The basics

We are committed to supporting schools and colleges with the delivery of controlled assessment.

What is controlled assessment?
It is a form of internal assessment where the control levels for each assessment stage (task setting, task taking and task marking) are defined by the qualifications regulators for all awarding bodies.

The controlled assessment process
There are three stages to controlled assessment:
• task setting
• task taking
• task marking.

Each stage has a level of control (high, medium or low) to ensure reliability and authenticity and to make assessments more manageable for teachers and students.

How do I prepare my students for controlled assessment?
In many ways, your preparation will be the same as for coursework. The requirements for each subject are different and the specifications give more detail about what preparation is required and appropriate.

However, generally speaking, all teachers will need to do the following:
• teach an overview of the chosen topic/task before students set to work
• give students the context they need to understand the topic
• teach students any skills they will need for their tasks, such as research skills
• support and guide students throughout the research, drafting and write-up stages.

Which courses/levels does it affect?
All GCSE specifications with an internal assessment component:
• Applied Business
• Art and Design
• Business and Communication Systems
• Business Studies
• Citizenship
• Classical Civilisation
• Dance
• Design and Technology
• Drama
• Electronics
• Engineering
• English
• English Language
• English Literature
• Environmental Science
• Expressive Arts
• Geography A and B
• Health and Social Care
• History A and B
• Home Economics
• Human Health and Physiology
• Humanities
• ICT
• Leisure and Tourism
• Media Studies
• Modern Foreign Languages
• Music
• Performing Arts
• Physical Education
• Science(s)
• Statistics

Functional skills:
• English
• ICT
• Maths
Task setting
Task setting outlines:
• who will set the task e.g. awarding body and/or teachers
• what students have to do.

Teacher-set tasks must be developed in line with awarding body requirements. Here are some control examples:
High control – the awarding body sets the task
Medium control – teachers can set the task with guidance from the awarding body, or can choose from a number of comparable tasks set by the awarding body
Limited control – teachers set the task using criteria set out in the specification.

Task taking
Task taking outlines how students go about taking the task and can be split into stages (e.g. research, analysis and write-up). Each stage can have different controls – see the examples below:
Research
Low control – students can work unsupervised outside the classroom
Analysis
Medium control – students do their analysis and selection under informal supervision
Write-up
High control – students write up their task in a supervised, classroom environment.

Task marking
Task marking outlines who will do the marking, e.g. awarding bodies and/or teachers. Here are some control examples:
High control – the awarding body does the marking
Medium control – work is assessed by teachers and moderated by the awarding body.
Managing controlled assessment

Issue of tasks

When will the tasks be issued to schools and colleges?
There is no common publication date for tasks, but generally speaking they will be issued a year in advance to allow time for planning, resourcing and teaching. In some subjects, eg where tasks only have a one year shelf-life, we will issue a number of years’ tasks at the same time. Teachers must ensure they use the correct task for the year of submission. Students should not have access to the tasks in advance of the specified period.

How will the tasks be issued?
They will be issued via our secure extranet, e-AQA.

Controls and deadlines

What does formal supervision (high level of control) actually mean?
• students must be in direct sight of the supervisor at all times
• the use of resources is tightly prescribed, normally limited to research folders/diaries
• students must complete all work independently
• students must not communicate with each other
• no assistance can be given to students
• no access to email or the internet is allowed.

What does informal supervision (medium level of control) actually mean?
Students do not have to be directly supervised at all times but there must be adequate supervision to ensure that work can be authenticated.

Teachers must ensure:
• that the students’ work is their own
• plagiarism does not take place
• the contributions of individual students are recorded accurately
• students have access to resources.

Under medium level control:
• students can work together
• students can receive limited teacher guidance.
What does limited supervision (low level of control) actually mean?
- some work can be completed without supervision and/or outside the classroom
- students have access to resources and can use the internet
- students can work together
- students can receive guidance from teachers.

