



GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice

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Ofqual

Spring Place
Coventry Business Park
Herald Avenue
Coventry
CV5 6UB

2nd Floor
Glendinning House
6 Murray Street
Belfast
BT1 6DN

www.ofqual.gov.uk

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This document replaces GCSE, GCE and AEA code of practice (April 2009).

Awarding organisations and other interested parties should note that this code of practice and any future revisions will appear on the websites of the regulators of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland ('the regulators').

The regulators produce this code of practice to meet a public need.

The public expects qualifications to be high quality. It wants qualifications to:

- be fit for purpose
- command public confidence
- be fair and accurate.

It also wants the standard of qualifications to be the same across awarding organisations and over time. It needs to know that awarding organisations are competent and if something goes wrong that there will be a right of appeal.

This code of practice will help to uphold public confidence in qualifications.

Who is this code of practice for?

This code is for the awarding organisations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland that deliver the:

- free-standing mathematics qualification (FSMQ)
- General Certificate of Education (GCE) including GCE in applied subjects
- General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) including GCSE in applied subjects
- principal learning qualification¹
- project qualification.

¹ Including principal learning (Wales)

Who regulates these qualifications?

These qualifications are regulated by the three regulators:

- in England: Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)
- in Wales: the Qualifications, Curriculum and Learning Improvement Group, Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS)
- in Northern Ireland: Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

The regulators use this code as the basis for their monitoring activity. They review it regularly to make sure it remains fit for purpose. The awarding organisations have agreed to follow this code.

What is this code of practice for?

This code builds on *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (2004), which sets out the principles of regulation and the criteria for recognising awarding organisations and for accrediting qualifications.

It also builds on relevant sections of the *Regulatory arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies* in relation to principal learning and project qualifications.

This code aims to:

- promote quality, consistency, accuracy and fairness in the assessment and awarding of qualifications
- help maintain standards across specifications, both within and between awarding organisations and from year to year.

To help achieve these aims, this code sets out:

- the agreed principles and practices for the assessment and quality assurance of qualifications
- the roles and responsibilities of awarding organisations and centres
- the requirements for a high-quality examinations process.

Principles underpinning the code of practice

The aim of all those involved in producing, delivering, assessing, awarding, certificating and regulating accredited qualifications is to make sure that all candidates receive the results their performance merits when judged against the relevant specification content and assessment criteria.

The regulators require that the awarding organisations are committed to the following principles that underpin a high-quality assessment system and promote good practice.

1. Procedures and systems must comply with relevant current legislation.
2. Management and administrative systems are efficient and effective.
3. Assessment instruments are fit for purpose, valid and reliable.
4. Assessment instruments are designed to make sure that all candidates are treated fairly.
5. The assessment system is transparent so that:
 - the evidence on which decisions are based is clear
 - it is possible to audit the decision-making process
 - those making decisions can be held accountable.
6. For each process in the assessment system there is an audit trail that sets out the key evidence that supports the decision taken.
7. Those involved in the assessment system must:
 - be clear about their roles and responsibilities
 - have appropriate experience and expertise
 - receive appropriate training to carry out their roles.
8. Enquiries and appeals from centres and private candidates are investigated and resolved.

Awarding organisations must provide clear documentation, procedures and guidance to support centres in meeting their responsibilities relating to the conduct and administration of examinations and internal assessments.

Awarding organisations must take account of any regulatory reports in the delivery and conduct of assessments.

Awarding organisations must seek the permission of the regulators before deviating from any of the requirements set out in this code.

The responsibilities of awarding organisations and awarding organisation personnel

This section sets out what the awarding organisations (including their governing councils, staff and examining personnel) must do to organise and manage themselves to maintain the quality and standards of the qualifications they offer.

Awarding organisations' governing councils

- 1.1 The awarding organisation's governing council is responsible for setting in place appropriate procedures to ensure that standards are maintained in each subject examined from year to year (including ensuring that standards between GCE and GCE in applied subjects, as well as between GCSE and GCSE in applied subjects, are aligned), across different specifications within a qualification and with other awarding organisations. It should act upon feedback from previous awards including recommendations from relevant monitoring and other reports. The procedures must ensure that any necessary action is taken to maintain parity of standards with other awarding organisations offering similar qualifications. This action includes exchanging appropriate information with the other awarding organisations and the regulators soon after awarding meetings and before the publication of results. It also includes providing the regulators with raw data and reports to an agreed timescale.
- 1.2 The responsibilities of the governing council, as discharged through its staff and fee-earning personnel, are described below. The functions described should be fulfilled for each qualification specification. One person may discharge more than one role provided that the role does not produce a conflict of interest, such as that between the roles of reviser and scrutineer. However, for each specification, regardless of the size of its entry, the following separate roles should be identified and fulfilled: awarding organisation officer (as distinct from any examining personnel who are treated as direct employees of the awarding organisation), chief examiner and reviser. The awarding organisation should provide appropriate training and support to ensure that its personnel can carry out the functions set out in this code of practice. The awarding organisation should monitor and evaluate this provision to make sure that it is effective and remains fit for purpose.

- 1.3 Where additional tiers of personnel are needed to cope with the numbers of candidates involved in a particular specification, one person must have overall responsibility.
- 1.4 The governing council must ensure that representatives of the regulators are provided with all the information they require and are given access to such meetings and staff as the regulators deem necessary for them to carry out their duties. The governing council should work in cooperation with these representatives to ensure, as far as possible, that schedules are arranged to facilitate their work.
- 1.5 The awarding organisation will appoint a single named person to be accountable directly to its governing council for ensuring the quality and standards of its qualifications (that is, the accountable officer). In doing so, the awarding organisation guarantees to the regulators that it ensures:
 - i all necessary action will be taken to maintain parity of standards in each subject and qualification from year to year, across different specifications and with other awarding organisations
 - ii compliance with the requirements of this code of practice and The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004) and other relevant regulations
 - iii effective means for the consideration of the recommendations of the chairs of examiners
 - iv its participation in comparability and monitoring activities, and that such changes as this work shows to be necessary are made.

Awarding organisation officers

- 1.6 Awarding organisation officers manage all stages of the examining process to ensure that:
 - i they are carried out in accordance with this code of practice and with the awarding organisation's policies and procedures
 - ii fee-earning personnel and committees are provided with all necessary administrative, subject specialist and technical support
 - iii awarding organisation senior management, including the accountable officer, are alerted to issues or concerns that arise during the process.

Chair of examiners

1.7 A chair of examiners² is responsible to the awarding organisation for maintaining standards across different specifications in a subject within a qualification and from year to year. For principal learning, the chair must take responsibility for standards across all levels within a line of learning, ensuring that the levels do not overlap. For project, the chair must take responsibility for standards across all levels, ensuring that the levels do not overlap. The chair of examiners must:

- i chair the question paper evaluation committee meetings, where possible, for every specification in the subject in that particular qualification type
- ii monitor the standards of chief examiners and advise on their appointment, training and reappointment
- iii chair the awarding meeting(s) and recommend grade boundaries for each specification to the awarding organisation
- iv submit, as directed by the awarding organisation, an overall evaluation report on the internal and external assessment for the qualification.

Chief examiner

1.8 The chief examiner³ for a specification is responsible to the chair of examiners for ensuring that the examination as a whole – including both internal and external assessment – meets the requirements of the specification and maintains standards from one year to the next. For principal learning, the chief examiner will be responsible for standards within a particular level of a line of learning. For project, the chief examiner will be responsible for standards at a particular level. The chief examiner must:

- i act as principal examiner or principal moderator for at least one component
- ii supervise the construction of question papers⁴ and mark schemes and, where appropriate, the criteria for internal assessment to ensure appropriate standards
- iii ensure that the external assessments as a whole cover the assessment criteria, as set out in the specification, and satisfactorily sample the appropriate content
- iv ensure that, over a reasonable number of years, the examination as a whole will address all the specification content

² An assistant chair of examiners can be appointed, subject to the approval of the regulators, where the awarding organisation considers this to be appropriate. When this option is taken, it is the responsibility of the awarding organisation to ensure that arrangements are made for coordinating the work of assistant chairs of examiners. The chair of examiners will remain the single point of accountability. It would be a potential conflict of interest if the chair was also responsible for standards within one level, or for one of the specifications within the subject area for which they have overall responsibility.

³ Assistant chief examiners can be appointed, subject to the approval of the regulators, where the awarding organisation considers this to be appropriate. When this option is taken it is the responsibility of the awarding organisation to ensure that arrangements are made for coordinating the work of the assistant chief examiners. The chief examiner will remain the single point of accountability.

⁴ The term 'question papers' applies to all externally assessed components, including tasks and awarding organisation set assignments.

- v seek to ensure parity across alternative components and options in terms of the demands made on candidates
- vi monitor the standards of principal examiners and principal moderators and advise on their appointment, training and reappointment
- vii submit, as directed by the awarding organisation, an evaluation report on the examination in that specification.

Principal examiner

- 1.9 The principal examiner for each unit/component is responsible for the setting of the question paper / task and the standardising of its marking. The principal examiner must:
- i set the questions and mark schemes for the question paper or approve those set by other examiners
 - ii seek to ensure parity of standards across optional questions in the paper and assist the chief examiner in ensuring parity of standards across optional papers
 - iii monitor the standards of marking of all the examiners for the paper, including, where necessary, any assistant principal examiners and team leaders, and take appropriate steps to ensure accuracy and consistency
 - iv advise on the appointment, training and reappointment, where necessary, of assistant principal examiners, team leaders and examiners for the question papers
 - v attend the awarding meeting, advise members on how the question paper functioned and recommend preliminary mark ranges for the judgemental grade boundaries for the question paper
 - vi submit to the chief examiner an evaluation report on the performance of the question paper / task.

Reviser

- 1.10 The reviser is required to:
- i provide written comments on early drafts of question papers / tasks and provisional mark schemes
 - ii work through question papers, where appropriate.

The awarding organisation may appoint more than one reviser for each examination.

Scrutineer

- 1.11 The scrutineer is responsible for:
- i checking the final drafts of all question papers / tasks without reference to the mark schemes to ensure that the questions can be answered in the time allowed and that there are no errors or omissions

- ii working through question papers, where appropriate
- iii checking the mark scheme to ensure that the marks given are identical to those on the question paper
- iv preparing a report for the awarding organisation officer.

Examiners

1.12 Examiners are responsible for marking candidates' work in accordance with the agreed mark scheme and marking procedures.

General markers

1.13 General markers are responsible for marking candidates' work where a high level of subject expertise is not necessary to apply the mark scheme. They must mark such work in accordance with the agreed mark scheme and marking procedures.

Principal moderator

1.14 The principal moderator for each internally assessed unit/component is responsible to the chief examiner for ensuring that the standards of the unit/component are maintained and are consistent with the unit specification and assessment criteria. The principal moderator must:

- i compile exemplar work, annotated to show how the assessment criteria are to be applied
- ii ensure that moderators meet the standardisation requirements and take action if any moderator fails to maintain the required standard
- iii ensure that all moderators correctly interpret and apply the assessment criteria and that they are using the same criteria as the awarding organisation provides for the internal assessors
- iv monitor the standards of any assistant principal moderators, team leaders and moderators and advise on their appointment, training and reappointment
- v ensure that appropriate preparatory, follow-up and remedial work with centres is carried out
- vi attend the awarding meeting and advise members on how the component functioned and, where appropriate, recommend preliminary mark ranges for the judgemental grade boundaries
- vii submit to the chief examiner an evaluation report on issues relating to the performance of the component.

Moderators

- 1.15 Moderators are responsible for moderating centres' assessment of candidates' work in accordance with the agreed assessment criteria and the awarding organisation's procedures.

Assistant principal examiners, assistant principal moderators and team leaders

- 1.16 Assistant principal examiners and assistant principal moderators must be appointed where required by the size of entry. Assistant principals are responsible for a group of senior examiners or moderators where the span of control would otherwise be too great for the principal examiners or principal moderators. If a team structure is used, team leaders must be appointed to supervise a team of examiners or moderators. They must act as mentors for new appointees, check and guide the work of the examiners and moderators for whom they are responsible and advise on the need for adjustments to examiners' marks or moderators' recommendations.

The relationship between awarding organisations and centres

This section sets out what the awarding organisations must do to make their relationship with centres clear and streamlined. It covers:

- **administrative demands**
- **responsibilities of centres**
- **reporting results**
- **feedback to centres**
- **support and guidance.**

Administrative demands and confidentiality

- 2.1 The awarding organisation's demands on centres must be the minimum necessary to support professional competence and maintain the integrity of the examination. Awarding organisations must agree collectively – and comply individually – with common administrative and other practices in areas specified by the regulators to an agreed timetable and standard.
- 2.2 The awarding organisation must produce and distribute clear statements of administrative procedures and products that have an impact on centres.
- 2.3 The awarding organisation must take precautions to ensure the confidentiality of examinations, including controlled assessments. These precautions must ensure that scripts or copies of scripts from externally assessed components are seen by no one other than awarding organisation staff, their authorised agents and fee-earning personnel, representatives of the regulators and authorised staff at the candidate's centre until the closing date for enquiries about results.⁵

⁵ This does not exclude candidates' rights to access scripts as detailed in Section 10 of this document.

