

Wednesday 8th April 2020

Re: Awarding grades for GCSE & A Level 2020

NB: As yet, guidance relating to vocational / BTEC grading has not been released

Dear Students & Parents

I am writing to let you know the process by which the School will be formulating your Centre Assessed Grade that will be submitted to the Awarding Bodies for them to work on. I realise that this is an emotive issue, and I appreciate that many of you will be anxious that the grade awarded is fair and appropriate. In response to these concerns, I request that you have faith in your teachers and our processes as a School. We are used to predicting grades regularly and much of the process outlined below is standard practice for our academic monitoring throughout the year. Importantly, I must urge you to let us move forward with this process without seeking to influence decisions. According to the Ofqual guidance, we are not at liberty to discuss the Centre Assessed Grade with students or their families. We very much appreciate the sensible and considerate way students and parents have gone about things so far.

Ofqual Guidance

Details regarding the awarding of grades for students completing courses in summer 2020 are available online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcses-as-and-a-level-awarding-summer-2020>

It is important that the procedures used at Wallingford School are in line with this guidance. As new information is released, we will adapt our practice accordingly.

In short, we are required to provide a 'centre assessed grade' for every student in all courses and then to rank students within each grade bracket.

The Process

Our guiding principle is that staff must use their professionalism and integrity throughout the process. Staff will not be held to account for their 2020 results and will focus on providing grades for students that are as accurate as possible using all available information. There is no change here from the way we go about our predictions on a regular basis, so we are asking for the same application of professional judgement.

In order to provide each student with a 'centre assessed grade' and a rank within that grade boundary, staff will consider a range of things such as: classwork and homework; results in assignments & assessments; any non-exam assessment or coursework; and general progress during the course.

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Please note, student will not be asked to complete any additional assessments or finish outstanding coursework. We will be in touch with students regarding collection of work at a later date.

Class teachers will be the first to complete the process, after which our subject leaders (Heads of Department) will collate, review and moderate the data. Finally, our senior leaders will have access to the whole cohort results and will consider this data in the context of students' prior attainment and the school's performance trends over time. At all stages, the focus will be on integrity and professionalism.

It is important to note that the grades we submit to the Awarding Bodies are not necessarily the grades that will be awarded in July/August. Ofqual is working to devise a methodology to allow standardisation across centres and this may lead to changes that are out of our control.

Special Considerations

As a School, we pride ourselves on knowing our students very well. Any issues that would have normally led to the school applying to exam boards for special consideration, will be factored into decision-making when looking at performance at particular points. Similarly, staff have been reminded of Exam Access Arrangements, which should also be taken into account.

Next Steps

Yr11: Sixth Form, College, Apprenticeship entry

Yr13: University / UCAS, Apprenticeship entry; Employment

In short, we plan to follow the same procedures as previous years when it comes to transition from Yr11 to 12, and Yr13 onwards. We will still hold options clinics – dates to be confirmed. We will provide information regarding colleges, apprenticeships and universities (UCAS) primarily through web-links, at the appropriate times. There is likely to be an enhanced process for Yr11 into Yr12 throughout August & September 2020, since a little more information may be required to ensure that students in this cohort are on appropriate courses. More details will follow.

For Yr11 students planning on joining our sixth form, we will introduce some 'summer work' a little earlier than normal, enabling pupils to prepare effectively for the start of the sixth form programme proper in September. Details and logistics clearly require a good deal of planning, and Ms Mummery will be in touch to confirm them in due course.

Appeals

The process for appeals is still being worked out by Ofqual. However, it looks likely that, in the event of being dissatisfied with the grades awarded, there will be an opportunity for candidates to sit the examination in the Autumn. We will keep an eye on developments in this regard and, if it is appropriate, will look to devise some process by which we can support those wishing to sit the examination after grades are formally released in July/August. With this in mind, I encourage pupils and students to ensure that notes and resources are kept safe so that they might be used in the future if required.

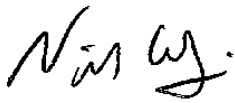
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Confidentiality

It is important to reiterate that the School, like all schools, is not able to discuss the Centre Assessed Grades with the candidate or any other interested party. I would politely ask that you refrain from contacting teachers regarding the process and if you do have any questions they are directed to Mr Keeling for Yr11 (keelingj@wallingfordschool.com) and Ms Mummery for Yr13 (mummerya@wallingfordschool.com) or myself (lambn@wallingfordschool.com).

I hope this is all clear. My colleagues and I have worked hard to develop a rational and measured response to these unusual circumstances. We want to provide grades that are fair, reasonable and carefully considered – the process outlined above will enable this.

Yours sincerely,



Mr N Lamb
Deputy Headteacher

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