



VTCT



Awarding the Applied General in Summer 2021

A Guide for Teachers

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide teachers with guidance and information about VTCT's approach for our suite of Applied Generals in Summer 2021.

VTCT has provided information about the timelines, key stages of information sharing, webinars and quality assurance of the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). In addition to the published guidance and webinars, VTCT has set out the arrangements to support teachers at each stage of the TAG process, through dedicated Customer Support staff and our team of Partnership Planning Managers.

2. Identifying Performance Table Qualifications

VTCT has identified that the purpose of our suite of performance table qualifications (PTQs) aligns with the purpose of General Qualifications (GQs) such as GCSEs, AS and A levels. Therefore, VTCT's approach will align, where appropriate, to the approach taken by GQs this summer and centres will submit Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for assessment components learners were due to undertake in summer 2021.

This guidance document is specifically to support you in producing your learner TAGs for the qualifications indicated below:

Product code	Qualification title
Applied Generals	
SP3D17	VTCT Level 3 Introductory Diploma in Sports Studies
SP3D18	VTCT Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Sports Studies
SP3D19	VTCT Level 3 Diploma in Sports Studies
SP3D20	VTCT Level 3 Extended Diploma in Sports Studies
SP3C16	VTCT Level 3 National Certificate in Sport and Exercise Sciences
SP3EC1	VTCT Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sport and Exercise Sciences
SP3D26	VTCT Level 3 National Foundation Diploma in Sport and Exercise Sciences
SP3D27	VTCT Level 3 National Diploma in Sport and Exercise Sciences
SP3ED25	VTCT Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Sport and Exercise Sciences

VTCT's Applied Generals are our A 'level equivalent qualifications, which are primarily delivered to 16-19 year olds and support learners to progress into Higher Education.

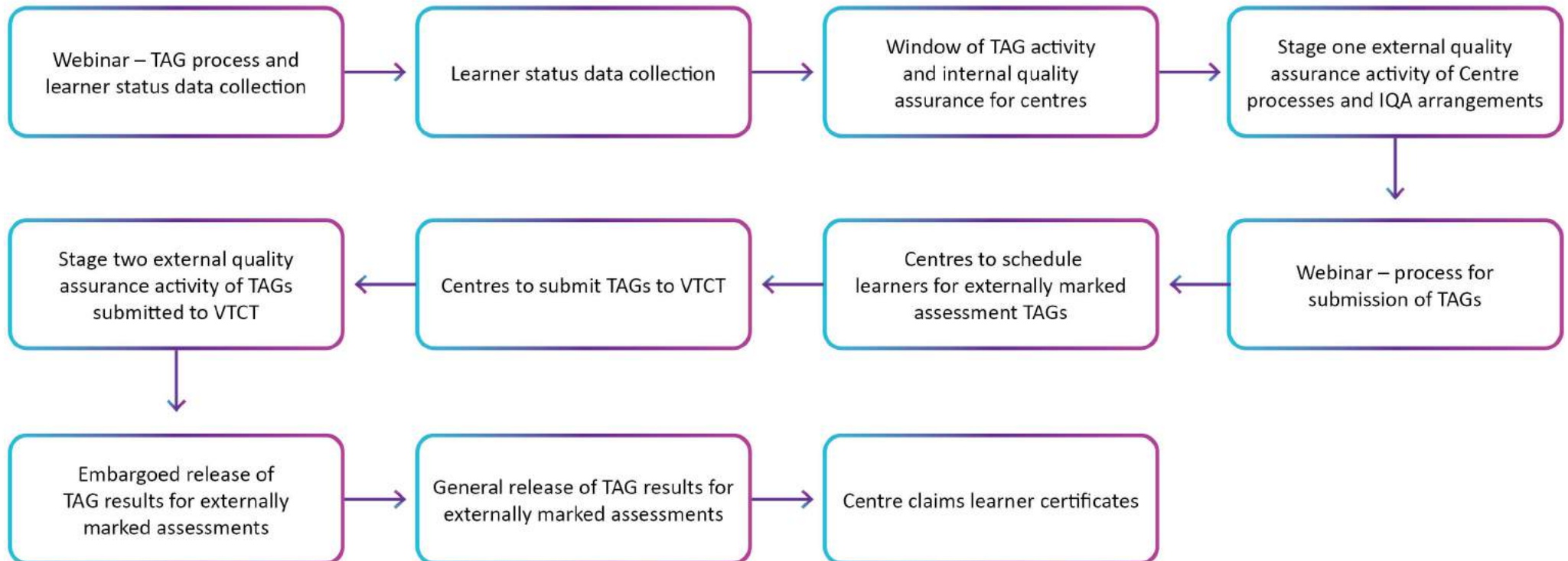
3. Timelines

VTCT is committed to releasing learner results on the dates published in the key dates calendar for the summer 2021 series. In order to achieve this objective, strong collaboration between VTCT and our centres will be essential during this intense period of activity.