Responsibilities of centres

- 2.4 The awarding organisation must require centres offering its examinations to commit themselves to ensuring that:
- i they meet the administrative requirements of the awarding organisation
 - ii they comply with regulations concerning the security and confidentiality of external and controlled assessments
 - iii they conduct external and controlled assessments in accordance with the standards and procedures specified by the awarding organisation for the qualification
 - iv internal assessments are conducted by staff who have the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills in the area being assessed
 - v assessment evidence provided by candidates has been produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the specification
 - vi they secure the consistency of internal assessment through internal standardisation where more than one assessor is involved
 - vii they avail themselves of the training and guidance offered by the awarding organisation that is needed to ensure understanding of the expectations of the specification, including attendance at any compulsory training sessions for internal assessors
 - viii they retain candidates' assessment evidence under secure conditions to allow for the possibility of enquiries about results or appeals; if the nature of the work makes retention of portfolios or artefacts a problem, internal assessors must keep sufficient evidence (documentary, photographic, audiotaped or videotaped, as appropriate) to support their judgements
 - ix published appeals procedures relating to internal assessment decisions are made widely available and accessible to all candidates
 - x they meet requests from the awarding organisation for information for the purposes of moderation and monitoring
 - xi they comply with the procedures of the awarding organisation for dealing with and, as appropriate, reporting malpractice.

Reporting results

- 2.5 The awarding organisation must report results on a consistent basis applicable to all specifications within a qualification. Information about results must be presented in a clear and readily understood manner. Candidates, centres and other recipients of information about results must receive such information in a standard format.
- 2.6 The outcomes of the assessment of individual units must be reported.

Feedback to centres

- 2.7 The awarding organisation must provide a mechanism for receiving and responding to comments from centres and others about their examinations, and for providing information about the performance of candidates where appropriate. Where an awarding organisation offers examinations through the medium of Welsh or Irish, the awarding organisation should have a published policy about communicating bilingually with the centres involved and include the policy in their customer service statement. In the case of Welsh, the statement should have due regard to the principle that in Wales both Welsh and English will be treated on the basis of equality, in so far as it is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable.
- 2.8 The awarding organisation will take steps to help ensure that centres carry out their procedures correctly and that instructions given to centres have been followed.

Support and guidance

This section of the code should be read in conjunction with Section 5.

- 2.9 The awarding organisation must ensure that centres have access to regular advice and guidance on the teaching and assessment of qualifications that are covered by this code of practice, supported by meetings as appropriate.
- 2.10 The awarding organisation must provide appropriate support and guidance for teachers and internal assessors when a specification involving new techniques and approaches is introduced. This must take the form of written guidance, supported by meetings as appropriate.
- 2.11 The awarding organisation must provide opportunities – normally in the form of meetings – where teachers and internal assessors can discuss relevant qualifications issues, particularly in the case of new specifications where difficulties may arise across centres.
- 2.12 The awarding organisation must provide further guidance to centres that fail to meet the requirements for internal assessment.

Preparing question papers, tasks and mark schemes

This section should be read in conjunction with Section 5 and the appropriate appendix.

This section sets out what the awarding organisations must do to produce high-quality question papers, tasks and marking guidance. It covers:

- **ensuring that checks for quality are in place**
- **ensuring that the required content is covered in question papers**
- **using clear language in question papers and tasks**
- **using clear language in marking instructions.**

Division of responsibilities

- 3.1 The awarding organisation personnel involved in setting question papers, tasks and mark schemes include the chair of examiners, chief examiner, principal examiner(s), scrutineer, reviser(s) and awarding organisation officer(s). Their responsibilities are described in Section 1.
- 3.2 The chief examiner and principal examiner(s) are responsible for:
- i demonstrating how the specification's content and assessment criteria and objectives have been met in the question paper or task; this may take the form of a grid
 - ii ensuring that the manner in which the content is tested in questions is clear and fit for purpose
 - iii ensuring that, where candidates can choose between questions, it can be demonstrated that any permitted combination of questions provides for the coverage of a similar balance of content and assessment criteria
 - iv taking account of feedback from previous assessment sessions, including recommendations from relevant monitoring reports
 - v ensuring that final draft question papers / tasks meet the specification content and assessment objectives.

The timetable for drafting the question papers, tasks and provisional mark schemes must allow for all the above.

Preparing assessments including provisional mark schemes

- 3.3 Question papers / tasks and provisional mark schemes must be produced at the same time. Awarding organisations must make sure that they have contingency plans in place that allow them to react swiftly in the event of question paper security being breached before an examination.

Assessment of written communication

- 3.4 Where the scheme of assessment requires candidates to produce extended written material in English, Irish or Welsh, the marks awarded will take into account the quality of written communication as defined by the appropriate qualification-type criteria.

Revising the question papers, tasks and provisional mark schemes

- 3.5 The reviser(s) must:
- i scrutinise the initial draft question papers / tasks and mark schemes
 - ii check that the nature and range of responses required by the mark scheme are appropriate
 - iii comment on individual questions and responses and the draft question paper(s) as a whole.

Account should be taken of feedback from previous examination sessions, including recommendations from relevant monitoring reports where these are available.

- 3.6 The initial draft question papers / tasks and mark schemes must be amended in the light of the comments and forwarded, together with the original comments of the reviser(s), to the awarding organisation officer for consideration by the question paper evaluation committee.

Evaluating assessments and mark schemes

- 3.7 A committee, normally chaired by the chair of examiners, must be convened to evaluate the question papers / tasks. The chief examiner and the principal examiner responsible for the particular units/components must attend. In addition, the question paper evaluation committee should include the reviser(s) and may also include members of the subject committee who have recent and relevant teaching or examining experience. Where there is more than one specification in a subject within a particular

qualification, membership of the committee should overlap (chair of examiners and at least one other member). Where the question paper / task is to be offered through the medium of Welsh or Irish, at least one member of the committee should normally have the necessary expertise to advise on Welsh-/Irish-medium issues.

- 3.8 The committee must be serviced by an awarding organisation officer, who will provide administrative and technical support and guidance and ensure that awarding organisation policies are observed.
- 3.9 When the draft question papers / tasks and provisional mark schemes are submitted to the committee, they must be accompanied by the reviser's comments and details indicating where the content and assessment criteria for the specification have been met in the question papers / tasks.
- 3.10 The committee will seek to ensure that the challenge and level of demand of the question papers / tasks and mark schemes are maintained from one year to the next, referring, as appropriate, to previous years' question papers / tasks and mark schemes where these exist. For reasons of confidentiality the committee should not expect to have sight of question papers / tasks from the previous year where these have not been taken.
- 3.11 Where there is more than one specification in a subject within a particular qualification type, the chair of examiners must seek to ensure that the question papers / tasks set for the different specifications make comparable demands on candidates.
- 3.12 The committee will ensure that the question papers / tasks and provisional mark schemes meet the requirements of the assessment criteria as set out in the specification and that they are of consistently high quality.

As part of this work, the committee must ensure, where appropriate, that:

Rubrics

- i are presented in a standard format and printed in a consistent style that readily distinguishes them from questions
- ii are written so that candidates can distinguish between advice, instructions and information
- iii indicate where candidates are expected to produce extended written material, and where marking will take into account their quality of written communication
- iv detail any resources required, such as dictionaries, maps or calculators

Questions/tasks

- v are within the specification
- vi can be answered in the time allowed
- vii use language that is clear, precise and intelligible to candidates
- viii use source material that does not cause offence because of inappropriate subject matter or language
- ix are not identical in successive years or examinations, except where this is consistent with the assessment model stated in the specification

Question papers or tasks

- x show mark allocations
- xi do not, as far as is practicable, advantage or disadvantage particular groups of candidates on grounds other than competence in the subject
- xii make comparable demands on candidates who take alternative routes in the specification
- xiii discriminate effectively across the range of attainment targeted by the assessment

Mark schemes

- xiv include general instructions on marking
- xv are clear and designed so that they can be easily and consistently applied
- xvi allocate marks commensurate with the demands of questions/tasks
- xvii include the mark allocation for each question/task and part of a question/sub-task, with a more detailed breakdown where necessary
- xviii include marking instructions for those questions where extended written answers are expected and the quality of written communication used by candidates will be assessed
- xix include an indication of the nature and range of responses, appropriate to the subject, likely to be worthy of credit
- xx state the acceptable responses to each question/task, or part thereof, with detail that allows marking in a standardised manner
- xxi allocate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do

Equipment or materials

- xxii required for any externally assessed test or task set by an awarding organisation, including practicals, are specified in sufficient detail for the assessment to be carried out properly. The requirements for any such test/task should not make unreasonable demands on centres.

Checking the question papers, tasks and provisional mark schemes

- 3.13 The awarding organisations must ensure that they have appropriate arrangements in place to evaluate those question papers / tasks and mark schemes that have been extensively rewritten at the original question paper evaluation committee meeting.
- 3.14 Question papers / tasks and provisional mark schemes will be checked by the scrutineer. This process will include:
- i checking the final drafts of the question papers / tasks, without reference to the mark schemes, to ensure that the questions can be answered in the time allowed and that there are no errors or omissions
 - ii working through the question papers / tasks where appropriate
 - iii checking the mark schemes to ensure that the marks given are identical to those on the question papers / tasks
 - iv preparing a report for the awarding organisation officer.
- 3.15 The report will be sent to the chief examiner, who must then approve any necessary changes to the question papers / tasks and provisional mark schemes.
- 3.16 The final draft question papers / tasks and provisional mark schemes must be submitted for final approval to the chair of examiners or awarding organisation officer. Where the external assessment is to be offered through the medium of Welsh or Irish, the final Welsh-/Irish-medium draft will be checked by a Welsh-/Irish-medium specialist who will advise the chair of examiners or awarding organisation officer on its approval.
- 3.17 Awarding organisation officers must alert appropriate senior management if they believe that a breach of the awarding organisation's policy has occurred. Senior management must act decisively and promptly to maintain quality and standards.

Standardising marking: external assessment

This section applies to traditional and online marking. It should be read in conjunction with the appropriate appendix.

This section does not apply to items that are marked solely by computer, such as objective test questions, or questions with responses that lend themselves to auto-marking by computer. In such cases computer marking must be designed to ensure 100 per cent accuracy from the outset. Appropriate quality control systems should be used to confirm the accuracy of computer-marked items.

This section sets out the processes that must be in place to ensure that candidates' examination papers are marked consistently and accurately to an agreed standard. It covers:

- training, monitoring and supervising examiners
- checking the work of examiners
- action to be taken if marking instructions are not followed
- reviewing examiner performance.

Division of responsibilities

- 4.1 The awarding organisation personnel involved in the standardisation of marking include awarding organisation officer(s) and the following examiners: the chair of examiners, the chief examiner, principal examiner(s), assistant principal examiners and team leaders, where appointed, and examiners. Details of their responsibilities are given in Section 1.
- 4.2 There must be a chief examiner responsible for the specification as a whole. A principal examiner must be responsible for the professional judgements underpinning the process of standardisation for one or more specified units/components. An awarding organisation officer must be responsible at all times for supervising and guiding the standardisation process and ensuring that all steps in the process are followed.

General markers

- 4.3 Individuals who are not necessarily subject experts may mark candidates' work where they are not required to use a high level of subject expertise to interpret the mark scheme. Such individuals, known as general markers, must be trained, supervised and monitored to ensure that they are marking accurately and consistently.
- 4.4 The procedures used to train and monitor general markers must be as rigorous as those set out for examiners. These procedures must be fully documented.

Marking candidates' work

- 4.5 Candidates' work deriving from externally assessed units/components must be marked by suitably experienced and trained examiners and general markers. They will mark an item, which may be:
- i a script, which is a candidate's entire response to an external assessment
 - ii a number of questions or tasks within a script
 - iii one question or task within a script
 - iv part of a question or task within a script.
- 4.6 Examiners and general markers will normally mark candidates' work from a number of different centres, subject to their total load being manageable. They must declare any personal interest in a centre before marking. They should not normally mark candidates' work from any centre in which they have a personal interest unless marking anonymised items online. If an examiner or general marker recognises a candidate's work, they must not mark it but must instead seek guidance from the

awarding organisation on what action to take. In the case of sole examiners or general markers where this requirement cannot be applied, awarding organisations must make arrangements to ensure that this marking is scrutinised.

