

## **TEACHER ASSESSED GRADES – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **How will grades be awarded this summer?**

Grades for GCSEs, A levels, BTECs and Cambridge Nationals will be based on a process involving teacher assessment against national standards followed by internal quality assurance by senior staff, and external quality assurance by the exam boards.

The national process defined by the Department for Education and the exams' regulator, Ofqual is as follows:

1. Teachers will **assess students against a national standard**, which will be defined by the exam boards before the Easter break.
2. Departments will submit grades which will be **quality assured by the school**. This internal quality assurance process will have to be signed off by the exam board to ensure it is rigorous and in line with national standards.
3. Our school results will be **quality assured externally** by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of our school's evidence.
4. If the exam boards are confident in our submitted results, **then the exam boards will award students their final grades**.
5. If students do not think their results are accurate, they will have the right to **appeal**.

### **Do teachers award the grade?**

The grade students achieve will start with their teacher's assessment of their performance across a range of evidence. This is against a nationally-defined standard, not the teacher's own opinion. This assessment is then subject to both internal and external quality assurance before the final grade is awarded by the exam body as usual.

### **Does this mean grades are decided by an algorithm?**

No, unlike last year, students' grades will not be changed by a formula. The internal and external quality assurance measures will all be done by humans, not an algorithm. There is no limit on the achievement of students, providing they have evidence that they are working at that grade.

### **What about loss of learning / impact of Covid?**

This year, teachers will only assess students on content they have been taught – because of the continued disruption of the pandemic. This means students will not be disadvantaged if they individually, their whole class or whole year group have been unable to complete their full course. However, grades can only be submitted on the basis of the evidence we have of students' performance, even if that evidence covers less of the course than usual. Students who would usually have extra time in the exams will benefit from the same arrangements in teacher assessment.

### **Will grades be different between different schools and colleges?**

No, the standard against which teachers will be assessing students is set nationally by the exam boards. This is the standard that will be used during external quality assurance and appeals to ensure consistency and fairness across the system.

### **What evidence will be used?**

Teachers will use a range of assessment evidence from across a student's study of the course. Data will be collected up until 14.05.21 for Year 13 students and 21.05.21 for Year 11. This may include homework tasks, tests, past papers. This may include evidence from before the second lockdown, as well as evidence from March – June. The exam boards are producing assessment materials that will be sent to us before Easter. Different departments may use different sources of evidence, and there is no requirement for any one type of assessment to be used – it's about a performance across a range of evidence.

### **The exam boards are only giving out past papers, how is this fair?**

Most of the assessments provided by the exam boards will be drawn from past papers, although there will be new questions as well. There is significant research that even if students have seen assessments questions before, it does not reduce the validity of the assessment. Furthermore, exam board questions are only one of the many pieces of evidence we will use to assess students this summer.

### **Can students and parents make the case for why a student should get a higher grade?**

Our teachers are already using their professional expertise to assess students on the content they have been taught. Teachers are unable to submit higher grades for students unless they have the evidence that they are consistently working at this level. If teachers submit higher grades without evidence they are committing exam malpractice.

In addition, students can hand in work that they have completed independently over lockdown. This must be authentic work, it may be used to form part of the judgement.

### **Can students discuss their grades with teachers?**

Teachers will be able to discuss which evidence they are using to inform their judgement with students, including marked or graded pieces of work.

However, they are not allowed to disclose the final submitted grade given to the exam board.

Students should not attempt to second-guess the grade submitted, as teachers will be using a range of evidence to inform their final judgement. Students must not pressure teachers to reveal the grades they are submitting, or to increase the grades.

### **What are mitigating circumstances?**

Students should make teachers aware of any mitigating circumstances that have occurred that have affected their progress and their ability to perform. These should be made through Mrs Glen so that they can be logged and given due consideration. She will circulate them sensitively to the relevant teachers.

### **What should students do to improve their grades?**

The best thing students can do is to continue to attend classes, learn, act on feedback from their teachers, revise, and read around their subject. Their grade will be based on their performance, and so their outcomes are ultimately in their hands.

### **How does the appeal process work?**

Before a grade is submitted, teachers should make students aware of the evidence they are using to assess them. Students will then have the opportunity to confirm the evidence is their own work and make their teachers aware of any mitigating circumstances they believe should be taken into account.

Every student will have the right to appeal their final grade and on the results release day a form will be available for appeals to be logged. The school will undertake an initial process review to check all processes were followed correctly and no errors were made. If the school finds an error, they can submit a revised grade to the exam board.

If no error is found and the student still wants to appeal, they can ask the school to submit a formal appeal to the exam board. The exam board will check the school followed its own processes and exam board requirements as well as reviewing the evidence used to form the judgement and providing a view as to whether the grade awarded was a reasonable exercise of academic judgement. If the exam board finds the grade is not reasonable, they will determine the alternative grade and inform the school.

In cases of disagreement between the school and the exam board, or if the student disagrees with the school or the exam board, the case can be referred to Ofqual's Exams Procedure Review Service (EPRS). The exam board's decision on the grade following appeal will stand unless the EPRS finds that the exam board has made a procedural error.