It may be necessary for VTCT to contact exams officers or teachers during this process, please be alert and responsive to our communications.

Date	Action
22 April 2021	Webinar To provide centres with guidance and processes for generating and submitting TAGs
22 April – 20 May 2021	Centre Activity Window of TAG activity and internal quality assurance for centres
23 April 2021	Data Collection Phase one data collection on learner status and centre intentions begins
4 – 14 May 2021	Mandatory Meeting with Centres Window of VTCT’s stage one external quality assurance of Centre processes and IQA arrangements
4 May 2021	Webinar To provide centres with guidance on IQA process and documents
7 May 2021	Webinar To provide centres with guidance on the process of submitting TAGs to VTCT
7 May 2021	Deadline Deadline for learner status data collection
20 May 2021	Deadline Deadline for centres to complete scheduling learners for TAGs
21 May 2021	Deadline Deadline for submitting TAGs to VTCT
21 May – 13 July 2021	VTCT Activity Window of VTCT’s stage two external quality assurance of TAGs
7 July 2021	Release of Results Embargoed results day
8 July 2021	Release of Results General release results day
31 October 2021	Deadline Deadline for appeals

4. Overview of process



5. Phase One – Data collection of learner status and centre intentions

5.1. Overview of Phase One



The initial stage of the Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) process is a mandatory data collection that all centres delivering PTQs are required to complete. You will be required to categorise your registered learners, for each PTQ that you offer, into one of the following categories:

- Certifying
- Non-certifying
- Withdraw

Once you have categorised your learners, you will be required to indicate if you intend to submit TAGs for both certifying and non-certifying learners. This will identify whether VTCT should expect a submission of a TAG for your learner by the 21 May 2021.

- TAG
- No TAG

As the teacher/s delivering the qualification, you will be responsible for deciding on the correct categorisation of each learner. This information will then need to be passed to the Exams Officer to enable them to process the data collection.

The deadline for submission for the mandatory data collection is 7 May 2021.

The information submitted on this form will inform later stages in the TAG process. Therefore, if the status of the learner changes, you are required to inform VTCT and update the form.

5.2. Learner profiles

5.2.1. Stage 1 – categorisation of learners

You will categorise your learners using the following principles:

‘Certifying’ category

Certifying learners refers to learners who are due to complete their qualification in summer 2021. For example, this may be learners in the second year of an Applied General, who are due to complete their qualification in summer 2021.

'Non-certificating' category

Non-certificating learners refers to learners who were due to undertake assessments in summer 2021, however, they were not due to complete their qualification at that time. For example, this may be learners in year one of a two year programme, who are not due to complete their qualification until summer 2022.

'Withdraw' category

Teachers go through a formal process to withdraw learners from their programme of study at centre level but this information may not have been passed to VTCT. If there are any learners on the pre-populated web form that have not been formally withdrawn with VTCT, they will need to be placed into the 'withdraw' category.

Additionally, there may be some learners pre-populated on the web form from previous years who were not formally withdrawn from the qualification; in this instance you will need to place these learners in the 'withdraw' category.

You are encouraged to complete the withdrawal process with VTCT.

5.2.2. Stage 2 – intention to submit TAG

You will need to indicate your intention to submit a TAG to VTCT for both your certificating and non-certificating learners:

'TAG' category

By selecting this category, you are notifying VTCT that you intend to submit TAGs for your learners for the relevant assessment components by 21 May 2021.

'No TAG' category

By selecting this category, you are notifying VTCT that you do not intend to submit TAGs for your learners for any assessment component. Therefore, VTCT should not expect to process any TAG for your learner in summer 2021.

5.3. Resitting learners

There may be some learners within your centre who are planning to re-sit assessments in summer 2021. In this instance, you can follow the same procedure and submit a TAG for the learner. The learner will be placed into either the 'certificating' or 'non-certificating' category, you should then indicate you intend to submit a TAG.

