

Update on the current situation regarding the awarding of GCSE and Vocational qualifications this summer for students in Year 11.

There has been much media speculation as to the workings of the system to allocate grades and mention of some forms of external examination potentially going ahead. This uncertainty is difficult for parents and carers and especially for the children for whom these qualifications represent the culmination of years of study.

A joint consultation from Ofqual and the DFE has taken place. Following the consultation, the Secretary of State for Education is expected to announce at the end of February the detailed plans for the awarding of qualifications this summer. It is important to acknowledge that these plans will remain fluid and will adapt and change in line with any subsequent guidance released from the Department for Education and the ability to act within the limitations placed upon us by the spread of the virus.

Whilst the picture surrounding external terminal exams in the summer remains unclear, it is important that students work towards a final assessment point/exam. Current indications suggest that this may be a paper provided by the examination boards which will then be marked internally, however it could equally be devised by the school and moderated externally. Whatever the exact form this takes, this will provide the opportunity for students to experience a form of terminal exam even if it will be used alongside other assessment methods to determine a calculated grade. For portfolio based Vocational courses coursework portfolios must still be completed by students for the qualifications to be awarded.

It is vitally important that Year 11 students complete as much work as possible and to the absolute best of their ability to provide hard evidence to support any Centre Assessed Grades. Hard evidence includes completed classwork, coursework, mock exams, and assessments. This also includes any classwork and assessments that are set as remote learning. Without sufficient hard evidence provided by the student schools will be unable to provide Centre Assessed Grades and qualifications will not be awarded.

The courses that students are undertaking include important knowledge, understanding and skills necessary both for progression onto further study and for life beyond school. Students in Year 11 must maximise their efforts and engagement throughout the remainder of the course, both to ensure an accurate assessment and that they continue to develop as learners.

We will of course inform you if there are any changes or developments as soon as possible.