

Notes and guidance: How grades will be determined in 2022

Applied General assessments are scheduled to take place in January 2022 and in Summer 2022 having been cancelled in Summer 2020 and in Summer 2021. Many students certificating in Summer 2022 will have entered for units in Summer 2021 or even Summer 2020. These students will have no results from those units to count towards their qualification grade.

Earlier this year, we issued advice regarding entries and certifications for Summer 2021. For students who were **completing a qualification**, centres should have made entries for:

- the qualification
- all constituent units for which the student didn't already have a banked result
- any banked units which the student would have re-entered if exams had gone ahead
- for students who entered for the Certificate, any further units which would contribute to the Extended Certificate in 2022 and which the student would have entered in 2021 if exams had gone ahead.

Centres should have submitted teacher-assessed grades (TAGs) for each qualification entered (but not for units). A qualification grade was issued but no unit grades or marks.

For students who **would have entered for units but not a qualification** if exams had gone ahead, (eg students who would have entered units 1, 2 and 4 and who intend to complete the Extended Certificate in 2022), centres should have made entries for those units. Centres didn't submit grades, and no unit results were issued. Students completing their qualification in 2022 will have the option to re-enter those units but (provided that the entries were made in Summer 2021) they won't need to do so.

Centres need to make sure that certificating students in 2022 have entries for all of the required units either in the series when they're certificating or in a previous series. They don't need to take any special action regarding units from Summer 2021 (or from Summer 2020) where their students currently have no results. Provided that students were entered for the units at the time, results will be generated based on results in the assessments which students actually sat. This will be done by using the z-score method for estimating missing marks (see <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/other-documents/>) The calculation takes into account any differences in assessment performance that exist across different units.

An estimated uniform mark for a unit that was entered in Summer 2021 (or in Summer 2020) to count towards certification in a later series (eg Summer 2022) is called a **back-calculated mark**. Back-calculation won't take place until a student certifies.

Students who need back-calculated marks for one or more units have the option of re-taking those units in 2022, but they don't need to do so. Because back-calculation can't be carried out until a student certifies, students won't know the back-calculated marks at the point where they decide whether to re-take.

The approach to back-calculation and the grading of examined units in Applied Generals have been devised so that grading standards at subject level are aligned as closely as possible with GCE, both in 2022 and, subsequently, in 2023. Ofqual announced on 30 September that, in 2022, grading in GCE and GCSE would aim to reflect a midway point between 2021 and 2019 and that in 2023 it would aim to return to pre-pandemic standards (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/ofquals-approach-to-grading-exams-and-assessments-in-summer-2022-and-autumn-2021>).

Students who already entered for a unit in 2021

When the student certifies (eg in Summer 2022), results for units entered in Summer 2021 will be calculated based on results in units taken in other series (eg January 2021, January 2022 and/or Summer 2022) so they'll not be required to enter that unit again. This will ease the burden for both students and teachers where a student plans to certify in 2022. However, a student may decide to re-enter a unit in 2022 if they feel that they'd do better in an exam, compared with a calculation based on their performance in other units.

How unit marks are back-calculated

Where a student entered a unit in Summer 2021 (or in Summer 2020) and is certifying in 2022, the missing unit result will be estimated using a z-score calculation (the same as if a student is absent from an exam for an acceptable reason. See <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/other-documents/>).

The z-score method ensures that students are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged if marks for easier units are estimated from marks for harder units (or vice-versa).

Back-calculation will be carried out only for units which the student entered in Summer 2021 and won't be provided if the student studied for the unit in the academic year 2020-21 but didn't then enter in Summer 2021. A similar situation would apply in a normal year; if a student didn't enter any units in their first year and proceeded to the Extended Certificate in their second year, they'd have to do all six units.

When back-calculated unit marks will be available

In order to maximise the evidence available, this calculation can't be carried out until the series in which the student certificates.

For example, a student might have the following entry pattern:

- entered for units 1-3 and for the Certificate in Summer 2021;
- enters for unit 4 in January 2022;
- enters the remaining units and for the Extended Certificate in Summer 2022.

The marks for units 1-3 will be back-calculated once the Summer 2022 marks are known.

