Summer 2020 results for vocational, technical and other qualifications

Advice for teachers, trainers and tutors; learners, parents and carers; employers and professional bodies on vocational and technical qualifications, and general qualifications other than GCSEs, AS and A levels, Extended Project Qualifications and Advanced Extension Award in maths
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Introduction

On 18 March 2020, the Secretary of State for Education announced that exams in schools and colleges due to take place in summer 2020 would be cancelled in order to help fight the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). On 3 April, Ofqual published information\(^1\) on how grades would be issued for GCSEs, AS and A levels, Extended Project Qualifications and the Advanced Extension Award in maths.

On 9 April we received a direction from the Secretary of State which set out how the Government expects vocational, technical qualifications, and other general qualifications, to be assessed and awarded in the coming weeks and months. We also published the first version of this advice note.

Ofqual is working with the awarding organisation to make sure results awarded this summer are as fair as possible for students and other learners.

We want to ensure that learners enrolled on vocational and technical qualifications, which are principally used for progression to further or higher education, are not disadvantaged with respect to their peers in the same cohort taking GCSEs, AS and A levels. The Secretary of State has already said that, as far as possible, such qualifications should be treated in the same way as GCSEs, AS and A levels, with learners receiving a calculated result or grade.

The Secretary of State also wants learners who are taking other vocational and technical qualifications that are used for progression to and through employment, as well as further or higher education, to receive results this summer in order to allow them to progress to the next stage of their lives. For some of these qualifications, we will expect awarding organisations to issue calculated results to learners, where it is possible to do so, whilst ensuring that those awards are sufficiently valid and reliable. Where this is not possible, we will require awarding organisations to adapt assessments or delivery models so that learners can sit assessments and complete their qualifications.

In some cases, where qualifications directly signal occupational competence or function as a licence to practise, and where we do not think it will be safe or meet employers’ requirements to do either of these, there may be no option but for learners to wait until assessments can take place as normal again.

This advice notice aims to provide users of qualifications with answers to some common questions about results to be awarded in summer 2020.

\(^1\) [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/how-gcses-as-a-levels-will-be-awarded-in-summer-2020]
Qualifications and learners in scope

Which qualifications are covered?

Assessments for all vocational and technical qualifications which meet the following criteria are covered by the direction from the Secretary of State and by the new temporary regulations - our extraordinary regulatory framework - which we are proposing to put in place so that as many learners as possible can get results this summer.

Qualifications which are in scope could include those:

- used for progression either to further or higher education, or into and through employment, or used for both purposes
- approved for public funding in England for 14-16, 16-19, 19+ learners (including advanced learner loans)
- qualifications at Entry Level through to Level 6 (Level 7 and 8 qualifications are specifically excluded)

Any general qualification which is not covered by the Secretary of State’s GCSE, AS and A level direction (for example, the International Baccalaureate, Pre-U and those termed “Core Maths”) is also covered by the direction.

The final list of qualifications will be determined by the Secretary of State, following advice from Ofqual.

Which learners will be covered by these arrangements?

If a qualification is determined as being in scope of the framework, as far as possible, all learners of that qualification, no matter their age or the type of centre or setting within which they are taking their assessments, should be able to access a calculated result or sit an adapted assessment where that is made available by their awarding organisation. Where that is not possible, learners will have to take their assessments at the next opportunity.

What is the position with qualifications which do not fall under the direction and the new extraordinary regulatory framework?

Awarding organisations can still make assessments for these qualifications available to centres and learners and award results, but they will need to take account of Public Health England guidance and remain compliant with all our existing rules.

What is the position with apprenticeship end-point assessments?

Apprenticeship end-point assessments are not covered by the direction or the new extraordinary regulatory framework.
The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has overall responsibility for policy on end-point assessments.

For those apprenticeship standards where we provide external quality assurance, we have worked with the Institute to provide advice on arrangements for adaptation of assessments, where appropriate.

**What is the position with ESOL qualifications?**

ESOL Skills for Life qualifications are within scope of the direction.

**What is the position with graded music or performing arts qualifications?**

Graded music or performing arts qualifications, carrying UCAS or performance table points and which support progression, are in scope of the direction (this is grades 6, 7 and 8).

