

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope you and your family are well and keeping safe. Under normal circumstances, I would be writing to you about the start of the summer term and your son's/daughter's preparations for their A Level or GCSE examinations or the completion of their Diploma course. Instead, I have to inform you that the College will remain closed for the foreseeable future. I would nevertheless like to update you on the methodology that has been set out by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) for the awarding of grades to A Level, GCSE and Diploma students this summer, and give you some information about College activities for the summer term.

Ofqual have stated that A Level, GCSE and Diploma students will receive a calculated grade for each qualification they have been entered for this summer and have published a methodology for how calculated grades will be generated for students taking GCSEs, AS and A Level subjects. While we await further guidance on the methodology for Diploma qualifications, Ofqual have indicated that this will be similar to the approach taken for generating calculated grades for students taking A Levels and GCSEs.

The methodology has two stages. The first stage is for schools and colleges to provide awarding organisations with Centre Assessment Grades for their students, and to rank students within each grade. The deadline for colleges to provide Centre Assessment Grades to awarding organisations will be no earlier than 29th May 2020.

A Centre Assessment Grade is the grade the College believes a student would mostly likely have achieved, if they had sat their exams and/or completed all non-examinable components of their qualification(s). In making judgements about students' grades, colleges have been asked to consider all available evidence, including:

- Classwork
- Bookwork
- Participation in performances (e.g. Music or Drama)
- Non-examinable work, whether complete or incomplete
- Results of assignments
- Results of mock exams
- Previous examination results
- Any other records of students' performance over the course of study

The process will begin with teachers in subject teams drawing on the range of evidence to allocate grades for students in the subjects that they teach, and to rank students within each grade. The outcome of the process will be signed by one of the teachers and reviewed and countersigned by the Curriculum Manager.

Heads of Faculty will then carry out a quality assurance process to verify that the full range of evidence has been used in each case for each student, and to ensure through a comparison of the outcomes per course with the previous year, that no groups of students have been unintentionally disadvantaged by the process. The allocation of grades to students, and the conduct of the quality assurance process will then be reviewed by the Principal, who will sign a statement to say that the Centre Assessment Grades submitted by the College are what the College believes the student would have achieved, if they had sat their examinations and/or completed their course.

The second stage will be carried out by the awarding organisations, who will standardise the grades submitted by the College against the students' prior attainment and against the College's previous year's outcomes. The grades students receive may therefore be different from the Centre Assessment Grades submitted by the College.

I would like to make you aware that schools and colleges have been told that they must not share their Centre Assessment Grades with students, parents or guardians under any circumstances. I would therefore be grateful if you did not ask teachers, or anyone else at the College, to talk about the grades the College will be submitting to awarding organisations.

The Department for Education have announced that grades will be published on the scheduled awards days; 13th August for A-levels and 20th August for GCSEs. You will be able to appeal the grades, if you do not believe the right process has been followed, and your son/daughter will have an option to sit the exams early next academic year or defer the exams to summer 2021, if you believe the calculated grades do not reflect your son's/daughter's performance.

In the summer term, the College will continue to operate as usual, albeit online. This means we will be running online classes, a virtual Year 1 student parents' evenings, a virtual awards ceremony and virtual Open Days as planned. Although students will not be sitting exams, and will no longer need to complete coursework, your son/daughter may nevertheless wish to sit exams for some subjects in the autumn term, and if intending to progress to university, into an apprenticeship or employment, can benefit from useful progression work with their teacher. I would therefore ask that you encourage your son/daughter to continue to engage in learning online with the College as usual, and where possible in line with their articulated timetable.

I'd also like to let you know that the College has experienced an unexpected IT issue over the last three weeks, and this has affected a small number of our systems, including LearnZone, which is currently unavailable. Our remote learning resources via our improved Microsoft Teams environment and email system are however unaffected. We are working with IT experts to get things back up and running as soon as possible and will keep you updated with any developments.

I'd like to assure you that the temporary loss of access to LearnZone has no impact on your son's/daughter's online learning, which takes places through email and Microsoft Teams, and is unrelated to the College's work in preparing calculated grades for final year students.

Below is a list of frequently asked questions and answer for your information, and a link to the government guidance on how grades will be calculated.

Yours faithfully,

Satwant Deol
Principal

Frequently Asked Questions - Calculated Grade Guidance

How will my final grade be awarded?

You will be awarded a 'calculated grade'. The calculated grades process will take into account information provided by teachers about predicted grades and non-exam assessment (such as mock exams and coursework). Exam boards will then combine this information with government data on prior attainment (i.e. GCSE) and typical projected progress.

Ofqual states, 'we know that simply using predicted grades would not be fair to all students ... students' final grades will not necessarily reflect their predicted grades'.

How important is my predicted grade?

Ofqual have stated 'we are not awarding students their predicted grades'. They will develop a fair and robust process that takes into account a broad range of evidence, including teacher assessment and prior attainment.

How important will my mock exam results be?

Mock exam results will be one of the pieces of evidence that will be taken into account. Ofqual will be providing further guidance on how this will be done but this will be in combination with other evidence.

How important will my GCSE grades be?

Ofqual will consider carefully how to ensure the process is as fair as possible, which is likely to include considering measures that reflect how much progress a student would have been likely to have made in the light of their GCSE outcomes.

What about my coursework?

The calculated grade process will take into account a range of evidence including non-exam assessment and the approach will be standardised between schools and colleges.

What if have started my coursework but it is not finished?

Exam boards will provide advice on this to schools and colleges as soon as possible but you should continue with this work as it will most likely form part of the non-exam assessment process.

What about my university application?

The calculated grades awarded will be formal grades, with the same status as grades awarded in any other year. University representatives have already confirmed that they expect universities to be flexible and do all they can to support students and ensure they can progress to higher education.

Will I be able to appeal my calculated grade?

The exam boards will work closely with Ofqual to ensure candidates are awarded a fair grade that recognises the work they have put in. If you do not believe the correct process has been followed in your case you will be able to appeal on that basis.

Will I be able to sit an exam next year instead?

If you do not feel their calculated grade reflects your performance, you will have the opportunity to sit an exam, as soon as is reasonably possible after schools and colleges open again. Ofqual has also said students will also have the option to sit their exams in summer 2021.

For the full government guidance, please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/how-gcses-as-a-levels-will-be-awarded-in-summer-2020>