

Assessment of BTEC qualifications in 2021/2022 - a transition year

Information for Learners

Many of you will be receiving the results of your BTEC external assessments in the coming weeks. We would like to congratulate you on your hard work getting to this point.

This guide explains how your final qualification grade will be awarded this year.

The principles around awarding results in 2022

This year the Government has confirmed that exams, external and internal assessments should go ahead as planned, for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic began.

Ofqual (and other regulators), the Department for Education (England) and Awarding Organisations, like Pearson, recognise the difficulties you have faced since 2020, and changes have been made to this year's arrangements to support you.

Ofqual has **set out their plans** for awarding qualifications in 2022 and their plans to return to a normal approach to grading by 2023. They have confirmed that 2022 will be a transition year, to reflect that we are in an adjustment period and that your education has been disrupted.

Ensuring grading is fair to all learners is our guiding principle and approach to awarding BTEC qualification results in 2022. We would like to assure you that we aim, as far as it is possible, to ensure that you are not disadvantaged nor advantaged compared with your GCSE and A level peers.

Differences between BTECs and GCSEs/A levels

As you know, BTEC courses have a different structure and design to academic qualifications. BTEC qualifications are modular, which means that you will take 'unit' assessments (both internal – set and marked by your teacher or tutor, and external – set and marked by Pearson) throughout the course. GCSEs and A levels are linear, which means they are assessed and awarded with exams at the same time at the end of the course.

Rather than assessing everything together at the end of the course, BTECs give learners the opportunity to show what you have learned in each unit and build on your achievements as you progress through the course. That means there are plenty of chances to learn, improve and succeed.

The difference in how these qualifications are assessed means that how your final BTEC grade is achieved will differ from a GCSE or A level. This document explains the approach we're taking in awarding a qualification grade this year, including the safety net we've put in place to support students whose studies have been disrupted.

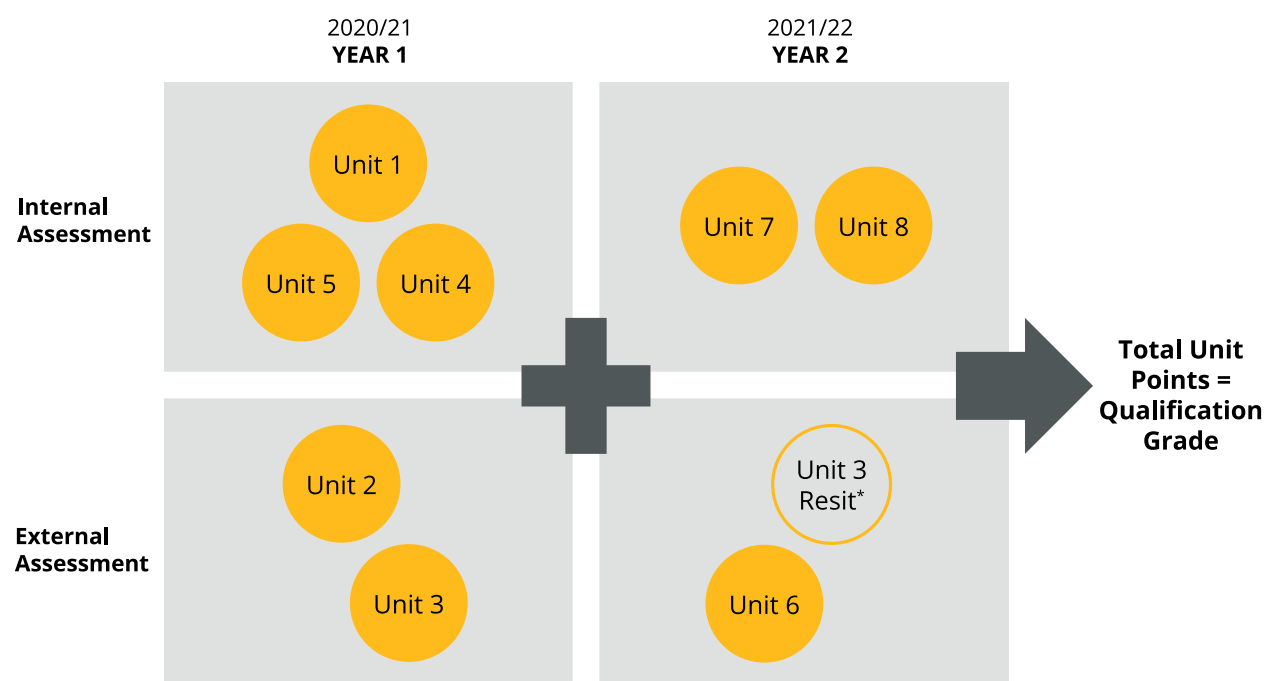
Awarding BTEC qualification grades in 2022

In a normal year, BTEC qualifications are a mixture of internal and external assessments. For Level 3 BTEC Nationals, for example, most qualifications are made up of around 60% of internally assessed units, which are assessed by schools and colleges and quality assured by Pearson. External assessments (usually around 40% of the qualification) are set, marked, and awarded by Pearson.