Number of examiners

- 4.7 There must be one principal examiner responsible for each unit/component, except where candidate numbers are small, when the chief examiner may be responsible for all units/components and mark all of the work. Under such circumstances the chief examiner should have recourse to a second opinion, as should any examiner who is the sole marker of a unit or component. This will normally be provided by the chair of examiners.
- 4.8 In the interests of reliable marking and to reduce the scope for variability, the awarding organisation should ensure that marking is undertaken by the minimum possible number of examiners. In arriving at this minimum number, the awarding organisation must ensure that the amount of marking allocated to examiners takes account of:
- i the nature of the unit/component being assessed
 - ii the time required to mark candidates' work
 - iii the experience of examiners
 - iv the amount of marking they are able to manage during the marking period, within limits to be specified by the awarding organisation.

Where principal examiners, assistant principal examiners and team leaders are appointed, the amount of marking allocated to each of them must take their other duties into consideration.

- 4.9 Where there are Welsh- or Irish-medium items, the allocation of these items to examiners must ensure that standardisation and monitoring of marking can be undertaken even when the supervising examiner is not able to mark scripts in the medium of Welsh or Irish. This will normally entail allocating both Welsh-/Irish- and English-medium scripts to Welsh-/Irish-medium examiners.
- 4.10 Where the number of examiners required demonstrably exceeds that which a chief examiner or principal examiner could reasonably oversee unaided, an appropriate supervisory structure must be established. If a team structure is used, the number of teams should be kept to the minimum needed to secure reliable and consistent marking. The relationships between and the functions of examiners with responsibility for supervising others should be clearly specified by the awarding organisation to secure the efficient monitoring and management of marking.

Team membership and training

4.11 Examiners should have relevant experience in the subject area where this is appropriate. Marking teams should normally include a balance between new examiners and examiners with prior marking experience. Where team leaders are appointed, they will normally have examined for at least two years in the same or a related subject. The same requirement applies to principal examiners and the chief examiner, whose responsibilities are detailed in Section 1.

4.12 New examiners must receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out their duties. This training may depend on whether they are:

- i first-time examiners, who need training on all aspects of the examining process relevant to their role before marking items
- ii new to the awarding organisation and require training specific to the awarding organisation's procedures
- iii new to the particular unit/component or specification and require training specific to that unit/component or specification.

During examiners' first marking period, and on subsequent occasions if necessary, they should be allocated a mentor, normally a more senior examiner, to provide close support throughout the marking period.

First-hand marking

4.13 Principal examiners and, where appointed, assistant principal examiners and team leaders should mark items at first-hand to gain direct evidence of the candidates' interpretation of questions and the application of the mark scheme. Principal examiners and designated assistant principal examiners should mark all items across the paper to gain a feel for the candidates' performance.

The standardisation process

4.14 The standardisation process is designed to make sure that all examiners mark candidates' work consistently and accurately. It establishes a common standard of marking that should be used to maintain the quality of marking during the marking period.

4.15 All examiners are expected to have studied and provisionally marked an agreed range of items before standardisation.

- 4.16 All examiners must satisfactorily complete all aspects of the standardisation process relevant to their responsibilities; inability or failure to do so will result in disqualification from marking. Where disqualification occurs, the awarding organisation must take steps to ensure that the integrity of the marking process is maintained.

Securing consistent application of the mark scheme

- 4.17 The awarding organisation must ensure that all examiners have a well-founded and common understanding of the requirements of the mark scheme (appropriate to their responsibilities) and can apply them reliably. This is the responsibility of the principal examiner, whose professional judgements on the interpretation and application of the mark scheme for the unit/component must be final. Where there are large numbers of examiners and a supervisory structure has been set up, the awarding organisation must ensure that coordination of all assistant principal examiners and team leaders takes place to ensure consistency of practice.
- 4.18 The process of helping to secure the consistent application of the mark scheme must include:
- i an administrative briefing from the awarding organisation that includes reference to this section of the code, awarding organisation procedures, time schedules, administrative documentation and contact points
 - ii an explanation from the principal examiner of the nature and significance of the standardisation process
 - iii a briefing from the principal examiner on relevant points arising from current examinations, drawing as necessary on relevant points made about previous examinations in chief examiners' reports and regulatory monitoring reports
 - iv a discussion of marking issues, including:
 - full consideration of the mark scheme in the context of achieving a clear and common understanding of the range of acceptable responses and the marks appropriate for each item being marked, and comparable marking standards for optional questions
 - handling of unexpected, yet acceptable, answers
 - v the marking of a number of common, clean responses sufficient to:
 - illustrate the range of performance likely to be demonstrated by the candidates in an examiner's allocation
 - help consolidate a common understanding of the mark scheme, including any criteria for the assessment of written communication.

- 4.19 Where changes are made to the original mark scheme, the revised mark scheme must be agreed and authorised by the principal examiner. An awarding organisation officer must be responsible for providing the revised mark scheme, which is issued to all examiners during or within one working day of standardisation. Examiners must not finalise any marking until they have received this authorised revised version. In the case of small-entry examinations, even where there is only one examiner, final detailed mark schemes must be prepared.

Initial sampling to ensure consistent application of the mark scheme

- 4.20 Immediately after standardisation examiners must mark a sample of items (which may include the re-marking of those marked provisionally before standardisation) for checking by a more senior examiner. The sample will normally be not less than 10 of each allocated item. This sample should also:
- i cover the range of performance within the allocated items as far as possible
 - ii cover as many different types of response as possible.

The awarding organisation should have defined procedures in place that seek to ensure that principal examiners' marking is consistent.

- 4.21 Following standardisation, senior examiners must check the marked samples of the examiners for whom they are responsible to ensure that the authorised mark schemes are being accurately and consistently applied. A record must be kept of the marks awarded by both examiners and of the feedback given to the initial examiner.
- 4.22 Examiners must not complete marking until they have received clearance from the relevant senior examiners. Where senior examiners are not satisfied with the quality of an examiner's marking, they must explain the reasons to the examiner concerned. A further sample of marked items, normally the same size, should then be sent to the senior examiner for checking. Only if marking is then satisfactory should an examiner be allowed to proceed. Examiners who do not display sufficient care, accuracy or consistency when applying the mark scheme at this stage must not be allowed to continue marking and their items should be reallocated.

Monitoring marking and taking corrective action

- 4.23 The process of monitoring and taking corrective action to ensure that all examiners are marking consistently and accurately must be fully recorded to provide an audit trail.

4.24 The systems put in place to monitor marking may vary according to the method adopted by the awarding organisation: either traditional or online marking. The requirements for each method are set out below. Awarding organisations must meet the requirements set out in the appropriate subsection.

Traditionally marked scripts

4.25 The marking of all examiners who have been cleared by their senior examiners must continue to be monitored by a senior examiner and, if necessary, the appropriate corrective action taken. The monitoring must include sampling of sufficient scale, range and frequency for the awarding organisation to demonstrate that confidence can be placed in the monitoring process. Marks from this sampling process should be recorded by the senior examiner and used to construct a profile of the quality of marking of each examiner in terms of accuracy, consistency and leniency/severity.

4.26 A review of the entire marking process must be undertaken to decide if any adjustments should be made to the marks of individual examiners. The review must involve the awarding organisation officer, chief examiner, principal examiners and, where appointed, team leaders. The awarding organisation officer has final responsibility for implementing any adjustments made to the marks of individual examiners. Where adjustments are made to the marks of examiners who have marked both Welsh/Irish- and English-medium scripts, the marks for scripts in both languages must be changed.

4.27 Adjustments to the marks of individual examiners must only be made after reference to:

- i sufficient scripts marked by the individual examiner to confirm, or refute, any suspected shift in accuracy, consistency and leniency/severity
- ii how the marking of individual examiners compares with that of the relevant senior examiners
- iii appropriate statistical evidence, for example raw mark distributions
- iv where possible, the distribution of performance of the same candidates on different papers marked by different examiners.

4.28 Where the review shows that examiner inaccuracies have occurred, positive or negative adjustments of appropriate size should be made across the relevant range of marks. To be fair to candidates, awarding organisations must ensure that adjustments do not change the rank order of marks given by the examiner, unless the examiner has been demonstrably inconsistent.

4.29 The process of adjustment must be fully documented for subsequent reference if necessary.

Online marked items

4.30 The marking of all examiners must continue to be monitored by a senior examiner and, if necessary, appropriate corrective action taken. The monitoring must include sampling of sufficient scale, range and frequency for the awarding organisation to demonstrate that confidence can be placed in the monitoring process. Marks from this sampling process should be recorded and used to construct a profile of the quality of marking of each examiner in terms of accuracy, consistency and leniency/severity.

4.31 The marking of individual examiners will be compared with that of a senior examiner at regular intervals throughout the process. Action will be taken, where required, to correct examiner inaccuracies. The awarding organisation officer will take final responsibility for implementing adjustments made to the marks of individual examiners. This corrective action will include:

- i removing the examiner from marking an item or items and the re-marking of those items already marked
- ii removing the examiner from the entire marking process and the re-marking of all items marked to date.

Checking marking

4.32 The processing of the examination must include checks to ensure that all marks have been accurately recorded and transcribed and that any adjustments have been correctly applied and the marks accurately amended. All items must be checked for incomplete marking and errors in totalling.

4.33 The awarding organisation should monitor and evaluate the performance of examiners and take appropriate action to maintain standards in current and future examinations. This may include further training.

Supervising externally assessed set assignments

4.34 The awarding organisation must specify the conditions under which externally set assignments should be undertaken. The conditions specified must facilitate the supervision and authentication of candidates' work by the centre.

4.35 The awarding organisation must require centres to record full details of the nature of any substantial assistance given to individual candidates that is beyond that of the teaching group as a whole, but within the parameters laid down by the specification.

- 4.36 The awarding organisation must require centres to confirm that they have satisfied themselves that the work is that of the candidate and has been carried out within the parameters governing assistance. The centre must present a written declaration that the candidate's assignment was conducted under the required conditions. The awarding organisation must make centres aware of the likely consequences if excessive assistance outside the parameters of the specification is given.

Retaining evidence

- 4.37 The awarding organisation must ensure that candidates' work is available for reference during the awarding meeting. All work must be retained for a sufficient period of time thereafter to allow for the possibility of enquiries about results or appeals.

Standardising marking and moderation: internal assessment

Throughout this section, 'centre' should be taken to mean 'centre or consortium'. This section should be read in conjunction with the appropriate appendix.

This section sets out the arrangements to ensure that candidates' internally assessed work is marked consistently and accurately, to an agreed standard. It covers:

- the systems for setting, authenticating, supervising and assessing this internally assessed work
- training, monitoring and supervising moderators
- action to be taken if the agreed standards are not applied or procedures are not followed
- reviewing moderator performance.

Division of responsibilities

- 5.1 The awarding organisation personnel involved in the assessment and moderation of internal assessments includes the chair of examiners, chief examiner, principal moderator, assistant principal moderators and team leaders, where appointed, moderators and awarding organisation officer(s). Details of their responsibilities are described in Section 1.
- 5.2 The awarding organisation must appoint a principal moderator for each internally assessed unit/component. The principal moderator must have substantial relevant experience of teaching and assessment in the subject area concerned.
- 5.3 The awarding organisation must appoint moderators and, where necessary, assistant principal moderators and team leaders with relevant teaching and assessment experience. The number of moderators appointed must be sufficient to ensure that standards in a given specification can be aligned effectively within and across centres to the timescale required. Moderators must, wherever possible, consider work from several centres, subject to their total load being manageable, and must not normally

moderate the work of candidates from any centre in which they have a personal interest. An awarding organisation officer must be responsible at all times for supervising and guiding the proceedings and ensuring that all steps in the process are implemented.

Instructions, training and guidance for internal assessors

- 5.4 The awarding organisation must provide clear and comprehensive instructions and guidance to internal assessors. Centres and internal assessors must be given comprehensive information and feedback to ensure that they understand and can meet their responsibilities in relation to the requirements of the specification. The awarding organisation must provide training for internal assessors and teachers in task-setting, marking and internal standardisation when new or significantly revised specifications are introduced and as necessary thereafter. The awarding organisation will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the instructions, training and guidance provided for internal assessors so that they can be continually improved.
- 5.5 The awarding organisation must provide centres with clear administrative instructions, including details of how to record, transcribe and check individual candidates' marks. The awarding organisation must provide guidance on how to make decisions and record relevant information.

