



PRINCIPAL'S BULLETIN

Thursday 3rd December

HNC responds to 2021 exam announcements

The announcements

Today the DfE announced that A Level and GCSE exams will go ahead in 2021, with the following adjustments to try to make them fairer:

- exams delayed by three weeks to enable three more weeks to catch up on lost learning due to Covid-19
- minor changes to the content to be examined in some subjects
- advance notice of some content to be examined in January 2021
- exam aids such as formula sheets to be permitted
- exam papers to be spaced 14 days apart, so that most students will be able to sit at least one paper per qualification, even if required to self-isolate during the exam period. A grade will be calculated from the paper sat.
- clinically extremely vulnerable students will be able to sit exams at home, under invigilation
- students who miss all the papers in a qualification will be given a special paper in July. Their grade will be calculated from this paper.
- in extreme cases, where a student misses every exam opportunity, a Teacher Assessed Grade based on a rank order of their students will be used
- final grades to be in line with the generous 2020 grades

Pearson are planning to draft similar adjustments for BTEC.

Principal's response

These adjustments are welcome, and whilst they make the exams next summer a little bit fairer, they do not make them fair.

They fail to address the big issue of differential learning because of the differential impact of Covid-19 on individual students living in different parts of the country.

It is a fact that some individual students have missed more learning than other students simply because of where they live. As a College in a Tier 3 area, we are fully aware of this fact.

The adjustments announced today apply to all students, and will simply serve to advantage most those students who live in the parts of the country least affected by Covid-19.

Unless this differential learning issue is addressed, these exams will not and cannot be fair.

We are pleased to see that the government has recognised this and intends to set up an Expert Group to look at this issue.

How you can help

As a College community we must do everything we can to make sure this Expert Group ensures a fair exam outcome for all.

We can start by letting our local MP know how important it is for our students at Huddersfield New College that the issue of differential learning is resolved by this Expert Group before next summer by contacting our local MPs.





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The contact details for the local MPs in Kirklees and Calderdale are:

Kirklees

Huddersfield: Barry Sheerman MP: sheermanb@parliament.uk

Colne Valley: Jason McCartney MP: jason.mccartney.mp@parliament.uk

Batley & Spen: Tracey Brabin MP: tracy.brabin.mp@parliament.uk

Dewsbury: Mark Eastwood MP: mark.eastwood.mp@parliament.uk

Calderdale

Halifax: Holly Lynch MP: holly.lynch.mp@parliament.uk

Calder Valley: Craig Whittaker MP: craig.whittaker.mp@parliament.uk

Thank you in anticipation of your support with this. Living in Kirklees or Calderdale during a global pandemic should not affect your life chances more than those of your peers living in different parts of the country. We need to do everything we can to make sure that this is not the case.

Angela Williams
Principal

