



RC/JAE

30 September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

The Department for Education and Ofqual have started to clarify the arrangements for this year's GCSEs for Year 11 students.

Please see below for a summary of that announcement.



### Grading 'transition year' as results return to normal in 2023

- This year will act as a 'transition year' to 'reflect the recovery period', Ofqual said. Grade boundaries will be set by exam boards at a 'midway' point between 2021 and 2019, the last time exams were sat before the pandemic.
- Grades are expected to return to normal by 2023. The approach will 'provide a safety net for this year's students as well as a step back to normality', the Government said.
- Grade boundaries will be set by senior examiners after they have reviewed students' work.
- While results will be higher than pre-pandemic exams, the exact position may vary by subject and grade because of a shift in entry profiles (for instance, more higher attainers taking a particular subject).

### Optionality and advance notice confirmed

- There will be a choice of topics in some GCSE exams this year, such as English Literature and History.
- Where there is not a choice of topics, advance information will be provided to help students target their revision. There will also be support materials like formulae sheets in maths.
- Advanced information will be released by 7 February 2022, before half term, but the timing will be kept 'under review, subject to the course of the pandemic' and can be brought forward.

### Schools should start collecting plan B evidence this term

- The Government was lambasted for not having an 'off-the-shelf' plan B ready for when exams were cancelled in January. A two-week consultation is due to launch today outlining the DfE and Ofqual's proposals.
- These are that if exams cannot go ahead next year – either because of further disruption or because of public health advice – Teacher Assessed Grades will be used again.

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- DfE and Ofqual say assessments that take place over the course of the year already – such as coursework and mocks – will make up the evidence base wherever possible.
- Schools will be asked to start collecting this evidence from the second half of this term.
- Students will be told beforehand by their teacher if any work could contribute towards a TAG. Also, the time that students spend in assessments this year will be limited so they take no longer than the total exam time for that subject.
- The department hopes that this will be less burdensome than last year and final guidance would be published after half term. There will be no cut off point on when the plan B can be implemented.
- No decision has been made on the grading standards if TAGs are used.

### **Back to normal on results days**

- This year, results days were held earlier and in the same week, two days apart. But these too are going back to normal. So, A-level results day is on 18 August 2022 and GCSE results day on 25 August 2022.

As soon as more information is available from each specific examination board we will share this with you and your child.

Yours sincerely

*R Carlyle*

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Headteacher

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