



Holy Family Catholic High School

Virgin's Lane, Thornton, Liverpool L23 4UL.
Tel: 0151 924 6451 Fax: 0151 932 1417
Headteacher: Mr M Symes BA(Hons), NPQH

Wednesday, March 03, 2021

Dear Pupil and Parent,

Summer 2021: How qualifications will be graded (overview)

The Government and Ofqual have announced their plans for how grades will be awarded this summer. This is an overview of how qualifications will be graded. At the end of this letter is more detailed information about the process and links to the relevant publications.

Grades

- Grades will be awarded by the school using a range of evidence gathered throughout the course. This will include teacher judgement using assessments, homework, coursework, mock exams and tasks that have already been completed, as well as past unit exam scores.
- Your child received their report in December which indicated of how well they were performing in each of their subjects at that time.
- School must submit grades by Friday 18th June (two weeks after May half-term).
- Exam boards will check random samples if they have specific concerns about unusual results. They can investigate and change grades.
- A Level results day is **Tuesday 10th August**.
- GCSE results day is **Thursday 12th August**.

We will be using a range of evidence which will be moderated to assess each child's performance in their subjects, just as we did for their report grade at Christmas. Performance in mock exams will also be a way for pupils to provide the evidence they need to secure or improve on their current grades.

Mocks

- Originally, pupils were going to sit their mock exams in January.
- Before Christmas and during lockdown, teachers have provided revision lists/materials and delivered lessons/assignments designed to prepare our pupils for their mock exams when they return to school.
- To give pupils the best chance to provide evidence to secure and possibly improve on their grades, we are going to stagger their mocks and provide them with at least two opportunities to sit mock exams over the coming weeks and months. We believe that this staggered approach will allow for better preparation and revision.
- Pupils will only be assessed on work that they have been taught.
- The mock exams, and any evidence produced from now, provide an opportunity to secure or improve on their current grades.

Mock 1 (mostly week beginning 22nd March, a small number of GCSE exams will be on Thursday 18th and Friday 19th March). Two weeks after we return to school pupils will sit one mock exam in their GCSE/A Level subjects. This will give them enough time to prepare and revise.

Mock 2/3 (week beginning 26th April) – Two weeks after we return from Easter pupils will sit the second/third papers in their GCSE/A Level subjects. Some subjects will have three mock papers. This again will give them enough time to reflect on any feedback from Mock 1, and revise and prepare for Mock 2/3.

Optional resit mocks / mini-assessments – We will also provide our pupils with more opportunities in May/June. Optional resit mocks will be offered for those who want a chance to provide evidence to secure or improve their grades. Again, these will be fully moderated to ensure that the award of grades is fair and accurate. By offering an optional resit we are giving our pupils every chance to prove themselves. The exam boards are also providing schools with ‘mini-assessments’ that can also be used to provide evidence of their performance.

Vocational Subjects – Different exam boards (Edexcel/BTEC, OCR, WJEC) are taking slightly different approaches and it is not yet clear what evidence they require from schools. As soon as we know more we will share it with you all. In the meantime, please keep providing any evidence that your teachers ask for.

What to do next?

- Keep working hard and prepare for your mocks and/or provide the evidence that your teachers need for any of your vocational subjects.
- The mock exams, and any evidence that you produce, provide an opportunity to secure or improve on your current grades, especially if you feel you can improve on the grades that you got at Christmas.

You had the opportunity to discuss your child’s grades and specific strategies and areas for improvement in each subject at parents evening last week. In the meantime, try not to worry, continue to work hard and try your best over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Symes

Summer 2021 Grading: How qualifications will be graded (in more detail)

The Government and Ofqual (the qualifications, examinations and assessments regulator) have announced their plans for grading GCSEs, A Levels and Vocational & Technical Qualifications (VTQs) this summer. The guidance that schools and colleges will be required to follow is designed to ensure pupils receive grades that are fair and enable them to progress to the next stage of their education, employment or training. Outlined below is a summary of the information published by Ofqual and at the end of this letter you will find links to the relevant publications

for GCSEs, A Levels and VTQs. In addition, I have enclosed with this letter two helpful infographics that concisely set out the key points.

