

EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 3 rd February 2022
Report Subject	Learner Outcomes Assessment Process 2022
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been developed to provide Members with an overview of the current national position regarding arrangements for GCSE and A Level assessments in 2022.

The report also outlines the high level contingency arrangements that have been provided for examination centres, should any national decision need to be made to cancel the summer 2022 examination series.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the arrangements currently in place for assessments in 2022 and recognise the hard work of secondary schools in Flintshire in supporting their examination year groups.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2022
1.01	In 2021, examinations were cancelled for the second year in a row. In March 2021, it was announced that there would be examinations in summer 2022, and that the assessment requirements for Welsh Joint

	<p>Education Committee (WJEC) GCSE, AS and A level qualifications would be adapted to reduce the impact of disruption to face-to-face teaching and learning time during the pandemic.</p> <p>Decisions related to qualifications and assessment for 2022 are complex in light of the ongoing challenges of Covid-19. All examinations planned to take place in 2022 are currently set to go ahead and the January examination series has recently been undertaken. Welsh Government made provision for all schools in Wales to have two planning days at the start of the new spring term. As well as allowing time for schools to revisit their whole school contingency plans and risk assessments for the spring term, this was also to allow secondary school leaders time to plan for learners to sit their January exams safely.</p>
1.02	<p>Contingency Arrangements</p> <p>If further substantial disruption leads to a decision by Welsh Government to cancel the summer 2022 exam series, the contingency arrangements already outlined to examination centres will be implemented. Qualifications Wales published guidance on contingency assessment arrangements for approved GCSEs, AS and A levels in November 2021. This document gives centres the high level overview of what the requirements will be should a decision be made by Welsh Government to cancel the summer 2022 exam series. It would be updated with additional information and with WJEC's detailed operational guidance as soon as possible after any decision to implement the contingency assessment arrangements was made.</p> <p>As is the case for general qualifications, contingency arrangements will also be implemented for vocational qualifications if required. Qualifications Wales have been working closely with awarding bodies on these contingency arrangements.</p> <p>Examination centres have been advised that they should prepare for the possible implementation of the contingency arrangements by planning what assessments they will use to inform Centre Determined Grades (CDGs), should they be needed, so that the collection of assessment evidence starts as soon as possible and as appropriate for each centre. For this to be manageable alongside preparation for the examination series in summer 2022, centres were advised to aim to integrate these assessments into their usual teaching and learning and existing assessment plans.</p> <p>Overall centre determined grading decisions should only be made if exams are cancelled and only once the appropriate supporting information has been provided for centres to be able to do this as effectively as possible.</p>
1.03	<p>As a consequence of the disruption caused by the pandemic over the last two years, we know that there are learners in the current examination years who have already missed out on a significant portion of their learning and teaching time. Schools are placing a particular focus on minimising disruption and supporting those learners in examination classes. They are working very hard to support their learners, including looking to address some of the anxieties the changing picture of examinations and assessments over the last two years has led to for many young people.</p>

1.04	<p>The Welsh Government has provided funding for schools through the Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards: Accelerating Learning Programme during the pandemic. Schools have received funding from this grant to allow them to recruit and deploy additional human capacity to support learners in addressing their needs following the initial COVID-19 crisis and period of school closure.</p> <p>All pupils are eligible for additional help, although the scope of the help needed will vary significantly depending on individual circumstances. Given that resources are limited, schools have been asked to prioritise when planning the allocation of resources and this includes support for learners in examination classes.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>If examinations are cancelled, centres will be required by WJEC to implement internal quality assurance processes to promote consistency of the centre determined grade approach across the centre (within subjects and across subjects).</p> <p>Centres have been asked to prepare for the possible implementation of the contingency arrangements. Schools are having to manage this work alongside preparation for the exam series in summer 2022.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>Examination centres are required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) at all times, including in the production of centre determined grades. There are also specific duties for Wales which set out the steps that must be taken to demonstrate due regard for the general duty. This means that centres need to communicate with learners, and parents/carers in a clear, transparent, and accessible way, and take into consideration the needs of those who share protected characteristics.</p> <p>The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) produced guidance on complying with the PSED for summer 2021 which was made available on Hwb. WJEC and Diverse Cymru also provided training on avoiding unconscious bias. This guidance and training is relevant for summer 2022 if the contingency assessment arrangements are implemented.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	<p>Regular discussions are held between Education Officers and the Flintshire Secondary Headteachers Federation to ensure that all stakeholders are kept updated as to the current situation in schools and any ongoing challenges for examination cohorts arising from the pandemic. This information is used to update the GwE Management</p>

	Board which comprises of the Senior Management Team of GwE and the six Chief Education Officers of the North Wales authorities.
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5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	There are no appendices to this report.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Qualifications Wales assessment arrangements 2022</p> <p>https://qualificationswales.org/english/assessment-arrangements-20212022/</p> <p>WJEC assessment arrangements 2022</p> <p>https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/2022-everything-you-need-to-know/</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Vicky Barlow, Senior Manager for School Improvement</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 704019</p> <p>E-mail: vicky.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Qualifications Wales: the independent organisation responsible for regulating general and vocational qualifications in Wales.</p> <p>WJEC: Wales' largest awarding body, providing bilingual qualifications, specialist support, and assessment to schools and colleges.</p> <p>Centre determined grades: overall qualification grades that are produced through a holistic judgment that is underpinned by a number of pieces of evidence of demonstrated attainment.</p> <p>Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards: Accelerating Learning Programme: Welsh Government funding to schools and early years childcare settings to provide additional support to children and young people, whose education and development have been most disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>