

Frequently Asked Questions

Re: Ofqual updated guidance on the award of GCSE & A Level Grades

Thank you for bearing with us through such uncertain times. As a school we are doing our best to help your son/daughter navigate their way through the next few weeks and months, but I hope you can appreciate how the advice is changing rapidly. Information guidance released from the Department for Education can be read here.

Frequently Asked Questions (3 April 2020):

How will the teacher assessed grades and rank order be agreed at school?

- Schools are asked to use as full a range of evidence as is available. This will include quarterly assessments, assessed homeworks, evidence of practical work (where appropriate) and classwork.
- We have a consistent approach to assessment and therefore are accustomed to comparing the achievements of individual students and groups. Teachers will work with Curriculum and Senior leaders to agree a consistent approach to the awarding of teacher assessments as well as a fair system for rank ordering.
- There is strong evidence that teachers are able to rank-order students with a high degree of accuracy, and exam boards respect this.

Will the teacher assessment be capped at the level of the most recent PPE?

- No, teachers will take into account the level of difficulty of the mock exam and the progression which previous students have made between mocks and the final exam.

Is there any point continuing with work which is currently being set?

- Teachers are continuing to set specific work until the 1st May then we will move to bridging work for Year 11 to support with their post 16 study.

How will the exam board calculate the final grades?

- The exam boards already have an awareness of the following information:
 - National trends and therefore expected national outcomes.
 - The Prior Attainment of students at the school.
 - The results of the school in recent years (e.g. the progress made by students at each school in each subject from their individual starting points).
- The Exam boards will look at the assessments submitted by all schools to ensure that grades fall within expected norms.
- The Exam boards may adjust grades, however not the rank order within a subject.

What is to stop all schools submitting vastly inflated grades?

- The exam boards know the prior attainment of students and the progression rates achieved at different centres in each subject.
- The exam boards are aware that for most centres, year on year variation in results is usually quite small.
- Grade adjustment is most likely to occur if the grade profile differs significantly from the progress trend in previous years.

- The rank ordered list will help exam board decide which grades, if any, need to be adjusted if there appears to be a discrepancy between teacher assessments and Ofqual's statistical model.
- The grades which are most likely to change are those which are closest to the grade boundary, hence the importance of the rank-ordered list.

What if a school was aware that delivery (and therefore pupil progress) had been significantly weaker in a previous year?

- If there were a particular reason why the school was predicting a set of results which were out of line with previous years, we would expect to have to provide evidence for why this might be the case. The school has yet to have advice on this.

Will I know what teacher assessment grade has been submitted by the school?

- No, Ofqual has made it very clear that schools must not share provisional grades/teacher assessments or rank ordering with students or parents.
- This is designed to avoid lobbying/pressure from students or parents which might influence the professional integrity of teachers.

When will I receive my grade?

- Results are expected to be no later than the existing exam results days, however exam boards are aiming to release grades a little earlier if possible.

Can I appeal my final grade?

- For a student who feels that his/her summer grade does not represent his/her true ability there is opportunity to sit the examination in the Autumn exam series or the following Summer. In this case both grades will stand, however it would be reasonable for students to quote their higher grade on future applications.
- Ofqual are considering the arrangements which may be put in place to allow for an effective appeal. There will be a further consultation on this.
- Under the circumstances, the normal reviews of marking and appeals will not apply

How will this impact admissions processes to university, college, sixth form etc?

- Universities are likely to issue their own guidelines, however the grades awarded will have the same status as in previous years and therefore we expect places will be honoured if offer grades are met.
- Sixth-forms (and colleges), are likely to utilise exactly the same admissions process using these grades as they would have in previous years.
- Unless the release of date for grades changes significantly, we will retain our current arrangements for sixth form enrolment.
- We will confirm results day arrangements as soon as these release dates are confirmed.

We will endeavour to write to all students/parents frequently over the coming weeks, because of the rapidly changing landscape.