

17<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear parents, agents and guardians,

I am sure that you are all aware there has been much discussion as to how the current Year 11 and Year 13 students are going to be assessed for grades this summer. Although no firm decision has yet been made, a consultation process with OFQUAL is now underway. To this end, you need to be aware of the following:

### **Key Proposals in the Consultation with OFQUAL**

#### **1. Timeline**

- Students would be assessed by their teachers in a period beginning in May and going into early June;
- Teachers would submit grades to the exam boards by mid-June;
- External quality assurance by the exam boards would be ongoing throughout June;
- Results would be issued to students once the quality assurance process is complete, most likely in early July;
- Student appeals could be submitted immediately following this and would be considered by schools in July;
- Appeals to exam boards begin in July;
- Exam board publishes results (in July); and
- Results given to universities.

#### **2. Provisional Grades**

These will be decided by teachers by mid-June, using all the evidence available and under school-wide quality assurance processes. Exam board tests will be available in May/early June, marked by teachers, but the results of these should not necessarily trump other evidence.

These will be decided by teachers by mid-June, using all the evidence available and under school.

The consultation asks the question whether the exam board tests should be mandatory or not. The exam board tests will look like GCSE or A Level questions, but there will be optionality, so if a student has not covered a topic, they do not need to answer questions on it.

The teacher is asked to assess 'the standard at which the student is performing' by early June.

Teachers/schools will need to collect and record evidence to support their grades. Clearly, marks achieved in mocks and from doing past papers and the exam board tests would be good evidence.

The topics coming up in the exam board tests may be revealed well before the test, but the date is not known.

Teachers may devise their own final assessment instead of the exam board tests, but these should happen in May/early June, in line with the timing of the exam board tests.

Exam board will check each school's quality assurance arrangements and sample the evidence on which the submitted grades were based. The exam board will only accept the grades if they are happy the correct processes have been followed.

### **3. GCSE English Language, GCSE Modern Foreign Language Spoken Skills and A Level Science Practical Skills**

These will be given a separate grade by the teacher.

### **4. Non-exam Assessments**

These should be completed as far as possible and the teacher will then decide the grade based on the work completed. There will be no exam board moderation.

### **5. Appeals**

Pupils will be told their Teacher Assessed Grades by schools in early July. At that point, the grades are only 'provisional'.

Pupils will then be able to appeal to the school 'if they think their teacher has made an error'.

The appeal will be heard by a person other than the original teacher, who could be another teacher from that school or another school. This person will be appointed by the school.

The grade could only be changed if 'it could not have been arrived at by a person which was reasonably exercising their academic judgement – i.e., it is way off.

After this appeal, pupils will also be able to appeal to the exam board on the grounds that the school has not acted in line with the exam board's procedural requirements, either when assessing the standard at which the student was performing or when considering the student's appeal.

Teachers/schools will need to collect and record evidence to support their grades, because they may face three challenges: exam boards pushing back against the teacher assessed grades, pupil appeals to the schools in early July, and finally, pupil appeals to the exam board.

## **6. Grade Distribution and Boundaries**

There will be no control over the national grade distribution (which up to now has limited the number of Grade 9s, 8s etc).

There are no grade boundaries.

## **7. Exam Boards**

The boards are ultimately responsible for awarding the grades.

## **8. Comparability**

There will be no assurances about comparability between individual pupils, between schools and between exam boards.

International GCSEs are not regulated by OFQUAL and are not part of the arrangements that apply to GCSEs and A/AS Levels for the summer of 2021. As previously advised, Cambridge International and Edexcel have already confirmed that IGCSE examinations will be going ahead. Please note that the College prepares students for 5 IGCSEs in English, Geography, Mathematics, ESL and ICT.

Whilst the consultation process is ongoing, in light of the details provided regarding GCSEs and A Levels and recognising that travel restrictions are currently in place, we would ask that your sons and daughters return to the College as soon as possible, so that we can provide them as much support as possible to ensure they achieve the best possible grades.

I will endeavour to keep you updated.

Best wishes

Lorraine Atkins  
Principal