

# Ofqual publishes initial decisions on GCSE and A level grading proposals for 2020

Our [consultation on the exceptional arrangements we have put in place for awarding GCSEs, AS and A levels this summer](#) closed on 29 April. We are grateful for the 12,500 plus responses we have received from teachers, teacher representative groups and unions, university or higher education institutions, parents, carers and students; we are taking these into account when finalising our plans.

To give students, schools and colleges certainty at the earliest opportunity, we have prioritised our [analysis and decisions on 2 proposals about who should receive a calculated grade](#).

## **Calculated grades for students in year 10 and below**

In line with our consultation proposal, we have decided that students entered for exams in year 10 and below will be eligible to receive calculated grades this summer. This follows the majority of responses received, which indicate that the progression of some students would be disrupted if they were not awarded a grade this summer, and to exclude them would have an unfair impact. Amongst the responses we received were concerns about the potential impact of excluding early entrants on disabled students or those with special educational needs, who might wish to spread their GCSE exams over different years.

## **Private candidates**

There was broad support for our proposal to only allow exam boards to issue results for private candidates for whom the Head of Centre is confident they can submit a centre assessment grade and include them in the centre's rank order. The majority of respondents considered this necessary for the fairness and integrity of the approach. Most of those who disagreed were students who are private candidates themselves and their parents or carers.

We have worked with exam boards to explore options for private candidates to receive grades this summer. Last week, the boards set out new guidance, and we [published an update to our Information document](#), about the alternative sources of evidence a school or college might consider where it does not have sufficient evidence about a student's attainment to submit a centre assessment grade and rank order information. It also confirms that some students may transfer to another centre ahead of the grading process if the centre where they had registered decides it cannot submit a centre assessment grade. In this case, some other centres may be able to work with private candidates who need a grade this summer in order to progress. So that the grading process is fair, the Head of Centre must have the same level of confidence in the grade and rank order position as for all other students

when providing information to the exam board.

We said in our consultation decision document that we could not identify any reliable way to calculate grades for private candidates who could not be included within a centre's cohort of students. No workable possibilities were advanced by respondents to the consultation and we have decided that private candidates can be included only through centres.

We are continuing to analyse consultation responses on our other proposals for awarding GCSEs, AS/A levels, Extended Project Qualification and Advanced Extension Award in maths this summer; we will publish final decisions later in May.

Separately, our [consultation on arrangements for awarding vocational, technical and other general qualifications](#), including proposals for early entrants and private candidates in these qualifications, remains open until Friday 8 May.

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## **DASA awards £2.3m to develop novel sensor technology**

The [Defence and Security Accelerator \(DASA\)](#) has awarded 13 contracts worth a total of £2.3 million to develop improved Electro-Optics and Infrared (EOIR) sensor capability, it was announced today .

[The Advanced Vision 2020 and Beyond competition](#), run on behalf of the [Defence Science and Technology Laboratory \(Dstl\)](#), sought innovation and novel approaches from industry, including small and medium-sized enterprises and academia.

Electro-Optic and Infrared (EOIR) sensors are a key military capability used for surveillance, reconnaissance, target acquisition, threat warning, target detection and more.

Potential use cases of the innovative approaches being developed include:

- Imaging in difficult environments such as through clouds or smoke, low or no light, and through foliage or camouflage
- Detecting and identifying small targets such as drones, snipers, people, weapons, and vehicles
- Identifying objects more than 20km away and classify friendly or adversary vehicles

Additionally, EOIR sensors offer a complementary approach to radio frequency sensors, being able to detect objects in environments where radar is challenged or to operate against objects that have a naturally lower radar

signature so are harder to identify.

Andy Cole, Dstl project manager, said:

The ever evolving nature of military operations means that we wish to invest in novel and resilient technologies that can function in contested and congested environments, that will extend the range, lower the cost and size, and expand the range of targets that can be addressed by EOIR sensors.

DASA associate delivery manager Katy Violet said:

DASA finds and funds the best innovative ideas and solutions from the brightest minds in science, technology, academia, and research to give our Armed Forces and security services advantage over our adversaries, while supporting brilliant UK companies from start-ups, small and medium-sized businesses, academia right through to major employers.

Those awarded contracts are:

- Thales
- Teledyne e2v
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Exeter
- QinetiQ (2 funded proposals)
- University of Stirling
- Heriot-Watt University
- University of Bristol
- Icen Labs
- Frazer-Nash Consultancy
- Living Optics
- Spectra Medical

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## [Leave lockdown in lockstep](#)

I believe that when Scotland is ready to emerge from lockdown we should do so in lockstep with the UK as a whole.

There are strong, practical reasons why this should happen.

It's important, as Scotland's two governments make such onerous, difficult demands on people to stay at home and to stay away from family and friends, that we speak with the same voice.

If we can present a simple, clear, united message, it will be much more effective.

The more we feel we are in this together, the more we will pull together – to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

A UK-wide approach will also be best for Scottish businesses.

It will help our economy recover as strongly as possible. It will help save as many jobs as possible.