What are the deadlines for controlled assessment task submission?
The standard deadline for the June series is 7 May (the same as for coursework). For some specifications a later deadline of 31 May will apply.

Does writing in MFL, which is externally assessed, have a different deadline?
No.

Are there any penalties incurred for work which is too long?
No. Some specifications have word limits as well as time limits but these are for guidance only. There is no penalty for exceeding word limits unless concision is a requirement in the assessment criteria.

How should schools and colleges store work securely?
Throughout the assessment period, all assessment materials (including mark schemes and student work) must be stored securely, usually in a locked cabinet/cupboard. Work produced over several sessions must be collected at the end of each session and stored securely, including, if appropriate, research folders/diaries) so that it cannot be adapted in an uncontrolled environment. Work produced electronically must be saved securely to ensure it cannot be amended between sessions. Work stored on memory sticks should also be collected in after each session.

In some cases, eg where students are producing artefacts in Design and Technology or artwork in Art and Design, the locked classroom, studio or workshop will count as secure storage.

Where specifications allow limited control, how can schools and colleges sign up to verify that time controls have been met since they cannot monitor the amount of time that students spend?
Time allowances are for guidance only and students cannot be prevented from spending more time if they wish.

Where specifications allow limited control, how can schools and colleges authenticate work that has not been directly supervised?
Teachers should be aware of planned student activities. Authentication of off site work can be achieved by monitoring each student’s research diary/plan of action. Regular monitoring should be undertaken so that the work is seen at each developmental stage.
Can I give advice and feedback to students?
This depends on the level of control for the relevant stage of the assessment.

Under **limited control**, you may give unrestricted feedback and guidance to individual students.

Under **medium control/informal supervision**, you can review student work and provide oral and written advice at a general level. This advice can evaluate progress to date and propose broad approaches for improvement. Students can then revise and redraft their work before submitting the final piece.

Guidelines for **medium control** advice and support:
- you must not offer specific or detailed advice on how to improve drafts to meet assessment criteria
- you must not give detailed feedback on errors/omissions
- you must not indicate how specific improvements to presentation or content can be made.

Under **high control/formal supervision**, no guidance is permitted at all. After setting the task, you may answer questions but cannot advise students on how to approach the task. Whilst students are working on the task the following guidelines apply:
- you must not answer questions about the meanings of terms or interpretations of findings
- you must not give guidance about how to write conclusions and evaluations.

In all cases, any feedback given should be recorded. Support or feedback given to individual students but not to the class as a whole must be clearly recorded on the Candidate Record Form.

Model answers and writing frames are not permitted for any level of control.

**What is a research diary/folder?**
- a record of the research and planning phase of the controlled assessment
- evidence that each student’s final assignment is their own work and that the ideas are their own
- it should contain a note of all the sources used eg books, websites, DVDs etc (bibliography)
- it may contain notes, quotations, diagrams and sketches
- it should record all feedback given to students and participation in any group work
- it may contain an essay plan but should not contain any lengthy passages of prose that can be copied out in the final assessment.

Resources allowed

Q: In high level control sessions, are students ever allowed access to the internet, or email?
A: No.

Q: What reference materials will I be able to provide?
A: This will vary according to subject. For subjects with low and medium control, students may have unlimited access to any print and electronic resources that are available to and within schools and colleges. During high control write-up sessions, the use of resources is tightly prescribed. Teachers should refer to the relevant specification for further guidance.

Q: Can I give students a copy of the marking criteria?
A: Yes. Students should be aware of the assessment criteria so that they can understand how work will be assessed and what they need to do to get high marks. It is also perfectly acceptable for teachers to produce a simplified ‘student friendly’ version.

Q: What materials can students take into the room when they write their assignment?
A: During high control write-up sessions, students will normally have access to research folders/diaries only, but the requirements may be different across subjects. Teachers should refer to the relevant specification for further guidance.
Management of group work for research – how is work apportioned to individual students?
Students can collaborate when undertaking research. Their work can be informed by working with others but ultimately each student has to produce an individual response. Where work is undertaken within a group, eg fieldwork, each student must indicate where they have made a contribution to the investigation or have demonstrated initiative.

