

Dance, Drama and Music

GCSE, AS and A-level

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.

Non-examined assessment (NEA)

- NEA for Dance, Drama and Music may contribute to the evidence you use to determine grades. Students should continue with the completion of NEA components where it's safe and possible to do so. Please note that the usual deadlines for NEA aren't applicable this year.
- NEA will be marked by you and will contribute to the overall grade, whether or not it's been completed, we'll not be required to moderate/examine the work produced.
- Standardisation examples of internally assessed NEA are available to support you on T-OLS (Teacher Online Standardisation).
- Examples of examined NEA, AS/A-level Dance, GCSE and A-level Drama Component 3 and AS/A-level Music are available in Centre Services (and eAQA).
- Although there won't be any formal authentication procedures this summer, you need to be confident that NEA work used as part of the evidence to determine a student's grade is the student's own. This applies equally where candidates are undertaking written or practical work at home.
- It's important that, where possible, all evidence on which a student's grade is based, including copies of the student's work and any mark records, is retained safely by the centre as this will be needed to support the determination of students' grades and the internal and external quality assurance processes and appeals. It's not a requirement that the copy retained is the original version, and a scanned copy of handwritten evidence or digital document will be acceptable.

Guidance for teachers assessing NEA where adaptations to evidence has been permitted by Ofqual for Summer 2021

- Adaptations have been made to Dance, Drama and Music as permitted by Ofqual to mitigate lost teaching and learning time (see [the Changes to 2021 pages in the specification for your subject](#)).
- The adaptations to NEA have been designed to provide opportunities for all students, under whatever circumstances, to be able to demonstrate the application of relevant knowledge

and understanding of the application of skills and techniques (as appropriate). Adapted work can still achieve marks across the whole mark range. When assessing adaptations to specified NEA requirements, you should identify how the work demonstrates how assessment objectives have been met. This involves focusing on how appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills and techniques have been applied in the adapted formats.

- It's recommended that you guard against the possibility of over rewarding non-adapted NEA or under-rewarding the knowledge, understanding, skills or techniques demonstrated in an adapted piece of work by ensuring a consistent focus on assessment objectives (AOs).
- Standardisation examples of adapted internally assessed NEA are available to support you on T-OLS
- Examples of adapted examined NEA, AS/A-level Dance, GCSE and A-level Drama Component 3 and AS/A-level Music are available on in Centre Services (and eAQA).

Guidance for teachers assessing NEA where work is incomplete for summer 2021

We're receiving many questions regarding incomplete NEA. Here's some guidance on assessing incomplete NEA and applies to all levels for Dance, Drama and Music:

- Students should not be penalised if they had been unable to complete their NEA due to circumstances beyond their control caused by the pandemic (for example lack of access to specialist equipment or audio/video technology)
- Where students are unable to complete their NEA as per the Dance, Drama and/or Music specification requirements and/or published adaptations and therefore submit incomplete work, you should aim to assess the degree to which the work presented demonstrates attainment of the required skills, knowledge and understanding.
- You should clarify how marks have been awarded. The following are examples of how incomplete work may be assessed:
 - Incomplete research and planning relevant to dance and drama only – look for evidence of appropriate research and application of knowledge and understanding of as many key concepts as possible;
 - Incomplete production – consider adapted forms of evidence that demonstrate elements of knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Where NEA is incomplete and some elements are missing altogether, you shouldn't attempt to predict an outcome or award a mark according to a student's potential. Depending on the amount missing, you might mark the NEA out of fewer marks to reflect the missing element(s) and look for supplementary evidence which demonstrates similar skills, knowledge and understanding when making final grading decisions for the qualification. Only include work that demonstrates the skill or knowledge you're wishing to include when predicting your grade.

Choosing the range of evidence

Every aspect of the specification doesn't need to be assessed to arrive at a grade. The aim is to include evidence that assesses the student's ability across a reasonable range of subject content reflecting, where possible, all assessment objectives, as set out in the dance drama and/or music specifications.

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. This may apply to some centres for all students, in others for some students depending upon how Covid19 has impacted them.

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.

Consider whether the evidence available is sufficient to support the judgement that is being made. If not, what additional written assessments might be needed? Could the assessment materials provided by us be used to supplement or help to confirm the performance of previous assessments?

Ideally, the evidence used will be consistent across the class or cohort but that may not always be the case if a student has missed some teaching, or one or more assessments, for valid reasons.

All students will have had slightly different learning experiences. For most students, consistency in the use of evidence is expected, and a differentiated approach is not warranted. In cases where students have experienced significant disruption, however, some flexibility may be required. Each student must be made aware of the evidence that's going to be used and understand that the range of evidence used to determine a grade is not negotiable. Here are some ideas for sources that you may choose to build your range of evidence from:

- 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 lots of past papers, practice papers and sample materials that we've published over the years.
- Non-exam assessment (NEA) work, even if this hasn't been fully completed.
- Student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that follow the same format as AQA materials and has been marked in a way that reflects awarding our mark schemes. This can include:
 - Centre-set tasks – tasks that you've set that the whole cohort has completed and marked consistently. This could include:
 - (a) homework – even from when you were teaching remotely and you have confidence that any homework used is the work of the student
 - (b) classroom tests
- Mock exams have taken over the course of study. You'll likely have lots of these already.

