

16 April 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

GCSE and Functional Skills grading arrangements - Summer 2020

Following on from the DfE and Government plans around GCSE and Functional Skills exams there has been comprehensive guidance from Ofqual. Please read this letter to the end as it will provide significant information in answer to any queries you may have.

The guidance is summarised below:

For this summer's awards, schools and colleges are being asked to provide centre assessment grades for their students. These should be fair, objective and carefully considered judgements of the grades schools and colleges believe their students would have been most likely to achieve if they had sat their exams, and should take into account the full range of available evidence.

Sally Collier, Chief Regulator, Ofqual, said:

"School or college based assessment already has an important role in many GCSEs, AS and A levels and in extraordinary circumstances such as these, schools and colleges are best placed to judge the likely performance of their students at the end of the course.

"We have worked closely with the teaching profession to ensure that what we are asking is both appropriate and manageable, so that everyone can have confidence in the approach. I would like to take this opportunity to thank teachers and school leaders for making this process work for students during these very challenging times.

"We have published a [message to students](#) to reassure them that we, and exam boards, will do everything we can to make sure that, as far as possible, grades are fair and that they are not disadvantaged in their progress to sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, training or work because of these unprecedented conditions."

Exam boards will be contacting schools, colleges and other exam centres after Easter asking them to submit, by a deadline that will be no earlier than 29 May 2020, the following:

- *a centre assessment grade for every student in each of their subjects: that is, the grade they would be most likely to have achieved if they had sat their exams and completed any non-exam assessment. Judgements should balance different sources of evidence such as:*
 - *Classwork*
 - *Bookwork*
 - *any participation in performances in subjects such as music, drama or PE*
 - *any non-exam assessment – whether or not complete*
 - *the results of any assignments or mock exams*
 - *previous examination results – for example, for any re-sitting students or those with relevant AS qualifications*
 - *any other records of student performance over the course of study*
- *the rank order of students within each grade for each subject – for example, for all those students with a centre assessment grade of 5 in GCSE maths, a rank order where 1 is the most secure/highest attaining student, and so on. This information will be used in the statistical standardisation of centres' judgements – allowing fine tuning of the standard applied across all schools and colleges*
- *a declaration from the Head of Centre making the submission*

To make sure that grades are as fair as possible across schools and colleges, exam boards will put all centre assessment grades through a process of standardisation using a model being developed with Ofqual. We will consult on the principles of our model shortly, but we expect it will look at evidence such as the expected national outcomes for this year's students, the prior attainment of students at each school and college (at cohort, not individual level), and the results of the school or college in recent years. It will not change the rank order of students within each centre; nor will it assume that the distribution of grades in each subject or centre should be the same. The process will also recognise the past performance of schools and colleges. However, if grading judgements in some schools and colleges appear to be

more severe or generous than others, exam boards will adjust the grades of some or all of those students upwards or downwards accordingly.

Schools and colleges have been told that they must not share their centre assessment grades with students, parents or carers, under any circumstances, until after final results are issued. This is to protect the integrity of centres' judgements, and to avoid anyone feeling under pressure to submit a grade that is not supported by the evidence. Since the final grades for some or all students in a centre could be different from those submitted, it also helps to manage students' expectations. We're working hard to get results out as soon as is possible – results won't be delayed after the dates they were expected in August and ideally will be released a little earlier, so students can have the certainty they need.

We are all focused on making sure students are not disadvantaged by these unprecedented circumstances, including allowing for an appeal where appropriate. We will consult on proposals for specific appeal arrangements soon.

At EKC Group we will be working hard to ensure we follow the directives contained above and we are very keen to be fair and to reflect the hard work put in by every student. There is going to be a great deal of work for staff to do over the next few weeks in terms of making these assessments, which will number well into the thousands of individual grades. Whilst we fully appreciate you may be concerned about your grade, the guidance makes clear, **we cannot enter into any dialogue with individual students or their parents about individual grades as we have been instructed to refrain from doing so.** Please do not contact your teachers on this issue as they will not be able to reply.

Rest assured, we will do our best to ensure that the work which has already been completed by students, that is the evidence available, will be taken into account in the formulation of these final grades.

Of course there will be some students who have had extenuating factors which have impacted on their work, such as a period of illness, where we would ordinarily inform the examination board. This process, known as the special consideration process, will be undertaken in the same way in 2020.

The full guidance document can be seen [by following this link](#).

We do hope you find this information useful.