**What is the position with qualifications in other parts of the UK?**

Ofqual-regulated qualifications taken in other parts of the UK are in scope of the direction.

We have long-standing collaborative arrangements with the regulators of qualifications in the UK. This is particularly the case with Qualifications Wales and CCEA Regulation because many of the same qualifications are awarded in the same way in these 3 countries. Given the high degree of coherence of both the qualifications available and our regulatory approaches, we have agreed with Qualifications Wales, CCEA Regulation and SQA Accreditation that our proposals relating to Ofqual-regulated qualifications awarded in England should also apply when they are awarded in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Qualifications Wales, CCEA Regulation and SQA Accreditation will have specific requirements in relation to qualifications designed specifically for Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland (respectively). We will continue to work closely with these regulators to make sure it is clear to awarding organisations which rules apply.

**What is the position with qualifications offered internationally, as well as in the UK?**

We are proposing that awarding organisations can decide on the best approach for their international markets. This would mean that they could decide to operate under our extraordinary regulatory framework outside the UK or to operate in whatever was the best way for the local situation.
About the Regulatory Framework

Why did Ofqual receive a ministerial direction?
The direction was issued by the Secretary of State for Education and is the statutory mechanism that allows us to prioritise government policy (as was the case with the direction for GCSE, AS and A levels).

How long will the extraordinary regulatory framework last?
We are introducing this temporary framework to meet the current extraordinary circumstances. To achieve government policy, we are enabling awarding organisations to take measures that they would not normally be permitted to do to ensure that learners who were due to take assessments this spring and summer are able to move on to the next stage of their lives. It will be in place for the minimum time possible to achieve this.

What is the position if assessments can continue as normal during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
Where it is possible for assessments to continue as normal, we do not propose to prevent this. We do not, however, consider that there will be many examples where awarding organisations will be able to do this.

Awarding organisations will need to take account of Public Health England guidance and remain compliant with all our existing rules when offering assessments and awarding qualifications during this period.

How the framework will work

How will results for learners be secured for the different categories of vocational and technical qualifications?
The Direction from the Secretary of State sets out 3 categories of qualifications:

- qualifications used for progression to further or higher education
- qualifications serving a mixed purpose, supporting progression to further or higher education, or to employment
- qualifications signalling occupational competence

For qualifications used for progression to further or higher education, it is government policy that, as far as possible, qualifications in this category should be treated in the same way as GCSEs, AS and A levels, with learners receiving a
calculated result. Under our proposals, awarding organisations will be required to take all reasonable steps to provide learners taking these qualifications with a calculated result.

For those qualifications or learners where the awarding organisation considers it is not possible to provide a calculated result, awarding organisations will have to evidence why this is the case. In those cases, we are proposing that awarding organisations should offer adapted assessments, rather than automatically delay assessments which would risk limiting the ability of some learners to receive a result who otherwise might have done so.

**For qualifications which are used to signal occupational competence,** it is government policy that learners should not receive a calculated result. This is because it would not be clear that a learner possesses the skills required by the role to which the qualification relates, or does not meet the standards set by professional bodies or in regulations. This could have health and safety implications.

Therefore, in the interests of securing results for learners, the starting point for this category of qualifications would be whether it would be possible for an awarding organisation to make changes to the way a qualification is assessed. We call this an adaptation. This would only be possible where it would not undermine the reliability of the result issued to learners.

Only if adaptation is not possible, should awarding organisations postpone assessments.

**For those qualifications with a mixed purpose,** we will expect awarding organisations to consider whether their qualification more closely aligns with the primary purpose of supporting progression to further or higher education (in which case the starting point would be a calculated result, with an adapted assessment potentially being made available where this is not possible), or whether it is more closely aligned with signifying occupational competence (in which case the starting point should be the provision of adapted assessments).

The postponement of assessments, leading to a delay to results, should be a last resort.

**Functional skills**

It is government policy that learners due to take assessments for Functional Skills qualifications before the end of the summer, receive a calculated result rather than an adapted or postponed assessment, because of their importance for progression. Under our proposals, awarding organisations will be required to take all reasonable steps to provide learners taking these qualifications with a calculated result.