Re-taken units

If a student re-takes a unit and obtains a mark which is lower than their back-calculated mark, the best result for each unit will be used to produce the overall subject award. That result might be an actual result or a back-calculated result. The actual result might be from a re-take or from a previous attempt. So, if the back-calculated result is higher than the actual result then the back-calculated result will be used to count towards the subject grade, and vice-versa.

Which unit marks we will use to back-calculate marks for units entered in Summer 2021

Which unit marks will be used depends on the situation. We'll look to use the most appropriate evidence that is available for the student. There are some general principles that we'll apply *as far as possible* (there may be occasions where a student has an unusual entry pattern and one or more of the principles has to be violated). These principles are shown below in order of priority (for example, if principles (i) and (iii) can't both be applied, we will apply principle (i)).

- (i) A unit result won't be used in the back-calculation of a mark for the same unit (eg a mark in unit 1 in January 2022 won't be used in the back-calculation of a mark for unit 1 from Summer 2021).
- (ii) If a student has re-taken a unit, the mark on the most recent sitting will be used. For example, if a student entered a unit in January 2021 and re-entered in January 2022, the January 2022 result will be used if the unit is needed for a back-calculation.
- (iii) *As far as possible*, a unit result from before Summer 2021 won't be used in any back-calculations if the student re-entered that unit in Summer 2021.
- (iv) *As far as possible*, units used to back-calculate marks will be at the same 'level', ie Certificate units (1-3) will be used to back-calculate other Certificate units, while Extended Certificate units (4-6) will be used to back-calculate other Extended Certificate units. This will often not be possible, for example when a student has entered units 1-3 in Summer 2021 and enters units 4-6 in January and/or Summer 2022. In this situation units 1-3 will need to be back-calculated from units 4-6.

Students who entered for the Certificate in 2021

The grade for a Certificate issued in Summer 2021 is a subject result, not a unit result, so won't count towards the Extended Certificate result in 2022.

Instead, students will receive back-calculated marks for units entered in Summer 2021, as described earlier.

If a student:

- entered for units 1-3 for the Certificate in Summer 2021 *and*
- enters for units 4-6 and for the Extended Certificate in Summer 2022,

then units 4-6 will be graded at the intended standard, ie a midway point between 2021 and 2019. The back-calculated results for units 1-3 are graded to the same standard as the units which are used as the basis of the calculation (units 4-6) and won't be checked to ensure that they'd give the Certificate grade awarded in Summer 2021.

Centres may be aware that the approach was different for students who certificated in January 2021 and needed back-calculated marks for units entered in Summer 2020. In that instance, the marks counting towards a qualification entered in Summer 2020 were aggregated and the total checked against the centre-assessed grade (CAG) given to a student. In some cases, this aggregation gave an overall grade that was lower than the CAG. If this happened, then the back-calculated marks were adjusted upwards (subject to certain limits) to give the CAG grade. This was known as 'uplift'.

Uplift is not being applied in 2022 because of the national policy intention to reflect a midway point between 2021 and 2019.

Students who entered for the Certificate in 2021 and wish to obtain a new grade in 2022

If a student has previously been awarded the Certificate, they'd need to re-take all units in order to be awarded a new grade for the Certificate, as stated in the specification. Back-calculation of marks wouldn't be applicable in this case.

Students who entered units 1-3 in Summer 2021 and are planning on entering units 4-6 in Summer 2022

Some students who entered for units 1-3 in Summer 2021 and are planning to enter the Extended Certificate in 2022 may wish to consider re-taking one or more of units 1-3. It's an unfortunate consequence of the cancellation of exams in Summer 2020 and Summer 2021 that students who need back-calculated unit results won't be able to decide whether to re-take any of those units in the same way as normal. Students will need to discuss with their teacher whether there are any individual units on which they might expect to perform better than on other units. Remember that the back-calculated results for units 1-3 will be based on the student's performance in units 4-6 (and will take account of differential performance across the units by students in general), so it might be advisable for the student to concentrate on units 4-6 if their performance would be fairly uniform across all six units.

Examples

In these examples the students may or may not have entered for the Certificate in Summer 2021. It makes no difference to how their Extended Certificate grades are determined in 2022.

The later examples are quite complex but are provided for the benefit of centres where these unusual scenarios arise.