6. Phase Two – Generating Teacher Assessed Grades

Once you have categorised your learners, the process of generating Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) will commence. TAGs will need to be based on sufficient sources of evidence which reflect the learner’s level of attainment. You should continue with the teaching and learning to ensure, as far as possible, that the content of the qualifications is delivered to the learners.

For VTCT’s suite of Applied Generals, you will be required to submit TAGs for the assessment components that your learners were due to complete in the summer 2021 assessment window. This may include one or more of the following components:

- External examinations
- Internal assignments

The process for generating TAGs is different to the process VTCT used for Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) in summer 2020. CAGs were a prediction of the grade the learner was likely to achieve if they had sat their assessments.

In comparison, TAGs are determined on actual evidence that is generated by the learner and that demonstrates the range of knowledge, skills and understanding that would have normally been assessed. We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the information provided in this document and not rely upon last years’ experience.

6.1. Determining TAGs

This section discusses the steps centres should take to generate Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for their learners.

6.1.1. Overview of process to determine TAG



6.1.2. Stage 1 – initial review

You should review the content within the qualification specification to ascertain what has been delivered to your learners for the assessment components and where further teaching and learning may need to take place. This should include the teaching and learning activity that may have taken place remotely during the pandemic. You should then review the potential sources of evidence available for each learner that reflects their level of attainment. As VTCT is collecting component level TAGs, you should look for evidence that specifically relates to the unit initially. Once the level of evidence is identified, you may look more broadly across other units within the qualification for evidence if necessary.

6.1.3. Stage 2 – collect evidence

VTCT has aligned with other Awarding Organisations to identify the sources of evidence that may be used to underpin TAG judgements, see Table 1. Ideally the evidence used will be consistent across your cohort of learners, however, VTCT recognises that this may not be possible in all circumstances due to the varying levels of impact learners have faced during the pandemic.

VTCT will not prescribe the evidence that you must use to underpin the TAG judgement or the priority of one source over another. You are best placed to select the evidence which contains a representative range of content from across the qualification's units and learning outcomes to best support the process. If you identify that your learners have insufficient evidence for an assessment component that represents their level of attainment, then you should prioritise this delivery and attempt to gather further evidence for the learner.

Table 1

Theory examination and assignment units
<p>Sources of evidence that may be used to underpin TAG judgements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Banked assessment components• Complete or partially complete internal assignments which have been internally assessed, however, have not been externally verified by VTCT• Completed mock papers and past papers marked internally by the centre• Classwork or homework tasks• Informal assessments

6.1.4. Stage 3 – evaluate the quality of the evidence

To ensure the learner's work is sufficient to reliably underpin TAG judgements, you should consider the following when evaluating the sources of evidence:

- Coverage of assessment criteria/grade descriptors (where relevant)
- Authenticity of evidence – you must be confident that the evidence is the learner's own work
- The conditions the evidence was generated under – Was the learner supervised? Were learners able to make amendments to the evidence?
- When the evidence was produced – evidence that is more recent may be more representative of the learner's current performance, compared to evidence generated at the beginning of their studies, although there may be exceptions. For example, where a learner has experienced significant ill health since the earlier assessments
- Marking – How much feedback was given to the learners as they generated the evidence? Has there been internal quality assurance of the evidence? Is the evidence relating to banked assessment evidence?

6.1.5. Stage 4 – assign a grade

Once you have gathered and evaluated sufficient evidence for your learners, you are required to assign a grade for the assessment component. The grade should be based on the range of available evidence and its coverage of the unit content and assessment criteria/grade descriptors and your professional judgement as the teacher. In some cases, evidence may be used across multiple assessment components where there is overlap of content.

6.2. Internal assessment

You are encouraged to continue with internal assessments as these are valuable tools to engage learners and for them to participate in their studies. Internal assessment may be a helpful form of evidence to support your teacher judgement for Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). However, VTCT recognises that due to the disruption in learning it may not be appropriate for internal assessment to continue. The continuation of internal assessment should not disrupt good practice in teaching and learning and the provision of feedback to your learners about their progress and performance.

