



Dear Parents/Carers and Our Year 11 Students,

There has been a lot of talk across the Media about what will replace the cancelled GCSE exams this summer. We understand that the communications that we are all receiving is complex in places and frustrating; we all want to know what the final plans are for our students. **We should also emphasise that the proposals do include testing of some kind for all students.** There is, alongside GCSEs, an ongoing consultation for all Vocational and BTEC qualifications.

Schools and stakeholders have been asked to complete a consultation about the potential processes that will be used as a replacement to the GCSEs, in order to award students their final grades. We would encourage you to read the consultation paper; it can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/953000/6743-1\\_GCSE\\_AS\\_and\\_A\\_level\\_grades\\_should\\_be\\_awarded\\_in\\_summer\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/953000/6743-1_GCSE_AS_and_A_level_grades_should_be_awarded_in_summer_2021.pdf)

As a school, we want to ensure that we continue to communicate with you about this, and update you when we are able to. So, following this introduction are key pieces of information about the proposed changes and processes for the awarding of our students' grades. We would encourage to read these so that you are informed and updated. We will work with you throughout the next few months to ensure that your child is supported.



## **Proposals – how will grades be determined?**

Grades this year should be based on teachers' assessments of the evidence of the standard at which their students are performing ... and should indicate their demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills.

Teachers should assess students on the areas of content they have covered and can demonstrate their ability, while ensuring sufficient breadth of content coverage so as not to limit progression.

Teachers should be able to use evidence of the standard of a student's performance from throughout their course (including NEA).

A breadth of evidence should inform a teacher's assessment of their student's deserved grade.

## **Proposals – how will grades be standardised within and across institutions?**

Exam boards could provide papers that teachers could use to assess their students – ***consultation is asking whether the use of these papers should be optional or mandatory.***

Papers would be marked by teachers.

Exam boards could also sample teachers' marking as part of the external quality assurance arrangements and to seek to ensure this was comparable across different types of school and college.

The set of papers provided by the exam boards should cover a reasonable proportion of the content and teachers should also have some choice of the topics on which their students could answer questions. Students should be assessed across a range of content.

Teachers should record the evidence on which they base their decision for each student.

## **Proposals – the use of Non-Exam Assessments (NEA)**

Teachers should take account of the standard of the student's non-exam assessment in their final assessment.

Students should not be penalised if they have been unable to complete their non-exam assessment for reasons beyond their control.

Teachers should mark non-exam assessments, however the exam boards should not be required to moderate their marking this year.

## **Proposals – the use of other performance evidence**

If teachers do not use the exam board set papers, or even where they do, they should use additional ways to assess students and to gather evidence of the standard at which their students are performing.

Where teachers devise their own assessment materials, they should be comparable in demand to the papers provided by the exam boards.

Teacher devised assessments used to support the final assessment should be used at the same time as the exam board papers would be taken.

**We** propose that other sources of performance evidence could include:

- formal tests
- mock examination results
- substantial candidate work (which relates to the qualification specification, and where the school or college are confident it was completed without support/external support)

## Proposals – Appeals

**Teachers should not tell students the grade they have submitted to the exam boards on their behalf.**

Once results have been issued, a student who believes their teacher has made an error when they assessed their performance in 2021, should be able to appeal to their school or college on that basis. The appeal process should include a:

- Review of marked papers
- Review of NEA
- Review of any other evidence used to support submitted grade decision

The outcome of the teacher assessment should only be changed if the person undertaking the appeal found that the outcome was not legitimate.

A student should also be able to appeal further to the exam board (on the grounds that the school or college had not acted in line with the exam board's procedural requirements).

## Timeline

- **Jan - May** - Students continue their academic studies
- **May/Early June** - Teachers make final assessments about students' performance (possibly through use of a selection of exam board provided papers)
- **Early - Mid June** - Papers marked, internal quality assurance process, grade evidence organised and recorded
- **Mid June** - Grades submitted to exam boards
- **June** - External quality assurance by exam boards throughout June
- **Early July** - Results released to students
- **July onwards** - Appeals process





As we said in our letter on the 5th January, 2021, please continue to ensure that your child turns up to all their online lessons, as per their normal school timetable, they should keep working hard and know that every piece of learning that they complete including their March mock exams, will still make a difference. Please take a look at the video created by PiXL which is on the next slide.

We would ask that if you have any questions, to please contact us at Beacon High and we will endeavour to answer the questions that we are able to, at this time.

Yours faithfully,

***E. Good***

Emma Good  
Deputy Headteacher

***M. Abdelmula***

Mohamed Abdelmula  
KS4 Director of Learning

