

PD/JSo

17 March 2021

To: Students Entered for AS, A Level, VTQ and GCSE Examinations and their Parents/Carers

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

Can I first of all begin by saying how proud I am of the way in which our students have returned to school from the national lockdown. I am sure that many will have been anxious to return to be tested, and apprehensive to be back in school once more. For these particular year groups they have needed to be more resilient than most. We should never have doubted the resilience of our students, they are a credit to us all.

As we now look to return to the rhythms and routines of the regular school day, we can look forward to the summer term and the planned changes to the examination series, which we have brought together and summarised here.

Summer 2021 Grading

I am sure you are aware that the Government and Ofqual (the qualifications, examinations and assessments regulator) have announced their plans for grading GCSEs, A Levels, Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) this summer. The guidance that schools and colleges will be required to follow is designed to ensure students receive grades that are fair and enable them to progress to the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Outlined below is a summary of the information published by Ofqual and at the end of this letter you will find links to the relevant publications for GCSEs, A Levels and VTQs. In addition, I have enclosed with this letter two helpful infographics that concisely set out the key points as well as a FAQ section.

How students will be assessed

- Students will be assessed only on the curriculum content they have been taught.
- Students' grades will reflect the standard at which they are currently working (rather than predicting how they would have performed if they had sat examinations).
- Evidence from students' performance throughout their courses may be used to inform assessed grades.
- Teachers will draw on a broad range of evidence when making judgements about grades and centres will tell students the evidence on which their grades will be based.
- For subjects with non-examination assessment (for example, coursework or practical components), this will be internally marked (but not moderated by the examination boards) and will provide evidence to support grading.
- The examination boards will provide schools with additional assessments (past paper questions and unpublished questions) for all subjects which they may choose to use in class to assess students' knowledge and understanding of content they have been taught.

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- For students in receipt of access arrangements, they will be applied to any assessments taken during the summer term.
- GCSE and A Level Art grades will be determined entirely on portfolio work.
- Students will continue to receive an endorsement (separate to their grade) for GCSE English Language (Speaking), GCSE Modern Languages (Speaking) and A Level Sciences and Geology (Practical).
- Level 3 Core Mathematics and the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) will be graded using a similar process to GCSEs and A Levels.

Quality Assurance

- Schools and colleges will be required to implement internal quality assurance procedures, including considering how this year's grades compare with outcomes for cohorts from previous years who sat examinations.
- Examination boards will conduct their own quality assurance, checking a sample of schools and colleges to ensure their internal quality assurance systems are effective.
- Examination boards will only issue results once they are satisfied by the quality assurance process and they may make changes to grades if they determine that they are not a 'reasonable exercise of academic judgement'.
- The Head of Centre (Headteacher) will be required to sign a declaration confirming that the requirements for internal quality assurance have been met.

Appeals

- Whilst we hope this will not be necessary, students will be able to appeal against their grades.
- They may request that the school checks for an administrative or procedural error.
- If students believe a grade is wrong, they may request an appeal is submitted to the examination board by school on their behalf and the examination board will determine whether the grade issued represents a 'reasonable exercise of academic judgement'.
- A grade may go up or down at appeal.
- Ofqual will consult at a later stage on whether to offer an Autumn examination series.

Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs)

- An approach similar to grading GCSEs and A levels will be adopted for VTQs such as BTECs.
- Teachers will make informed judgements on the grades students will receive using a variety of evidence, including performance in tasks or assessments that have already been completed.

Results Days

- Level 3 (A Levels and VTQ's) - Tuesday 10 August 2021
- Level 2 (GCSEs and VTQ's) - Thursday 12 August 2021

Although examinations have been cancelled, it will be necessary for teachers to carry out some internal assessment of students' knowledge and understanding of the content they have been taught. Over the next few weeks, you will receive details about the approach we will take at Wales High School to ensure all of our students receive the grades their efforts deserve. In the meantime, I would ask that you all try not to worry unduly as our students continue to work hard and try their best over the coming weeks.

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I would respectfully ask that you do not ask teachers on likely grades and how judgements will be made. Please remember that at this stage, teachers have very little information about the grading process and their time will be best spent preparing your children for their assessments.

I hope that this information regarding the summer assessments is helpful and I will provide further updates in due course. The links below are the official documents released from the DfE and Ofqual:

- [DfE/ Ofqual awarding qualifications in summer 2021](#)
- [Consultation decisions for GCSE, AS and A Levels](#)
- [Consultation decisions for VTQ and other general qualifications](#)

I began my letter to you confirming how proud I am with the resilience and agility of our students in the face of change. Although students face a change to the traditional summer routines, I am confident that their strength of character and adaptability will stand them in good stead throughout this period.

As we now approach the Easter holiday, ahead of the hopefully successful move to the next step in our national roadmap to recovery, I look forward to contacting you in the summer term to outline the plans we will have to celebrate our end of term. All being well, as we continue to make positive progress along the roadmap, we will see a further return to a sense of 'normality' and the possibility to gather in larger numbers more socially, for those events that are so important rites of passage for our students, such as their year group leavers assembly and their school 'Prom'.

I am sure for many different reasons, we all eagerly await the opportunity for this return.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely



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Headteacher