6.3. Banked assessment components

A banked assessment component is an assessment that has been marked or verified by VTCT and a grade issued. For example, this may be a completed external examination paper or an assignment that has been externally verified by VTCT. Banked assessments may be used as evidence of your learner's attainment and can be used as a source of evidence to underpin your judgements for a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG).

7. Phase Three – Internal Quality Assurance

7.1. Teacher judgement and objectivity

VTCT asks schools and colleges to use their professional experience and integrity to make a fair and objective judgement of the grade they believe a learner would have achieved if they had sat their assessments this year. You are best placed to make these decisions due to the fact that the teachers know their learners and the progress that they have made throughout the academic year. Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) judgements must be carried out by the teacher/s delivering the qualification to the learners. You must ensure that there are sufficient sources of evidence and rationales to underpin the learner's TAG.

You must consider the standard at which each learner has performed over the course of study. This judgement should be based on the evidence of your learner's performance on the subject content which they have been taught. The evidence could include work which has already been completed during the course, as well as that which will be completed in the weeks and months to come. It is important that the judgements are objective and based on the evidence produced by a learner on the content they have been taught.

You must make learners aware of the sources of evidence that will form the basis of the TAGs submitted, although learners should not be told the final grade that is submitted to VTCT. As far as possible, the sources of evidence should be consistent across a class or cohort of learners, and you should record the reasons for their selection. You will make the final judgement about what is to be included and will need to document the rationale for any instances where consistent evidence is not used for a whole class or cohort.

7.2. Conflicts of interest

VTCT expects centres to ensure there are appropriate controls and existing policies and procedures are followed for managing potential conflicts of interests through the Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) process. For example, where a staff member might have a personal interest in a learner's TAG result, e.g. a relative.

7.3. Reasonable adjustments

You will judge the Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) for your learner, taking into account any reasonable adjustments your learner would have had in place if the assessment had gone ahead.

As a team, you should increase the internal quality assurance activity of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for learners with reasonable adjustments to provide assurances that learners have not been disadvantaged by the TAG process. For more information on internal quality assurance requirements please see section 7.8.

7.4. Special considerations

Schools and colleges do not need to apply for special considerations for learners who have missed teaching and learning as a result of following public health guidance. The arrangements introduced under the VCRF for alternative awarding arrangements are intended to mitigate the impact of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic for your learners.

However, there may be extenuating circumstances where a learner has received all of the teaching and learning for an assessment, but through a temporary illness, injury, or other event outside of their control has been unable to complete an assessment, then they may be eligible for a special consideration to be included within the judgement for a TAG.

As a team, you should increase the internal quality assurance activity of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for learners with special considerations to provide assurances that learners have not been advantaged or disadvantaged by the TAG process. For more information on internal quality assurance requirements please see section 7.8.

7.5. Equalities and protected characteristics

Judgements that you make regarding learners' Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) must be made in an unbiased, impartial and balanced way. Centres are to ensure that learners with protected characteristics are not systematically advantaged or disadvantaged by the TAG process. Centres are to increase the internal quality assurance of the grade profiles of learners with protected characteristics. VTCT may request evidence from centres to ensure the process has been fair to all learners.

The evidence, which should be considered, includes evidence from specialist teachers and other educational professionals such as special education needs coordinators (SENCOs) who have worked with the learner, where appropriate.

7.6. Record keeping

As a team, you must ensure appropriate record keeping of decisions made through the Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) process. In addition, VTCT requires centres to retain the evidence, which is used to support a TAG until **6 months** after the date of the issue of the result, or the conclusion of any appeal in relation to that result, whichever is later.

You must ensure that you keep accurate records on the approach taken and the decision making process for TAGs. These records should be clear and contain sufficient detail to facilitate an external review without additional guidance. This includes why a centre may decide not to submit a TAG for a learner, due to insufficient sources of evidence.

7.7. Authenticity of sources of evidence

You should be confident that the work produced to support Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) is the learner's own and that the learner has not been given inappropriate levels of support to complete it, either in the centre, at home or with an external tutor. You must carry out internal checks on the authenticity of learners' evidence during the internal quality assurance activity. For more information on internal quality assurance requirements please see section 7.8. VTCT may investigate instances where it appears that learner evidence used to underpin TAG judgements is not authentic. Please refer to VTCT's Malpractice Policy for more information.

