



FAO: Parents & Carers of Students in Year 11

RE: Further clarification regarding the awarding of Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs)

Dear Parents & Carers

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and well at this time.

As you are aware, this year the Secretary of State for Education confirmed that formal summer series of GCSE examinations would not take place for our current Year 11 students. Consequently, schools were been asked to provide Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) which reflected the attainment of the students. These grades would then be used by the examination boards to generate a final result for every student in each of their subjects.

The TAGs are due to be uploaded to the examination boards on **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021** and the final results released to the students on **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021**. This has raised a number of questions from both our students and their parents, so this letter is aimed at clarifying the process and what will happen next.

#### **How has my child been graded this year?**

Grades for GCSEs, A-levels, and most other qualifications including applied generals will be based on a process involving teacher assessment against national standards, internal quality assurance, and external quality assurance by the exam boards.

In our school we have used a range of evidence to reach a holistic judgement for each student. This includes formal assessments sat under exam conditions, a selection of class and homework and non-exam assessment (coursework), as well as practical performances in some subjects.

Our Centre Policy details the approaches we have taken as a school has been approved by the examination boards and can be found [here](#).

#### **Why have there been so many assessments when exams were cancelled?**

As you are aware National exams were cancelled in **January 2021**. Schools were then given flexibility about how to arrive at a fair and robust grade for each student. Throughout the early summer term we have been using exam-style assessments, as well as drawing on the assessment materials provided by exam boards, to produce the most reliable, and therefore fairest evidence base for each of our students.

#### **What evidence has been used in each subject?**

Our Centre Policy details the high-level approach we are taking as a school. Your child's subject teacher will have already let students know what evidence is being used for the year group.

If there are any reasons why you think certain evidence should not be used (e.g. your child missed out on learning content for that assessment), your child must let the school know as soon as possible, ideally before **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June**. This can be done by contacting Mr Haslam (Deputy Headteacher), at [j.haslam@dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk](mailto:j.haslam@dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk) so that we can apply the mitigating circumstances to all of your child's qualifications equally.

Please note, that teachers and leaders will use their professional judgements about how to respond to mitigating circumstances and this may vary between subjects depending on the impact it had on the assessment. Teachers will record how any mitigating circumstances were responded to.

**My child usually has access arrangements (e.g. extra time) in exams. Have they this year?**

If a student is eligible for any sort of access arrangements as part of their SEND provision, then these will have already been applied during the assessments we have carried out.

If a student who is eligible for access arrangements did not have them for an assessment being used to inform their grade, they raise this with the school by contacting [info@dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk](mailto:info@dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk). A record of how this is responded to will be made and an alternative piece of evidence used, alternatively the marks for that assessment may be adjusted accordingly.

**Can we know the grade submitted?**

No, we are legally obliged not to let students or parents know their submitted grade before results day. In some subjects, students may receive grades or marks for certain assessments that may count towards their grades but this is at the department's discretion. Students do not have an automatic right to know their grades or marks in an assessment, just because they've been told marks in another assessment.

**The assessments you're doing are different from another school. How is this fair?**

Schools have been given a lot of flexibility in how they can decide a holistic TAG this summer. This means that it is likely the assessments will look different in different schools, even ones in the same area.

Because students should only be assessed on what they have been taught, to account for variations in lost learning due to the pandemic, the range of evidence will differ between schools, and even between students within their own school.

Our approach has been approved by the exam boards; but many different approaches have also been approved. This does not mean one approach is better than the other.

**I don't think my child's teacher will judge them fairly?**

All of staff have undergone objectivity and bias training. This is detailed in our Centre Policy, which has been approved by the exam boards. This document highlights all the training that our staff received to help produce the TAG for the students in their subject. All of the TAGs being submitted will be signed off by two members of staff, including the Head of Department. All grades will then be signed off by the Head of Centre.

Samples of work will be submitted to the exam boards for further moderation to ensure our grades are fair and accurate.

