



22 January 2021

Re: Consultation on Summer 2021 / Grades for Students

Dear Student / Parent

Earlier in the week we sent you a link to the consultation about proposals for awarding grades this Summer. This consultation closes next Friday, 29th January and we would encourage anyone to respond if they wish.

In this letter I have summarised the key points of the proposal for you, which I hope will help you to understand the direction of thinking at the moment. I also want to outline our own thinking on how we will be responding to this.

Summary of Consultation Proposals

Consultation on GCSEs, AS and A levels

The key points about the suggested process are that:

- *Grades will be based on teacher/centre assessment. Exam boards will provide advice on a standardised approach between schools, what evidence should be collected, and how schools should quality assure internally. Grades will be submitted as late as possible to maximise the time for catch-up teaching and ongoing assessment.*
- *Teacher assessment will be based on the current, ongoing performance of students; rather than a hypothetical prediction of what students may have got had exams run as normal; or what students would have got had the pandemic not disrupted their learning. It's not clear how evidence will translate into a grade.*
- *Exam boards may provide some external assessment tasks, which would be based on exam paper questions. DfE and Ofqual are consulting on whether these should be mandatory or not, whether teachers could set their own assessments instead, the percentage of the course that the tasks should cover, and the timing of the external assessment.*
- *Schools and colleges will be expected to provide internal quality assurance, with support and advice from the exam boards.*
- *Exams will also provide external quality assurance, both during the process of determining grades, and once grades are submitted. If the exam boards are satisfied with the internal quality assurance of a school's or college's judgement, it is unlikely to change grades. A formula or algorithm will not be used to standardise results.*
- *Private candidates will be included in the process, and the consultation asks what the best way to do this is. This may include private candidates being entered centrally by the exam boards.*
- *Students will have the right to appeal grades, which is currently being proposed as being led by schools and colleges in the first instance, before being escalated to exam boards.*

Consultation on VTQs (vocational qualifications) and other general qualifications

DfE and Ofqual are running a simultaneous consultation on vocational and technical qualifications (including BTECs and Cambridge Nationals) and other general qualifications (including EPQ, the IB, and Functional Skills). The approach is broadly the same as the approach outlined above for GCSEs and A levels, but recognises the different ways in which VTQs are assessed usually. The broad principles are:

- *For exam-based assessment in VTQs, the same approach should be applied as is confirmed for GCSEs and A levels*
- *Non-exam assessment should continue where possible, although candidates should not be disadvantaged if they are unable to complete NEA due to Covid-19*
- *The Extended Extraordinary Framework already gives exam boards a lot of scope in how to change the assessment of VTQs; this continues.*
- *Because VTQ exams happen throughout the year, with different dates of certification, no candidate will be penalised whether or not they were able to sit an exam. All candidates expecting certification in 2021 should be able to receive a grade.*

From the Consultation Summary you can see that the grades in the Summer will be determined by **actual grades achieved by students in assessments / internal exams**. There has to be **hard evidence** of a student achieving that grade.

As a school our intention is to give students as many **opportunities** as we can to show us the grade they are capable of. This will be done through assessments and examinations (remotely and in school on their return). We will use mock data if that advantages students but there will also be future assessment opportunities for students to shine

This means that:

- High engagement is critical
- Completion of work is critical
- Assessments in the coming weeks will be very important
- Work done now and in the future will matter

We will be continuing to work with students to support them in achieving the best grades possible and are appreciative of your support with this during these very difficult times.

Kind regards



Carol Hubbard
(Deputy Headteacher)