- 1 Student P has a result for unit 1 from January 2021. They entered for units 2 and 3 in Summer 2021. They are entering for units 4-6 and for the Extended Certificate in Summer 2022. How will the Extended Certificate grade be determined?

The unit 2 and 3 results for Summer 2021 will be back-calculated using the unit 1 result from January 2021. The Extended Certificate grade will be determined by aggregating the results (ie adding the uniform marks) for the six units, using the back-calculated marks for units 2 and 3. It makes no difference whether they enter for units 4, 5 and/or 6 in January 2022 or Summer 2022; if they enter one or more of these units in both series then the better results will be used to count towards the Extended Certificate grade.

- 2 Student Q entered for units 1, 2 and 3 in Summer 2021. They are re-entering for unit 1 in January 2022 and entering for units 4-6 and for the Extended Certificate in Summer 2022. How will the Extended Certificate grade be determined?

The unit 2 and 3 results for Summer 2021 will be back-calculated using the unit 1 grade from January 2022. The unit 1 result for Summer 2021 will be back-calculated using the unit 4, 5 and 6 results from Summer 2022. The Extended Certificate grade will be determined by aggregating the results for units 2-6 together with the higher of the January 2022 mark and the back-calculated mark for unit 1.

- 3 Student R has a result for unit 1 from January 2021. They re-entered for unit 1, entered for units 2 and 3, and entered for the Certificate, in Summer 2021. They are entering for units 4-6 and for the Extended Certificate in Summer 2022. How will the Extended Certificate grade be determined?

The unit 1, 2 and 3 results for Summer 2021 will be back-calculated using the unit 4, 5 and 6 results from Summer 2022. The Extended Certificate grade will be determined by aggregating the results for units 2-6 together with the higher of the January 2021 mark and the back-calculated mark for unit 1.

The January 2021 unit 1 result isn't used as the basis of back-calculation because the student presumably wasn't satisfied with it, having re-entered in Summer 2021.

- 4 Student S has a result for unit 1 from January 2021. They entered for units 2 and 3, and for the Certificate, in Summer 2021. They are re-entering for unit 1 in January 2022 and entering for units 4-6 and for the Extended Certificate in Summer 2022. How will the Extended Certificate grade be determined?

The unit 2 and 3 results for Summer 2021 will be back-calculated using the unit 1 result from January 2022. The Extended Certificate grade will be determined by aggregating the results for units 2-6 together with the higher of the two results for unit 1 (January 2021 or January 2022).

- 5 Student T has a result for unit 1 from January 2021. They entered for units 2 and 3, and for the Certificate, in Summer 2021. They are re-entering for units 1 and 2 in January 2022 and entering for units 4-6 and for the Extended Certificate in Summer 2022. They also decide to re-enter for unit 1 for a second time in Summer 2022. How will the Extended Certificate grade be determined?

The unit 3 result for Summer 2021 will be back-calculated using the unit 1 result from Summer 2022 and the unit 2 result from January 2022. The unit 2 result for Summer 2021 will be back-calculated using the unit 1 result from Summer 2022. The Extended Certificate grade will be determined by aggregating the results for units 3-6 together with the higher of the three results for unit 1 (January 2021, January 2022 or Summer 2022) and the higher of the two results for unit 2 (Summer 2021 or January 2022).

- 6 Student U has a result for unit 1 from January 2021. They re-entered for unit 1, entered for units 2 and 3, and entered for the Certificate in Summer 2021. They're re-entering for unit 2 in January 2022 and entering for units 4-6 and for the Extended Certificate in Summer 2022. They also decide to re-enter for unit 1 for a second time in Summer 2022. How will the Extended Certificate grade be determined?

The unit 3 result for Summer 2021 will be back-calculated using the unit 1 result from Summer 2022 and the unit 2 result from January 2022. The unit 2 result for Summer 2021 will be back-calculated using the unit 1 result from Summer 2022. The unit 1 result for Summer 2021 will be back-calculated using the unit 2 result from January 2022. The Extended Certificate grade will be determined by aggregating the results for units 3-6 together with the higher of the three results for unit 1 (January 2021, Summer 2021 or Summer 2022) and the higher of the two results for unit 2 (Summer 2021 or January 2022).

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