

# Online submission of NEA samples via Centre marks submission (CMS)

## Frequently asked questions

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## Frequently asked questions

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### **1. How can I contact AQA for support with online NEA sample submissions?**

You can email our Exams Office Support team at [eos@aqa.org.uk](mailto:eos@aqa.org.uk) or call them on 0800 197 7162 between 0800-1700 UK time.

### **2. When do I need to upload my sample?**

We ask centres to upload their sample files to Centre Services within three days of submitting marks, or at the latest within three days of the mark submission deadline.

### **3. How many files can I upload at once?**

Up to 50 files can be uploaded at once per batch.

**Please note:** Centre documents are no longer uploaded separately. All documents should be uploaded as candidate files and tagged to the relevant candidates.

Centre declarations (to authenticate the work and confirm internal standardisation) are now completed online via a popup window when marks are submitted and don't need to be uploaded.

**Please note:** if the Upload Candidate Files button is greyed out, this may be because you have already submitted your sample and your candidates are now locked. To amend your sample, see 9. *Amending submissions*.

### **4. What is the maximum file size limit?**

There is no limit on individual file size, but uploads are capped at 50Gb per batch.

**Please note:** the larger the files, the longer the upload will take to process.

### **5. What video quality format should I use to output audiovisual sample files?**

We recommend using Standard Definition (SD) format rather than High Definition (HD) to output audio and visual sample files. This will mean your sample files are smaller and quicker to upload.

### **6. How long will it take to upload my sample?**

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This depends on the number of files being uploaded at once, your centre's internet connection speed, and wired versus wireless connections, among other factors. An upload progress bar will display the file upload percentage for each file.

Once uploaded, files are scanned for viruses and verified (audio and video files are also transcoded).

### **7. *Why can't I use the Digital Media Portal to upload my sample?***

Centre marks submission online sample submissions is for the submission of centre marked NEA sample files. It is different to the Digital Media Portal, which is for the submission of examined assessment files (e.g. Modern Foreign Language speaking components).

### **8. *Why can't I access my sample through Centre Services top level navigation?***

Samples are only generated once marks or grades are input and submitted for all candidates in a component.

You can access your sample from the Dashboard and Marks and Samples screens once your sample is generated and the sample links become active.

### **9. *Can I still send my sample materials through the post?***

For components using online NEA sample submissions, we no longer accept samples sent through the post.

For all other components, NEA sample material is submitted in the same way as previous years.

**Please note:** in exceptional circumstances if you have a legitimate reason why your sample media cannot be uploaded digitally, email our Moderation team at [moderation@aqa.org.uk](mailto:moderation@aqa.org.uk).

### **10. *Can I upload candidate record forms that have hand-written signatures on them?***

Yes, you can either print, scan and upload these, or alternatively we also accept typed signatures in digital documents in place of hand-written signatures.

### **11. *Can I upload sample files from the cloud?***

Centre marks sample submissions does not currently support files uploaded directly from cloud-based platforms such as ShareFile, One Drive, Google, etc.

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### **12. Can I upload a password protected file?**

Centre marks sample submissions does not prevent password protected files from being uploaded, but we ask centres not to password protect their files so that they can be opened by moderators.

### **13. Can I upload an encrypted file?**

Centre marks sample submissions does not currently allow encrypted files to be uploaded. For more information on valid file types please see [Appendix 2: Valid file types](#). SupportedSupported

### **14. What browsers work for online submission of NEA samples?**

We recommend you use the latest version of either Chrome or Edge.

If you're using an older browser version or a different browser to those listed above, some features may not work as you expect, or at all. We recommend you upgrade to the latest version for the best online experience.

### **15. There was a problem with my upload. What should I do?**

If an upload fails, you can either resume the upload and select and re-upload the same file or delete the failed upload and try again. If you uploaded multiple files, where part of the batch uploaded successfully you only need to re-upload the ones that failed.

**Please note:** files with a failed upload status must be resolved or deleted before finalising your sample submission.

### **16. All of my candidates have files uploaded. Why can't I submit my sample?**

There are certain criteria that need to be met before the system will allow a sample to be submitted.

Before submitting make sure that:

- ✓ all candidates in the sample are tagged to at least one file.

**Tip:** on the View and upload sample screen, ensure each sample candidate has at least one file type listed in the 'Media type' column of the 'Sample candidates' table.

- ✓ all uploaded files are tagged to candidates.

**Tip:** On the Upload and manage files screen, the 'Associated Candidates' column of the 'Candidate Files' table should not show any files as having 'No candidates tagged'.

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- ✓ all uploaded files have fully processed.

**Tip:** on the Upload and manage files screen, the 'Upload status description' should show 'Media file is successfully uploaded' for all files.

