

25th February 2021

Dear Parent and Carer

We have promised to keep you updated with any further news or detail in relation to how Year 11 and 13 students will be awarded their final grades this summer. Today the Education Minister, Gavin Williamson, made an announcement about this which followed the recent publication of the results of Ofqual's consultation.

If you would like further details, I have placed links at the end of this letter that will take you to Gavin Williamson's statement, the statement from the Chief Regulator of Ofqual (Simon Lebus) and the full publication of the consultation results from Ofqual. It was interesting to note that responses from students (over 100,000 of them) accounted for 52% of the responses to Ofqual. I think it is really good to see young people taking such a direct interest and sharing their views. I know that some Budmouth students were part of this, so well done to them.

The key summary points are:

1. Students will not sit exams this summer.
2. Students' grades will be determined by teacher assessment.
3. There will be no government or exam board 'algorithms' used to change the grades that teachers award.
4. Schools will submit their grades to the exam boards by 18th June.
5. Results days will now take place in the week beginning Monday 9th August.

Although some of these things e.g. no exams had already been announced, it is still reassuring to see final clarification. These have been anxious times for all students across the country who have been working hard to keep up with their studies. We know that during the months that remain, they will be keen to be able to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding that will enable them to get the grades they need to progress to their next stage of education e.g. 6th Form, University or even employment with training. We look forward to welcoming them back to school in order to help them achieve these targets.

Further information

We have been told that exam boards will provide schools with detailed guidance about how teachers will make their judgements before the end of the Spring Term. We are advised that teachers will be able to draw on a range of evidence when determining the grades. This might include the optional use of questions provided by exam boards, as well as other evidence from tests, essays, coursework or any work that has been completed as part of the course.

Schools will be expected to conduct appropriate checks in order to ensure that fair grades are awarded. This will include moderating the judgements that are awarded across the school to ensure fairness and that the correct procedures have been followed. Whilst we are assured that no 'algorithm' will be used to determine grades, we are advised that exam boards will conduct their own checks on schools, including random sampling.

Appeals

We have also been told that students will have some right of appeal if they are unhappy with their grade. Specifically, Ofqual have said:

'A student unhappy with their grade would submit an appeal to the school or college, so that they could check whether an administrative error had been made. If a centre does find an error in the grade submitted, it can submit a revised grade for the board to consider. If a centre does not believe an error had been made, the centre will appeal to the exam board on the student's behalf, and will be supported to do so.'

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Sitting an exam

Although the issue of taking an exam was not specifically addressed in today's announcements, we do understand that this opportunity will exist for students next Autumn Term 2021, as it did last year for students who were not able to take their exams in Summer 2020. Last year, almost 60% of students who took an autumn exam in GCSE subjects other than English and Maths improved on their grades issued in the summer. The top results at A level dropped, compared to the summer's Centre Assessed Grades.

I hope that you find this information helpful. We are now looking forward to welcoming all of our students back to school and, in the case of those who would have been taking exams this summer, providing them with lots of opportunities to demonstrate what they can do. Mr Hudson (Vice Principal, Year 11 Curriculum) and Mr Henman (Director of 6th Form) will be in further contact with you and our students about this during the months that remain.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



David Herbert

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/how-qualifications-will-be-awarded-in-2021>

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/teacher-assessed-grades-for-students?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=go-vuk-notifications&utm_source=2568affc-1ccd-40cf-af75-2e775650b1a2&utm_content=daily

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