

GCSE Citizenship and AS/A level Accounting, Law, Politics, and Philosophy

Summer 2021 exam changes and support

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Following JCQ's guidance on putting together a range of evidence for your students and deciding grades, here are some things to consider.

Choosing the range of evidence

It's important to note that students don't have to have completed a mandated amount of content or demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding across every area of the specification as they would normally. You'll be grading students on their performance in the subject content they've been taught. This means they may not have covered every topic in the specification.

The aim is to include evidence that demonstrates the student's ability across a reasonable range of subject content reflecting, where possible, all assessment objectives (AOs). You can use a range of different types of evidence from across the course of study.

It's ultimately up to your school or college to decide what evidence is to be included, but here are some ideas for sources that you may choose to build your range of evidence from:

- Mocks – it's likely you'll have evidence from these already.
- Assessment materials (<https://www.aqa.org.uk/2021-exam-changes/about-our-assessment-and-support-materials>) – we've produced groups of questions and mark schemes that you can use with your students. There are also past papers and sample assessment materials that we've published over the years.
- Centre-set tasks – tasks that you've set that the whole cohort has completed and you have marked consistently. This could include:
 - homework – even from when you were teaching remotely
 - classroom tests
- Progress records that you've kept for your students over the course of their studies to see their strengths and areas for improvement and development.
- Tasks that you, colleagues, other teachers, or publishers have put together – your normal go-to resources.

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- For GCSE Citizenship, students will have completed the Citizenship Action investigation. Whilst this isn't an assessed piece of work, the investigation in itself enables students to demonstrate the application of the citizenship skills, processes and methods and may therefore be a useful source of evidence.

Collecting the evidence and evaluating its quality

Evidence should be consistent across your cohort as far as possible, to make it easier to assign grades consistently, but this may not always be possible. All students will have had slightly different learning experiences and some may have missed some teaching for valid reasons so flexibility may be required.

- While there's no one type of evidence that takes precedence, evidence gathered in conditions that enable confidence about the authenticity of the students' work will give more confidence in the overall holistic judgement. More recent evidence is likely to be more representative of student performance, although there may be exceptions.
- Consider the range of evidence you have from across specification content; it doesn't need to be balanced but it could be helpful to have assessments that reflect student performance on the different elements of the course.
- As far as possible, all AOs should be covered across as much of the specification as you can. There's no requirement to address each AO according to their normal weightings.
- You've got until **18 June** to submit your grades, so there's time to use the assessment materials we've produced to plug any gaps or cover any areas of the specification that you're struggling to find evidence for.

Using the AQA assessment materials

These materials are an optional part of the range of evidence that can be used to help you assign grades.

The assessment materials (<https://www.aqa.org.uk/2021-exam-changes/about-our-assessment-and-support-materials>) are made up of past questions (both material openly published and material currently only published securely). We've designed our materials so that they can be given out and answered in lesson time (around 45 minutes to an hour). We've selected questions that draw on a range of specification content so that they can be used flexibly as a source of evidence.

They are completely optional and carry no more weight than any other evidence. They are there to be used in whatever way you choose - this means you can mix and match questions from different materials, add questions, remove elements that aren't required or choose not to use them at all.

There's no requirement that these materials be administered in exam conditions. Indeed, because some students may not be in the position to physically attend their schools this term, the JCQ guidance makes it clear that questions may be set as a classroom test, as homework, or be completed remotely if a student is self-isolating or conditions require it.

The benefit of the AQA materials is that there are accompanying answers exemplified with commentary which show how the mark schemes have been applied and these will be helpful when assessing your students.

But ultimately, they aren't compulsory and can be used flexibly to suit the needs of your students and school. You may find them helpful if you need to plug any gaps or cover any areas of the specification that you're struggling to find evidence for.

Assigning the grade

Grades should be based on a holistic, objective judgement of the evidence of the students' performance on the subject content they've been taught, using the grade descriptors and accompanying exemplification material provided.

- Your judgement should be made by considering how any evidence meets the qualitative characteristics of the grade descriptors.
- You should make a holistic judgement where evidence crosses grade descriptors, balancing coverage of differently graded work across the course of study and accounting for conditions in which evidence was collected.
- Students are likely to show characteristics from different grade descriptors within a piece of work so using the exemplification provided will be helpful when fine-tuning your decisions.
- Although there are many bullet points in the grade descriptors, students may not have had an opportunity to meet all of them so you can only grade using the evidence you have in the aspects that have been taught, so some bullet points may have to be ignored. This may apply to some schools and colleges for all students, in others for some students depending upon the different impacts of the pandemic.
- Grades should be based on the student's performance not their potential. You can only assign a grade based on the evidence you're submitting, not how you think the student should or could have performed if the exams had gone ahead. Only the student's demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills should be used to assign a grade.
- The emphasis must be on this holistic approach and not on individual marks or particular grade boundaries.

Relevant resources

The following resources can be used both to plug gaps in your evidence and also to support consistent marking and grading.

- JCQ full guidance <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JCQ-Guidance-on-the-Determination-of-Grades-for-A-AS-Levels-and-GCSEs-Summer-2021.pdf>

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- Further JCQ guidance on how to come to judgements about grades can be found here: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Summer-2021-JCQ-Guidance-WorkedExamples.pdf>

Available on Centre Services (or e-AQA if you're not yet registered for Centre Services)

- Grading exemplification – examples of marked student work at different grades, exemplifying the grade descriptors
- 2021 Assessment materials – sets of questions, mark schemes and mapping grids with example student answers and commentaries
- Examiners' reports from previous examination years.
- Events recordings and materials including autumn feedback events, and Fundamental skills
- Past papers and mark schemes for all qualifications