Setting internally assessed tasks

- 5.6 Where internally assessed tasks are set by the awarding organisation, the tasks and marking criteria must receive appropriate quality checks. The awarding organisation must ensure that it adheres to the relevant principles of paragraph 3.12.
- 5.7 Where the scheme of assessment allows centres/candidates to devise tasks, the awarding organisation must set down parameters and guidance for task-setting and must publish detailed assessment criteria. The parameters must define the scale and nature of tasks that are acceptable. The marking criteria must require the appropriate assessment objectives to be fully addressed.
- 5.8 Where the scheme of assessment requires candidates to produce extended written material in English, Irish or Welsh, the marks awarded will take into account the quality of written communication as defined by the appropriate qualification-type criteria.

- 5.9 Whenever a new or significantly revised specification is introduced that involves new internally assessed tasks, the awarding organisation must take steps to ensure that the tasks and mark schemes that centres devise are of an appropriate standard and conform to the requirements of the specification.

Supervising internal assessment

- 5.10 The awarding organisation must specify the conditions under which internally assessed work can be undertaken. The specified conditions must facilitate the supervision and authentication of candidates' work by teachers and internal assessors. Where, because of the nature of the subject, the specification requires centre-based candidates to undertake some internally assessed activities outside their school or college, the awarding organisation must require that sufficient work takes place under direct supervision to allow the internal assessors concerned to authenticate each candidate's work with confidence. The awarding organisation must ensure that moderators apply awarding organisation guidelines relating to word limits.
- 5.11 The awarding organisation must specify the degree to which candidates are allowed to redraft their work prior to it being marked by the internal assessor.

Authentication of candidates' work

- 5.12 The awarding organisation must require internal assessors to record full details of the nature of all assistance given to individual candidates that is beyond that of the teaching group as a whole, but within the parameters laid down by the specification. A record must be kept where the amount of assistance given varies between teaching groups. The awarding organisation must require internal assessors to take any assistance into account, according to the awarding organisation's instructions, when assessing candidates' work.
- 5.13 The awarding organisation must require internal assessors to provide a written declaration for each candidate that confirms that:
- i the candidate's work was conducted under the conditions laid down by the specification
 - ii they have authenticated the candidate's work and are satisfied that the work produced is solely that of the candidate concerned.
- 5.14 The awarding organisation must require centres to obtain from each candidate a signed declaration that authenticates the work they produce for internal assessment as their own. A mark of zero or absent must be recorded if a candidate cannot provide confirmation of the authenticity of the work they have produced for internal assessment.

- 5.15 An awarding organisation must investigate any cases where a centre is unable to authenticate internally assessed work submitted for moderation. Where a centre is unable to authenticate internally assessed work produced by any of its candidates, either within the initial moderation sample or the teaching group as a whole, that work must be recorded as contributing zero marks to the overall award for the candidates concerned.
- 5.16 Where awarding organisations accept entries from private/external candidates, they must ensure that adequate procedures exist for the authentication of internally assessed components.

Assessment and standardisation within centres

- 5.17 The awarding organisation must require internal assessors to show clearly how credit has been assigned in relation to the criteria defined in the specification. Internal assessments must indicate where quality of written communication will be assessed, where this is appropriate. The awarding organisation must provide guidance on how this is to be done.
- 5.18 Where the regulators have agreed that the nature of the subject requires credit to be allocated for the skills displayed by candidates in redrafting and refining work, the awarding organisation must ensure that internal assessors are given explicit parameters defining the limits within which they may give feedback to candidates.
- 5.19 The awarding organisation must require centres to standardise assessments across different assessors and teaching groups. This is to ensure that for a particular unit/component all candidates in the centre have been judged against the same standards. The awarding organisation must specify the necessary procedures, including the use of reference and archive materials where available and trial marking of common pieces of work. The awarding organisation must normally provide training in the form of written guidance, supported by meetings as appropriate.
- 5.20 The awarding organisation must provide an opportunity for centres to check that they are applying the assessment criteria appropriately.

Moderating assessments submitted by centres

- 5.21 To ensure that standards are aligned within and across centres, the awarding organisation must moderate the marks submitted by each centre against the specified assessment criteria.

- 5.22 The awarding organisation must adjust the marks submitted by centres as necessary to bring each centre's judgements into line with the required standard. The awarding organisation must take remedial action where there is evidence of standards being applied inconsistently, or of other departures from specification requirements.
- 5.23 The awarding organisation must provide centres with details of the moderation procedures that apply to a specification, amplifying as necessary the account printed in the specification itself. The documentation must confirm the awarding organisation's right to act as it judges necessary to align standards. In particular, arrangements must be specified for:
- i requesting, as necessary, at appropriate stages during and at the end of the course, samples of specific internal assessments and associated assessment criteria to indicate how credit has been assigned
 - ii drawing samples of marked, internally standardised candidates' work, to cover the full range of units and to represent adequately the range of attainment in the centre
 - iii sampling the judgements made by all internal assessors where there is evidence that this is necessary to guarantee confidence in the internal assessment process
 - iv requesting additional samples or all relevant work from all candidates, if necessary
 - v establishing whether a centre's marks require adjustment, determining the nature of any required adjustment and making the necessary changes
 - vi giving centres details of, and reasons for, any significant adjustments made.
- 5.24 The awarding organisation must normally adjust marks from a centre where the difference between moderated and unmoderated marks exceeds the awarding organisation's specified tolerance limits. Final decisions must be based on full consideration of the sample of candidates' work. Additional samples must be requested if initial samples indicate that required standards are not being applied but provide insufficient evidence to determine the appropriate remedial action to be taken. To be fair to candidates, awarding organisations should ensure that adjustments do not change the centre's rank order, unless the centre marks are demonstrably inconsistent.
- 5.25 Statistical information must be used, where applicable, to inform the awarding organisation's final judgements on marks awarded.

Methods of moderation

- 5.26 The awarding organisation must use one or more moderation methods that are reliable and valid for the subject area concerned. For the moderation arrangements for GCEs in applied subjects, principal learning and project see Appendix 1. Where an awarding organisation offers assessments through the medium of Welsh or Irish, the moderation methods must ensure reliable and valid moderation of Welsh-/Irish-medium internally assessed work. For internal assessment that leads to written outcomes, moderators must inspect samples of candidates' written work.
- 5.27 For assessments from which no written outcome arises, the awarding organisation must take all necessary steps to ensure consistency of standards. This should include reviewing samples of candidates' actual work wherever possible, for example by visit or by post. Alternatively, the awarding organisation may moderate on the basis of photographed or recorded evidence accompanied by internal assessors' notes detailing the basis for their assessment decisions. Where appropriate, checks on the consistency of standards may take forms other than centre visits or the review of audio/visual evidence.

Standardisation of moderators

- 5.28 The awarding organisation must provide training and follow-up guidance for moderators in all relevant aspects of the internal assessment units and the moderation procedures. All moderators must take part in the training.
- 5.29 The awarding organisation must arrange for the standardisation of all moderators, to ensure common understanding of procedures and standards before moderation begins. This is the responsibility of the principal moderator, who will ensure that the standards of the unit/component are maintained and are consistent with the specification and assessment criteria. Normally, a meeting will be required. Where the number of moderators is sufficiently large to require a supervisory structure, pre-standardisation of all assistant principal moderators and team leaders who have been appointed must take place to ensure consistency of practice. All standardisation must include the consideration of archive material, where appropriate, selected to show candidates' work assessed in relation to the full range of assessment criteria and exemplar material, where available.
- 5.30 All principal moderators and, where appointed, assistant principal moderators and team leaders must undertake some first-hand moderation of centres' assessments in each examination series.

- 5.31 The standards applied by each moderator must be checked by a more senior moderator, who repeats the assessment of candidates' work on a specified, representative sample of the moderator's allocation. Where an awarding organisation offers examinations through the medium of Welsh/Irish, the allocation of candidate work to each moderator must allow the checking of the work of Welsh-/Irish-medium moderators by senior moderators.
- 5.32 Samples to be reassessed by the senior moderator must include, wherever possible, some centres for which adjustments are recommended and some for which no adjustments are recommended. A centre for which a comparatively large overall adjustment is proposed should be included. If the senior moderator is not satisfied with the moderator's standards, a further sample of the moderator's allocation must be requested and reassessed.
- 5.33 The senior moderator must complete a report for the awarding organisation on the work of each moderator. Moderators whose standards are judged to be unsatisfactory may not continue their moderation, and candidates' work from all their centres must be re-moderated. Such moderators may not be reappointed without satisfactorily completing further training.
- 5.34 Where candidates' moderated work or evidence of that work cannot, for logistical reasons, be posted or inspected at a meeting, the senior moderator must normally accompany the moderator on at least one visit to a centre (normally a centre specified by the senior moderator or the awarding organisation) to check the moderator's judgements.
- 5.35 Moderators must be provided with clear administrative instructions, including details of how to record, transcribe and check moderated marks. The awarding organisation must ensure that checks are made of the accuracy with which moderators record and transcribe marks.

Reusing marks

- 5.36 Where candidates repeat non-modular qualifications, moderated marks for their internally assessed work may be carried forward during the lifetime of the specification.

Dealing with unsatisfactory practice

- 5.37 The awarding organisation must provide centres that fail to meet its requirements for internal assessment with further guidance.
- 5.38 Where a significant problem occurs – including non-attendance at compulsory training sessions – the awarding organisation must approve and monitor the centre’s arrangements for assessment and standardisation for as long as necessary, informing:
- i the regulators
 - ii where it is in the public interest to do so, the other awarding organisations.
- 5.39 Where a centre fails to attend compulsory training events, the awarding organisation must take such steps as are necessary to safeguard the interests of candidates in future awards.

Awarding, marking review, maintaining an archive and issuing results

This section should be read in conjunction with the appropriate appendix.

This section sets out the arrangements that must be in place to cover the awarding process, marking review, archiving process and issue of results. It covers:

- making sure the responsibilities of those involved are clearly defined
- making sure the pre-awarding meeting procedures are clearly defined
- making sure the make-up of the awarding committee is clearly defined
- setting out the process for determining grade boundaries
- maintaining an archive of marked examination papers at grade boundaries
- reviewing examiners' marking
- issuing results on agreed dates.

Division of responsibilities

- 6.1 The personnel involved in awarding include the chair of examiners, chief examiner(s), principal examiners, principal moderator(s) and awarding organisation officers. Details of their responsibilities are given in Section 1.

Procedures prior to the awarding meeting

- 6.2 The chair of examiners, chief examiner(s), principal examiner(s) and principal moderator(s) in a specification must ensure before the awarding meeting that they are fully conversant with the overall standard of work associated with particular grades in previous years or previous examination series. The prime objectives are the maintenance of grade standards over time and across different specifications within a qualification type. Attention also should be paid, where appropriate, to the alignment of standards between GCE and GCE in applied subjects and between GCSE and GCSE in applied subjects in the same subject area.
- 6.3 Question papers / tasks (including internally assessed work), mark schemes and candidates' work (marked scripts and/or internally assessed material) exemplifying grade boundaries for previous awards in each subject or vocational area must be reviewed in the context of relevant statistics. In the case of a new specification, pertinent material from other examinations in the subject or other relevant subjects should be considered.
- 6.4 After the marking and moderating period, principal examiners and principal moderators must propose preliminary ranges of marks for each component/unit as a basis for locating key grade boundaries on the basis of judgement. Full details of the key grade boundaries are given in appendices 3 and 4. All other grade boundaries are determined arithmetically. These proposals must be made following consideration of sufficient candidates' work (marked scripts and/or internally assessed material) to gain a feel for candidates' performance.
- 6.5 Preparation must be undertaken prior to the awarding meeting to:
- i ensure that sufficient marks are on the awarding organisation's system to inform the awarding committee's grading decisions
 - ii ensure that appropriate ranges of candidates' work (marked scripts and/or internally assessed material) are available for the awarding meeting
 - iii identify, on the basis of preliminary calculation of outcomes, where problems of consistency and comparability may arise.

The awarding committee

- 6.6 For each specification, there must be an awarding committee, chaired by the chair of examiners, which:
- i checks that the required standards are brought to bear in each component/unit and in the examination as a whole
 - ii assists the chair of examiners in arriving at recommended boundary marks for each key grade in the examination.
- 6.7 In addition to the chair of examiners, the committee must include the chief examiner(s), principal examiner(s) and principal moderator(s).⁶ In exceptional circumstances where a senior examiner or moderator is unable to attend an awarding meeting, the awarding organisation officer will ensure that an examiner or moderator of nearest seniority for the specification under consideration attends the meeting. Awarding organisation officers must advise the committee and direct its procedures. Where necessary the committee may include others with particular expertise.
- 6.8 Where there is more than one specification in the same subject, or where specifications share units or where the same unit is assessed through the medium of English and Welsh/Irish, there must be a single awarding committee or an overlap of membership (chair of examiners and at least one other member) across the committees responsible. For each principal learning line of learning or project there must be a single awarding committee responsible for all levels of the qualification or an overlap of membership (chair of examiners and at least one other member) where there is more than one committee.
- 6.9 The role of the overlapping members of the committee is, in principle, no different from that of the other members: to bring their professional experience and expertise to bear on the task of recommending grade boundaries. These members are expected, in addition, to consider the consistency of the recommendations in the light of standards applied in other specifications.
- 6.10 For specifications with a large number of units or components, a sub-group of the awarding committee may be convened to award a component or unit of a specification. Recommendations made by the sub-group must be referred to the whole awarding committee for approval. A sample of candidates' work at the proposed boundary marks must be available to the awarding committee for reference.