We are returning to the normal qualification grading process for this academic year, an example of which is shown below.

How BTEC qualifications grades are awarded

This example is a Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma (720)



**Some learners will 'resit' their external assessment, the highest grade and points will carry forward to the qualification grade*

This is a simple example of how a BTEC grade would be awarded over two years. As they are flexible, modular qualifications they can be completed over a number of years and there are many variations.

Each completed unit has its own individual grade, and a points score that can be carried from one year to the next. These points are then added up to award a qualification grade.

This year we are returning to issuing unit grades, in addition to the overall qualification grade.

Adaptations to Assessment in 2022 - a comprehensive package of support has been put in place for students

Following guidance from the Department for Education and Ofqual, we have put in place some key adaptations to BTEC internal and external assessments in recognition of the disruption to education since 2020.

Your individual School or College will be able to advise which adaptations they have used.



The package of support in place to support BTEC students in 2022

Streamlined Assessment for Internally Assessed Units

Internal Unit grades awarded by teachers or tutors can be streamlined, and based on assessment of one learning aim or objective rather than 3-4.

Grade Boundaries for Externally Assessed Units

Some BTEC assessments are set and marked by Pearson. We will look to award grade boundaries for these units in the best place to achieve parity in the Summer with General Qualifications.

BTEC
parity with
GCSEs and
A levels

U-TAGs for Assessments that were due to take place in 2020/21 but could not go ahead

'Unit-Level Teacher Assessed Grades' were permitted for all assessments that were due to take place in 2020/2021.

Special Considerations

The Special Consideration process means learners who unavoidably miss external assessments can be awarded unit grades by Pearson to ensure they can certificate in 2022.

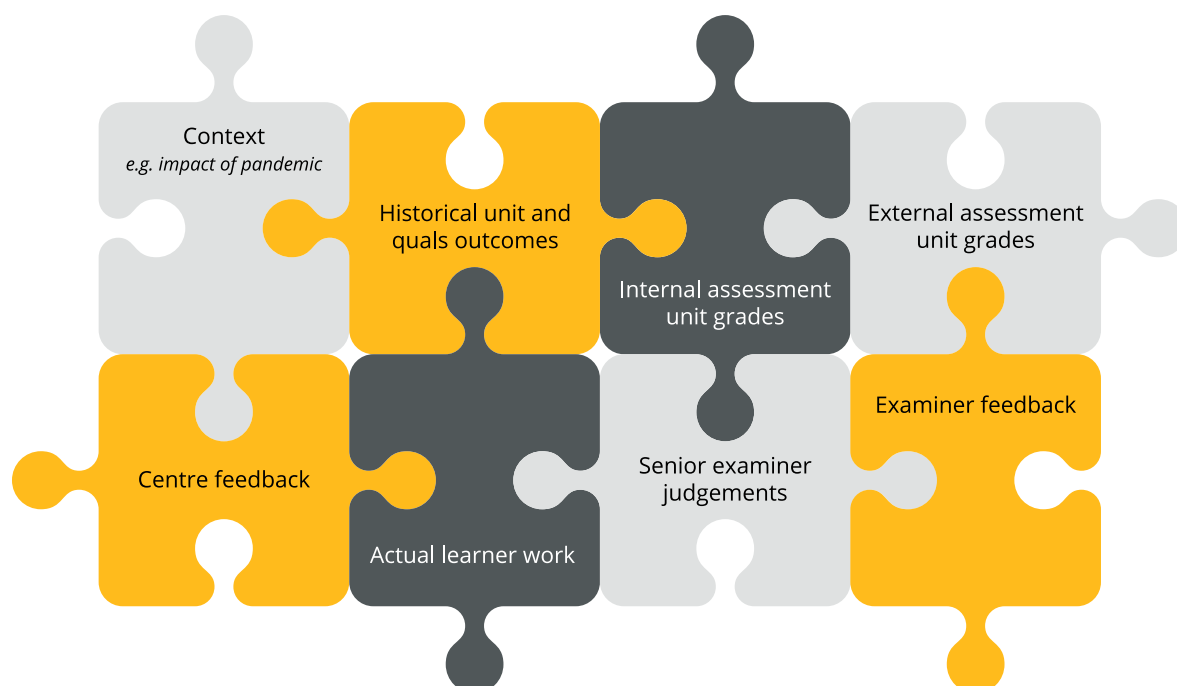
How we will set Grade Boundaries for External Assessments in Summer 2022