We are, after all, part of the UK economy.

Sixty per cent of Scotland's trade is with the rest of the UK and as we begin to ease restrictions our businesses will need a level playing field to compete.

So I'm in no doubt that moving forward as one United Kingdom will save lives and save livelihoods.

I'm glad to say that the UK Government and the Scottish Government are in agreement on that broad principle.

Nicola Sturgeon has acknowledged the advantages of taking a UK-wide approach to tackling coronavirus.

She has spoken consistently of the benefits of working together, of the UK remaining in alignment.

We've both made the point that coronavirus does not respect borders and the First Minister has been clear it would be wrong for the Scottish Government to issue different guidance 'just for the sake of it'.

That's a sentiment I welcome.

Devolution, rightly, gives the Scottish Government a key role in responding to the coronavirus outbreak.

But the ability to do things differently, which is central to devolution, does not, and never has, meant that things must be done differently or are best done differently.

The coronavirus pandemic is a national emergency and has created an unprecedented challenge for the whole of the UK. We should meet the challenge together.

Up to now there have been some differences in approach, though most have been minor.

But where differences have been more substantial, the Scottish Government have not made good decisions.

Using Scotland's share of extra UK Government funding for business support, they created a system that put many firms at a huge disadvantage compared

with south of the border.

Even now – after a U-turn forced by an outcry among businesspeople and pressure led by Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw – levels of support for the hard-hit retail, hospitality and leisure sector falls well short of what's on offer in England.

The Scottish Government has also failed to justify their decision to shut down all building sites apart from hospitals.

South of the border the advice is to continue to go to work, but only where it can be done safely and where you are unable to work from home.

Here, the Scottish Government have decreed no building site can be operated safely. They have not explained why – but we do know the decision is having a disastrous impact on the Scottish building industry.

I applaud businesses, such as the famous shortbread baker Walkers, on Speyside, who used a brief shut down to figure out safe working practices and who are now back up and running as best they can.

They know they must do everything they can to keep their businesses going and so protect the jobs and livelihoods of their workforces. This can only be done if they maintain their share of the market in the UK and further afield.

Our vitally important Scotch Whisky industry has also been at its innovative best to design safe ways of working.

They've not only continued to produce and bottle our national drink, they have provided huge quantities of badly-needed hand sanitiser to keep frontline health and care workers safe.

Their effort is a very neat example of protecting people and protecting the economy at the same time.

Let me be clear, we are not yet at the point where we are able to start 'unlocking' our society, because we have not yet met our five tests. For now, everyone needs to continue to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives. But I am equally clear, when the data shows we can start easing the restrictions we are all currently living with, it will be important to do so as one United Kingdom.

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## [UK and US start trade negotiations](#)

The UK and US governments will today (Tuesday 5 May) start negotiating a UK-US Free Trade Agreement.

The International Trade Secretary Liz Truss and the US Trade Representative

Robert Lighthizer are launching negotiations via video conference call.

This first round of negotiations will last for approximately 2 weeks and will involve around 100 negotiators on each side.

On the UK side, talks will be led by Oliver Griffiths, with all UK trade negotiations being overseen by Crawford Falconer, DIT's Chief Trade Negotiation Adviser, formerly New Zealand's Chief Negotiator and Ambassador to the WTO.

Talks will cover all areas set out in the UK's negotiation objectives, including goods and services trade, digital trade, investment and supporting SMEs.

Further rounds will take place approximately every 6 weeks and will be carried out remotely until it is safe to travel.

This common-sense approach to negotiations will ensure that talks can progress during the COVID-19 pandemic, while public health and social distancing measures can continue to be respected.

### **International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:**

The US is our largest trading partner and increasing transatlantic trade can help our economies bounce back from the economic challenge posed by Coronavirus.

We want to strike an ambitious deal that opens up new opportunities for our businesses, brings in more investment and creates better jobs for people across the whole of the country.

The Prime Minister has been clear that we champion free trade and this deal will make it even easier to do business with our friends across the pond.

As we sit down at the negotiating table today be assured that we will we will drive a hard bargain to secure a deal that benefits individuals and businesses in every region and nation of the UK.

Both negotiating teams have already laid the groundwork for an ambitious agreement through the UK-US Trade and Investment Working Group, which has met six times in the lead up to the talks. They have discussed the full suite of topics typically included in FTAs – allowing talks to quickly get underway.

Government analysis shows a UK-US FTA will benefit every region and nation of the UK, with the greatest benefits in Scotland, the North East and the Midlands. It will also include a dedicated chapter to help the UK's 5.9 million small businesses.

The UK's negotiating objectives make clear that any future agreement must protect our NHS and we will continue uphold our high standards on food safety

and animal welfare.

The government is committed to a transparent approach to trade negotiations and we will publish a summary of the first round once it has concluded.

## Notes to editors

The Department for International Trade [published the UK government's negotiation objectives](#) on 2 March 2020.