**How will results be calculated?**

Those vocational and technical qualifications in scope of the direction for learners receiving a calculated result this summer are quite varied in a number of respects, including:

- the amount of teaching time and size of the qualification
- assessment structure (for example, the proportion of internal versus external assessment; or the number of pathways through)
- the profile of marks-based and directly graded components
the grading structures (for example Distinction, Merit, Pass; A to E etc.)

the range of qualification delivery models (timetabled, sessional, on-demand)

This means that the learners due to certificate qualifications this summer are likely to have very different profiles of formal assessment already completed.

Therefore, the framework and requirements around calculating results for learners are sufficiently flexible to acknowledge these differences and allow awarding organisations to devise and implement approaches to calculating grades which are appropriate within different contexts. At the same time, the requirements also promote as much consistency as possible such that similar qualifications and/or qualifications with similar contexts, should have similar ways of calculating results for learners.

We are proposing that awarding organisations develop approaches to calculating results which involve the following 3 elements:

- a centre assessment grade for each learner (generated by the centre) and/or a calculated grade (determined by the awarding organisation) based on the results they already hold for the learner
- quality assurance of the overall calculated result (which is derived from the centre assessment grade and/or any awarding organisation calculated grade)
- a check on overall qualification level outcomes and grade profile, and that it is in line with expectations

Awarding organisations will identify both the available evidence and the evidence that can be collected in respect of each qualification which they can use to determine a calculated result. This evidence falls into 6 categories as detailed below.

1. ‘banked component marks or grades’ for learners’ completed assessments in qualification components to date. This includes both external assessments as well as internal assessment where the marks/grades have already been through the normal moderation or verification processes carried out by awarding organisations

2. internal assessment grades for work that has been completed but not yet subject to external moderation or verification by the awarding organisation

3. centre assessment grades or other centre sourced information about learners. A centre assessment grade is a centre’s judgement about the grade that each learner would most likely have achieved had teaching, learning and assessment proceeded as normal. A centre assessment grade could be for the remaining components or it could be requested for the qualification overall, depending upon the structure of the qualification and the proportion of components already completed. This professional judgement is to be derived from evidence (work, records of work) held within the centre and which has been reviewed by subject teachers/tutors/assessors and relevant heads of department. Awarding organisations may also ask for other information in order to support an approach to calculating grades, such as a rank order for learners. This might involve an overall rank order of learners or a rank order of each learner in each grade

4. historical data about qualification functioning. This includes the analysis of historic relationships between different components within a qualification might show that performance on one component is highly predictive of performance on
another component. These sorts of analyses might be useful either for generating awarding organisation calculated grades and/or for quality assuring centre assessment grades.

5. centre data and information. This includes a range of data and information. One useful type of data is likely to be analyses of qualification outcomes at centre level to understand the degree of stability or variability over time. This historical evidence of centre performance may be useful for generating predictions of centre performance to quality assure centre assessment grades. There may be other information available such as centre risk profiles, centre visit information, and records of any investigations. Again, this data may form the basis for quality assurance.

6. prior attainment data. For some qualifications, learner prior attainment data (for example Key Stage 2 data or mean GCSE score) may be available and may be used routinely in annual standards maintenance exercises.

We expect awarding organisations to provide effective guidance to centres on the provision of any information that the awarding organisation requires from them in order to calculate a learner's result. Awarding organisations will also have to ensure that they have an effective way to quality assure the calculated results.

We also expect that if/when awarding organisations request centre assessment grades, they should also direct centres to include within their consideration the impact of any reasonable adjustment that the learner would have.

Learners who do not feel that the calculated result they have been issued with fairly reflects their performance will have the opportunity to appeal this result in accordance with awarding organisation appeals’ procedures, and/or to take a further assessment at the next available opportunity.

How will Ofqual ensure that calculated results are valid and trusted?

