moderation, even if the candidate has not done any further work on them. Where work is assessed or moderated live, all tasks **must** be repeated. This does not apply if assessment or moderation is carried out from recordings, except in the Speaking component of GCSE and GCE Modern Foreign Languages, where the whole of the Speaking test **must** be repeated.

Centres **must** be aware of the need to authenticate candidates' work, as detailed in section 4.6. They **must** ensure that any additional assistance is recorded and taken into account when marking the work (or submitted to the external examiner) in the normal way, as detailed in section 4.2. However, candidate knowledge of the previous breakdown of marks **does not** need to be regarded as additional assistance.

What happens if a candidate moves to a different centre during the course?

It may be possible to help candidates who move centres during the course. Possible solutions depend on the stage at which the move takes place. The relevant awarding body should be contacted at the earliest opportunity for advice about individual cases.

Appendix 1

Practical Skills Endorsement for the A level Sciences designed for use in England

Introduction

The assessment of practical skills is a compulsory requirement of A level Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics qualifications. Each of these qualifications will have an endorsed components, covering those skills.

The endorsement has several features which distinguish it from most general qualifications assessments, in particular:

- it **will not** contribute to the A level grade;
- no marks will be assigned - it will be assessed holistically and reported as 'Pass' or 'Not Classified';
- it will be assessed on a 'competency' basis using agreed Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC). Candidates **must** consistently and routinely meet **all** of the criteria to be awarded a 'Pass' at the end of the course;
- there will be a monitoring visit to each centre which will check that teachers are implementing the requirements of the practical endorsement appropriately and applying the assessment criteria correctly.

New lead teachers are required to undertake training provided by the awarding body on the implementation of the practical endorsement. Further details will be supplied by the awarding body.

Lead teachers **must** ensure that all other teachers of that subject within the centre can apply the standards appropriately.

There is no separate assessment of practical skills for AS Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics qualifications.

Entries and centre declaration

A level entries for Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics automatically include the respective practical skills endorsement.

A certificate will be issued for A level Biology, Chemistry, Geology and/or Physics where the candidate has been awarded a grade (A* to E). The result for the endorsement, including 'Not Classified', will be reported on the certificate.

The head of centre **must** sign a declaration confirming that all reasonable steps have been or will be taken to ensure that all candidates at the centre have had, or will have, the opportunity to undertake the prescribed practical activities.

Where a centre intends to enter candidates for the first time for one or more of the A level subjects, as above, the relevant awarding body **must** be contacted at the beginning of the course.

Practical activities

The arrangements for the assessment of practical skills in A level Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics are common to all awarding bodies and include the following.

- The required practical activities (that will enable candidates to demonstrate the five practical competencies) are set out by each awarding body in the subject specification and **must** be carried out by each candidate.
- Centres assess candidates using Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) issued jointly by the awarding bodies. The CPAC are based on the requirements of the respective appendix from the prescribed subject content, published by the Department for Education (DfE). They define the minimum standard required for the achievement of a 'Pass' grade.
- Candidates who consistently and routinely demonstrate the required standard across all of the CPAC, incorporating all of the skills, apparatus and techniques (as defined in the respective appendix of the DfE subject content), will receive a 'Pass' at the end of the course.

Candidates may work in groups, but teachers should be confident of each individual's competence when awarding a 'Pass'.

In each specification, at least 12 activities are prescribed. These activities provide opportunities for demonstrating competence in all the required skills and in the use of all apparatus and techniques detailed for each subject. Some awarding bodies' specifications require candidates to carry out all of the specified activities. In all specifications candidates may also demonstrate the competencies in any additional practical activities undertaken during the course of study which cover the requirements of the CPAC and are of Level 3 challenge.

Centre record-keeping

Each centre **must** keep a written record of the following:

- plans to carry out sufficient practical activities which meet the requirements of CPAC, incorporating skills and techniques detailed in the respective appendix of the DfE subject content over the course of the A level;
- each practical activity undertaken and the date when it was completed;
- the criteria being assessed in that practical activity;
- candidate attendance;
- details of which candidates met the criteria and which did not;
- candidate work showing evidence required for the particular task with date(s), together with any associated materials provided for the practical activity, e.g. written instructions given.

