



Ein cyf/Our ref KW/05120/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair Petitions Committee
Senedd
Cardiff Bay
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Petitions@Senedd.Wales

8 September 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 1 September regarding Petition P-05-1020 to introduce an Appeals process for all Centre Assessed Grades for the 2020 public exam programme which you have received.

As you know, I announced on Monday 17 August that GCSE, AS, A level and Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications would now be awarded on the basis of centre assessment grades. As a result of this change in approach to awarding qualifications, learners in Wales will now receive the higher of the centre assessment grade and calculated grade for GCSE, AS level and Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications. For A levels, learners will receive the higher of their AS level grade, centre assessment grade and calculated grade.

In light of this change in policy approach, Qualifications Wales has refined the appeals process to reflect the use of centre assessment grades. The full Qualifications Wales appeals statement is accessible below and was recently expanded to allow for exceptional circumstances to be taken into account, following changes made in other jurisdictions so that learners in Wales are not disadvantaged. A [learner's guide](#) to the appeals process has also been published to support learners in considering whether they should make an appeal and how to do so.

<https://qualificationswales.org/english/coronavirus---covid-19/qualifications-wales-statements/qualifications-wales-statement-on-appeals-process/>

Following my decision on 18 March 2020 to close schools and cancel the summer 2020 exam series, progression of learners to sixth form, college, higher education, training or employment had to be facilitated.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Schools and colleges were asked to submit centre assessment grades, together with a rank order of learners to enable the award of GCSE, AS, A level and Skills Challenge Certificate (SCC) qualifications. Guidance was provided to Heads of Centre and teachers about how to generate the grades and the evidence that should be considered to arrive at Centre Assessment Grades and a link to that is also provided below.

<https://www.qualificationswales.org/media/5973/information-for-centres-on-the-submission-of-centre-assessment-grades-version-2-18-may-2020.pdf>

Centres were advised that the centre assessment grades submitted to WJEC must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely grade a learner would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment.

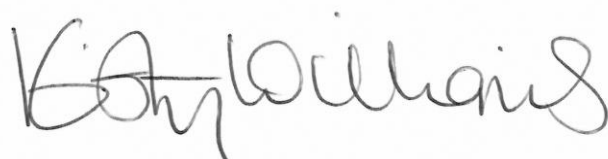
Where learners have concerns that their centre has exhibited bias or discrimination of one form or another, in determining their centre assessment grades then the learner should raise the matter with their centre and ask if an error has been made. If the grade was submitted correctly, a learner may wish to make a complaint to their school or college and we have published guidance on schools complaints procedures on the Welsh Government website <https://gov.wales/school-complaints-procedures-guidance>.

In cases where that may not be appropriate, a learner could also pass such evidence on to WJEC who may then decide to investigate the matter as alleged malpractice by the centre. This is all explained in the learner guidance produced by Qualifications Wales. With regards to the appeals process, on 12 August I also made a commitment that appeals to the Welsh Exam board, WJEC, would be free to ensure that there was no financial barrier for learners who were unhappy with their grades.

On 28 August, I announced that Louise Casella will chair an independent review of the arrangements for awarding grades for the 2020 exam series. Louise is Director of The Open University in Wales and has extensive experience in strategic roles in the education sector. The review will consider key issues that have emerged from the arrangements which were put in place for this summer's exams, and the challenges resulting from the 2020 experience. Given the pressing need to put measures in place for the 2021 exam series, and development of contingency arrangements in case of further disruption, I have asked Louise to provide me with an interim report of key findings by the end of October, with a final report and recommendations to follow by mid-December.

I hope you find the above information useful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education