7.8. Internal quality assurance requirements

You will be required to demonstrate a robust internal quality assurance process to support the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) submitted to VTCT. As a team, you should ensure that your centre puts in place effective arrangements to internal quality assure TAGs, which must include:

- a clear approach as to how the centre makes judgements in relation to each TAG, including;
 - how the sources of evidence will be used to support judgements
 - how results from previous cohorts have been used to carry out a high-level cross-check of the TAGs being submitted
- a review of the TAGs by both;
 - subject Teachers or Assessors, and
 - the relevant Head of Department or equivalent or, where there is no person in such a role, the Head of Centre or equivalent

Whereas data from previous years can potentially provide a useful high-level cross-check on overall grading patterns to ensure that objectivity is being maintained, your learner's TAG should be determined by the specific performance of that learner in relation to the evidence for the relevant assessment.

7.8.1. Mandatory requirements for internal TAG sign off

Each Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) submitted to VTCT must be signed off by at least two teachers in that subject and documented on the internal quality assurance documentation.

One member of staff should be the Head of Department or a subject lead. Where there is only one teacher in the subject or department, or only one is available, the Head of Centre should be the second signatory.

Where a staff member might have a personal interest in a learner (for example, as a relative), Heads of Centre should make sure that additional controls are put in place, as appropriate.

7.8.2. Audit trail

As a team, you should ensure that you maintain an audit trail of the internal quality assurance activities, including standardisation meeting minutes, evidence where grades have been changed through the internal quality assurance (IQA) process and rationales for decision making.

VTCT may request evidence of IQA as part of its external quality assurance monitoring to ensure consistency and compliance with the requirements set out by VTCT for TAGs.

7.9. Mandatory Head of Centre declaration

The Head of Centre is required to complete a mandatory Head of Centre declaration to support the TAG. The Head of Centre is typically the Principal or Head Teacher. If the Head of Centre is unavailable, the responsibility may be delegated to a deputy or someone within the senior management team of the centre. It is not appropriate for Head of Centre Declarations to be completed by a teacher/tutor of the learners.

The Head of Centre is required to confirm that the TAGs submitted are a true representation of learner performance. In reviewing the TAGs, the Head of Centre should consider how the distribution of achievement compares with grades achieved by the centre in previous years. The Head of Centre declaration is provided by VTCT and you will be required to submit the declaration when the TAGs are uploaded to VTCT.

8. Phase Four – Submitting data to VTCT

As a team, once you have completed the Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) process, you will need to submit the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) to VTCT.

- You will need to submit grades for all the individual assessment components that have a TAG generated for your learners
- You will not be required to generate a TAG for the overall qualification grade

VTCT has a webinar planned for 7 May 2021, to support you with the submission of the TAGs. Do not try to submit any TAGs until VTCT has issued specific instructions for this process.

9. Phase Five – External quality assurance

VTCT will undertake two stages of external quality assurance activity for the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) process in summer 2021.

9.1. Stage 1 – mandatory meetings with centres

Stage 1 will take place before you submit the TAGs. VTCT's team of External Quality Assurers (EQAs) will conduct a mandatory meeting to support centres in providing valid TAGs. These meetings will take place between 4 – 14 May and will last approximately one hour. The meetings will require staff responsible for the TAG process to attend and will cover all Performance Table Qualifications (PTQs) the centre is submitting TAGs for.

The Stage 1 meetings will be a professional conversation and will focus on the internal processes for generating TAGs. The purpose of the meeting is for you to provide assurances that your centre is equipped to meet the internal quality assurance requirements outlined in section 7.8 and for VTCT to provide further support and guidance where applicable.

VTCT will contact you to invite your centre to book your mandatory stage one meetings. Agenda items to be discussed will include;

- Roles and responsibilities of staff
- Sources of evidence
- Objectivity in decision making
- Standardisation and record keeping
- Internal quality assurance arrangements
- Comparison of TAGs to historic achievement
- Confidentiality, malpractice and conflicts of interest
- Head of Centre declarations

9.2. Stage 2 – external quality assurance of TAGs

Stage 2 will commence once you have submitted your TAGs to VTCT. VTCT will implement a risk-based strategy when carrying out external quality assurance of the TAGs which will be influenced by the following factors.