If you have a further concerns about bias please contact Mr Haslam as soon as possible.

**My child needs a particular grade for college; what can I do to make sure they get it?**

It is important that neither students nor the parents or carers put undue pressure on classroom teachers or Heads of Department to submit a certain grade before **Friday 18th June**. If a member of staff feels that pressure is being applied, we will first raise this with you directly.

If the pressure continues, we have been instructed to report this (whether from parents or students) to the exam boards as potential malpractice.

If you want to raise genuine mitigating circumstances with us, then please do through the channels outlined above.

### **What is exam malpractice?**

Exam malpractice this year includes students fabricating evidence (e.g. claiming plagiarised work is their own), they or their parents placing undue pressure on teachers to submit a certain grade, as well as teachers fabricating evidence.

If malpractice is proven, the exam boards may decide to withhold the qualification altogether.

Our approach to authenticating evidence is set out in our Centre Policy.

### **How can I appeal?**

If your child is unhappy with their grade this summer, they will have the opportunity to resit all their GCSEs in the autumn. Students should speak to Mr Haslam if they have any questions about entering the autumn series. There is also the option to appeal a grade on the following grounds:

- **Administrative Error** - You think the school has submitted the wrong grade for you
- **Procedural Error** - You think the school did not follow our process correctly
- **Error of Academic Judgement** - You do not think the grade submitted reflects a reasonable judgement on either the evidence that was used, or the grade arrived at

All appeals will first be processed as a centre review. Following the outcome of centre review, students can choose to take forward an appeal to the exam board(s), which we will do on their behalf. Details of how to request a centre review will be available before results days.

Please note that at any stage of the appeals process a student's grade(s) could go up or down. If the appeal process decides that the submitted grade was too high, students will **not** be able to keep the higher grade. We will require students to sign a declaration saying that understand this before they submit an appeal.

### **My child has work at a higher grade than the work used as evidence. Can they appeal?**

Students have already been told what evidence is being used. If they wish to raise any mitigating circumstances about this, they should follow the process already outlined. Just having a higher-graded essay is not in itself grounds for mitigating circumstances, although this request will be recorded.

When it comes to appeals, exam boards will be considering whether any teacher acting reasonably could have used the same evidence and reached the same judgement. This is different to whether other alternatives would have been equally as valid.

If students have a genuine concern about the evidence being used, they should raise this with the school before **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June** so that due consideration can be given. To view the sources of evidence being used by subject teachers to inform the production of the TAGs, please follow this [link](#).

### **Where can I find additional information?**

Additional helpful information for you and your child regarding the TAG process can be found by following this [link](#).

### **What will happen on Results Day - Thursday 12th August 2021?**

If the government timetable for the lifting of restrictions allows, learners will be encouraged and welcomed to attend school to collect their results. Details will follow regarding this in line with the updating of Covid 19 regulations and procedures.

Learners who cannot collect results **MUST** follow the following procedures:

### Collection by third party (learner's representative)

The person collecting the results on behalf of a learner must be in possession of a letter signed and dated by the learner stating the name of the person collecting the results on a learner's behalf. The person collecting results must bring ID (eg. passport, driving licence).

### Posting Results

Any results that remain uncollected on results will be posted to the learner's home address on results day. If you have recently moved house or believe our records are out of date please contact the school to have these updated before **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021**.

Under no circumstances will examination results be issued over the telephone, text, fax or email.

Further information about Examinations can be found in the student section of the Denton Community College [website](#) . Please select Exams Information from the drop-down menu. Here you will find all JCQ and relevant exam season information.

I hope this letter has helped clarify some of the questions that have been raised by some of our students and their parents. If you do require any further clarification do not hesitate to contact Mr Haslam. We would like to once again thank you all for your continued support in the education of your children over the last five years.

Yours sincerely



Greg Rule  
Headteacher



James Haslam  
Deputy Headteacher