

Frequently Asked Questions

How will grades be awarded this summer?

Grades for GCSEs, A levels, and most other qualifications including applied generals will be based on a process involving teacher assessment against national standards, internal quality assurance, and external quality assurance by the exam boards.

The national process defined by the Department for Education and the exams' regulator, Ofqual is as follows:

1. Teachers will **assess students against a national standard**, which will be defined by the exam boards before the Easter break.
2. Departments will submit grades which will be **quality assured by the school / college**. This internal quality assurance process will have to be signed off by the exam board to ensure it is rigorous and in line with national standards.
3. Our school or college results will be **quality assured externally** by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of our school or college's evidence.
4. If the exam boards are confident in our submitted results, **then the exam boards will award students their final grades**.
5. If students do not think their results are accurate, they will have the right to **appeal**.

How will schools and exam boards ensure results are fair?

The whole process of awarding teacher assessed grades will undertake a rigorous quality assurance process both within school and by exam boards. Exam boards will have the ability to adjust our grades if our process does not stand up to external scrutiny.

What will in school quality assurance consist of?

Firstly, assessment will be based on exam board materials and therefore the questions and mark schemes used have already undertaken a rigorous quality assurance process. Teachers will assess students against a national standard, which will be defined by exam boards. To ensure that marking of papers is consistent across staff, samples of papers will be moderated to ensure that mark schemes have been fairly and consistently applied.

Secondly, all grades must be agreed by a minimum of two staff, typically the class teacher and head of department. These will then also be analysed by the senior team.

Finally, the head of centre, must confirm that the grades are a true representation of student performance and more information related to this can be found in by following this link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/965648/6749-3_Summer_2021_GQs_-_Info_for_Heads_of_Centre.pdf

What will external, exam board quality assurance consist of?

All school and college results will be quality assured externally by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of our school evidence. If the exam boards are confident in our submitted results, then they will award students their final grades. Where the exam board have concerns, they may adjust the grades awarded by a school.

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.

Does this mean grades are decided by an algorithm?

No, unlike last year, students' grades will not be changed by a formula. The internal and external quality assurance measures will all be done by humans, not an algorithm. There is no limit on the achievement of students, providing they have evidence that they are working at that grade.

What about loss of learning / impact of Covid?

