

Q & A – March 2021

I appreciate that it has been a difficult and challenging time for you with the cancelling of the exams in the summer 2021, and you may have concerns and questions about the GCSE results this year. Based on the information we have to date, here are the answers to some of the questions you may have.

What is a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG)?

Ofqual have issued a summary, which is attached, explaining how Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) will be awarded for GCSE examinations and what will be taken into account.

BTEC Level 1/ 2 Tech Award in Enterprise

We are still awaiting information from Edexcel on how the BTEC Level 1/ 2 Tech Award in Enterprise will be awarded, which is expected by the end of March 2021. This course is mostly coursework and internal assessments, so different to GCSEs. However, the results will be issued at the same time as the GCSE results are issued.

What Evidence is used in the TAG?

Ofqual have confirmed that the exam boards will be asking teachers to assess the standard at which students are performing based only on what they have been taught to determine students' grades. Teachers' judgements will be based on a range of evidence relating to the subject content that teachers have delivered, either in the classroom or via remote learning. The process to calculate your TAG will be robust and thorough, as it was last year.

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 disability or are entitled to any access arrangements e.g. extra time, scribe, reader etc.

Will I be told the TAG submitted?

Teachers will tell you which pieces of work will count towards your grade, before your grade is submitted to the exam board. You will not be informed of the TAG submitted, as it will be subject to a review by the exam board so the final TAG may go down as well as up.

I have not finished the Course – is it a problem?

We know that some of you may be worried that you have not covered all the content for a particular subject. There is no set requirement about the minimum amount of content that should be taught or assessed, but Ofqual have asked schools to confirm that you have been taught enough content so that you can progress to the next stage of your education.

I have not finished my Non-Exam Assessment (NEA)

Work on your non-exam assessment (NEA) work or coursework, wherever possible, should continue. Teachers will mark your NEA and it will contribute to your overall grade, whether or not it has been completed.

Art and Design, English Language and Modern Foreign Languages

Specifically, for GCSE Art and Design, your grade will be based on your portfolio only, whether or not you have finished your portfolio.

For GCSE English language and GCSE modern foreign languages, the school will submit a separate grade or result for the spoken language based on work that you have completed.

Can I appeal?

There will be an appeal process if you are unhappy with a grade that was submitted by the school. In the first instance, the school will check whether an administrative error had been made. If you believe your grade should be higher and you have evidence, you could possibly appeal. The appeal would need to be supported by the school, but we are awaiting further clarification.

Can I request Special Consideration?

During an exam season there are times where a student is disadvantaged either through illness, injury, personal or family issues. In these circumstances, provided we have some evidence, the school can submit a request to the exam board to consider special consideration for that student, Special consideration is granted at the exam board's discretion, and the school is not informed of their decision.

The exam board can award between 0% and 5%, the highest awarded if a parent has died or is terminally ill. Typically, it is either 1% or 2%.

If you feel that you have grounds to be considered for special consideration please contact Mrs Campbell, the Exams Officer, providing details.

If you qualify for special consideration your TAG will be adjusted accordingly.

Is there an opportunity to resit?

As last year, we are anticipating that there may be an opportunity to resit GCSE examinations in November. We are awaiting further confirmation from the exam boards on how the resits, if any, will be administered, and in which subjects they will be offering resit examinations.

When is Results Day?

The date the GCSE Examination results will be issued have been brought forward to Thursday 12 August 2021. Usually, the school is open between 11am and 12 noon to collect your results. Further details on results day will be issued nearer the time.

Any exam results not collected on results day will be posted to the student's home address that day, so please notify the school of your new address if you move.