⁶ The roles of chief examiner, principal examiner and principal moderator may be combined in one person in small-entry specifications.

The awarding process

6.11 The process of awarding must be conducted by establishing the range for each key grade boundary and, subsequently, marks at each grade boundary for each externally and internally assessed unit/component. A record of the preliminary ranges of marks proposed by the principal examiners and principal moderators must be included in the report of the awarding meeting. Where the nature of particular specifications requires modifications to be made to the procedures set out below, arrangements will be agreed between the regulators and the relevant awarding organisation.

Setting grade boundaries

6.12 The awarding committee must consider candidates' work, selected on the basis of the range for each key grade boundary. These ranges must be based on the preliminary ranges of marks proposed by principal examiners and principal moderators and must also take account of the relevant technical and statistical information. If necessary, marked scripts and internally assessed material outside the preliminary ranges must be included to ensure that work of the appropriate standard is considered.

6.13 A provisional boundary must be set separately for each component/unit for each key grade identified in the relevant qualification-type appendix at the end of this document. Other arrangements may apply to specifications or options with small entries to avoid distortions caused by atypical mark distributions. Depending on the assessment pattern, it may be appropriate to consider a boundary for more than one component or module/unit before moving on to the next boundary, with the prior agreement of the regulators.

6.14 Each boundary must be set using professional judgement. The judgement must reflect the quality of candidates' work, informed by the relevant technical and statistical evidence.

6.15 The awarding organisation must provide the awarding committee with procedures that are consistent with this code. These must be used to conduct the award and may be set out as an agenda. The following must be used, as appropriate, to inform the determination of marks at key grade boundaries:

Qualitative

- i copies of question papers / tasks and final mark schemes
- ii reports from the principal examiner(s) / principal moderator(s) on how the question paper functioned
- iii archive scripts and examples of internally assessed work (including, in appropriate subject areas, photographic or videotaped evidence) at the relevant grade boundaries, together with relevant question papers and mark schemes
- iv samples of current candidates' work (marked scripts and/or internally assessed material) distributed evenly across key boundary ranges for each component, with enough representing each mark to provide a sound basis for judgement so far as the size of entry and nature of work permit. The material should be selected from a range of centres and/or consortia where work has been marked/moderated by examiners/moderators whose work is known to be reliable
- v any published performance descriptions, grade descriptions and exemplar material, where available
- vi any other supporting material (such as marking guides for components where the evidence is of an ephemeral nature)

Quantitative

- vii technical information, including mark distributions relating to the question papers / tasks and individual questions for the current and previous series, where available
- viii information on candidates' performance in at least two previous equivalent series, where available
- ix details of significant changes in entry patterns, choices of options and prior attainment, where available
- x information on centres' estimated grades for all candidates including:
 - qualification-level estimates for linear (including linear unitised) specifications
 - unit-level estimates for externally assessed units in all other unitised specifications⁷
- xi information about the relationship between component/unit level data and whole-subject performance, where available

Regulatory reports

- xii relevant evidence from the regulators' monitoring and comparability reports.

⁷ For units that are entirely composed of multiple choice questions, information on centres' estimated grades for all candidates need be collected only for a period that includes two summer awarding series.

Marked scripts

- 6.16 Awarders must consider candidates' work in the range for each key boundary, ensuring that a sufficient amount of candidates' work is inspected. They must consider each mark in turn, as follows:
- i First, working down from the top of the range, awarders must identify the lowest mark for which there is consensus that the quality of work is worthy of the higher grade of the boundary pair. This forms the upper limiting mark.
 - ii Next, working up from the bottom of the range, awarders must identify the highest mark for which there is consensus that the quality of work is not worthy of the higher grade. The mark above this forms the lower limiting mark.

Awarders must then use their collective professional judgement to recommend a single mark for the grade boundary, which normally will lie within the range including the two limiting marks. This judgement will include consideration of the evidence listed in paragraph 6.15. All awarders must have considered candidates' work at the recommended mark.

Internally assessed components/units

- 6.17 When the boundary marks for an internally assessed component/unit have been preset, the grade distribution for the component/unit – together with data on previous distributions and any changes in the entry pattern – must be reported to the awarders.
- 6.18 Boundary marks for other internally assessed components/units must be determined according to the procedures set out in paragraphs 6.12–6.16 above.
- 6.19 For established specifications in which internal-assessment boundary marks have been stable for two or more examination series and the nature of the associated tasks and the marking criteria have not changed, key internal-assessment boundary marks may be carried forward from the previous series. Boundary marks should be carried forward only if this is recommended by the principal moderator after completion of the moderation process, and by the designated awarding organisation officer in the light of the technical and statistical evidence available. A sample of current candidates' work at the proposed boundary marks to be carried forward must be available for reference as necessary.

Multiple choice question papers

6.20 For units that are entirely composed of multiple choice questions, the technical and statistical information specified in the ‘Quantitative’ section of paragraph 6.15 must be supplemented by item-level analyses, including facility and discrimination indices, and the correct answer to each item. The awarding committee must use a valid methodology to reach its grade boundary recommendations.

Subject grades

6.21 Where there are a number of different routes to a subject grade, including replacement papers where there has been a security breach, the chair of examiners must ensure that the standards of the awards for grades derived from each route are comparable. Where a component/unit is shared between different specifications or options, the same grade boundaries must be used.

6.22 For all qualifications, awarding committees must consider available aggregate outcomes as part of the awarding process, in the light of evidence about the nature of the candidature. Additional information on aggregation is provided in the relevant qualification-type appendix.

Procedures following the awarding committee

6.23 The chair of examiners’ recommendations must be reviewed by the accountable officer to ensure that grades awarded represent continuity and parity of standards across years, over time and across specifications. In this review, the following evidence must be considered:

- i reports from the awarding meeting, including the chair of examiners’ recommendations
- ii evidence of awarders’ professional judgements on the quality of candidates’ work within the range considered at the awarding meeting
- iii the most complete technical and statistical evidence available, including that outlined in paragraph 6.15 and any generated subsequent to the awarding meeting (for example, information from cognate subjects).

6.24 Should the chair of examiners’ recommendations be deemed to need reconsideration by the accountable officer, the chair of examiners must be engaged in this process and consulted before any change is finalised.

6.25 Where a final boundary mark is proposed that lies outside the range over which candidates’ work was considered at the awarding meeting, the awarding committee must be reconvened and the regulators must be informed.

- 6.26 Responsibility for setting the final grade boundary rests with the accountable officer. If the accountable officer selects a final grade boundary that is not supported by the chair of examiners, a full report must be made to the awarding organisation's governing council. The regulators must be informed and provided with an evidence-based justification for the proposed decision at least two working days before it is finalised.
- 6.27 If they deem it necessary – and within one working day of receipt of such information – the regulators will inform the accountable officer of any dissatisfaction with the justification and proposed decision, giving their reasons and requiring reconsideration with a further report on the final decision within a further working day.
- 6.28 The regulators reserve the right to advise the awarding organisation's governing council of any remaining concerns and, further, to make them known publicly.
- 6.29 The awarding committee must be advised of the reasons for any changes to the recommended grade boundaries as soon as possible, and in any event before the publication of results.

Maintaining an archive

- 6.30 While a specification remains in use, the awarding organisation must maintain a full archive containing marked scripts at the final mark selected for each key grade boundary covering each series for at least the last five series. In addition, the awarding organisation must retain equivalent evidence from the first examination of the specification to guide the work of examiners and awarders.
- 6.31 The awarding organisation also must supply material in accordance with the requirements of the National Archive.

Marking review for traditionally marked scripts

- 6.32 The procedures identified in Section 4 are intended to minimise errors in the marks awarded. Nevertheless, there may be cases where some doubt remains about whether the marks given to a candidate or group of candidates are accurate. The purpose of the marking review is to ensure that such cases are identified and remedial action taken where necessary.

- 6.33 The marking review will consist of a re-marking of scripts marked by examiners about whom there is lingering doubt.⁸ Each externally assessed component will be treated in this manner when it is awarded. Other candidates' work may be included in the marking review if the awarding organisation and/or chief/principal examiner considers there to be good reason to do so, such as significant discrepancies between estimated grades and provisional grades.
- 6.34 After the re-marking by senior examiners of those candidates' work identified as indicated in paragraphs 6.32 and 6.33, the revised mark will replace the original mark and the result will be automatically recalculated.
- 6.35 Where an awarding organisation offers examinations through the medium of Welsh or Irish, the procedures for marking review must allow for the review, as appropriate, of the work of Welsh-/Irish-medium candidates.

Issue of results

- 6.36 The awarding organisation must issue results for each series of examinations on the agreed dates.
- 6.37 The awarding organisation must ensure that all available work from candidates is marked and/or moderated before results are issued. In the event of any difficulty, the awarding organisation must notify the regulators in good time of the nature of the difficulty and the action taken to resolve it. The regulators may, at their discretion, request progress reports and confirmation of completion from the awarding organisation's accountable officer.

⁸ For GCSE linear specifications, the marking review must include the re-marking by senior examiners of components marked by examiners about whom there is lingering doubt, where candidates' aggregate marks are one per cent or less below the C/D grade boundary.

Candidates with particular requirements

This section sets out the arrangements that must be in place to meet the needs of candidates with particular requirements without undermining standards. It covers:

- **giving centres clear information about the arrangements available, eligibility criteria, application process and deadlines**
- **giving the regulators data about the arrangements annually, where such information is not available on *Access arrangements online*.**

- 7.1 The awarding organisation must consider the needs of all candidates, including those with particular requirements, when preparing question papers, tasks (including internally assessed tasks) and mark schemes, without compromising the assessment criteria.
- 7.2 Concerning access arrangements and special consideration, the awarding organisation should identify a person, team or department to be responsible for administering the arrangements for candidates with particular requirements. Staff involved in administering these arrangements must be provided with appropriate training to carry out their duties.
- 7.3 Candidates may have particular requirements for a number of reasons including:
- i a permanent (long-term) disability⁹ or medical condition
 - ii a temporary (short-term) disability or medical condition
 - iii an illness, other indisposition or unforeseen incident at the time of the assessment
 - iv where their first language is not English, Welsh or Irish.
- 7.4 The assessment requirements of individual candidates may vary over time and according to the demands of the subject and the method of assessment. Centres should consider the particular requirements of individual candidates and then follow the awarding organisations' regulations and guidelines to make sure that these needs are met appropriately.

⁹ This would lead to a reasonable adjustment. See the glossary.

Access arrangements¹⁰

- 7.5 The awarding organisation must, when necessary, approve appropriate access arrangements for candidates with particular requirements to enable them to have access to fair assessment and to demonstrate attainment. The awarding organisation should not approve access arrangements that will directly affect performance in the attributes that are the focus of assessment or otherwise affect the integrity of the award.
- 7.6 The awarding organisation must provide centres with information for making access arrangements that includes:
- i conditions for eligibility
 - ii the range of available access arrangements
 - iii clear guidance on when an access arrangement may not be permitted, as it would undermine the assessment in question
 - iv how and when applications should be made
- 7.7 The awarding organisation must ensure that access arrangements:
- i take account of all current legislation and regulatory requirements that have an impact on equality of access to assessment and qualifications
 - ii comply with regulatory requirements and do not invalidate the assessment requirements set out in the specification for the relevant qualification
 - iii do not give the candidates an unfair advantage or disadvantage when compared with candidates for whom access arrangements are not being made
 - iv maintain the relevance, validity, reliability, comparability and integrity of the assessment

Special consideration¹¹

- 7.8 Special consideration involves procedures that may result in an adjustment to the marks of candidates who have not been able to demonstrate attainment because of exceptional circumstances at the time of the assessment. The awarding organisation must arrange for such adjustments to be given to candidates who were present for the assessment but were disadvantaged, or were unable to be present for a unit/component for reasons deemed to be acceptable. The awarding organisation must provide centres with information about applying for special consideration, including:
- i conditions for eligibility, including minimum assessment requirements
 - ii the application procedures and deadlines.

¹⁰ Defined in the glossary.

¹¹ Defined in the glossary.