The tick box at the bottom of the screen must also be ticked to confirm that all files for the sample have been uploaded. The Submit button turns blue once you have met the above criteria and you can then click to finalise your online NEA sample submission.

### **17. How can I change my sample after submission?**

Once you click submit, your sample uploads will be locked and you will not be able to make changes.

If you have made an error in your submission, email our Centre Marks team at [centremarks@aqa.org.uk](mailto:centremarks@aqa.org.uk) to ask for your submission to be unlocked, see [9. Amending submissions](#).

You can then add to or edit your sample files.

Once you are ready, please tick the confirmation checkbox at the bottom of the 'View and upload sample' screen, then click Submit to re-submit your sample.

**Please note:** you can still upload sample files for non-sample candidates after submission.

### **18. I need to amend a candidate mark or grade. How do I do this?**

You can still amend your candidate marks after you have submitted them.

To do this, login to Centre Services and navigate to the Dashboard screen, then click on your component name in the bottom left 'Submitted to AQA' quadrant.

This will take you to the 'Amend marks' screen where you can input and submit new marks for your candidates, plus a reason for the amendment.

**Please note:** you do not need to ask for your marks or grades to be unlocked to do this.

### **19. I have made a late entry. Do I need to submit a sample for this candidate?**

First, input and submit a mark or grade for your late entry candidate as normal. Then, if they are added to the sample (they will show on the sample list in red) you will need to upload a sample file for them and click Submit to finalise your submission again.

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## **20. Why aren't all my candidates showing in the sample list?**

Certain candidates are not included in sample lists, e.g. absent candidates, candidates with a carry forward request, candidates with lost coursework, candidates with a Not Classified grade, candidates withdrawn before mark or grade submission.

## **21. I have submitted my sample. Why is the Dashboard still showing a 'Pending' status?**

If you have already submitted your sample, the most likely reason is because your cohort has been re-sampled and a new candidate has been added to the sample. This can happen if a late entry is made. You will need to upload a file for the added candidate and submit your sample again.

## **22. Why is my moderator chasing me for my sample even though I have uploaded it?**

If you have uploaded at least one file for all of the candidates in your sample, the most likely reason is that you have not clicked Submit to finalise your submission. Once you have done this, your moderator should be able to view and moderate your sample.

## **23. Why can't I see my moderator's address on the view and upload sample screen?**

Moderator addresses are no longer displayed for components requiring online NEA sample submissions. They are only shown for components where samples are still being sent by post.

## **24. Is the transcoded version of my media file the same as the original?**

No, when you upload your media file a process called transcoding converts your file into a format that is suitable for streaming online. If you download your file after it has been uploaded, the transcoded version may not be the same as the original.

**Please note:** we recommend you retain a local copy of the original file in case you need this at a later stage, e.g. Post-Results.

## **25. Can teachers upload sample media in addition to exams officers?**

Exams Officers or Teachers can upload media, depending on the level of user permissions that have been set up by the nominated administrator/s within your centre.

Below are some typical examples of user permissions based on centre roles:

Role	Permissions
Exams Officer (centre admin)	View marks and grades Input marks and grades Submit marks and grades Request extensions View and upload samples Submit samples.
Teacher (centre user)	View marks and grades Input marks and grades View and upload samples.

## **26. Should I use digital or hand-written annotations?**

You may use either approach, depending on which is most efficient or sustainable for your centre. If you use digital annotations in Word or Acrobat, please make these visible in the sample file. If you use hand-written annotations, please print hard copies before scanning.

## **27. How do I upload my Computer Science samples?**

Please produce a report (PDF or Word) with the program code copied and pasted into the document. This should document all stages of development of the 'product' with annotation to indicate that the teacher has seen the working system and is able to mark it accordingly. There may be instances where candidates video themselves testing and uploading via YouTube. In such cases, simply add links to the report document.

**Please note:** moderators do not need to see the 'product' working and will not accept .py files, etc.

## **28. What are the sample requirements for A-Level History?**

Please upload and tag files as normal for your sample candidates, including the Question Approval Form (QAF).

You should also upload and tag candidate record forms for **all** of your A-Level History candidates, including non-sample candidates.

**Please note:** these files should be uploaded as candidate files rather than centre documents.

## **29. How long will AQA keep my files?**

Candidate files and centre declarations will be retained for 12 months from the date of upload. Once the retention period is over these will be purged in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

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**30. Can you send me a copy of my files?**

Please retain a local copy of your sample files as we are unable able to return digital media to centres.

**31. When will other subjects be available for online sample submissions?**

We continue to look to expand the list of components in scope for online sample submissions and all components are reviewed individually for suitability.

An up-to-date list of components in scope for online sample submission can be found on the [AQA website](#).