



# Understanding how BTEC results have been reviewed (August 2020)

**This guide applies to the following qualifications:**

- **BTEC Level 3 Nationals**
- **BTEC Level 2 Technicals**
- **BTEC Level 1/2 Tech Awards**
- **BTEC Level 1/2 Firsts**

(including qualifications sharing the external assessments)

## Introduction

Following the [announcement on 17 August 2020 from Ofqual](#) and feedback from students, teachers, schools and colleges, we have reviewed our approach to awarding BTEC results this summer to ensure they are consistent with the principles now being used for GCSEs and A Levels. We know this has been an incredibly stressful time for students, teachers and parents, and we are very sorry for causing any additional worry due to this review process and the subsequent delays in issuing some BTEC results. The decision to do this has not been taken lightly. Our priority is to ensure fairness and that BTEC students are not disadvantaged in comparison to their peers studying A Levels and GCSEs.

**No unit or qualification grades will go down as a result of this review. The higher of the two sets of results will count as the final grade(s) to be issued this summer, according to the principle applied in GCSE and A level.**

This guide outlines the method for the review that we will be using. This method will be applied to all sizes of qualification within the BTEC suite listed above. It applies equally to all students, regardless of whether they are in the first or second year of their course.

## Background about BTEC qualifications

BTEC qualifications have a different assessment and grading structure to A levels and GCSEs. That is because BTECs have a large element of coursework, which is internally assessed by schools/colleges and quality assured by Pearson. Furthermore, students are assessed using this information and externally assessed exams throughout the course and not just at the end. Consequently, unlike A level and GCSE, we already have a lot of objective information about BTEC students' qualification outcomes.

For A levels and GCSEs, schools/colleges had to provide just one Centre Assessment Grade per student to represent the overall qualification grade, as they have a linear structure with all the exams at the end of the course.

The process for BTECs is more complex. As described above, BTECs are modular, with units assessed throughout the course, with a mix of internal and external assessment. Each completed unit has its own individual grade that can be carried from one year to the next. This meant that earlier this year, we asked you to provide for each student:

- Internal unit grades for fully completed units
- Centre Assessment Grades for internal units due to be completed this summer.

## Background about BTEC qualifications (continued)

So, when reviewing BTEC grading, we can't simply accept Centre Assessment Grades. This is because for each student we need to review a number of individual grades for completed modular units, alongside Centre Assessment Grades for internal units. Furthermore, in order to reduce the administrative burden on schools and colleges during lockdown, we did not ask for Centre Assessment Grades for external assessments due to be sat this summer.

In the absence of Centre Assessment Grades for these external assessments/exams, we have had to update how we work this out. Previously the grades for the external assessments/exams had been calculated in accordance with our [published process](#), using the grades that schools/colleges submitted for internally assessed units and other information, with a view of maintaining overall outcomes with prior years (under Ofqual's Extraordinary Regulatory Framework, ERF, principle 4).

Instead, in compliance with the 'public confidence' ERF condition (VTQCov9.1 and [under](#) principle 5), we will award the external assessments using an average of the internal assessment grades submitted, and removing the requirement to maintain outcomes with prior years, to maintain parity with the principle applied in GCSEs and A levels. This is because Ofqual and the Department of Education have outlined that Centre Assessment Grades are the best indicator of the grade(s) that students would most likely have achieved had they been able to sit examinations. We will also accept Centre Assessment Grades for the small proportion of internally assessed units that had been adjusted downwards.

## The approach

There are two key aspects to the approach informing the review and regrading of BTEC results:

1. In the small instances (around 0.5% and 0.7% for Level 3 RQF and QCF respectively, and 2.4% on BTEC Firsts) where we made downward adjustments to internal unit grades, we will be setting these to the Centre Assessment Grades, according to the principles outlined by Ofqual that have now been applied in A levels and GCSEs.
2. We will be awarding a grade for external units (where students were unable to sit the examination(s) this summer and have a test booking), based on the internally assessed units, and removing the requirement to prioritise maintaining overall outcomes with prior years, according to the decision taken by Ofqual in relation to GCSEs and A Levels.

## How we will award the grade for the external unit(s)

We will work out an average point score across all internal units – units already achieved, and any Centre Assessment Grades submitted this summer, that contribute to the qualification being claimed. This average is weighted to the Guided Learning Hours (GLH) for the associated units.

This points score will be used to determine an equivalent point score for each of the external unit(s) that were due to be taken this summer, proportionate to the size (GLH) of the unit. These points are contained in the specification for each of the relevant BTEC qualifications on [our website](#).

The same method will be used for students due to sit the assessment for the first time, and for those that were due to resit. If the reviewed grade is lower than a previous attempt, the higher grade will count.

As students are at different stages of their course, with some having sat external units and some having sat none, we will not be using the results from any external units that students may have already taken (before the lockdown), as part of this review for the outstanding external units. Furthermore, because it is possible to have more than one attempt at the external assessment, some students do not consider their previous external assessment results to be the final attempt. To be equitable to all students, it will be based only on the internal units - fully completed units and those with Centre Assessment Grades - in line with the approach in A levels and GCSEs, where Centre Assessment Grades are the primary source of evidence used.

In order to determine the external assessment grades, we need a minimum threshold of evidence, which is one internal unit grade, either for a fully completed unit or a Centre Assessment Grade. For those students who are on the first year of a two-year course, we will be able to award an external assessment grade for assessment(s) due to be sat this summer. Students also can request for this grade to be reviewed when they complete the course and have more evidence from internal units available.

## Awarding the overall BTEC qualification grade for students who are completing this summer

We will follow the usual process for awarding the qualification grade, whereby the grade points for each internal and external unit in the qualification (including the units with updated grades) will be added together to work out the overall qualification grade, and checked to ensure they meet the rules, as outlined in the relevant BTEC Specification.

Updated BTEC results will start to be released on a rolling basis from Tuesday 25 August 2020, with results continuing to be processed after Friday 28 August 2020 through September, as in previous years. This is to accommodate additional data provided by schools/colleges over the next few weeks in response to where we have identified areas for clarification and are working with them to resolve these areas.

## How is the evidence used different to what we had originally planned to use this summer?

Unlike the original model, and according to the principles applied in GCSE and A level, the new method of awarding results **does not** use:

- schools/colleges' historical results data
- prior attainment data at school/college level (at Key Stage 2 or 4)
- the qualification level rank order.

This is because Ofqual and the Department of Education have outlined that Centre Assessment Grades are the best indicator of the grade that students would most likely have achieved had they been able to sit examinations. Therefore, BTEC qualification results are determined based solely on what individual students have actually achieved to date, and the Centre Assessment Grades for internally assessed units provided by teachers, who have made a professional judgement about the grade(s) students most likely would have achieved had they undertaken the assessment(s) this summer.

We have made the decision to not observe the rank order provided, on the grounds it would mean some students would be downgraded from previous results issued. This change will help ensure parity with A levels and GCSEs, where teacher assessment grades are the primary source of evidence used.

### Generating external unit grade(s) and a qualification grade