- 7.9 The awarding organisation must ensure that the minimum evidence required to make an award by special consideration is specified. This is an award that is made to a candidate who has covered the course but is unable through temporary illness, injury or indisposition to complete all of the usual assessment requirements.

Monitoring and reporting

- 7.10 The awarding organisation must collect and report to the regulators data where such data are not available on *Access arrangements online*.
- 7.11 The awarding organisation must have procedures in place to monitor actively the work of centres, with the option of taking any or all of the following actions to maintain the integrity of accredited qualifications:
- i routine inspection of a range of different types of centre
 - ii increasing the level of monitoring and sampling
 - iii de-registering a centre.
- 7.12 The awarding organisation must report annually to the regulators on the outcome of its centre monitoring. This report should include any issues or problems that have been identified, including malpractice, and the action taken to maintain the integrity of assessments.
- 7.13 The awarding organisation must regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of its arrangements for candidates with particular requirements. This evaluation should include:
- i the identification of any changes or improvements that need to be made (including the evidence base on which judgements have been made)
 - ii the actions arising from evaluation (including any target dates for completion).

Malpractice

This section sets out the arrangements that identify and deal with cases of malpractice to make sure standards are maintained. It covers reporting and investigating malpractice and taking action.

- 8.1 The awarding organisation must have procedures in place for dealing with malpractice on the part of candidates, centre staff or others involved in providing a qualification and must ensure that all centres, its own staff and the regulators receive copies of those procedures.
- 8.2 The awarding organisation must require centres to report to it any malpractice suspected after candidates have been registered, making clear any possible implications of a failure to cooperate for the issue of certificates and the future acceptance of entries.
- 8.3 The awarding organisation must report significant cases of malpractice to the regulators automatically and report all cases on request. The awarding organisation must initiate investigations and cooperate fully with any follow-up investigations required by the regulators, sharing information with other awarding organisations or with other agencies as necessary.
- 8.4 Each awarding organisation will investigate any instances of alleged or suspected malpractice in either the internally or externally assessed components and must take such action, with respect to the candidates and centres concerned, as is necessary to maintain the integrity of the examination.
- 8.5 Each awarding organisation has the right to impose special conditions on the future involvement of a teacher or internal assessor in the conduct, supervision or administration of its examinations and to refuse to accept examination entries from a centre in cases where malpractice is established. Other awarding organisations will be informed when such special conditions are imposed.
- 8.6 The awarding organisation will investigate each case of alleged malpractice to establish the full facts and circumstances relating to the case and, where appropriate, the candidate's conduct in other assessments. The head of a centre normally will be asked to submit a written report on the case to the awarding organisation and to provide appropriate supporting documentation.
- 8.7 Each case of malpractice will be considered and judged on an individual basis in the light of all information available. The outcome should be commensurate with the gravity of the malpractice as determined by the awarding organisation.

Enquiries about results and appeals

This section sets out the arrangements for further checks if a centre or candidate believes their results are incorrect. It covers the range of services and relevant deadlines.

- 9.1 Each awarding organisation must publish its arrangements for the submission of enquiries about results and for appeals against the awarding organisation's decisions. These arrangements must indicate that all summer enquiries must be received by 20 September and advise of a comparable schedule for any additional series that has been agreed with the regulators.
- 9.2 Each awarding organisation must publish agreed arrangements for dealing with enquiries about results and for appeals against their decisions.
- 9.3 The services available for enquiries about results must include a clerical check and post-results reviews of marking and moderation of internally assessed components. For level 3 qualifications where a candidate's place in higher education is dependent upon the outcome a post-results review of marking service is available on a priority basis for individual candidates.
- 9.4 The enquiry about results procedure, which is carried out on internally assessed work, should be undertaken on the sample used at initial moderation.
- 9.5 Each awarding organisation must publish common administrative arrangements and deadlines. The awarding organisation must provide notification of the outcome of any enquiry concerning a subject grade within the following deadlines:
 - i a priority post-results review of marking, within 18 calendar days of receipt
 - ii a clerical check, within 20 calendar days of receipt
 - iii a post-results review of marking, within 30 calendar days of receipt
 - iv a post-results review of moderation, within 40 calendar days of receipt.

All reports relating to paid enquiries also normally must be provided within 40 calendar days.

- 9.6 Where an enquiry has been made, the original script cannot be returned until the enquiry is completed.
- 9.7 The awarding organisation must, wherever possible, ensure that a post-results review of marking is undertaken by someone other than the original examiner.
- 9.8 Each awarding organisation will make a charge for the result enquiry services. The awarding organisations will adopt common principles relating to the refund of fees in instances where candidates' results are raised or lowered following an enquiry or subsequent appeal. In the case of a group enquiry, the awarding organisation will refund either the total fee or a proportion depending on the outcomes of the enquiry. Information about these principles and their application will be provided to all centres.
- 9.9 In cases where the outcome of an enquiry brings into question the accuracy of results for other candidates in the same examination, the awarding organisation must take whatever steps it considers appropriate to protect the interests of all candidates who may have been similarly affected.
- 9.10 In cases where a clerical check or post-results review of marking reveals inaccurate marking, subject grades or unit marks may be confirmed, raised or lowered. The awarding organisation must ensure that centres confirm to them that candidates whose work is to be clerically checked or the subject of a post-results review of marking have consented to their inclusion in the process. In the case of private candidates, the awarding organisation must ensure that the candidate is advised that their mark may be confirmed, raised or lowered and establish that the candidate consents to this. The awarding organisation must inform centres that before giving their consent, candidates should be advised that their grades may be confirmed, raised or lowered as a result of the initial enquiry or any subsequent appeal. Where the outcome of a post-results review of marking brings into question the accuracy of results for other candidates in the same examination, subject grades already awarded to candidates who were not part of the initial enquiry can only be confirmed or raised.
- 9.11 In cases where a post-results review of moderation reveals inaccurate moderation, subject grades already awarded can only be confirmed or raised. Marks for modules, units or components may be confirmed, raised or lowered, and these marks will be carried forward to any subsequent subject grade. It is not necessary to obtain candidates' permission before a centre requests re-moderation.

- 9.12 The awarding organisation must not consider enquiries about results directly from internal candidates or their carers. Enquiries about results must be accepted directly from private candidates.
- 9.13 The awarding organisation must require centres offering its examinations to ensure that they have in place:
- i a procedure for candidates or their carers to request access to the enquiry and appeals system
 - ii a procedure for lodging enquiries about results in cases where the centre supports an enquiry lodged by a candidate or carer
 - iii a formal, codified procedure for handling disputes when a candidate or carer disagrees with a decision by the centre not to support an enquiry.

Centres must be required to ensure that the procedures are published and made widely available and accessible to all candidates and their carers.

- 9.14 In deciding whether to support an enquiry or appeal, centres should take account of all relevant factors and afford candidates or their carers a reasonable opportunity to express their views.
- 9.15 Following receipt of the outcome of an enquiry, appellants must be allowed up to two calendar weeks in which to lodge an appeal. Appeals should focus on whether an awarding organisation:
- i used procedures that were consistent with this code of practice
 - ii applied its procedures properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.
- 9.16 Appeals must be heard by awarding organisation appeals panels including at least one independent member (who is not, and has not been, a member of the awarding organisation's board or committees, or an employee or examiner at that awarding organisation, at any time during the previous five years). Each awarding organisation should advertise for and appoint independent members of appeals panels who match a specification agreed by the regulators. Each awarding organisation should use arrangements, endorsed by the regulators, to appoint (for terms up to four years) and train independent panellists to hear appeals. All appointments of independent panellists should be notified to the regulators.

- 9.17 Where appeals are lodged, awarding organisations must carry out a preliminary appeals process and then – unless the outcome leads the appellant to withdraw the application – conduct a formal appeals hearing and send a decision letter within 50 working days¹² of the lodging of the original request. In any event, awarding organisations will communicate the outcomes of all appeals on summer examinations by 12 February in the following calendar year and on any additional examinations to a comparable schedule agreed with the regulators.
- 9.18 When the relevant awarding organisation's enquiries and appeals procedures have been exhausted an appeal may be made to the Examinations Appeals Board, which has been set up to ensure that schools and colleges, and through them candidates and parents, are satisfied that the grades awarded are as fair and accurate as they can be.

¹² Any working days falling between 25 December and 1 January inclusive will be excluded from the allowed 50 working days.

Access to marked examination scripts

This section sets out the arrangements that must be in place for providing access to marked examination scripts. It covers conditions of access and relevant deadlines.

- 10.1 A 'script'¹³ refers to any candidate's work deriving from an externally assessed component that is primarily written, subject to a list of excluded components agreed by the regulators. These arrangements do not apply to internally assessed components.

Rights to access

- 10.2 Access to externally assessed components must be granted when a request is made to the awarding organisation either by a centre or by a private candidate. Access will be available by individual component.
- 10.3 The awarding organisation must make clear to centres that all requests to have access to their marked examination scripts from candidates who sat examinations at that centre should be processed and transmitted to the relevant awarding organisation within the timescales prescribed below. Awarding organisations must accept access to scripts requests directly from private candidates.
- 10.4 Awarding organisations must inform centres that it is the centre's responsibility to make candidates aware of the arrangements for access to scripts in advance of the candidates sitting any examination to which the arrangements apply.

Conditions of access

- 10.5 Awarding organisations will release scripts to centres on the following conditions.
- i Scripts must be seen only by teachers who are members of staff at that centre or returned directly to the candidates concerned.
 - ii Prior written permission must be obtained from any candidates concerned where teachers intend to use their scripts as examples for other students. This permission must be sought only after the candidates have received their results. Candidates who grant their permission have the right to anonymise their scripts before use.

¹³ An electronic image, including marks and annotations, may be provided.

- iii Scripts used by teachers at the centre must be kept securely within the centre. Once no longer required, scripts must be disposed of confidentially. Confidential disposal must not take place earlier than three months after the publication of results or appeal involving those scripts.
- iv Candidates have the right to instruct their centres not to request their scripts for any purposes.
- v The originals of scripts that are or have been the subject of any malpractice investigation can be withheld by the awarding organisation concerned. In these circumstances a centre or private candidate may request copies of the scripts.

Supporting enquiries

- 10.6 In order to allow consideration of scripts for the sole purpose of deciding whether to request a GCE or level 3 principal learning enquiry about results, centres and private candidates may request advance copies of the relevant scripts. A request for such copies must be sent to arrive at the awarding organisation no later than eight days after the publication of results. The copies must be sent by the awarding organisation so that the centre or private candidate receives them no later than 10 days before the closing date for enquiries about results. Advance copies will not be available for candidates' scripts that are to be reconsidered as part of a priority enquiry post-results review of marking.
- 10.7 The awarding organisation must make available on request copies of candidates' marked scripts along with the outcomes of enquiries about results for both priority and regular enquiries about results.

Supporting teaching and learning

- 10.8 Requests for access for other purposes must be received by the awarding organisation no later than two weeks after the closing date for enquiries about results. In response to these requests, scripts must be sent by the awarding organisation so that the centre or private candidate receives them no earlier than the closing date for such enquiries and no later than eight weeks after the closing date for enquiries about results.
- 10.9 The originals of scripts that have been the subject of an enquiry about results cannot be returned until the enquiry is completed.

10.10 Once an awarding organisation has returned an original script to a centre, that script can no longer be subjected to an enquiry or investigation.

Further responsibilities of awarding organisations

10.11 Awarding organisations must continue to mark and annotate all scripts in accordance with good practice recognised by the regulators.

10.12 Awarding organisations must continue their arrangements to collect appropriate archive materials for all examinations.

Moderation arrangements for GCE in applied subjects, principal learning and project

GCE in applied subjects

The normal moderation arrangements apply to GCE in applied subjects. However, under agreed arrangements for these specifications, centre staff who have proved they can mark in line with agreed standards may gain accreditation from the awarding organisation concerned. Under the terms of this accreditation, accredited centre staff will agree to take responsibility for the standards of internal assessment of all candidates for their specific subject within the centre.

- 1 Under these arrangements, the awarding organisations must have clear processes to ensure the maintenance of the standard of all internally assessed work. These processes must include the following:
 - i guidance to centres about the system, the eligibility and accreditation criteria, and the application process
 - ii training for centre staff wishing to gain accreditation and ongoing training and support for accredited centre staff
 - iii monitoring and evaluation to make sure that centres' marks remain within agreed standards
 - iv remedial action to ensure the maintenance of standards in future assessments where problems have been identified
 - v a method of adjusting a centre's marks where standards have been found to be inappropriate
 - vi a requirement that centres maintain up-to-date registers of accredited staff for submission to the awarding organisation on request.
- 2 Where standards are found to be inappropriate, or the accredited member of staff has left the centre, there must be clear procedures that require the centre to achieve accreditation for a new member of staff or return to the traditional moderation system.

