

Ofqual statement on grading of VTQs, 18 August 2020

These are extraordinary times for young people who have recently taken exams and we want to reassure learners who have taken vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) after yesterday's decision to revert to centre assessment grades (CAGs) for GCSEs and A levels. Our priority has always been to ensure that no student is disadvantaged, that results issued this year are robust and reliable, and that as many students as possible get their results this summer.

It is vital that people understand that the statistical standardisation approach – the grading algorithm – used in A levels and GCSEs was not used in most VTQs, including BTECs.

VTQs are structured differently to A levels and GCSEs, and so the approach to awarding results has been different. Many VTQs were able to use evidence of work completed during the course and use this as a basis for calculating results. Indeed, for many qualifications, learners had taken adapted assessments and so there was no calculation process needed at all. For those qualifications that did use calculation, not all used CAGs. Where they did, it was often at unit level – so the CAGs did not weigh so heavily in arriving at the final result.

That's why we have seen little divergence between the results that schools and colleges thought learners would get, and the results that have been issued. We haven't seen the same downward moderation of results following statistical standardisation.

In BTECs, for example, students complete modular units and are assessed at regular stages during their course of study. This summer, Pearson was able to use those banked unit grades and CAGs for units that hadn't been completed – and all but a fraction of unit-level CAGs were accepted – after quality assurance checks – to generate the final overall qualification-level grade.

For the very small number of unit-level CAGs that were adjusted down (about 0.5%), Pearson will be reviewing those results with centres on a case-by-case basis, following the same principles as those announced for A levels.

A small proportion of qualifications did use a statistical standardisation approach similar the one used for A levels, and those awarding organisations are reviewing their approach in light of what was been decided about GCSEs and A levels yesterday. As a result, we are starting to see them re-running their awarding processes, to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged when compared to their peers taking GCSEs and A levels. We think that a small proportion of Level 3 VTQ results that were issued last week will be regraded upwards as a result.

There are a small proportion of results at Level 2 and below which are due

for issue this Thursday that will need to be recalculated. It is possible that they may not be available until a few days later than expected and any awarding organisations in this position will provide information as soon as possible about when this will be.

The overwhelming majority of VTQ learners have now received the results they expected last week. Some awarding organisations did notify us of late results and we understand the anxiety this causes every single learner who is still waiting. We are monitoring this very closely and can confirm that all the awarding organisations are working as fast as they can with schools and colleges to resolve the remaining issues so that learners are not being disadvantaged when it comes to applications to higher education.

If learners have questions about vocational and technical qualifications, they should speak to their centre in the first instance, who may wish to contact the relevant awarding organisation. There is [further information about the grading of vocational and technical qualifications](#) on our website.