

18th August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Even in a normal year the run up to an exam results day is a very anxious time for students and their parents. This has been no normal year and I am sure that you have been following the news stories around the publication of GCSE and A level results. Yesterday's remarkable announcement by Ofqual has caused celebrations in families all over the country and will provide both clarity and justice for our students in almost all of their subjects. Not for the first time, however, the reality turns out to be a little bit more complicated than the headlines might have us believe. I wanted, therefore, to write and explain the implications of the rapid change in government policy as we understand them today. Please understand, however, that the situation is changing very quickly. At this stage there are still some things that we simply do not know and others may well be amended or "clarified" over the next few days.

The government position (as at Monday evening) is set out in a news announcement on the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gcse-and-a-level-students-to-receive-centre-assessment-grades#:~:text=The%20Government%20has%20announced%20that,A%20level%20results%20this%20summer.&text=If%20students'%20calculated%20grades%20were,their%20calculated%20grade%20will%20stand.>

The relevant sections read:

Students awaiting their GCSE grades on Thursday will receive their centre assessment grade from their school or college, and students who received their A or AS level results last Thursday (13 August) will be reissued their centre assessment grade. If students' calculated grades were higher than the centre assessment grade, their calculated grade will stand...On Thursday schools and colleges will inform students of their GCSE centre assessment grades, and official results will be released to students next week.

So, what we can say with certainty is:

1. We will be able to issue centre assessed grades (which were assessed, moderated and reviewed by Academy teachers and leaders in May and June)
2. Students' "official" results will be at least as good as these Centre Assessed Grades (if the Ofqual algorithm adjusted the grades upwards, the official grade will be higher, though the experience of the A level processes suggests that this will apply in very few cases)
3. The "official" results (ie the better of the two grades) will be published by the exam boards at some point next week.

However there are some things that we do not know at this stage:

1. We do not know whether or not the "calculated grades" (those generated by Ofqual's infamous algorithm) will be released to schools as originally planned tomorrow morning

2. The announcement refers only to GCSEs; there is no mention of technical awards (those taken by Academy students in Enterprise and Marketing; Graphics; Hospitality and Catering; iMedia; Sport; and Travel and Tourism)
3. In particular, in those technical awards offered by BTEC (Sport and Travel & Tourism) and NCFE (Graphics), centres were not asked to submit overall grades but just separate grades for coursework units; there is no indication of how these subjects will be treated and it is a matter of some concern that not all the Level 3 BTEC results (which were due to be issued at the same time as last week's A levels) have yet been published.

In this uncertain climate, we intend to proceed as follows:

1. If we have the "Calculated Grades" from the GCSE exam boards, we will provide these to Year 11 students as part of their interviews as well as the Centre assessed Grades
2. If the "Calculated Grades" are not released until next week, we will contact Year 11 students directly if there are any changes to their actual grade (ie in the unlikely event that the Calculated Grade is higher than the Centre Assessed Grade) and, in any event, send out the "official" results early in the new term
3. We are in contact with A level providers and the College and will be able to advise on the next steps for progression to post 16 courses.
4. As planned, we will post whatever information we have by the end of this week out to students in Year 9 and Year 10 and update it if necessary at the start of the new term
5. We will continue to seek clarification on the position where technical awards are concerned.

I hope this provides some clarity on what is a complex and fast moving situation. I shall, of course, update you if there are any significant changes over the next few days. In the midst of all this confusion, it is important to hold on to the central fact that our students worked really hard for their GCSEs and yesterday's announcement means they will achieve the grades that we believe they deserve. Please rest assured that when the opportunity arises, we will find the best ways of celebrating their achievements and that, in the meantime, we will provide our year 11 students with all the support we can to help them progress to their next destination.



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