Candidate record keeping

Candidates **must** keep a record of their practical work, including their assessed practical activities and the dates. The format is not prescribed, as it is important that candidates record their practical experiences in their own ways. It could include:

- lab books (allowing all records to be kept in one place);
- candidates' folders;
- computer-based systems;
- pre-printed workbooks.

Monitoring

Quality assurance of the practical endorsement is supported by visiting monitors from the awarding bodies. As the practical activities for the endorsement take place throughout the two years of the A level course, visits could be in either the first or second year.

Each centre will be visited (or will have been visited) at least once, in at least one of the sciences (A level Biology, Chemistry or Physics), during the period September 2023 to May 2025. If there are more than 140 candidates following any of the A level sciences in a centre, then the centre will receive a visit for every science.

Centres will receive a separate visit for A level Geology.

The purpose of the visit is to ensure that the centre is implementing the requirements of the practical endorsement appropriately and applying the assessment criteria (CPAC) correctly. The monitoring process **is not** intended to moderate or adjust the results of individual candidates.

The centre visit

The monitor will contact the examinations officer at the centre who will be asked to pass information to the lead teacher for a visit to be arranged with at least two weeks' notice.

On the day of the centre visit the monitor will:

- observe a practical activity taking place;
- review the records kept by the centre and by a sample of candidates;
- talk with staff and candidates.

The visit is intended to determine the ability of the centre to assess candidates in the practical endorsement, not to decide on candidate achievement. It is unnecessary and counter-productive to rehearse the practical activity that the monitor is to observe.

The monitor will prepare a written record of the visit and a copy will be sent to the centre, stating whether or not they agree with the centre's implementation of the requirements and application of the assessment criteria (CPAC).

If the monitor **does not** agree with the centre's judgements, they will provide guidance on the measures which the centre needs to put in place. Such an outcome could result in the other sciences (Biology, Chemistry and/or Physics) receiving a visit from the respective awarding body/bodies as well as a repeat visit for the science which was monitored. If additional visits are necessary, there may be a supplementary charge.

It is possible that the monitor may agree with the centre's application of CPAC, yet still include guidance on improvements which could be made.

What if a centre disagrees with the monitor?

If a centre disagrees with the outcome of a monitoring visit, it may request a repeat visit by an alternative monitor. There may be a charge for this service.

Alternative centre arrangements

- To offer the A level sciences, a centre **must** be able to provide practical work and the practical endorsement.
- Where a centre **does not** have laboratory facilities and undertakes the practical endorsement at an alternative site or venue, or in a foreshortened timescale, a specific visit will be made on a defined date when practical activities are taking place.
- Where candidates from more than one centre undertake practical work together using joint-teaching arrangements, the centre being monitored **must** inform the awarding body's monitor of such arrangements when contacted. Monitoring visits will take place with all centres within an academy chain or a consortium where each centre has separate classes.

Candidate absence and exemptions

Where a candidate misses a prescribed practical activity through absence, the centre must organise an alternative session, or provide other opportunities for the candidate to demonstrate the required skills and techniques.

It is a regulatory requirement that each candidate must demonstrate the specified skills and techniques through carrying out a minimum of 12 activities. Candidates who are unable to do this because of absence **will not** qualify for special consideration and will receive a 'Not Classified' result for the practical skills endorsement.

If a candidate cannot access the endorsement due to a substantial impairment, reference should be made to section 5.17 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*:

https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance

When an exemption is granted by an awarding body an indication will be placed on the candidate's certificate.

Centres which switch to another awarding body

Where a centre intends to switch awarding body, the relevant awarding bodies **must** be informed as soon as possible.

If no visit has yet taken place, the updated details will be used when arranging the visit.

If a visit has already taken place in the science where the centre has switched, the consequential decisions will stand.

Candidates who move to a new centre during the course

To award a 'Pass' grade, the new centre must take all reasonable steps to ensure that it is satisfied that all of the five competencies and all of the skills and techniques have been successfully covered in at least 12 practical activities (at one or both centres).

Re-use (carry forward) of practical skills grades

A candidate who is re-taking an A level Biology, Chemistry, Geology or Physics qualification may request to carry forward (i.e. transfer into a new entry) a previous grade for the practical skills endorsement, even if it was awarded by a different awarding body.