Principal learning and project

In addition to normal moderation arrangements, a number of principles and practices can be applied to the moderation of internally assessed principal learning units and project qualifications.

- 3 For some or all units in each principal learning level / line of learning undertaken by a centre, the work of a sample of candidates is reassessed by a moderator using the original assessment criteria. Where not all units are to be sampled in a line of learning / level, the units must have been divided into groups so that the units within each group have similar requirements and assessment criteria. At least one unit from each group must be sampled. Reassessment by the moderator may take place while assessment by the centre is in progress or after marks have been submitted to the awarding organisation.
- 4 Where the centre's marking is not accepted for some or all principal learning units and not all units have been sampled, appropriate action must be taken for the unsampled units, for example by including them in the moderation process or by requiring the centre to review the assessment of these units in the light of feedback from the sampled units.
- 5 While the marking of each principal learning unit (or set of linked units) must be standardised across all centres / assessment sites in a consortium, the marking of a project qualification must be standardised within an individual centre.

Grading for GCSEs that do not use uniform marks

Setting key component grade boundaries¹⁴

GCSE and GCSE (short course) – non-tiered components

- 1 The three key grade boundaries must be dealt with in the following sequence throughout the awarding process:
 - i C/D
 - ii A/B
 - iii F/G.

GCSE and GCSE (short course) – tiered components

- 2 The key grade boundaries must be dealt with in the following sequence throughout the awarding process:
 - i C/D foundation tier
 - ii C/D higher tier
 - iii A/B higher tier
 - iv F/G foundation tier
 - v D/E higher tier.
- 3 Scripts at the arithmetically determined D/E boundary on the foundation tier are used to inform the judgemental D/E decision on the higher tier.

Setting grade boundaries for the subject as a whole

- 4 After key grade boundaries for each component have been set, provisional boundaries for the subject as a whole must be established for the key judgemental grades as detailed below. For each of the judgemental boundaries, two indicators are calculated through the process described below. GCSE mathematics and new GCSE linear specifications will use indicator 1 only.

¹⁴ For information on GCSEs that use uniform marks refer to 'Appendix 3: Aggregation and grading for qualifications that use uniform marks'.

Indicator 1

- i The boundary mark for each component is scaled as necessary to reflect the mark allocation for that component as detailed in the specification.
- ii The resulting scaled component boundary marks are added and the result is rounded to the nearest whole number (0.5 rounded up).

Indicator 2

- i The percentage of candidates at and above the boundary mark on each component is determined.
- ii A weighted mean of these percentages is calculated, using the weightings of components as detailed in the specification.
- iii The mark is identified on the distribution of total examination marks at which the cumulative percentage of candidates most closely corresponds to the weighted mean.

Conclusion

- i Whenever the two indicators do not coincide, the grade boundary should normally be set at the lower of the two indicator marks, unless, in the awarders' judgement, there is good reason, as a result of a review of the statistical and technical evidence, to choose a higher mark within the range spanned by the indicators.
- 5 The other grade boundaries must be determined arithmetically as set out below.

Key subject grade boundaries

GCSE and GCSE (short course) – non-tiered and tiered examinations

- 6 The following three key subject boundaries are set using indicators 1 and 2:
- i C/D
 - ii A/B
 - iii F/G.
- 7 The B/C boundary is obtained by dividing the mark interval between the A/B and C/D boundaries by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade B interval.

- 8 The D/E and E/F boundaries are obtained by dividing the mark interval between the C/D and F/G boundaries by three. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade D interval. Where there is remainder of two, one extra mark is added to each of the grade D and grade E intervals.
- 9 In a tiered examination, the D/E boundary on the higher tier is set using indicators 1 and 2.
- 10 All other boundaries are determined arithmetically.
 - i In a tiered examination the E/U boundary on the higher tier is provisionally set by subtracting half the mark interval between the C/D and D/E boundaries (rounding up half marks) from the D/E boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads the awarders to judge that the E/U boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiners' grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal.
 - ii The G/U boundary is the same number of marks below the F/G boundary as the E/F boundary is above the F/G boundary.
- 11 The A*/A boundary is provisionally set at the same number of marks above the A/B boundary as the A/B boundary is above the B/C boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads the awarders to judge that the A*/A boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiners' grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal.

Aggregation and grading for qualifications that use uniform marks

- 1 Aggregate marks will be calculated on the basis of a uniform mark scale (UMS). Uniform marks for each unit must be calculated in such a way as to maintain the candidates' relative position between the raw grade boundaries. Each unit must be reported in uniform marks. Uniform marks for individual assessment units are added to generate a final grade for the qualification as a whole.
- 2 Where a candidate has taken more than the required number of units, the awarding organisation will generate the best grade for the candidate. Results for units that are not included in the aggregation remain available for future use if required.

For GCSE specifications for first teaching in 2009, units that account for at least 40 per cent of the assessment must be taken in the terminal series in which certification is requested. The final qualification grade must include assessment results from that series for the units which satisfy this terminal requirement.

- 3 The resit rules for each qualification are as follows:
 - i GCSE (except for GCSE science specifications)
In modular or staged schemes, any individual assessment unit may be resat once before certification, with the better mark counting towards the final grade (subject to the application of the relevant terminal requirements).
 - ii GCE and GCSE science specifications
Individual assessment units may be resat before certification, with the best mark counting towards the final grade.
 - iii Additional arrangements for GCSE science specifications
Where a candidate takes more than one GCSE science qualification, those externally assessed units common to both specifications must be resat. Where the common unit is an internally assessed unit and the context is common to both titles, the result may be used to contribute to awards for both titles.

GCE and free-standing mathematics qualifications (FSMQ)

- 4 Grade boundary marks for each externally assessed unit or component will be determined judgements for the key boundaries in the following sequence:
- i E/U
 - ii A/B.
- 5 When a unit consists of two or more components, such as a written paper and internally assessed work, grade E/U and A/B boundary marks will be determined for each component separately. The boundary mark for each component is scaled as necessary to reflect the weighting for that component as detailed in the specification, and these scaled component boundary marks are added to give unit boundary marks. These unit boundary marks will then be used as the basis for conversion to uniform marks.
- 6 Where candidates repeat a unit that consists partly of internally assessed work, moderated marks for their internally assessed work may be carried forward during the lifetime of the specification (if allowed by the specification).
- 7 For each unit, the grade B/C, C/D and D/E boundary marks are determined arithmetically. The grade B/C, C/D and D/E boundary marks are calculated by dividing the mark interval between the A/B and E/U boundaries by four.
- i Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the A–B mark range.
 - ii Where there is a remainder of two, one extra mark is added to each of the A–B and B–C mark ranges.
 - iii Where there is a remainder of three, one extra mark is added to each of the A–B, B–C and C–D mark ranges.

Conversion to uniform marks in GCE and free-standing mathematics qualifications (FSMQs)

- 8 For all units, raw marks are converted to uniform marks according to the table below. At qualification level for GCE single award and FSMQ, the uniform mark grade boundaries are set at the same percentages of the maximum uniform mark for the qualification.

For GCE	A	B	C	D	E
Percentage of available uniform marks	80	70	60	50	40

- 9 A mark of zero on the raw mark scale must always be converted to zero on the uniform mark scale. The maximum raw mark for the unit is always converted to the maximum uniform mark for the unit.
- 10 For A level, with the exception of mathematics and further mathematics, an A* grade will be awarded to candidates who achieve grade A overall and also achieve 90 per cent or more of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of the A2 units.
- i For A level mathematics, an A* grade will be awarded to candidates achieving a grade A overall and 90 per cent or more of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of units C3 and C4.
 - ii For A levels in further mathematics, an A* grade will be awarded to candidates achieving a grade A overall and 90 per cent or more of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of the three best A2 units.
- 11 The maximum uniform mark for a GCE qualification is dependent on the number of units according to the table below.

Number of units	1	2	4	6	9	12
Maximum uniform mark	100	200	400	600	900	1,200

GCE double award

- 12 For double awards, the grade range at qualification level is extended to allow credit for intermediate performance. The uniform mark grade boundaries are set at the percentages of the maximum uniform mark for the qualification according to the table below.

For GCE double award	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE
Percentage of available uniform marks	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40

- 13 For the applied A level double award, there will be an A*A* and an A*A grade. In each case candidates will need to achieve an AA grade overall. The A*A* grade will be awarded to those achieving 90 per cent or more of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of all of the A2 units. The A*A grade will be awarded to those achieving 90 per cent or more of the maximum uniform mark on the aggregate of the three best A2 units but not achieving A*A*. For the applied A level nine-unit award, there will be an A*A grade (but not an A*A* grade). A*A will be awarded to candidates who achieve grade AA on the nine-unit award overall and 90 per cent or more of the maximum uniform mark on the three A2 units.

GCSE and GCSE in applied subjects¹⁵

Non-tiered components or units/modules

- 14 The three key grade boundaries must be dealt with in the following sequence for each component or module/unit:
- i C/D
 - ii A/B
 - iii F/G.
- 15 All other boundaries are determined arithmetically.
- i The B/C boundary is obtained by dividing the mark interval between the A/B and C/D boundaries by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade B interval.
 - ii The D/E and E/F boundaries are obtained by dividing the mark interval between the C/D and F/G boundaries by three. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade D interval. Where there is remainder of two, one extra mark is added to each of the grade D and grade E intervals.
 - iii The G/U boundary is the same number of marks below the F/G boundary as the E/F boundary is above the F/G boundary.
- 16 The A*/A boundary is provisionally set the same number of marks above the A/B boundary as the A/B boundary is above the B/C boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads the awarders to judge that the A*/A boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiners' grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal. For all schemes using uniform marks, this review should be carried out at component or module/unit level rather than at qualification level.

Tiered components or units/modules

- 17 The key grade boundaries must be dealt with in the following sequence for each component or module/unit:
- i C/D foundation tier
 - ii C/D higher tier
 - iii A/B higher tier
 - iv F/G foundation tier
 - v D/E higher tier.

¹⁵ For non-unitised GCSEs refer to Appendix 2.

- 18 Scripts at the arithmetically determined D/E boundary on the foundation tier are used to inform the judgemental D/E decision on the higher tier.
- 19 All other boundaries are determined arithmetically:
- i The B/C boundary is obtained by dividing the mark interval between the A/B and C/D boundaries by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade B interval.
 - ii The D/E and E/F boundaries are obtained by dividing the mark interval between the C/D and F/G boundaries by three. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade D interval. Where there is remainder of two, one extra mark is added to each of the grade D and grade E intervals.
 - iii The E/U boundary on the higher tier is provisionally set by subtracting half the mark interval between the C/D and D/E boundaries (rounding up half marks) from the D/E boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads the awarders to judge that the E/U boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiners' grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal.
 - iv The G/U boundary is the same number of marks below the F/G boundary as the E/F boundary is above the F/G boundary.
- 20 The A*/A boundary is provisionally set the same number of marks above the A/B boundary as the A/B boundary is above the B/C boundary. When a review of technical and statistical evidence leads the awarders to judge that the A*/A boundary should be set at a different mark, the chair of examiners' grade boundary recommendation will provide evidence that justifies this proposal. For all schemes using uniform marks, this review should be carried out at component or module/unit level rather than at qualification level.

All GCSE and applied GCSE exams that use uniform marks

- 21 When a unit/module consists of two or more components, such as a written paper and internally assessed work, the key grade boundary marks (as defined in paragraphs 11 or 14) will be determined for each component separately. The boundary mark for each component is scaled as necessary to reflect the weighting for that component as detailed in the specification, and these scaled component boundary marks are added to give unit boundary marks.¹⁶ These unit boundary marks will then be used as the basis for conversion to uniform marks.

¹⁶ In some legacy specifications, to be awarded for the final time in June 2010 / January 2011, the component boundary marks are aggregated using Indicators 1 and 2. The resulting unit/module boundary marks will be used as the basis for conversion to uniform marks.

Conversion to uniform marks for GCSE

22 In all GCSE specifications using uniform marks, with the exception of legacy modern foreign languages to be awarded for the final time in June 2010 / January 2011 and which are covered by paragraph 23, the raw grade boundary marks for each component/unit will be converted to the equivalent UMS boundary marks based on the percentages given in the table below.¹⁷ Awarding organisations will select an appropriate maximum uniform mark for the subject award in the light of the assessment scheme. At qualification level, the uniform mark grade boundaries are set at the same percentages of the maximum uniform mark for the qualification unless affected by tiering arrangements.

For GCSE	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Percentage of available uniform marks	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

23 For all units, a raw mark of zero will convert to a uniform mark of zero. For untiered and higher-tier units, the maximum raw mark will be converted to the maximum uniform mark. For foundation tier units, the maximum raw mark will convert to the maximum uniform mark allowed for the grade range, or one below the lowest uniform mark above the targeted grades.