We will expect each awarding organisation to:

- identify the evidence that is available, and that is potentially available, with the centre or within the awarding organisation for each learner taking a qualification in scope
- evaluate the level of trust they would place in each source of evidence
- devise an approach which maximises the most trusted source of evidence

Our proposal is that any approach developed by awarding organisations to provide calculated results needs to be based on at least one source of reasonably trusted evidence, along with a sufficiently robust means of quality assurance.

Awarding organisations will have to decide what is appropriate and possible based on the design and delivery of their qualifications, but we are proposing to implement a range of technical requirements that will support their decision making so that learners receive results that fairly represent their expected level of attainment and are valid and trusted.

We will also closely monitor the approaches developed for qualifications which are used to support progression to further or higher study. We will take a risk-based
approach and awarding organisations will have to explain and justify their approaches to us.

What might the adaptations to assessments look like?

Adaptations to assessments could take a variety of forms, for example:

- changing the way that assessments are delivered (replacing a paper-based test with an online version)
- adapting assessment methods (using simulation in place of an observation)
- changing invigilation requirements
- waiving or adjusting placement requirements
- changing quality assurance methods from those previously agreed with Ofqual (standardisation or moderation taking place remotely or online)

We propose to include a set of requirements within the extraordinary regulatory framework which awarding organisations would apply when making judgements about whether and how to adapt their assessments.

We will expect them to take all necessary steps to minimise risks to validity by ensuring that coverage of the key areas of the construct of the qualification is retained within the adapted assessment.

We also expect them to act only within the limits of their capacity and capability and take all necessary steps to minimise the burden on centres and learners resulting from the introduction of adaptations to assessments.

Awarding organisations should also look to ensure, as far as possible, that any adaptations minimise any disadvantage to learners with a protected characteristic.

Do awarding organisations have to comply with the requirements set out by professional bodies or employer groups when deciding on their approach to adaptation?

We have provided statutory guidance within our extraordinary regulatory framework on this point. We have said that awarding organisations should have 'due regard' to professional and sector body requirements. This means we expect them to fully consider the details that the professional body has set out. They should give these requirements appropriate weight when deciding how they want to approach an assessment. They can legitimately choose not to follow what has been specified by the professional body, where they think that is necessary, but we would expect the awarding organisation to detail their reasons for doing so.

What is the position if professional and sector bodies do not put in place any specific requirements around adaptation?

If there are no specific requirements set out by a professional or sector body, then we would expect the awarding organisations to comply with our requirements. We encourage awarding organisations to gather the views of employers and other users of their qualifications to ensure that the qualifications continue to meet the needs of employers.

How will Ofqual facilitate consistency between awarding organisations?

The extraordinary regulatory framework sets out a number of high-level principles, supported by requirements and technical guidance. We will expect awarding organisations to make judgements about the approaches they take to calculating results or adapting assessments, based on this extraordinary regulatory framework.

We know there are differences in assessment design and delivery, as well as subject specific differences, which may lead to different approaches even within qualifications of the same type, within and across awarding organisations, but we will continue to work with awarding organisations and professional bodies to develop a co-ordinated approach wherever possible.

Will the approach to statistical adjustment of centre assessment grades be the same as that used for GCSE, AS or A levels?

Given the number of awarding organisations and the range of different types of vocational and technical qualifications, it will not be possible to use the same singular statistical model that is being developed for general qualifications.

We expect that a range of different approaches, suited for the qualification in question and making appropriate use of the evidence and data available, will be employed. In many cases, these will be different from that used for general qualifications.

Should learners continue to work on or improve assignments or portfolios of evidence to provide more work that could be used to form the basis of centre assessment grades? What is the cut-off date?

Awarding organisations are responsible for providing guidance on this point for their centres. This should take account of the way their qualifications are designed and delivered and what is their normal practice.
We will work with awarding organisations to develop consistent approaches between similar qualifications where appropriate.

**What period of time is in scope for the calculation of results?**

In the [advice](#) we published on 9 April, we said that calculation of results could apply to those learners who would have expected to have taken assessments for qualifications in scope of the direction between March and the end of July 2020. We are keeping this under review in light of the uncertainty around how long the current health crisis will continue.