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# Funding boost to steer more women away from crime

- £2.5 million to be awarded to community services which divert women away from crime
- Wales chosen for government's first Residential Women's Centre

The funding, which will be awarded later this year, will help cover core costs such as wages, rent and bills. At the same time, Wales has been chosen for the Government's first Residential Women's Centre – an alternative to custody that is focused on rehabilitation for women convicted of low-level crime.

It builds on investment already awarded under the government's Female Offender Strategy.

By tackling the root causes of offending these services will help divert women away from criminality and out of prison wherever possible.

Justice Minister Lucy Frazer said:

The first £5 million awarded under our Female Offender Strategy has enabled some truly inspirational organisations to expand what they do and support more women in need.

These services have shown great creativity and resilience to continue their support through the lockdown, and I want to reassure them this extra £2.5 million will be available when those measures can be safely relaxed.

I am also delighted to be able to start working with the Welsh Government and our partners to develop the first of our innovative Residential Women's Centres.

The first Residential Women's Centre in Wales will provide accommodation for women with complex needs who would otherwise be sentenced to custody.

It will offer services which tackle the underlying causes of offending, such as substance misuse and mental health problems, and enable Welsh women to stay closer to home, benefitting their children and wider family ties – which are known to be key to reducing reoffending.

The service will also provide support for women as they transition from the centre to life back in their communities.

The Ministry of Justice will now work with the Welsh Government and partners in Wales to identify a provider and site, with the aim of opening the centre by the end of next year.

Allocation of the £2.5 million funding will involve the directors of each regional probation area – who best know their local communities, organisations and challenges. They will assess which types of service are most needed.

This could include services focusing on domestic abuse support, drug and alcohol rehabilitation or which work with a particular group such as women from ethnic minorities or in a specific age range.

The regional probation directors will evaluate bids and make funding recommendations to the Ministry of Justice.

This additional support comes after Chancellor Rishi Sunak last month announced a £750 million package of support to ensure charities across the UK can continue their vital work during the coronavirus outbreak.

Under the government's Female Offender Strategy, £5.1 million of grants have previously been awarded to 30 different organisations across England and Wales. These have funded the creation of six new women's centres, specialist domestic abuse workers and essential items for offenders upon leaving prison.

## **Case Studies of organisations previously awarded funding under the Female Offender Strategy**

### **Trevi, Plymouth**

Funding awarded to Trevi enabled it to relocate The Sunflower Women's Centre in Plymouth into larger premises. The move was completed in March 2019 and within 6 months the number of women using the service increased from around 100 to more than 450.

The centre offers a range of interventions, such as one-to-one support, counselling and therapeutic courses. Offender managers are also located at the centre, enabling women to meet the requirements of their licence while accessing programmes and support.

Tina, an ex-offender who has battled drug-addiction and now attends the centre, said it has given her a place where she feels safe.



She said: "A women's-only space is so empowering. It helps me to be the best I can be. I had people believe in me when I didn't believe in myself."

### **Willowdene Rehabilitation Centre, West Mercia**

Willowdene Rehabilitation Centre delivers programmes that address issues including abuse, exploitation, offending and substance misuse.

It used its funding to increase its residential spaces and expand its reach beyond West Mercia to the West Midlands. As a result, 92% of women using the centre successfully complete their programme and are actively engaging in society.

Jane entered Willowdene homeless, addicted to heroin and had 15 previous offences. She had been a victim of domestic abuse for 10 years and had attempted suicide several times. The centre supported her in gaining new skills and qualifications and she left clean from drugs and with a job.

She said: "It has given me the opportunity to live a healthy and happy life, building a foundation to get better, and better myself in life and work."

### **The Good Loaf Bakery, Northamptonshire**

Good Loaf Bakery used its funding to open an additional café in Kettering where women can gain practical skills and experience in a real work environment, get domestic abuse support and be diverted from the criminal justice system through conditional cautions.

The centre has supported close to 100 women in its first year.

Claire was referred to the centre by her probation manager.

She said: "I was on the road to nowhere but have grown in confidence and my behaviour has changed for the better. I work in the café almost every day and I am able to help others who join and feel like I did when I started."

### **Women Out West, Cumbria**

MOJ funding supported the creation of West Cumbria's first Women's Centre, Women Out West.

In its opening months it saw hundreds of women through its doors. The centre has adapted its service to social distancing measures, meaning it is still able to support nearly 100 women.

Anne spent almost her entire childhood moving between different care placements. She suffered abuse, which led her to drugs and then crime. She was ultimately referred to Women Out West.

She said:

There is always someone to talk to, it's like our own little community. I don't think I could get through things without the

support and help from the services.

I have come so far, they tell me that they are proud of me, that makes me cry happy tears as I have never had that before. I am proud of myself and I am moving forward.

## **Note to Editors**

- The complete [Female Offender Strategy](#) can be accessed on GOV.UK
- Details of how services can apply for grants will be made available in due course.
- This Residential Women's Centre announcement comes after the Welsh and UK governments launched a [joint Female Offending blueprint](#) last summer which promotes a holistic and rehabilitative approach to divert women away from crime.