

As a result of the disruption students and learners have faced due to the pandemic, the Government has said that many exams and assessments cannot be held this year in a way which is fair. All parts of the education system are working together to make sure that you are still able to get your grades and can carry on with your lives, whether that is continuing with education or training, or going into the workplace. To be of value, qualifications must reflect what you know, understand and can do and must be widely understood and respected.

We appreciate that this is a stressful time. There has been a great deal of uncertainty, and many of you will have missed out, not just on teaching and learning, but on the support offered by face-to-face contact with fellow students, friends, family and even employers.

OFQUAL recently consulted schools and colleges, jointly with the Department for Education, on alternative arrangements for exams and assessments that cannot go ahead as planned due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Now they have published what they have planned to do. Here you can read their [General Qualifications decisions documents](#) and [Vocational and Technical Qualifications decisions documents](#) for full details.

For GCSEs, AS and A levels, teachers will assess the standard at which you are performing based only on what you have been taught so that your school or college can determine your grade. Teachers' judgements should be based on *a range of evidence* relating to the subject content that your teachers have delivered, either in the classroom or via remote learning.

Teachers will be able to use evidence about your performance gathered throughout your course to inform their judgement. This might include *work that you have already completed, mock exam results, homework or in-class tests*. Your teachers may also use questions from exam boards, largely based on past papers, to help assess you, but this won't be compulsory. Reasonable adjustments will be taken into account if you have a specific need or disability, which your school will support you with as they would do normally in examinations.

The arrangements for this year are designed so that teaching and learning can continue for as long as possible, so your teachers' judgement of your work should take place as late in the academic year as is practical. It's important that you stay engaged in your learning and study as long as possible so that all of your hard work can be considered as part of your final grade. And of course, it will stand you in good stead for the next stage of your life. Teachers will tell you which pieces of work will count towards your grade, before your grade is submitted to the exam board.

We know that some of you may be worried that you have not covered all the content for a particular subject. *We will not set any requirements about the minimum amount of content that should be taught or assessed*, but we will ask the head of your school or college to confirm that you have been taught enough content so that you can progress to the next stage of your education. We want you to make the best choices about your next steps and it wouldn't be helpful if you started studying a subject at a higher level that you might struggle with.

Please continue to work hard to complete your non-exam assessment work and coursework. Your teachers will mark your coursework and *it will contribute to your overall grade*, whether or not you have completed it.

For GCSE, AS and A level **art and design**, your grade will be based on your *portfolio only*, whether or not you have finished it. And for GCSE **English language** (where appropriate), **GCSE modern foreign languages** and **A level single sciences (biology, chemistry and physics)**, your school should submit a separate grade or result for the spoken language or practical skills tested, according to the specification, based on work that you have completed in this part of the course.

2021 Examination entry series summer: Information for students and their parents from OFQUAL

Exam boards will provide a package of support materials to schools and colleges, including questions and mark schemes. They will also give your teachers advice about choosing topics, marking, and making grading judgements. Wherever possible, the exam boards will base this material on questions that have appeared in past exam papers.

These support materials will be made available publicly on a date to be agreed. Use of these exam board support materials is not compulsory. They are there to help your teachers and they are part of the range of evidence your teachers *could use* to determine your grade.

Exam boards will put in place quality assurance arrangements to make sure consistent judgements are being made and your head teacher will sign off all grades. Exam boards will also ask your school to confirm that they have followed the correct procedure for determining your grades.

If you are studying for a qualification that is similar to, or taken alongside GCSEs or A levels, then you will be eligible for a teacher assessed grade. This will require your teacher to make an informed judgement on the grade you will receive using a variety of evidence, such as performance of tasks or assessments that have been completed throughout your course. Examples of these types of qualifications are **BTECs** (Pearson) and OCR Cambridge Technicals in subjects such as engineering, digital media and health and social care. You should receive your results no later than students who are studying for GCSEs and A levels.

Please be assured that following students' return to school next week and then throughout this process we will work collaboratively with the other secondary schools in the MAT to ensure that our students are afforded the best possible opportunities to demonstrate their learning and the progress that they have made, despite the constraints of teaching and learning during the pandemic.