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- Records/rehearsals footage of a student's capability and performance over the course of study.
 - Progress records that you've kept for your students over the course of their study to see where they've improved or struggled.

Although there's no minimum requirement of content that students must have been taught, heads of centre will be required to confirm that students have been taught sufficient content to form the basis for a grade.

Evaluating the quality of evidence, establishing the appropriateness of the range of evidence and submitting the grades

Evaluating the quality of evidence

In addition to Ofqual's guidance document, consideration should be given to the following:

- coverage of assessment objectives
- coverage of content
- authenticity – is the evidence the student's own work?
- level of control – was it taken in timed conditions? Was there an opportunity for redrafting? Was it supervised?
- marking – how much support was available when applying the mark scheme? What internal standardisation processes have been applied?

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.

Establishing appropriateness of the range of evidence

- Wherever possible the same range of evidence should be used for all students in a class or cohort, although there may be individual students for whom the proposed evidence isn't appropriate.
- The rationale for any exceptions must be documented by the centre.
- Each student must only be graded on their performance based on the subject content they have been taught.
- Students must be told what evidence is going to be used so that they have the opportunity to raise any genuine and valid concerns. It's recommended that any student's views are recorded and documented along with reasons for the final decision.
- Some students may have missed a section of teaching due to valid reasons such as bereavement or long-term illness, or it may be the case that reasonable adjustments or

access arrangements weren't in place for a particular assessment. Where these weren't in place, you must consider whether to either:

- use the evidence when assigning a grade on the basis that it's the most appropriate evidence available, and disregarding it would disadvantage the student
- use alternative evidence to replace assessments that aren't appropriately representative of individual students' performance and if so, document decisions appropriately.

Submitting the grades

Grades should be based on a holistic, objective judgement of the evidence of the student's performance on the subject content they have been taught. Consider the quality of the work with the assessment materials used. Using grade descriptors (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/JCQ-Guidance-on-the-Determination-of-Grades-for-A-AS-Levels-and-GCSEs-Summer-2021.pdf>) and accompanying exemplification materials (log into Centre Services) and grading exemplification must be used to make holistic judgements about student performance.

As evidence should be consistent across your cohort, to make it easier to assign grades consistently, here are a few things you could consider:

- 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 spec that you're struggling to find evidence for.
- ensure that the grades represent a holistic judgement. The grading process this year isn't intended to be a formulaic calculation and should account for the context in which each student's evidence has been produced.
- note that you aren't making grading decisions in isolation. Once grades have been assigned, the centres' internal quality assurance process will ensure that standards are appropriate before sign-off by the head of centre.

Relevant resources

- JCQ full guidance
<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/JCQ-Guidance-on-the-Determination-of-Grades-for-A-AS-Levels-and-GCSEs-Summer-2021.pdf>
- GCSE Dance teachers guides x 3
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/dance/gcse/dance-8236/teaching-resources>
- A-level Dance teaching guide
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/dance/as-and-a-level/dance-7237/teaching-resources>
- GCSE Drama teachers guides x 8
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/drama/gcse/drama-8261/teaching-resources?f.Resource+type%7C6=Teaching+guides>
- AS Drama and Theatre teachers guides x 8
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/drama/a-level/drama-and-theatre-7261/teaching-resources>

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- A-Level Drama and Theatre teachers guides x 8
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/drama/a-level/drama-and-theatre-7262/teaching-resources>
 - GCSE Music teachers guides x 6
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/music/gcse/music-8271/teaching-resources?f.Resource+type%7C6=Teaching+guides>
 - AS Music teachers guide: area of Study 1
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/music/as-and-a-level/music-7271/teaching-resources?f.Resource+type%7C6=Teaching+guides>
 - A-level Music teachers guides x 8
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/music/as-and-a-level/music-7272/teaching-resources?f.Resource+type%7C6=Teaching+guides>

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

- T-OLS for GCSE Dance Component 1, GCSE Drama Component 2, GCSE Music Component 3, AS Drama and Theatre Component 2, A-Level Drama and Theatre Component 2
- NEA examined adapted assessment materials and commentaries for GCSE Drama Component 3, A-level Dance Component 1, A-level Drama Component 3 and A-level Music Components 2 and 2.
- Further NEA examples for all specifications
- Past papers and mark schemes for all qualifications
- Examiners Reports
- GCSE Dance Anthology videos, interviews and transcripts
- Grade descriptors and grading exemplification
- Assessment materials
- Assessment material exemplifications