If a candidate has two or more previous endorsement grades, the most recent grade will be used even if this is 'Not Classified'.

If a candidate re-takes the endorsement and a new grade is submitted, the new grade will be used.

An endorsement grade can only be carried forward where a grade, including 'Unclassified', has been awarded for the A level qualification.

Sanctions

- If a monitoring visit shows that a centre is not implementing the requirements of the practical endorsement appropriately, the awarding body will provide guidance on the improvements which need to be put in place.
- If a monitoring visit shows that a centre is not assessing to the correct national standard, the lead teacher may be required to undertake further training.
- Failure by the centre to act in response to the above, or to provide a declaration to confirm that all candidates have had the opportunity to undertake the prescribed practical activities, may cause results for the endorsement to be awarded as 'Not Classified'.

Malpractice

- If it comes to light that a teacher has awarded a 'Pass' grade to a candidate who has not satisfactorily completed the necessary practical activities, the head of centre will be asked to carry out an investigation of the circumstances and report to the awarding body. Results from some or all candidates at the centre may be withheld and the teacher may be subject to a malpractice investigation.
- Failure on the part of the head of centre to give all candidates the opportunity to undertake the practical activities is a breach of specification requirements and will be investigated by the awarding body, who may inform other awarding bodies and the regulator. The centre's arrangements for the next cohort will be closely monitored.
- Due to the nature of the work required, opportunities for candidate malpractice are lessened, but in circumstances where it occurs, the standard published malpractice procedures apply.

Appendix 2

Spoken Language Endorsement for GCSE English Language specifications designed for use in England

Introduction

GCSE English Language has an endorsed component covering Spoken Language. This endorsement has several features which distinguish it from most general qualifications components, in particular:

- it will be reported as a separate grade ('Pass', 'Merit', 'Distinction' or 'Not Classified') and **will not** contribute to the result of the GCSE English Language qualification;
- no marks will be assigned – it will be assessed holistically as a grade;
- it will be assessed on a 'competency' basis using agreed common criteria – to be awarded a grade, candidates **must** achieve all of the criteria for that grade.

The endorsement will be assessed by centres. There will be monitoring arrangements through which awarding bodies will check that:

- centres have used appropriate tasks;
- centres have applied the assessment criteria correctly and consistently – no adjustments will be made to centres' assessments.

For monitoring purposes, each centre is required to provide audio-visual recordings of the presentations of a sample of candidates.

Entries and centre declaration

Entries for GCSE English Language automatically include the Spoken Language endorsement.

A certificate will be issued for GCSE English Language where the candidate has been awarded a grade (9-1). The result for the endorsement (including 'Not Classified') will be reported on the certificate.

The head of centre **must** sign a declaration confirming that all reasonable steps have been or will be taken to ensure that all candidates at the centre have had, or will have, the opportunity to undertake the Spoken Language endorsement.

Task-setting and task-taking

Candidates **must** undertake a prepared spoken presentation on a specific topic. As a guide, the duration should be no more than 10 minutes. The requirements are as follows:

- Presentations may take a wide variety of forms, including talks, debates, speeches and dialogues.
- The appropriate format should be determined by the teacher, in discussion with the candidate. The format chosen should allow candidates to fully demonstrate their Spoken Language abilities.
- Candidates **must** identify the subject for their presentations in advance and agree it with their teacher.
- Presentations **must** be planned and organised. Candidates should be advised that lack of preparation is likely to prevent access to the criteria for the higher grades.
- Candidates may use pre-prepared notes to assist them during their presentations, but this **is not** a requirement.
- There are no word limits, page restrictions or other limitations regarding notes.
- Teachers should advise candidates that reading entirely from pre-prepared notes is unlikely to enable them to access the criteria for the higher grades which require engagement with the audience.

As part of or following the presentation, candidates **must** listen to and respond appropriately to questions and feedback. Therefore, task taking also includes the following requirements:

- Candidates **must** give their presentations to an audience, which **must always** include the teacher.
- The size and composition of the audience should be determined by the teacher, in discussion with the candidate.
- Where the audience is only the teacher, the presentation and dialogue should be designed in such a way that it could have a potentially wider audience than just one person (e.g. it replicates a television interview).
- An audience consisting of two people can more likely create the circumstances under which a candidate can demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to reach the higher specified levels of attainments in the spoken language assessment. The audience should be composed of individuals able to provide the candidate with opportunities to respond to appropriate questions and feedback.