**Will centres need to keep any centre assessment grades confidential?**

We expect awarding organisations to provide effective guidance to centres on this point. This should take account of the way their qualifications are designed and delivered and their usual practice.

We will work with awarding organisations to develop consistent approaches between similar qualifications where appropriate.

We recognise that this approach is different to the one set out in our proposals for general qualifications. Under usual circumstances, centres mark and grade student work in many vocational and technical qualifications. Learners would routinely be given these results and have the ability to challenge them. This year many learners may have already been given results in a number of assessments. Because of this we do not believe it is possible or desirable to prevent centres from sharing centre assessment grades with learner in all cases.

**When will centres be told by awarding organisations what they have to do to provide centre assessment grades? How long will they have to do it?**

We expect awarding organisations to provide effective and timely guidance to centres on the provision of any information that the awarding organisation requires from them in order to calculate a learner's result.

Centres will then make contact with students to explain how results will be calculated in the qualifications they are taking, and what this means for them.

**When will centres know which approach will be used for the qualifications they offer and what they have to do next?**

We expect awarding organisations to be in touch with centres straightaway about qualifications which clearly and obviously fall into either the first category (those which support progression to further or higher education – including Functional Skills
qualifications) or the third category (qualifications signalling occupational competence).

We have asked that this happens in parallel with the work being undertaken now to finalise which qualifications are determined to be in scope of the framework.

For qualifications in the mixed purpose category, it may take slightly longer before awarding organisations are able to provide final details, but they can share information with centres about their proposed approach now.

Where qualifications are clearly not in scope, then awarding organisations will be in touch with their centres as usual.

It is not possible for Ofqual to mandate a single approach because of the diversity of awarding organisations and vocational and technical qualifications. We will however work with awarding organisations to develop common guidance for centres as far as possible for similar qualifications.

What is the position if a learner wants to receive a calculated result but their centre, or their awarding organisation, says it is not possible?

Awarding organisations will expect their centres to provide the information needed to support the calculation of results when requested.

If, having reviewed the information provided, an awarding organisation concludes that they cannot issue a reliable calculated grade in a way which meets our requirements, then learners will need to wait and take their assessments at the next available opportunity.

We will monitor how awarding organisations implement the process of calculating results.

What happens if a learner cannot sit an adapted assessment this summer?

Learners will be able to sit an assessment at the next available opportunity.

What is the position if a centre is not able to work with awarding organisations to provide calculated results or to offer adapted assessments?

We would anticipate that all centres will prioritise the best interests of their learners, and will therefore provide information to awarding organisations in order to allow provision of a calculated result, and facilitate adapted assessments as appropriate, wherever they can. We recognise, however, that there may be cases where to do so is simply not possible. In such cases, learners will need to wait and take their assessments at the next available opportunity.
Will there be an additional assessment opportunity in the autumn?

Most vocational and technical qualifications have a number of assessment windows during the year. Where additional assessment windows are not normally made available in the autumn, we are currently consulting on proposals to require awarding organisations to provide these where possible and where there is demand.

Information for different groups of learners

How will this affect private learners?

There will be some learners who are studying vocational, technical and other general qualifications independently. Some of these learners may be registered directly with an awarding organisation, others may be registered for a qualification through a centre but may not be receiving education directly from them.

Where a centre provides a centre assessment grade for learners taking a particular qualification, they should include private learners where they have seen sufficient evidence of the learner’s achievement to make an objective judgement about their likely performance. Many vocational and technical qualifications are designed with a number of assessments which can be taken throughout the qualification. Where a private learner has completed some assessments, this is also likely to support the provision of calculated results.

Where awarding organisations adapt their assessments, they should seek to offer adapted assessments to private learners in a similar way as possible to other learners.

It may, however, be necessary for some learners who have not been studying with a centre to take assessments in the next available opportunity, which may be in the autumn.

How will this affect learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or other vulnerable learners?

We recognise that the provision of calculated results and adapted assessments may be more challenging for awarding organisations in relation to learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or other vulnerable learners. We have carried out an equality impact assessment, which we have published as part of our consultation on the awarding of vocational, technical and other general qualifications this year. As part of our consultation we have asked for interested parties to submit responses that can aid our understanding of the likely impact of this approach on these learners to inform our final decision making.