How pupils will be assessed

- Pupils will be assessed only on the curriculum content they have been taught.
- Pupils' grades will reflect the standard at which they are currently working (rather than predicting how they would have performed if they had sat examinations).
- Evidence from pupils' performance throughout their courses may be used to inform assessed grades.
- Teachers will draw on a broad range of evidence when making judgements about grades.
- For subjects with non-examination assessment (for example, coursework or practical components) this will be internally marked (but not moderated by the examination boards) and will provide evidence to support grading.
- The examination boards will provide schools with additional assessments (past paper questions and unpublished questions) for all subjects which they may choose to use in class to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding of content they have been taught.
- For pupils in receipt of access arrangements, they will be applied to any assessments taken during the remainder of the spring term and the summer term.
- GCSE and A Level Art grades will be determined entirely on portfolio work.
- Pupils will continue to receive an endorsement (separate to their grade) for GCSE English Language (Speaking), GCSE Modern Languages (Speaking) and A Level Sciences (Practical).
- The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) will be graded using a similar process to GCSEs and A Levels.

Quality Assurance

- Schools and colleges will be required to implement internal quality assurance procedures, including considering how this year's grades compare with outcomes for cohorts from previous years who sat examinations.
- Examination boards will conduct their own quality assurance, checking a sample of schools and colleges to ensure their internal quality assurance systems are effective.
- Examination boards will only issue results once they are satisfied by the quality assurance process and they may make changes to grades if they determine that they are not a 'reasonable exercise of academic judgement'.
- The Head of Centre (Headteacher) will be required to sign a declaration confirming that the requirements for internal quality assurance have been met.

Appeals

- Whilst we hope this will not be necessary, pupils will be able to appeal against their grades.

- They may request that the school checks for an administrative or procedural error.
- If pupils believe a grade is wrong, they may request an appeal is submitted to the examination board by school on their behalf and the examination board will determine whether the grade issued represents a 'reasonable exercise of academic judgement'.
- A grade may go up or down at appeal.
- Ofqual will consult at a later stage on whether to offer an Autumn examination series.

Vocational & Technical Qualifications (VTQs)

- An approach similar to grading GCSEs and A levels will be adopted for VTQs such as BTECs.
- Teachers will make informed judgements on the grades pupils will receive using a variety of evidence, including performance in tasks or assessments that have already been completed.

Additional links:

- [DfE / Ofqual Awarding qualifications in Summer 2021](#)
- [Consultation decisions GCSEs and A Levels](#)
- [Consultation decisions VTQs](#)



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



Ofqual/21/6751/2

Working out your grade



Graded by teacher judgement



Not graded by an algorithm



School and college assessments can continue



You'll only be assessed on what you've been taught



Your teacher will tell you what evidence is used to grade you



Private candidates to work with a school, college or exam centre to provide evidence for them to be graded

Evidence



Mocks, tests and work already done can be used as evidence



Non-exam assessment should continue



Non-exam assessments can be used as evidence even if incomplete



Art & design grade based only on your portfolio



Teachers can use question banks provided by exam boards if they want to



Results will be based on completed and future work, so keep doing your best

Results and appeals



Results days

AS and A level 10 August
GCSE 12 August



If you're unhappy with your grade, you can appeal it. First step is to submit an appeal to your school or college.

You can find out more details from your school, college or exam board, or by visiting the Ofqual website



www.gov.uk/ofqual

How vocational and technical qualifications will be awarded in 2021



Ofqual/21/6751/1

Qualifications most similar to GCSEs and A levels

e.g. BTECs and OCR Cambridge Technicals



Taken only in schools or colleges



Do not assess occupational skills

Qualifications not similar to GCSEs or A levels

e.g. Functional skills and ESOL Skills for Life



Taken in schools, colleges or other places



Do not assess occupational skills

Qualifications with occupational skills or proficiency assessments

e.g. construction, plumbing and electrical qualifications



Taken in schools, colleges or other places



Assess occupational skills

Your results



Graded by teacher or lecturer judgement



Various sources of evidence used



Results no later than for GCSEs and A levels

Your results



Assessments should continue where possible



May be awarded using other evidence or judgements



Awarding organisations decide the evidence needed

Your results



Assessments can continue as normal where possible



Assessments may be delayed



Assessments can be adapted if needed

Visit www.gov.uk/ofqual or search 'Ofqual 2021 qualification explainer tool' for specific details (coming soon)