

Dear Parent / Carer,

This is the third installment updating you on the grading process for the summer exams. Can I firstly say how we have all been so impressed by how hard students are working and the conscientious attitude they are showing to their assessments. It has been lovely to hear staff across departments speaking of their commitment under quite difficult circumstances. Please remember assessments will officially finish on the 21st May and here is the link again for the assessment calendar for each subject, both GCSE and A-Level.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Sc7DX\\_EmkNqLmT9rRSuftFiWYfL-dZQaAglOeam6nx8/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Sc7DX_EmkNqLmT9rRSuftFiWYfL-dZQaAglOeam6nx8/edit#gid=0)

I can also now outline the 'evidence portfolio' which details the assessments being used to calculate each subject grade. This can be viewed via the link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1s0ziTqM11izcph9YsWbJTmRVkqAEcVBVxEqI25Nm1kc/edit?ts=6093a0ce#gid=2037190995>

In terms of these assessments, different weightings will be applied depending on coverage, control level and skills covered. This will be decided by individual departments. Within departments, teachers will make the final judgement about the evidence to be included and this is not open to negotiation. Please remember that staff are not able to discuss grades submitted to exam boards during the process or after the deadline.

You have the right to make us aware of any mitigating circumstance you would like us to consider. This is where a student is fully prepared for an assessment but is disadvantaged due to temporary injury, illness or unavoidable circumstances beyond their control, at the times of the assessment, or when they completed their coursework/controlled assessment. If you think that special consideration may need to be applied and you have not notified us already please email the exams office ([exams@simonballe.herts.sch.uk](mailto:exams@simonballe.herts.sch.uk)) with as much evidence as possible, including doctors/consultants letters and details of any medication, where applicable. Each case will then be looked at individually. All evidence for special consideration must be submitted to the exams office by Friday 28th May 2021.

Over the past few years you probably have been aware that target grades are shown on "GO4Schools". Several parents have asked for clarification on what they actually mean. Target grades are used by secondary schools as a way of setting an aspirational but an obtainable goal. They are calculated using both national data including KS2 scores, gender differences, school demographic and past performance. These grades are recognised by educational professionals. As a school where performance is strong and aspirations are high, our targets are in line with the top 20% of schools, therefore providing a target that is a stretch to achieve.

At KS5 on the same principle we assign target grades at A level based on students' GCSE results (Year 11). We use targets in line with the progress expected at the top 25% of schools and again provide further 'stretch'.

In these extraordinary times, and throughout the past few weeks, we have ensured that all of our students feel very much part of the process. A full explanation has been provided to students in an

assembly and the powerpoint presentation has been shared with them afterwards. Students have also been asked to see myself, or a colleague, if they would like further clarification. This year more than ever, the grades assigned are a stepping stone into the next phases of education.

Before May half term, all students will be required to sign a candidate confirmation form detailing their understanding of how grades have been determined and to authenticate that the work submitted is entirely theirs. Here is a copy of the form:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bIAzCRUftbojsBcM80XtPdrbuA3cJ4Qp/edit>.

Further details on the appeals process this year will be shared with you once the government consultation has been completed. We are expecting to hear the outcomes from this towards the end of May.

Finally we look forward to welcoming all students into school to collect their A Level and GCSE results in August (A Level and BTEC, level 3, August 10th, whilst GCSE results will be collected on August 12th). We will provide more details on the timings for these days in due course. If students are not able to attend on results day and would like the results emailed to them, please notify the exams office in advance.

Kind regards

Mike Moss  
Deputy Headteacher