- Centre risk profiles
- Historic centre achievement data
- Plausibility of results based on any banked assessment component data

As part of the external quality assurance activity, VTCT may consider it necessary to request further assurances that the TAGs are based on appropriate evidence and that they have been generated in line with the guidance published by VTCT. This may include:

- Centre rationales to support the TAG results profiles in comparison to previous performance of cohorts
- Evidence and record keeping of a centre's approach to internal quality assurance
- Samples of evidence used to unpin TAG judgements

Some centres may also experience more intense scrutiny as part of VTCT's quality assurance process, for example centres in their first year of delivery of a performance table qualification.

9.2.1. Requirement for extra evidence

VTCT may make contact with you during the external quality assurance process if evidence to support the TAG submitted for your learners is required. This may be applicable if there is either an increase or decrease in the centre grade profile for an assessment component or overall qualification grade. VTCT asks that you respond to requests of evidence in a prompt manner, any delay in VTCT receiving the evidence may lead to a delay in issuing your learners' results for your centre.

9.2.2. Analysis of data

VTCT will review and analyse assessment component data submitted for each centre and the overall cohort qualification grade profile as part of stage two external quality assurance activity of the TAGs. VTCT will explore unusual patterns within the data and variations from what VTCT has typically seen in previous assessment series.

VTCT will review this data against the following:

- Historic centre achievement data for unit/s and qualification
- Historic VTCT held cohort achievement data for unit/s and qualification
- Volume of entries for summer assessment series compared to historic data
- Volume of entries for internally assessed components compared to historic data

9.2.3. Outcome of external quality assurance activity

VTCT will not be able to issue a result where any issues identified as part of the both stages of external quality assurance activity have not been resolved to VTCT's satisfaction.

10. Summary of requirements for Teacher Assessment Grades (TAG)

The below table summarises the requirements for the submission of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for VTCT's suite of Applied Generals.

Assessment type	Requirements for submission					Submission deadline
	Review and gathering of evidence	Complete assessments	Teacher Assessed Grade (TAGs)	IQA	Head of Centre Declaration	
External theory examinations	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	21 May 2021
Assignment briefs	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	

11. Results and certificate claims

VTCT will release results for your learners on the date set out in the timeline above; the general release of results date is 8 July 2021.

Your Exams Officer will claim learner certificates following the standard process for the qualification. VTCT encourages centres to submit certificate claims promptly in order to support your learners to move on to the next stage of their journey to higher education.

11.1. Sharing data with learners, parents and carers

Learners, parents and carers will want to know that the process of generating Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) is rigorous, objective and fair. You must not, under any circumstances, share the TAGs with learners, or their parents/carers or any other individuals outside the centre, before final results have been issued. However, you are able to discuss, with learners, the sources evidence that are used to underpin the judgements for the TAGs.

You must also ensure learners are aware, in advance of release of results, of instances where no TAG grade has been submitted for them, when they may have reasonably expected that one would have.

This is to protect the integrity of teachers' judgements, and to avoid teachers, heads of department, senior leaders or Heads of Centre being put under pressure by learners and parents to submit a TAG that is not supported by the evidence. Since the final grades for some or all your learners in your centre could be different from those submitted, it also helps to manage learners' expectations.

12. Appeals

VTCT's Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedures document is our standard policy for enquiries about results and appeals against assessment decisions. In addition, VTCT has published an addendum to the policy specifically for learners who have received a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG). The addendum contains information on the following:

- The grounds on which an appeal can be submitted
- The procedure that centres will be required to follow
- The steps that will be taken if a new result is to be issued to the learner

The deadline for Appeals to be submitted to VTCT for a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) is 31 October 2021.

13. Autumn 2021 assessment opportunity

The regulators are currently consulting on arrangements for an assessment opportunity in Autumn 2021. Once the consultation and decisions are announced VTCT will update its TAG centre guidance documents.

14. Further advice and guidance

The following resources will be available to support centres through the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) process:

- Instructions for completing the Phase One Data Collection for learner status
- All webinars will be uploaded to the VTCT website (centre log-in required)
- FAQs following the webinar will be published with the webinar slides

For further enquiries please contact customersupport@vtct.org.uk or PTQTAGS@vtct.org.uk

Document amendment history page

Version	Document Owner	Issue Date	Changes	Role
v1.0	Head of Assessment	21/04/2021	First published	Head of Technical Development

Document Review

Role	Review Status
Head of Technical Development	Reviewed
Chief Academic Officer	Sign-off

Document Owner

Document Owner	Document shared with
Head of Assessment	Head of Technical Development

Document Sign-off

Role	Sign-off Date
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