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In the case of calculated results using centre assessment grades, we propose that centres should use their professional experience to make a fair and objective judgement of the grade they believe a learner would have achieved had teaching and learning continued as normal and they were able to complete their assessments. For learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or other vulnerable learners, we propose centres should make their judgement assuming learners had continued to receive any usual additional learning support and had any agreed reasonable adjustments in place.

How will this affect apprentices?

Arrangements for end-point assessments (EPAs) are not covered by the direction or the extraordinary regulatory framework.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has set out guidance outlining what flexibility there may be in adapting assessments where the rescheduling or delay of an EPA would cause hardship to the apprentice, and has confirmed that approaches to calculate results cannot be used with EPAs.

Apprentices taking other vocational and technical qualifications as part of their apprenticeships may find their results are calculated or assessments are adapted, as we propose they will be for learners taking these qualifications outside of apprenticeships.

What is the position for learners studying legacy Functional Skills qualifications?

The regulation end date for legacy Functional Skills qualifications will be extended to the 31 December 2020 to allow learners who are currently on these qualifications, but who are yet to certificate, an opportunity to complete their qualification.

What about learners taking qualifications in which practical assessments must be performed at certain times of year?

We understand that some qualifications contain assessments that do not lend themselves to an autumn sitting, because of seasonally connected assessments (for example in agriculture). Awarding organisations are working hard to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged, mindful that delaying assessments is a last resort.

Might the approaches you are proposing to calculate results or adapt assessments disadvantage learners with certain characteristics?

We have carried out an equality impact assessment, which we have published as part of our consultation. We consider that it is unavoidable that some learners will be disadvantaged and awarding organisations will not be in a position to provide them with the result that reflects their expected level of performance in the qualification and that they may need to progress. We recognise that learners who share protected
characteristics may be disproportionately represented in the group of learners for whom, for a range of reasons, a qualification result cannot be secured. This could well cause disadvantage to this group as against their peers, in some cases within the same qualification. While we can consider the impact on learners with protected characteristics in broad terms, and have sought to do so throughout this consultation, we are not yet in a position to quantify that impact, given the number of qualifications that are within scope, and the varying cohorts that take them.

Awarding organisations will be required to take account of the impact of any adaptations to assessments on learners with a protected characteristic as part of their judgement about whether and how to make changes to the design or delivery of their assessments.

Will this approach only apply to learners completing a course this academic year? What about learners who would have undertaken assessments on modules in year 1 of a 2-year course?

If a qualification falls within scope of the direction, then all learners, no matter their age, should be able to access a result or an adapted assessment where that is made available by their awarding organisation. We believe that this is the fairest approach, and will lead to more consistent approaches being taken across awarding organisations.

This means that where learners would have been assessed on units or components of qualifications this spring and summer, that lead to certification next academic year, the approach of calculating results or adapting assessments should also apply.

What about learners on the first year of a course who were not due to take assessments but who have had their teaching and learning significantly disrupted this year?

We know the health crisis will have caused stress and uncertainty for many learners, regardless of whether or not they were due to take their assessments this year. Learners who are on the first year of a course will also have experienced disruption to their teaching and learning this year. It is too soon to say what level of impact this will have on their performance in future assessments, but, where possible, we will work with awarding organisations to ensure they are not unfairly disadvantaged by these circumstances. Our immediate priority is to ensure that results awarded this academic year are as fair and robust as they can be. We will develop our approach to future assessment series over the coming months.
What about learners in centres where classroom teaching has been suspended or where they have fewer staff than usual?

Awarding organisations will be in touch with centres to explain what information staff there need to provide in order to allow calculated results to be issued or adapted assessments to be delivered. In the exceptional circumstances that an awarding organisation finds that it cannot access its centres, perhaps because the centre is now experiencing financial difficulty and there is no one available to respond, we require awarding organisations to inform us. We would work with the Education and Skills Funding Agency to support learners to find alternative provision, as we have done before. As a last resort, it may be that some learners experience a delay before they can take an assessment at the next available opportunity.