The format of the task-taking is flexible. There is no requirement to present to other candidates. Further advice is provided in each awarding body's specification and/or guidance.

Assessment and internal standardisation

Candidates should be assessed either live or from recordings, using the common assessment criteria which have been developed collaboratively by the awarding bodies and teachers.

Teachers award grades ('Pass', 'Merit', or 'Distinction') - there are no marks. Candidates who **do not** reach the 'Pass' standard **must** be recorded as 'Not Classified'. To achieve a particular grade, a candidate must meet **all** of the criteria for that grade. The 'best fit' and compensatory approach normally used in GCSE assessments **does not** apply. Further details are available in the guidance and support provided by the awarding bodies.

Centres **must** make arrangements for internal standardisation of assessments. This should take place as far as possible **before** assessment begins. Internal standardisation should include a preliminary trial assessment session (including all teachers involved in assessment) using exemplar material provided by the awarding body. This will ensure that there is a common understanding of the assessment criteria. It could also include observation by teachers before starting their own assessments. Teachers could observe live sessions where the lead teacher assesses candidates and equally the lead teacher could observe some of the live sessions where each teacher assesses candidates.

Monitoring

Common monitoring arrangements are in place, as agreed by the awarding bodies, to ensure that centres are using appropriate tasks and are applying the assessment criteria correctly.

The centre **must** provide recordings of the presentations of a sample of candidates. The recording of each candidate's presentation, including questions and feedback from the audience, **must** be complete and unedited. Any proceedings at the beginning or end which are not part of the assessment should not be recorded or should be edited out.

Using their knowledge of candidates' likely performance, centres should select the sample following the guidance shown in Table 1, and its footnotes. Centres are recommended to aim to record slightly more than the minimum number at each grade to allow for candidates whose performance is awarded a higher or lower grade than the centre had anticipated. However, a centre whose sample at a particular grade is ultimately slightly smaller than the minimum specified in the table **is not** required to take further action (i.e. record further candidates) to rectify the sample. Awarding bodies will provide details regarding the storage and submission of recordings.

Table 1 – Sample sizes		
No. of candidates at centre	**No. of candidates whose presentations must be recorded**	**Minimum no. of candidates at each grade (D, M, P)+**
30 or fewer	All candidates	10++
Over 30	30	10+++

The sample should be representative of the teaching groups within the centre.

\+ All candidates at a grade if the centre has fewer than the stated minimum. Candidates assessed as 'Not Classified' should not be included.

++ For example, if a centre has 15 D candidates, 11 M candidates and 3 P candidates, all these candidates will be in the sample.

+++ For example:

(a) if a centre has 21 D candidates, 14 M candidates and 3 P candidates, the sample will consist of 10 of the D candidates, 10 of the M candidates and all of the P candidates, with 7 additional candidates (from D and/or M) to make the overall sample up to 30.

(b) if a centre has no D candidates, 7 M candidates and 60 P candidates, the sample will consist of all of the M candidates and 23 of the P candidates.

Where a centre is concerned that it may be unable to record the required number of candidates owing to concerns (expressed by the candidates themselves or by their parents/carers) about safeguarding, confidentiality or faith, it **must** contact the awarding body at the earliest opportunity.

Assessments **must** be submitted by the awarding body's published deadline for internal assessment. Awarding bodies will supply details of the administrative arrangements. The monitor appointed by the awarding body will view some, or all, of a centre's recordings and there will be a statistical analysis of the centre's assessments.

If there are concerns because of monitoring, the centre will be provided with additional support (which may include a visit by a monitor) in the academic year 2025-26. There may be enhanced monitoring arrangements such as an earlier deadline for submission of assessments or a requirement to record the presentations of all candidates.

Consortium arrangements

The normal consortium arrangements apply - see section 6.3.

The consortium **must** select a sample of recordings in line with the requirements in Table 1 and the accompanying text as above.

Candidate absence and exemptions

Where a candidate misses the scheduled date/time for their presentation, the centre **must** organise an alternative session.