A group of subject matter and technical assessment experts set new grade boundaries after each external assessment has taken place. They review a range of evidence (both qualitative and quantitative) to ensure that there is fairness, validity and robustness in the grade boundaries recommended. The types of evidence included are:

- Review of the work produced by learners
- The difficulty of the assessment compared to previous assessments
- A range of statistical evidence including how learners completing the assessment have performed compared to previous years
- The impact of unit grades, for all learners, on the overall qualification grade. (These BTEC national unit grades include UTAGs from the last academic year and streamlined internal assessment).

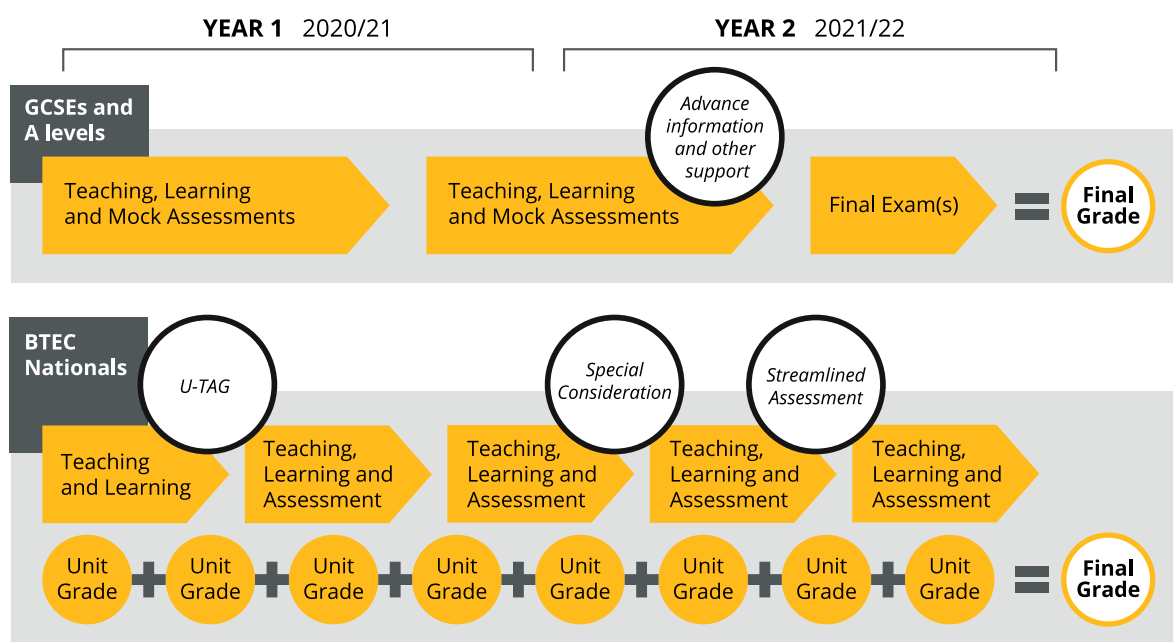
The subject experts make a final recommendation considering all the available pieces of evidence, which for this academic year will also be the context in which exams have been sat.

Unit-level External Assessment Grade Boundaries



Our aim is to ensure BTEC learners are not disadvantaged or advantaged in comparison to peers doing A levels/GCSEs as far as possible, so whilst you may hear about grade boundaries for GCSEs and A levels, this is used to describe reaching decisions on the entire qualification outcome. For BTECs, grade boundary decisions are only made for external assessments which, as you're aware, make up a smaller proportion of the entire qualification (around 40%). This means, in order to ensure BTEC learners are not disadvantaged or advantaged in comparison to peers doing A levels/GCSEs, we consider how the unit-level grade boundaries for BTEC external assessments combine with internally assessed unit outcomes, to create the overall qualification grade.

An overview of the packages of support in place for academic and vocational qualifications



At a glance - awarding BTECs in 2022

Ofqual has announced that 2022 will be a **transition year**, to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period and students' education has been disrupted. This principle is being applied to BTECs and other similar vocational qualifications, as well as GCSEs and A levels.

The basis of our awarding approach to BTECs this year is to ensure it is as fair as possible for all learners.

Exams will go ahead in 2022, and so we are returning to the usual method of issuing the qualification results. Pandemic related adaptations are in place to provide a comprehensive package of support for students.

Further details and updates on the 2022 exams series can be found on our [website](#) and via our social media channels