What safeguards are in place for learners if the awarding organisation offering their qualification has closed or furloughed staff?

Awarding organisations are required to contact Ofqual immediately if there is a risk of this happening and we will take steps to protect the interests of learners.

The action we take will depend on the individual circumstances. For example, where necessary we could support awarding organisations in exploring whether it would be possible to use established procedures with the Education and Skills Funding Agency to move learners to alternative awarding organisations. We may also ask awarding organisations to explore whether staff could be released from furlough.

Results and progression

When will results be released?

We are aiming for results for qualifications most similar to GCSEs and A levels to be issued in line with GCSEs and A levels. This will ensure learners taking vocational, technical and other general qualifications are not disadvantaged in relation to their peers taking GCSE, AS and A levels.

We will expect awarding organisations to make sure that other results are awarded in a timely fashion, in line with normal practice, to support progression.

Will results issued in 2020 carry the same weight as results issued in previous or future years?

The results and grades awarded to learners will have equal status to the results and grades awarded in other years and should be treated in this way by universities, colleges and employers.
Will learners be able to progress to the next stage of education or employment with these results?

The aim of our proposals is to ensure that, as far as possible, learners receive qualification results, which will allow them to progress as expected either through to higher or further education, or into and through employment. As we have set out extensively in our consultation, the results will need to be based on sufficient evidence, ensuring that they remain sufficiently valid and reliable. We have discussed our proposals with UCAS and further education providers who are supportive of our proposals and their intent.

Can employers have confidence in the qualifications that will be awarded this year?

Employers should be as confident in the qualifications that are awarded this year as they are currently in those already awarded or will be awarded in the future. We recognise that many qualifications are critical indicators of occupational or professional competence and have developed our extraordinary framework so that all users of qualifications can continue to have confidence in them.

It is government policy that calculated results cannot be issued for qualifications which signal occupational competence. This is because it would not be clear that a learner possesses the skills required by the role to which the qualification relates, or meets the standards set by professional bodies or in regulations.

Our extraordinary regulatory framework requires awarding organisations to take account of sector and professional body requirements, where they exist, when making decisions about how to adapt assessments, and to retain coverage of the key areas of the content of the qualification within any adapted assessments.

Further assessment opportunities and appeals

Can learners appeal these results?

There may be some learners who feel that their results from the summer do not properly reflect their ability. We are all focused on making sure learners are not disadvantaged by these unprecedented circumstances including to allow for an appeal where appropriate. Our current rules already provide for a right of appeal and we expect these arrangements to apply as usual in many cases.

Given the extraordinary circumstances, we are consulting on whether additional statutory guidance to promote consistency in approach and to make clear what awarding organisations should consider in relation to the conduct of appeals this year would be helpful. Our guidance would make clear that there is no duty on awarding organisations to accept appeals against teacher judgements and that an appeals process premised on scrutinising individual centre judgements, the efficacy of the evidence on which centres relied and/or the grades submitted by a centre would be both undesirable and impractical.
Additionally, learners who do not feel their result properly reflects their ability will be able to complete an assessment at the earliest available opportunity. Most vocational and technical qualifications have a number of assessment windows during the year. Where additional assessment windows are not normally made available in the autumn, we are consulting on proposals to require awarding organisations to provide them.

**Will there be a cost for appeals?**

Fees for all aspects of the assessment process are set by the awarding organisations. They will share further information on any fees for appeals in due course.

**What about fees this year? Will there be a cost for learners taking additional assessments in the autumn?**

Fees for assessments are set by awarding organisations. They will share further information on fees for awarding results this summer, and for any autumn assessments in due course. Fees are payable by centres for learners enrolled in a school, college or private training provider. Private learners pay their own fees, and should enquire with the relevant awarding organisation about these.

**Will learners who take an assessment in the autumn for a qualification needed to progress to university still be able to go to university this autumn?**

We have asked organisations that represent higher and further education providers to consider how they might be flexible in admissions decisions, considering delays to entry to courses, for any learners taking an assessment this autumn. We are reassured to hear that they believe institutions will be flexible wherever possible, but we recognise this might only be possible in a minority of cases.