A candidate who is unable to undertake their presentation because of persistent absence (whether through ill health or any other reason) **will not** qualify for special consideration and will receive a 'Not Classified' result for the Spoken Language endorsement. If the centre wishes to conduct the assessment at an alternative venue, the relevant awarding body should be contacted for advice.

If a candidate cannot access the endorsement due to a substantial impairment, reference should be made to section 5.17 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments.*

When an exemption is granted by an awarding body, an indication will be placed on the candidate's certificate.

Candidates who move to a new centre during the course

If a candidate moves to a new centre after their Spoken Language assessment has been carried out, the result of that assessment remains valid. The new centre should contact its awarding body for details regarding the administrative arrangements.

Re-use (carry forward) of Spoken Language grades

A candidate who is re-taking GCSE English Language may request to carry forward (i.e. transfer into a new entry for GCSE English Language) a previous grade for the Spoken Language endorsement, even if it was awarded by a different awarding body.

If a candidate has two or more previous endorsement grades, the most recent grade will be used even if this is 'Not Classified'.

If a candidate re-takes the endorsement and a new grade is submitted, the new grade will be used.

An endorsement grade can only be carried forward where a grade, including 'Unclassified', has been awarded for the GCSE English Language qualification.

Malpractice

- If it comes to light that a teacher has awarded a grade to a candidate who has not carried out a presentation in the required manner, the head of centre will be asked to carry out an investigation of the circumstances and report to the awarding body. Results from some or all candidates at the centre may be withheld and the teacher may be subject to a malpractice investigation.
- Failure on the part of the head of centre to give all candidates the opportunity to undertake a Spoken Language presentation is a breach of specification requirements and will be investigated by the awarding body. The awarding body will inform other awarding bodies and the regulator. The centre's arrangements for the next cohort will be closely monitored. Where candidates **do not** attempt the endorsement, a grade of 'Not Classified' will be recorded.
- Due to the nature of the work required, opportunities for candidate malpractice are lessened, but in circumstances where it occurs the standard published malpractice procedures apply.

Appendix 3

Distance learning candidates

It is possible for distance learning candidates to comply with the requirements of GCE and GCSE specifications, which include non-examination assessment components, in the following way.

Prior to embarking on any work for a non-examination assessment component, the distance learning candidate **must** register/enrol with a centre which has been **approved by the relevant awarding body. This includes Distance Learning Providers which are approved examination centres.** The centre, including a Distance Learning Provider approved by the relevant awarding body, will administer all aspects of the non-examination assessment process, as detailed in the awarding body's specification. This will be defined as the candidate's entering centre.

Information for private candidates may be found at:

www.aqa.org.uk/student-support/private-candidates

https://www.ocr.org.uk/students/private-candidates/

https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/registrations-and-entries/academic-registrations-and-entries/private-candidates.html

https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/student-support/private-candidates/

The entering centre will be responsible for teaching the course, including all aspects of setting, authenticating and marking the candidate's work.

The entering centre may, or may not, be able to conduct written examinations. If not, the candidate will be responsible for finding a centre, which is prepared to host the written examinations.

Where required, once a 'host centre' has been found, the entering centre will initiate the transferred candidate arrangement process. **The process must be completed by the published deadline**. A fee will be payable to the awarding body by the entering centre for the transferred candidate arrangement.

A Distance Learning Provider which **does not** provide 'face-to-face' teaching **must** comply with the awarding body's requirements for non-examination assessment. To achieve this there **must** be a pattern of regular contact between the candidate and any assigned tutor(s) prior to the commencement of the work through to its submission. This process **must** have been agreed with the awarding body prior to the candidate beginning the course.

During such contact, the tutor(s) **must** ensure that all non-examination assessment rules are, or will be, successfully adhered to.

The tutor(s) **must** authenticate the candidate's work and, where relevant, record any factors which may have a bearing on their judgement of the assessment, including the amount of assistance that has been requested by the candidate.

The tutor(s) **must** be sufficiently familiar with the candidate's general standard to judge whether the piece of work submitted is within their capabilities.

The entering centre **must** mark the candidate's work, which **must** be in accordance with the awarding body's published mark scheme.

The awarding body will issue results and certificates to the entering centre.

The entering centre **must** make distance learning candidates aware that there are several costs associated with the examination entry process.