

Pearson U-TAGS (Unit Teacher Assessed Grades) for mid-flight learners completing in 2021-22

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF 2021-22

This guidance has been created to support staff through explaining the processes (for both internally assessed units and externally assessed units) for learners who were 'mid-flight' in 2020/21 (i.e. learners who are now on the second year of their BTEC or are working towards a 'top up' qualification) and will be certificating between September 2021 and August 2022.

The U-TAGs for units completed in 2020-21 have now been submitted to Pearson. The unit TAGs were agreed on and subjected to the internal quality assurance procedures put in place by the College in line with JCQ and awarding body guidelines in summer 2021. Following receipt of the UTAGs, Pearson has provided guidance ([BTEC Qualifications Guidance 2021/22](#)) to ensure learners are aware of their grades and are provided with the opportunity to appeal should they wish to do so. As such, the College has been authorised to share these grades with the learners. However, learners must also be made aware that the grades are subject to Pearson Quality Assurance and may change.

This is a different process to that used by Pearson in Summer 2021 as they believe it would be beneficial for learners to understand their progress earlier in the academic year, to inform any resit choices. Pearson have also looked to align with other VTQ Awarding Organisations to ensure consistency for the College.

Teachers determined U-TAGs for the units which learners were due to take (but did not) between 1 August 2020 and 31 August 2021, in line with Pearson guidance. The process for determining a U-TAG for eligible learners was very similar to determining a Q-TAG. The guidance and principles issued for Q-TAGs, can be found on [Pearson's website](#)) and the key underpinning principles for a U-TAG are outlined below:

- The grade is based on evidence * produced between 1 August 2020 – 31 August 2021.
- That learners receiving a U-TAG are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged to learners who received a Q-TAG.
- That the judgments are objective (as outlined in Ofqual's guidance for centres on making Objective Judgments here).

* Evidence that reflects a learner's performance which can be used to inform the UTAG includes:

- Completed or partially completed assessments for the unit
- Completed assessments for a similar unit i.e. knowledge and understanding or skills/practical-based activities
- Mock or practice external assessments
- Non-assessed work such as classwork, homework, group learning activities
- Relevant extra-curricular activities

Pearson Quality Assurance

The use of U-TAGs as a mitigation for the disruption faced in 2020/21 and, in line with Ofqual VCRF, Pearson must ensure that Awarding Organisation Quality Assurance is undertaken for these Teacher Assessed Grades. This step is separate to Pearson's Standards Verification activity which is due to start

in January 2022. Standards Verification will look at the unit-level assessment against the national standards and the specific assessment criteria and guidance of the specification.

However, the U-TAG quality assurance step will help the awarding organisation to confirm overall that submitted U-TAGs are sufficiently valid and reliable, based on evidence, and have been determined in line with Pearson guidance.

The U-TAG Quality Assurance will run from U-TAG submission in November through to mid-December 2021. During this time, and if the college is selected for the Quality Assurance activity, Pearson will review a sample of evidence to confirm that the college has implemented the U-TAG process set out by Pearson, in line with BTEC centre policies, and that the submitted grades are therefore sufficiently valid and reliable.

The sampling process will also provide reassurance that unit grades awarded this year can be used confidently to aggregate the final qualification level result at the point of certification. The College will be informed by Pearson if they have been selected from 15 November 2021. The college will be selected for sampling on a range of factors including:

- A plausibility check on unit-level grade submissions, for instance, where topping up, this will be against previously submitted Q-TAGs
- A random selection to include the full range of centre types, qualifications and geographical locations.

The Right to Appeal

As with the Summer 2021 Q-TAG process, learners have the right to appeal a U-TAG. Learners must familiarise themselves with the guidance documents to ensure their concern falls into one of the categories under which they may appeal. It is important for learners to remember that their grade can go down, up or stay the same through either stage of the Appeals process.

If a learner believes they have grounds to appeal the U-TAG awarded for any particular unit they should follow the Q-TAG Appeals Process implemented in summer 2021: [BTEC Appeals process](#). The internal process for this is outlined in the [FCOT Teacher Assessed Grades Appeals Process Summer 2021 series](#). In line with this process, the College must first complete a Centre Review. The outcome of this will be shared with the learner and the learner then has the choice to further the appeal to the Awarding Organisation through a stage two appeal.

Key information for internal assessment U-TAGs and re-submissions:

- Only learner evidence from 1 August 2020 - 31 August 2021 can be used to inform U-TAGs.
- If a learner wishes to improve an awarded U-TAG, they may resubmit the unit with a new assignment in 2021/22, which should be assessed as normal. The resubmission grade would not be classified as a U-TAG, and therefore should be submitted without a 'Z' flag.
- If no resubmission opportunity was available (due to COVID-19) after a planned assessment was completed in 2020/21, learners can complete resubmissions against the same assignment brief(s) this academic year*.

**All other rules of resubmission will still apply (meeting the eligibility requirements, working independently, and having 15 days to complete the work).*

Any learner considering resitting any element of their course should discuss this with their teacher as soon as possible. This discussion will include considering the additional workload this will create for the learner and how they propose to manage their time effectively.

Key information for external assessment U-TAGs and re-sits:

- If a learner wishes to improve a U-TAG, the only option is to take a Pearson-set and marked (live) external assessment in 2021/22.
- The U-TAG does not count as one of the learner's attempts and the highest grade/points will be applied to the certification claim.

Timetable for U-TAG Key Activities

| KEY DATES | ACTIVITY |
|---|--|
| 10 th November 2021 | College to submit U-TAG's to Pearson |
| November – December 2021 | Pearson to complete quality assurance checks |
| 4 th January – 13 th January 2022 | Pearson to confirm U-TAG grades have been accepted |
| 13 th January 2022 | Pearson to open Appeals window FCOT to open centre review |
| 4 th February 2022 | FCOT to close Centre review |
| 14 th February 2022 | Pearson Appeal window closes |
| 1 st March 2022 | FCOT internal deadline for entering students into Summer Series of BTEC exams for re -sits |
| 24 th March 2022 | Pearson Deadline for June Exam Series |

UPCOMING DEADLINES

- **4th February 2022** – last date for submission of appeals from learners for centre review
- **1st March 2022** – FCOT internal deadline for entering mid-flight learners to re sit external assessment for May/June exam series

Further guidance on U-TAGs can be found within [BTEC Qualifications Guidance 2021/22](#)