

8th April, 2020.

Dear students and parents,

I am writing to you following the information released by the Department for Education which explained how A Level grades will be awarded. I know from my email conversations with students and parents that you have been anxious for news on how the grades will be awarded and may still have some questions about this.

Ofqual are clear that the school assessment grades submitted to exam boards must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely grade a student would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment.

Teachers will draw on existing records and available evidence using judgements that are objective, and only taking into account of evidence about student performance.

This will include the following, where it is available:

- performance on any class or homework assessments and mock exams taken over the course of study
- previous results in the sixth form in this subject – these will vary according to a number of factors, including prior attainment of the students
- records of each student's performance over the course of study, including for example progress review data, classwork, bookwork, and/or participation in performances in subjects such as music, drama and PE
- performance on any non-exam assessment (NEA), even if this has not been fully completed.

We have been told that where additional work has been completed after the school was closed on 20 March, we should exercise caution where that evidence suggests a change in performance.

Special consideration requests, in the event that a student is unable to take an assessment or suffers a traumatic event that might affect their performance, will not apply this summer. Instead judgements should reflect how the students would have performed under ordinary circumstances. Where illness

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or other personal circumstances might have affected performance in mock exams, centres should bear that in mind when making their judgements.

Some questions and answers:

Will all students get their UCAS predicted grade?

No. We know that simply using predicted grades would not be fair to all students. The 'centre assessment grade' which the exam boards will ask schools and colleges to submit for A Levels will take into account an assessment of the likely grade that students would have obtained had exams gone ahead, and these will be standardised across schools and colleges. For this reason, students' final calculated grades will not necessarily reflect their predicted grades.

Will schools be using mock exam results as a barometer for results – and is this fair on students as they did not know at the time these would be used as their final mark?

Mock exam results will be one of the pieces of evidence that will be taken into account in this process, alongside other factors.

What will happen to those who have already done some non-exam assessment?

Students who were due to sit A Level exams this summer will receive a calculated grade. The calculated grade process will take into account a range of evidence including, for example, non-exam assessment and mock results, and the approach will be standardised between schools and colleges.

Will universities accept these grades?

The calculated grades awarded this summer will be formal grades, with the same status as grades awarded in any other year. They will therefore be accepted by all institutions.

University representatives have already confirmed that they expect universities to do all they can to support students and ensure they can progress to higher education.

Do universities need to start making unconditional offers / should I accept an unconditional offer now that exams are cancelled?

Universities should not begin making new unconditional offers and applicants should feel no pressure to accept such offers, as they will be awarded a formal calculated grade for each exam they would have taken.

If I already have an unconditional offer, does that remain?

Yes. An unconditional offer means you have already met the entry requirements, so the place is yours if you want it.

If I take the exam option, will I still be able to go to university this year?

Students who do not feel their calculated grade reflects their performance will have the opportunity to sit an exam as soon as is reasonably possible after the beginning of the academic year. While it

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cannot be guaranteed in every circumstance, Universities UK has made assurances that the majority of universities will do all they can to ensure that such students who take this option are able to begin their course with a delayed start time. If a student is in this situation, they should speak to the university from which they have an offer after receiving their calculated grade.

What if I am unhappy with my calculated grade?

Ofqual and the exam boards are working to ensure that candidates are awarded a fair grade that recognises the work they have put in. Once centre assessment grades have been submitted, exam boards will carry out a process, developed with Ofqual, to statistically standardise the grades between different centres. Therefore, the centre assessed grade may not be the grade awarded to students.

If an A Level student does not believe the correct process has been followed in their case they will be able to appeal on that basis. Ofqual will consult shortly on the arrangements for these appeals. In addition, if a student does not feel their grade reflects their performance, they will have the opportunity to sit an exam, as soon as is reasonably possible after schools and colleges open again. Students will also have the option to sit their exams in summer 2021, in line with usual practice.

Will I be informed of my centre assessed grade?

Centres must not, under any circumstances, share the centre assessment grades nor the rank order of students with students, or their parents/carers or any other individuals outside the centre, before final results have been issued. Therefore no one should be asking this question of staff.

I would also like take this opportunity to thank you for all your support and hard work throughout your two years in the sixth form. Year 13 work has now been discontinued and there is no expectation of continuing with tasks unless they are for subjects that you might continue with next year. I have produced a booklet which you have been sent a link to which contains ideas for wider reading and enrichment activities to prepare you for university. I will issue further suggestions after the holiday.

Finally, I would like to wish you all the best in these unprecedented times. Please continue to stay safe, follow government advice, keep in touch and support each other.

I look forward to seeing you in the Autumn at our celebration party!

Yours sincerely,



Lindsay Pinnick
Director of Sixth Form

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