

1 March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers and Students

## **Re: Arrangements for the award of GCSE, A level grades and Vocational Qualifications in summer 2021**

You will be aware that in January, the government decided that this year's GCSEs, A levels and vocational examinations could not go ahead as planned and, instead, students should receive grades based on teacher assessment. The DfE and Ofqual have now confirmed the alternative arrangements schools need to implement for the award of these qualifications in 2021. Their overarching aims are that students can get their grades and move onto their next stage of education, employment or training and that these grades are widely understood and respected.

The details below outline the key elements of the assessment process to determine and award grades fairly and consistently both within and across schools. The attached infographics also provide useful 'at a glance' summaries. Students might also wish to read [this article](#) written by Ofqual especially for them.

### **Timelines:**

- Schools will need to submit grades to the exam boards by 18 June
- A level results will be published on 10 August
- GCSE results will be published on 12 August
- Vocational results will be published at the same time

### **How grades will be determined:**

- Teachers will assess the standard at which students are performing, based only on what has been taught (providing there has been sufficient coverage of the course content).
- Teacher judgements will be based on a range of evidence. This evidence may include any of the work listed below, but the school will need to be confident that it is the student's own unaided work and they have not been given inappropriate levels of support either at home or from tutors.
- The evidence can be taken from any point in the course, but it is expected that more recent evidence is likely to be more representative of a student's achievement.

The evidence base could include:

- work produced in class or at home (including remote learning, where schools are confident it is the students' own, unaided work). This would be expected to be similar in format as exam board material and marked using exam board mark schemes
- tests and mock exams taken over the course of study
- work produced in response to the additional assessment materials to be provided by the exam board
- non-exam assessment (NEA) work even if this has not been fully completed
- records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects such as music, drama and PE
- Teachers will be supported to arrive at grades using exam board guidance and exemplars.
- Students will know which evidence is being used to assess them but they will not be told the grade in advance of results day.

**How schools and the exam boards will ensure the grades are fair:**

- Schools will be expected to have internal quality assurance systems (including moderation) and checking of grades before they are submitted.
- This internal quality assurance will also include consideration of our school's profile of results in previous years as a guide to help check that judgements aren't unduly harsh or lenient.
- Exam boards will review all schools' quality assurance processes before grades are submitted.
- Once grades are submitted, the exam board will conduct various checks to make sure grades submitted are fair and consistent across centres. This will include sampling of evidence.
- If there are concerns with the grades submitted, the exam board will work with the school to address this before results day. (Exam boards will not 'remark' the work).

**Appeals:**

- Students will have the right to appeal if they are concerned about their grade.
- Grades will not be changed by exam boards if the evidence provided shows the grade is a 'reasonable' assessment.

**Next steps:**

We appreciate you may have many questions about how this process will work in practice, including: the nature of the evidence base; whether different subjects might consider using the exam released papers and about the content covered or missed. We would ask for your patience while we work through the practicalities and also while we wait for additional information from exam boards (due at the end of March.)

Once we have this, we will write out once again to confirm the arrangements.

Whatever further guidance is forthcoming, we will not be able to enter into conversation with parents or carers about the grades we will submit. Therefore, we would be grateful if you would avoid contacting subject teachers with specific queries about grades, because they will be unable to answer these.

For now, it is essential that students continue to work hard, complete all work set by teachers and respond to feedback so that the final evidence base shows their very best achievements and they can receive the grades they deserve.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Mitcherson  
Headteacher