24 The subject grade awarded for those schemes that use uniform marks will be determined by the total uniform mark. However, for some qualifications the grade range will be restricted by the tier of entry of the terminal paper(s).

Modern foreign language qualifications awarded for the final time in June 2010 / January 2011

25 In legacy GCSE modern foreign language specifications that use uniform marks, to be awarded for the final time in June 2010 / January 2011, the raw grade boundary marks for each skill will be converted to the equivalent UMS boundary marks, as shown in the table below.¹⁸

Maximum uniform mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20	10

¹⁷ Where other uniform mark scales are in use, these must be agreed with the regulators in advance and detailed in the relevant specifications.

¹⁸ Where the modern foreign language is modular, the maximum uniform mark may vary depending on the weighting of the component/module/unit, but will always be in the same proportion as laid down in the table.

- 26 The lowest uniform mark for each grade in the modern foreign language qualification is fixed in accordance with the table below.

Maximum uniform mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	40

GCSE in applied subjects, double award

- 27 For double awards, the grade range allows credit for intermediate performance according to the following table:

	A*A*	A*A	AA	AB	BB	BC	CC	CD	DD	DE	EE	EF	FF	FG	GG
Percentage of available uniform marks	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	40	35	30	25	20

Aggregation and grading for principal learning and project

Awarding of principal learning and project qualifications

- 1 Awarding organisations must award and report on the principal learning and the project qualifications according to the following grading scales:
 - i A*, A and B for graded results and U for unclassified results at level 1
 - ii A*, A, B and C for graded results and U for unclassified results at level 2
 - iii A*, A, B, C, D and E for graded results and U for unclassified results at level 3.
- 2 Awarding organisations must only award level 1 and level 2 principal learning qualifications once during the first year they are offered (summer).
- 3 Awarding organisations must not award level 3 principal learning qualifications during the first year the units are offered and must only award these qualifications once in the second year (summer).
- 4 For an initial period awarding organisations must award principal learning units and project qualifications no more than twice a year (summer and winter), to enable awarding and grading standards to be established. Ofqual will determine this initial period for awarding.
- 5 Principal learning individual assessment units may be resat. Awarding organisations must reissue the principal learning qualification certificate if a unit resit improves the grade awarded for the qualification.

Setting key grade boundaries

- 6 Grade boundary marks for each principal learning unit and for the project will be determined judgementally for the key boundaries in the following sequence:

Foundation (level 1):

- i B/U
- ii A*/A.

Higher (level 2):

- i C/U
- ii A*/A.

Advanced (level 3):

- i E/U
 - ii A*/A.
- 7 When a unit consists of two or more components, such as a written paper and internally assessed work, the key grade boundary marks are determined for each component separately. The component boundary marks, scaled as necessary to reflect the weighting for that component as detailed in the specification, are added to give unit boundary marks.
- 8 For each unit the other boundary marks are determined arithmetically:
- i For level 1 units, the mark interval between the top and bottom grades is divided by two. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade A interval.
 - ii For level 2 units, the mark interval between the top and bottom grades is divided by three. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade A interval. Where there is a remainder of two, one extra mark is added to each of the grade A and grade B intervals.
 - iii For level 3 units, the mark interval between the top and bottom grades is divided by five. Where there is a remainder of one, the extra mark is added to the grade A interval. Where there is a remainder of two, one extra mark is added to each of the grade A and grade B intervals. Where there is a remainder of three, one extra mark is added to each of the grade A, B and C intervals. Where there is a remainder of four, one extra mark is added to each of the grade A, B, C and D intervals.

Aggregation of performance

- 9 For all units, regardless of line of learning, raw marks will be translated into standardised scores (points) as follows. The minimum raw mark for a grade will equate to the point score for that grade (see tables below). The raw marks within the grade range will be distributed evenly across the number of points available for that grade.

Level 1

10 Minimum points awarded, by grade, for units of each size for level 1 principal learning and the foundation project:

GLH	Grade	Max. point score	A*	A	B	U
30		4	3	2	1	0
60		8	6	4	2	0
Foundation project (60)		8	6	4	2	0

Level 1 principal learning subject boundaries:

Grade	Max. point score	A*	A	B
Point score	32	24	16	8

Level 2

11 Minimum points awarded, by grade, for units of each size for level 2 principal learning and the higher project:

GLH	Grade	Max. Point score	A*	A	B	C	U
30		5	4	3	2	1	0
60		10	8	6	4	2	0
Foundation project (60)		10	8	6	4	2	0

Level 2 principal learning subject boundaries:

Grade	Max. point score	A*	A	B	C
Point score	70	56	42	28	14

Level 3

12 Minimum points awarded, by grade, for units of each size for level 3 principal learning and the extended project:

GLH	Grade	Max. point score	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
30		7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
60		14	12	10	8	6	4	2	0
90		21	18	15	12	9	6	3	0
Extended project (120)		28	24	20	16	12	8	4	0

Level 3 principal learning subject boundaries:

GLH	Grade	Max. point score	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Point score		126	108	90	72	54	36	18

Regulations for Welsh-medium and dual language (English/Welsh) assessment¹⁹

1. Scope

Where assessments are made available within individual specifications through the medium of Welsh for:

- a) GCSEs and GCE A/AS levels (including applied subjects)
- b) Advanced Extension Awards

the following regulations apply:

2. Internal assessment

- a) Candidates may present portfolio / internally assessed evidence entirely in Welsh, entirely in English or in a combination of both English and Welsh. Awarding organisations are not required to specify the proportion of evidence to be presented in either language where candidates present evidence for internal assessment in two languages (Welsh and English).

3. External assessment

- a) Where candidates have been entered for a test or examination through the medium of Welsh, they may, at the start or during the test/examination, request the English version of the paper from the invigilator/supervisor. Where candidates have been entered for a test or examination through the medium of English, they may, at the start or during the test/examination, request the Welsh version of the paper, if available, from the invigilator/supervisor.
- b) Candidates should normally be entered for the externally assessed parts of a qualification in either Welsh or English. However, where needed to reflect the language in which the candidates were taught, candidates may sit some units/components of a qualification in English and others in Welsh.

¹⁹ Welsh-medium papers are available only in those specifications for which awarding organisations have confirmed that they are making this provision and where centres have registered in advance that they have candidates who require it.

This glossary contains terms used in this code of practice relating to GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project assessments. It is designed to promote a common understanding of generic terms that are applicable to the qualifications covered by the code. The most broadly accepted usage has generally been taken as standard. The glossary does not attempt to be comprehensive.

Access arrangements

Arrangements that are approved in advance of an examination or assessment to allow attainment to be demonstrated by candidates with a permanent or long-term disability or learning difficulty, or temporary disability, illness, indisposition or medical condition, or a special educational need, including where the candidate's first language is not English, Welsh or Irish.

Aggregation

The process of combining (by summation or other agreed procedure) the marks or other units of credit awarded through an assessment scheme.

Appeal

A process through which an awarding organisation may be challenged on the outcome of an enquiry about results or, where appropriate, other procedural decisions affecting a centre or individual candidates.

Assessment criteria

Statements that describe performances and place them in context with sufficient precision to allow valid and reliable assessment.

Assessment objective

One of a set of statements in a specification describing the focus of assessment.

Authentication

Confirmation that work has been produced solely by the candidate on whose behalf it is submitted.

Awarding

The process through which candidates' grades are determined on the basis of available evidence.

Awarding organisation

An organisation recognised by the regulators for the purpose of awarding accredited qualifications.

Centre

An organisation (such as a school or college) accountable to an awarding organisation for the assessment arrangements leading to an award.

Comparability

The extent to which the same awards reached through different routes represent the same or equivalent levels of attainment.

Component

A discrete assessable element within a qualification that is not itself formally reported.

Consortium

A group of centres and other organisations working together formally to offer a qualification.

Enquiry about result

A process through which an awarding organisation may be asked to check one or more of the steps leading to a reported result.

Examiners

Individuals with subject expertise who are responsible for marking candidates' responses. They are required to use professional judgement because of the type of mark scheme they are applying.

External assessment

A form of independent assessment in which question papers, assignments and tasks are set by the awarding organisation, taken under specified conditions (including details of supervision and duration) and marked by the awarding organisation.

General markers

Individuals who may not have subject expertise who are responsible for marking candidates' responses. They are not required to use professional judgement because of the type of mark scheme they are applying.

Internal assessment

A form of assessment in which full examination conditions do not apply. The awarding organisation will specify the controls that will apply to how work is set, the conditions under which it will be done and how it will be assessed. Controlled assessments must also comply with relevant controlled assessment regulations.

Internal standardisation

A process carried out by centres and consortia in relation to internally assessed work to ensure that, for a particular specification, all candidates are judged against the same standards across different assessors and teaching groups.

Level

Principal learning and project are available at three levels that are defined in terms of complexity, autonomy and range of achievement.

Line of learning

The broad subject area that a principal learning qualification will cover.

Mark scheme

A scheme detailing how credit is to be awarded in relation to a particular assessment unit or component. A mark scheme normally characterises acceptable answers to questions/tasks or parts of questions/tasks and identifies the amount of credit each attracts.

Marking review

The re-marking of candidate work, prior to the issue of results. This includes work originally marked by examiners about whom there is lingering doubt about the consistency and standard of their marking.

Moderation

The process through which internal assessment is monitored by the awarding organisation to ensure that it is reliable, fair and consistent with required standards.

Monitoring reports

Reports that represent the outcomes of monitoring activity by the regulators relating to awarding organisations' quality assurance arrangements or to standards of achievement in specific subjects or sectors.

Online marking

An image-based marking system, usually available online, which allows the examiner to mark specific parts of candidates' responses, known as items, on their computer.

Post-results review of marking

A process in which a second examiner reviews the marking of the first examiner to ensure that the authorised mark scheme has been applied reliably. The second examiner needs to see the original marks and any annotations made by the first examiner to gain a full and clear understanding of whether the mark scheme has been applied as intended.

Post-results review of moderation

A process in which a second moderator reviews the work of the first moderator to ensure that the required assessment criteria have been fairly, reliably and consistently applied. The second moderator needs to see the original marks and any annotations made by the first moderator to gain a full and clear understanding of whether the assessment criteria have been applied as intended.

Private candidate

A candidate who pursues a course of study independently but makes an entry and takes an examination at an approved examining centre. The awarding organisation must accept communications about access to scripts or enquiries about results directly from the private candidate.

Question paper / task

A form of external or internal assessment including tests, assignments and projects.

Reasonable adjustment

An arrangement, required by current legislation, that provides disabled candidates with access to assessments.

Regulator

An organisation or department designated by government to establish and to secure compliance with national standards for qualifications.

Rubric

A set of instructions and other items of guidance provided for candidates on an assessment.

Script

A candidate's written response to the external or internal assessment.

Scrutineer

An individual responsible for checking the final drafts of all question papers and tasks.

Special consideration

Procedures that may result in an adjustment to the marks of candidates who have not been able to demonstrate attainment because of temporary illness, injury, indisposition or an unforeseen incident at the time of the examination.

Specification

The complete description – including mandatory and optional aspects – of the content, assessment arrangements and performance requirements for a qualification.

Standardisation

A process, relating to both external and internal assessment, by which the awarding organisation ensures that the mark scheme or assessment criteria for a unit or component are applied consistently by examiners or moderators. For example, the process may include a meeting of examiners or moderators to consider the mark scheme or assessment criteria in detail.

Unit

The smallest part of a qualification, which is formally reported and can be separately certificated. A unit may comprise separately assessed components.

About this publication

What's it about?

This document specifies the processes and procedures required to ensure high quality, consistency and rigorous standards in assessment and awarding.

What's it for?

This document aims to promote quality, consistency, accuracy and fairness in the assessment and awarding of GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project qualifications and help maintain standards across specifications, both within and between awarding organisations and from year to year.

What's next?

The regulators will continue to keep this document under review to ensure it continues to reflect best practice.

Related materials

This document replaces GCSE, GCE and AEA code of practice (April 2009) (Ofqual/09/4151)
The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2004) (QCA/04/1293)

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Ofqual

Spring Place
Coventry Business Park
Herald Avenue
Coventry CV5 6UB
Telephone 0300 303 3344
Email info@ofqual.gov.uk
www.ofqual.gov.uk

DCELLS

Castle Buildings
Womanby Street
Cardiff CF10 1SX
Telephone 029 2037 5437
Email qualifications&curriculum
14-19.info@wales.gsi.gov.uk
www.wales.gov.uk

CCEA

29 Clarendon Road
Belfast BT1 3BG
Telephone 028 9026 1200
Facsimile 028 9026 1234
Email info@ccea.org.uk
www.ccea.org.uk