



➔ Controlled assessment

This factsheet is designed to provide exams officers with a broad overview of controlled assessment in practice, ahead of its full introduction, at which point Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance will be published.

What is controlled assessment?

Controlled assessment will replace GCSE coursework. It is designed to measure skills that are not effectively judged by external assessment.

The introduction of controlled assessment does not necessarily mean there will be more exams. Some parts of a controlled assessment could take place under exam conditions or similar, but this will depend on the subject and what is being assessed. While some assessments might take place wholly within the centre under supervision with controlled access to resources, others might involve research outside the centre with limited supervision.

Control levels are set for each assessment so that the overall level of control secures validity and reliability, is manageable for all involved and allows teachers to authenticate the work confidently. Production of final reports/write-ups will take place under formal supervision.

Awarding bodies refer to science controlled assessments in different

ways. For example, AQA refer to them as Investigative Skills Assignments, and Edexcel describe them as Internal Assessment Activities.

When is controlled assessment being introduced?

Science GCSEs were the first subjects to include controlled assessment – these were available for first teaching in 2006. Religious studies, maths, sociology, psychology, law, economics, classical Greek and Latin will be assessed solely by external assessment. Assessment methods for English, English literature, maths and ICT are still under review and are due to be published in 2009. The remainder of qualifications which contain controlled assessment will be introduced in two phases, as illustrated in the table overleaf.



What is the level of security for controlled assessment materials?

Each awarding body provides information on security requirements and this can be found within the teachers' notes or guidance for each specification. For example, controlled assessment materials in science are usually made available to centres in one of the following ways:

- as files to download from the awarding body's secure website
- on a password-protected CD, typically sent to the exams office
- as hard copies provided with the specification.

Although arrangements for other subjects are yet to be finalised, it is expected that they will follow a similar format.

Examples of good practice include:

- ensuring any downloaded materials are not stored in electronic format but as hard copies in a locked metal cabinet or similar container
- storing numbered mark schemes in secure cabinets with a system in place to monitor usage ensuring that when teachers collect a mark scheme, they sign a form that indicates which numbered copy has been allocated to them

- storing completed assessment papers in a secure cabinet in a locked room, and ensuring they are never given back to candidates.

'I agreed with the head of science that I should hold the passwords and the disc containing the GCSE science controlled assessment assignments. When the science department needs to carry out a controlled assessment, a member of staff emails the exams office stating the date and time of the assessment and the number of copies required for the group. I then print the required number of controlled assessment papers and store them securely. On the day of the assessment, the teacher collects the papers and the associated marking guidelines and signs the security log. The teacher is responsible for keeping the papers secure until the assessment takes place.'

Emma Taylor, exams officer, Rushey Mead School, Leicester

What is the timetable for introduction of controlled assessment?

Science GCSEs were the first subjects to include controlled assessment – these were available for first teaching in 2006. The remainder of the GCSE qualifications which contain controlled assessment will be introduced in two phases, as illustrated in the table below.

Controlled assessment introduction timetable

| GCSE subject | Specifications available | First teaching | First awards |
|--|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Science | 2005 | 2006 | 2008 |
| Most other subjects | 2008 | 2009 | 2011 |
| English, English literature, ICT and mathematics | 2009 | 2010 | 2012 |

➤ Where can you get further information?

National Assessment Agency
29 Bolton Street, London W1J 8BT
Tel: 0870 0600 622, www.naa.org.uk, info@naa.org.uk

Information is also available from awarding body websites and within the teaching guides for each specification.

What is the anticipated exams officer involvement?

The exams officer should be given advance warning of the day of the controlled assessment, the title of the assessment and how many papers are required.

They are also likely to be involved in keeping scripts secure, recording results and providing awarding bodies with scripts for moderation.

'I have a system in place to store everything securely until the candidate has been awarded the qualification. When awarding bodies request moderation samples, I and/or the head of science can collate them immediately and verify that they have been kept under secure conditions.'

Emma Taylor, exams officer, Rushey Mead School, Leicester

Who is responsible for supervising the controlled assessments?

It is likely that it will be up to centres to determine who should supervise the controlled assessments. Who supervises could depend on the subject and nature of the assessment. For example, a controlled assessment of investigative techniques in science might require supervision by someone with specialist knowledge of the health and safety considerations involved.

'Teachers run science controlled assessments in the regular timetabled classroom time slots. We felt that external invigilation would not be practical and so it is not used. We find that this form of assessment is less of a burden than the old coursework.'

Steve Smith, teacher and exams officer, St John Payne School, Chelmsford

Where can I find the JCQ regulation for these assessments?

The JCQ recognises that there is a need to publish guidance for centres on the administration of controlled assessment, particularly in time for the teaching of new GCSE specifications from September 2009. The annual review of JCQ documentation for the next academic year (2008/9) has commenced and controlled assessment will form part of this review process. In the meantime, guidance relating to the administration and conduct of controlled assessment may be found on the relevant awarding body website and within the teaching guide for each specification.

How should access arrangements be administered?

Centres have been applying for access arrangements in the usual way, as described within JCQ regulations relating to candidates who are eligible for adjustments in examinations.