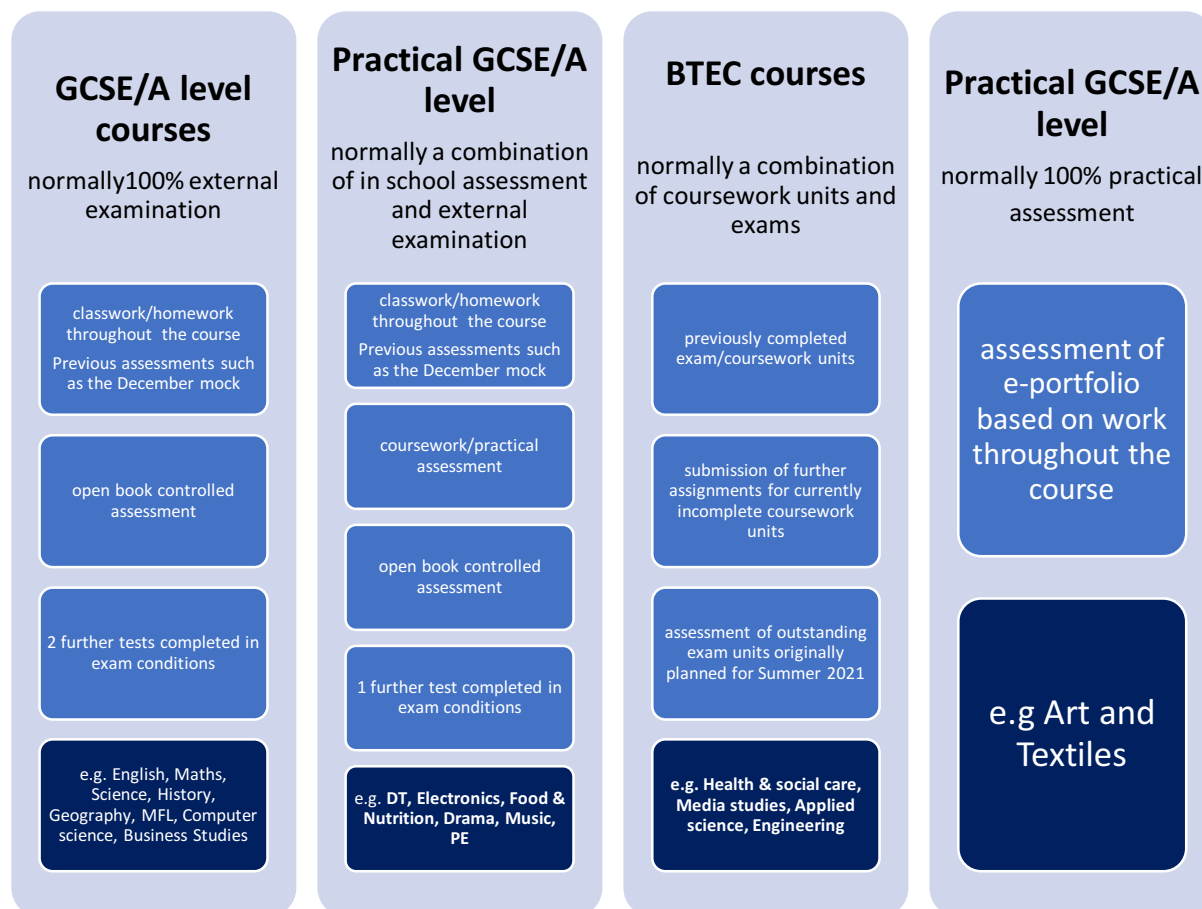
This year, teachers will only assess students on content they have been taught – because of the continued disruption of the pandemic. This means students will not be disadvantaged if they individually, their whole class or whole year group have been unable to complete their full course. However, grades can only be submitted on the basis of the evidence we have of students' performance, even if that evidence covers less of the course than usual. Students who would usually have extra time in the exams will benefit from the same arrangements in teacher assessment.

Will grades be different between different schools and colleges?

No, the standard against which teachers will be assessing students is set nationally by the exam boards. This is the standard that will be used during external quality assurance and appeals to ensure consistency and fairness across the system.

What evidence will be used?

The infographic below outlines the evidence that will contribute to the awarding of grades.



The exam boards are only giving out past papers, how is this fair?

Most of the assessments provided by the exam boards will be drawn from past papers, although there will be new questions as well. There is significant research that even if students have seen assessments questions before, it does not reduce the validity of the assessment. Furthermore, exam board questions are only one of the many pieces of evidence we will use to assess students this summer.

Will everyone sit the same papers?

Schools can select the materials and papers they use, but quality assurance will take place as outlined above. Students within our school on the same course and tier of entry will sit the same papers for fairness.

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 2020, any undue pressure by student or parent who placed undue pressure on teachers to increase grades was also considered exam malpractice. It is likely to be the same for 2021. 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.

Can students discuss their grades with teachers?

Teachers will be able to discuss which evidence they are using to inform their judgement. However, we are not allowed to disclose their final submitted grade we give to the exam board.

Students should not attempt to second-guess the grade submitted, as teachers will be using a range of evidence to inform their final judgement. Students must not pressure teachers to reveal the grades they are submitting, or to increase the grades, as doing so may be considered exam malpractice.

Will my child be given their mock papers or assessments?

All completed assessments will be stored securely in school should we need to submit them to the exam board as evidence during the external quality assurance process.

What if my child is unable to complete all of the assessments?

We are using a range of evidence completed at different points throughout the course. If a child is absent for an assessment they will be given a further opportunity to complete this assessment. Should a child not complete all of the assessments we will use the evidence available to make a judgement.

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 subject. Their grade will be based on their performance, and so their outcomes are ultimately in their hands.

When will student receive their results?

A level results will be issued on 10th August and GCSE results on 12th August. More details will be shared closer to the results dates.

When is my child's last day in school?

This date is yet to be confirmed as we are awaiting confirmation from the DFE. We will be looking to run transition activities for students progressing from year 11 into post 16 studies, to ensure they are prepared.

