

2021 GCSE Assessment Guidance

This document should be considered a 'live' document that will be updated as Ofqual and Examination Boards add new information regarding 2021 GCSE assessments. This document can be found on our website under the exam tab and will be updated regularly.

Introduction

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, extraordinary examination arrangements are in place for awarding GCSE grades to students in the summer of 2021 (See figure 1 below).

How GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded in summer 2021

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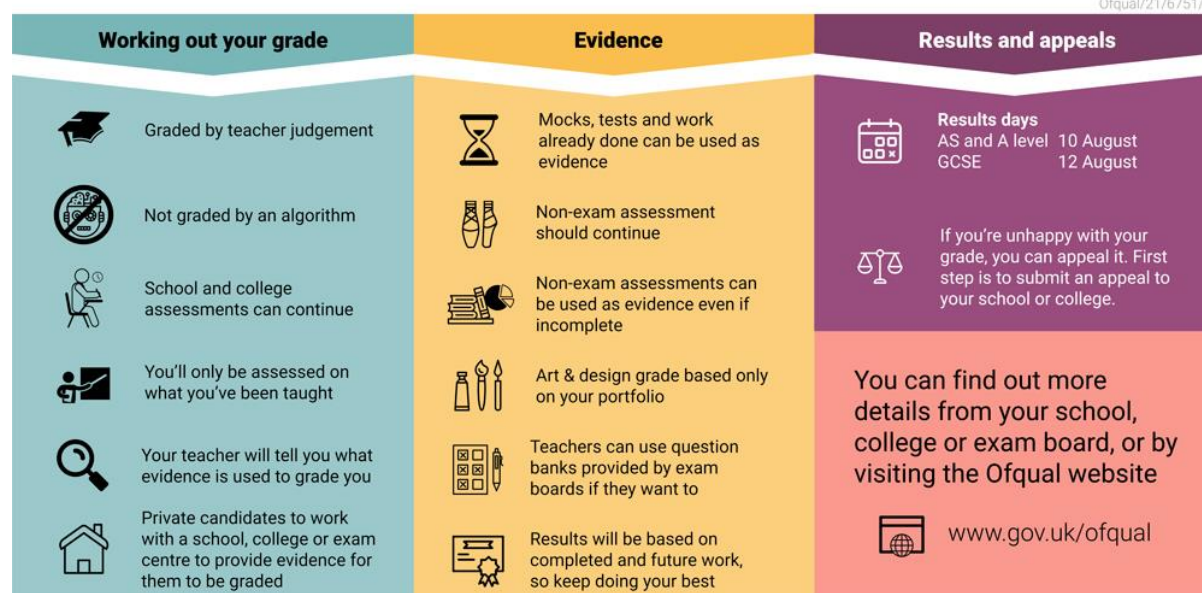


Figure 1

The College will use students' work to put forward as evidence to allow **exam boards to award** each student a grade for the different subjects they are entered for. Working within the guidance and frameworks set out by exam boards, the College will use an evidence base that is appropriate to the particular subject and provides the best means of assessing student performance in that subject. Whilst class work and past assessment points will contribute to the subject evidence base for all subjects, each subject has set out key assessments that will be used in grade decisions. The College will consider a wide range of evidence for each student before submitting a final recommendation for a grade.

Assessment schedules

Our teachers have designed an assessment schedule for each GCSE class which clearly highlights when upcoming assessments are and how to revise for these. These assessments will provide formalised opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a subject and for teachers to gather a broad base of evidence that can be moderated across all students studying that subject. All these assessment schedules are available to students and parents on the course page on 'itslearning.'

Moderation of grades

Key assessments, undertaken by all students studying that subject, will be moderated by subject specialist teachers to ensure consistency of assessment and grading for all students entered for the examination. Moderation will be conducted in line with guidance and exemplar material issued from exam boards and, where appropriate, using materials set by the exam board. External moderation will also happen with other schools where possible. Final quality assurance of subject moderation will be undertaken by the member of the Senior Leadership Team with line management responsibility for that subject.

Sharing of final grades with students

After each assessment teachers will share an overview of how the student has performed but this does not mean they will give the student a grade. The student could be given a numerical or percentage score. These assessments will then go through a rigorous internal and external quality assurance process over the coming weeks. The government will be issuing 'national standards' in April which all assessments will need to be moderated against. **Final submission grades will not be shared with students.** Ofqual have stipulated that the sharing of final grade decisions with students must not happen and if this happens this will be deemed exam malpractice.

Awarding of GCSE grades and Results Day 2021

GCSE Results Day is Thursday 12th August 2021. Further details of how students grades will be released closer to the time.

Appeals Process 2021

All students have the right to appeal against the grade they have been awarded. An initial appeal would be made to the College. The College will check for errors and ensure its own processes were followed. If the student wishes to take the appeal further, it must be made to the exam board. The exam board will then review the College's processes and the evidence used to decide the grade. **During the appeals process, the grade awarded to the student could go up or down.**

November examination series

There will be a November exam series available for students who wish to sit a formal examination in their subject. Further details will be made available at a later date.

Frequently Asked Questions for students (FAQs)

Will my grade be lower than if there had been no national lockdown?

No. We have many years of experience tracking students' progress through KS3 and then during the GCSEs. We also know exactly which topics were taught in College and which topics have been covered through home learning. Combining all of this knowledge together, we can ensure your grades are not lower because of the national lockdowns.

Will I know in advance what I am going to be assessed on?

Yes. We won't share the exact questions with you but we will share what topics will be assessed in advance of any assessment.

Will the assessment tasks use exam questions?

Probably, yes. Don't forget, you have spent years preparing for the GCSE exams and you are familiar with the style of exam board questions. It seems fairer to use questions that will feel familiar rather than assessing you with completely different types of questions or tasks.

Will assessments happen in the exam hall?

No, all assessments will be done in the classroom

So, do teachers award the grade?

Simply: no. The grade students achieve will start with their teacher's assessment of their performance across a range of evidence. This is against a nationally-defined standard, not the teacher's own opinion. This assessment is then subject to both internal and external quality assurance before the final grade is awarded by the exam body as usual.

Can students and parents make the case for why a student should get a higher grade?

Our teachers are already using their professional expertise to assess students on the content they have been taught. Teachers are unable to submit higher grades for students unless they have the evidence that they are **consistently working at this level**. If teachers submit higher grades without evidence, they are committing exam malpractice.

In 2021, any undue pressure by student or parent on teachers to increase grades will be considered **exam malpractice**. If students or parents are found to be putting teachers or leaders under undue pressure to increase grades, then this matter will be referred to the exam boards and an investigation into malpractice may ensue. This may result in the student's certificate being removed entirely if malpractice is deemed to have taken place.

What should students do to improve their grades?

The best thing students can do is to continue to attend classes, learn, act on feedback from their teachers, revise, and read around their subjects. Their grades will be based on their performance, and so their outcomes are ultimately in their hands.