# Exams and Assessments

The picture as to how grades will be awarded this year is becoming clearer, though many details are still being worked on. As you will no doubt already know, there will be no exams this year and no more formal assessments. This applies to GCSEs, A Levels and Applied General Qualifications (BTECs).

The process for calculating and awarding grades will be done according to the following general process:

* At a date in the future, yet to be determined but possibly as late as end of May or perhaps slightly beyond, teachers will be asked to estimate what grade they believe each of their students would have achieved.
* Further guidance will be issued on this and at the College we would apply our own quality and moderation processes to this. We would look to advise staff on what internal evidence they should include in making this determination.
* What is very clear is that the work that is currently being done remotely can form part of the evidence base from which teachers would make these assessments.
* It needs to be heavily stressed that this teacher assessment is **not necessarily** the grade a student will be awarded.
* These teacher assessments will be passed to the exam board who will them apply a range of additional evidence to them. That evidence would include the typical value added made at an institution. This would be applied at a subject level - in looking at this they will inevitably also be looking at the prior attainment of each student.
* For those unfamiliar with value added, it is a measure of how much progress a student makes at an institution. Each institution has individual data on this and these can be seen in the annually published performance tables provided by the DfE. At this College we have very strong value added and are typically at the top of the performance tables in the region. Simply put students make more progress here than is typical.
* As you can see the key information looked at would be:
  + The teacher’s assessment
  + The historic value added of the institution
  + The historic value added of each subject at the institution.
  + A students’ prior attainment
* For applied general qualifications (BTECs), coursework that has already been completed could also be included - the technicalities of this are still being worked on.
* Grades would be issued to students at some point in July 2020.
* These grades would carry the same legal status as grades awarded in previous years
* If a student was unhappy with their grade they have a number of options:
  + To quote a circular form the DfE - ‘If they do not believe the correct process has been followed they can appeal’. The word ‘process’ used here I expect is quite critical. Appeals will not be on the basis of a judgement made by the teacher or the information used by the board but merely if the correct process has been applied in a particular case. I expect appeal option will be very limited.
  + A student can opt to sit an exam in Autumn 2020 - the timing of this will depend on how the current situation unfolds but if done early enough there is the possibility that grades could be awarded in time for progression, perhaps a little late, to university that same term.
  + The exam could be take in summer 2021. It is not clear it this would be dependent on the student resitting their entire second year - that may or may not be available

## What should students do now

Students should do the remote work being set as well as they can. Doing well under these trying circumstances will provide additional evidence that can be used in making and substantiating teacher assessments.

What I want to stress very strongly is that students must not try and put pressure on teachers with regard to assessments. The College will ensure a fair and moderated process is in place and your teachers will make their assessments on the basis of the evidence available as to the quality of work you do and continue to do. Your teachers are very professional and highly ethical and, whilst wanting to do the best for you, will always do what is right.

Thank you for your continued support in these extraordinary circumstances.

Mike Kilbride

Principal

23-03-2020