What happens if I need to split the ‘Analysis and Evaluation’ phase into two or three shorter sessions?
The time allowed for this phase does not have to be continuous. Teachers have the flexibility to find what suits them and we fully expect that most teachers will split this phase into several shorter sessions.

Other issues

How is students’ work authenticated?
All students must confirm that the work they submit for assessment is their own by signing the Candidate Record Form (CRF). A completed CRF will be required for each student. Teachers must also confirm by signing the declaration of authenticity that the work is solely that of the student concerned and that it was completed under the required conditions. If a teacher cannot do this, the work should not be accepted for assessment. Schools and colleges should record marks of zero if the authenticity of students’ work cannot be confirmed. Failure to sign the authentication statement may delay the processing of the students’ results.

For work not completed under direct supervision, teachers should be sufficiently aware of the student’s general standard to know if the work submitted is beyond their talents. If teachers have reservations, they should follow the guidance below:
- if you believe that a student has received additional assistance and this is acceptable within the guidelines for the relevant specification you should award a mark which represents the student’s unaided achievement, sign the authentication statement and give relevant information
- if you feel unable to sign the authentication statement for a particular student then the student’s work cannot be accepted for assessment and you should record a mark of zero
- if you are concerned about malpractice you should consult your exams office for advice
- guidance is provided in the JCQ booklet ‘Instructions for Conducting Controlled Assessments’ together with Form JCQ/M1 - both booklet and form can be found at jcq.org.uk.

Re-sit rules
For most subjects this is permitted but for some, such as Science, it is not – see relevant specification for details.

Q: In subjects where tasks are not replaced every year, may a student who re-sits make another attempt at the same task which s/he submitted previously?
A: Yes. The work must be entirely new and previously submitted work must not be amended and resubmitted.

Q: Can a student who feels that s/he has underperformed in their initial attempt make another attempt at the same task (ie before submission to the awarding body)?
A: Yes, if the teacher is prepared to supervise the student and mark the work if medium or low level of control. For high level of control a different task may be completed.
What happens if students move centres during the course?
Possible solutions depend on the stage at which the move takes place. If the move occurs early in the course, the new centre should take responsibility for controlled assessment work. If it occurs late in the course, it may be possible to arrange for the moderator to assess the work through the 'Educated Elsewhere' procedure. Schools and colleges should contact us at the earliest possible stage for advice about appropriate arrangements in individual cases.

Will students requiring reasonable adjustments be given access arrangements eg extra time?
We can make arrangements so that students requiring reasonable adjustments can be assessed. These arrangements must be made before the assessment. Further advice can be obtained from the JCQ booklet 'Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration General and Vocational Qualifications' found at jcq.org.uk.

How can excluded pupils and those who cannot attend school for whatever reason do fieldwork?
Students who are excluded from mainstream schooling, for whatever reason, can sometimes still do controlled assessments provided that suitable arrangements for supervision, authentication etc can be made.

What happens if a student is absent for all or part of their assessment?
Teachers should be able to accommodate the occasional absence by giving students an opportunity to make up the time later. For longer absences, schools and colleges should contact us to see whether special consideration can be given. Unless instructed otherwise teachers must only mark what students produce.

Do the same rules for ‘special consideration’ apply to controlled assessment as to exams?
The rules are not the same in all cases and further information is available from the JCQ booklet ‘Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration General and Vocational Qualifications’ available at jcq.org.uk.

What happens if a school or student submits the wrong task from the series (ie one which is out of date or applicable to a future series)?
The centre should apply for special consideration to see if the task can be accepted and the marks for the wrong task allowed to stand. We will do all we can to protect students’ interests, but in some cases it might not be possible to accept work based on incorrect tasks. Schools and colleges should therefore take very great care to ensure they give students the correct task for the correct series.