



Magna Academy

Poole

an Aspirations Academy

Principal: Ms N Ullah

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3rd March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing as a follow up to my letter dated Wednesday 27th January that explained the summer 2021 examinations for Year 11 and 13 were cancelled. I am now able to update you further as to how your child will be awarded their final qualification grades this summer.

On 6th January, the government confirmed that in summer 2021, students taking GCSE, AS and A levels regulated by Ofqual, should be awarded grades based on an assessment by their teachers. It has also been confirmed that this is also the same for vocational qualifications, such as BTEC's.

I have outlined below summary guidance, recently jointly produced by the Department for Education and Ofqual, explaining key aspects of how teachers will award grades for summer 2021.

Assessment evidence

Teachers will use a range of evidence to make a judgement of the grade students are performing at. Students will only be assessed on what they have been taught, ensuring sufficient coverage of the curriculum to enable progression. When determining the grade, teachers will reflect the standard at which the student is performing now, not their potential.

Teachers will use the time remaining to balance continued teaching with any assessments they want to undertake. Work done at home can be included as evidence to support a teacher's judgement if it cannot be produced in the academy environment because of the pandemic, and where teachers are confident that it is a student's own work. Therefore students who have actively engaged with their remote learning provide teachers with a wealth of evidence.

Types of assessment evidence

Teachers will use evidence to determine grades from across the duration of the student's course. It is recommend that a range of evidence is to be used from the list below, where available:

- past papers or similar exam board materials
- non-exam assessment (NEA) work (often referred to as coursework)
- classwork and homework (including what was completed during remote learning)

- progress checks and all other internal assessments taken by students
- mock exams taken over the course of study
- records of each student's progress and performance over the course of study

It is advised that schools should take into consideration the most recent student assessment evidence, as it is likely to be more representative of student performance, although there may be exceptions. The rationale behind this is that students will have a wider breath of knowledge, as they have had longer studying their courses. This will allow them to produce answers to examination questions to a higher standard, drawing on the breadth of knowledge and skills learnt.

The academy has to be confident that work produced is the student's own and that the student has not been given inappropriate levels of support to complete it, either in the academy, at home or with an external tutor.

Making grade judgements

Exam boards will publish guidance later this month, so teachers have detailed guidance on how to make fair and consistent judgements. Although exam boards are giving this guidance, we have already established very robust systems to ensure fair and consistent judgements. Exam boards will also provide schools with support, guidance, and training on how to minimise the risk of bias and malpractice, if required.

At Magna Academy we have in place a series of progress checks for Year 11 and 13 during the spring term, ensuring that the whole year group are assessed in each subject using the same examination materials. The only exceptions is some subjects are split into Higher and Foundation tiers, such as Maths, Science and MFL.

Quality assurance

Exam boards are still to publish requirements for schools' quality assurance processes. I would like to highlight again, that we already have a robust, trust wide process in place to support this. Exam boards will review all schools' quality assurance processes before schools submit their grades. The Principal will submit a declaration to the exam board confirming they have met the requirements for quality assurance.

As well as the checks of schools' quality assurance processes, exam boards will complete checks of the evidence for a sample of student grades in a sample of subjects, in a sample of schools over June and July. The exam boards will determine which schools they visit, and which students' evidence they review. The exam boards will decide whether the grades determined by the centre following quality assurance are a reasonable exercise of academic judgement of the students' demonstrated performance. If they do not find this to be the case, the exam boards will ask the school to investigate. Exam boards would only change a grade, if they are not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation or malpractice is found.



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Prior to this guidance being released, Aspirations Academies Trust that governs Magna Academy has already started to quality assure the standard of work that Year 11 and 13 are producing during the spring progress checks. The secondary academies within the Trust are moderating each other's completed progress check scripts. This process is looking to ensure that each academy for each subject is making accurate judgements of the standard of work produced. It is ensuring that the materials used for the progress check is in line with the examination specification, reflecting the same rigor you would expect to see in the final public examinations. The moderation process is also ensuring that the mark schemes are used appropriately and applied accurately, with the final judgement reflecting a fitting level of grade for the answers produced.

This is one example of Magna Academy's quality assurance procedures, ensuring we are assessing students' performance accurately. We will also follow the guidance set out by the exam boards, as explained above, once we have these details. This will give you reassurance that our judgements are sound and fair for all of our students. As they were found to be last year also.

Results days

Students will receive their results for A/AS levels on the 10th August and GCSEs on 12th August.

Following the release of results, there will be a window for students who believe their grade is wrong to raise an appeal. Exam boards will support schools and colleges in prioritising appeals where their outcome will determine a student's ability to progress to their next stage of education or training.

Appeals

Every student will have the right to appeal their grade if they so wish. Students will be able to appeal only over the process taken, not a teachers judgement of the grade. As stated previously this judgement will be based on a variety of evidence that the student has produced and this will be moderated across the Trust. **Appeals are not likely to lead to adjustments in grades where the original grade is a reasonable exercise of academic judgement supported by the evidence.** Grades can go up or down as the result of an appeal.

Finally

Our third set of progress checks will take place within the academy between Monday 22nd March and Friday 30th April. These will be conducted during normal timetabled lessons under examination conditions, and the schedule for these will be communicated with you shortly. This will be yet another opportunity for students to showcase what their capabilities are for each of their subjects.



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We will provide all students and their families with an update as to how students are progressing within each of their subjects on Wednesday 24th March. You will be able to login to Progresso on this date and see your child's latest academic report. This will outline the current grade that students are working at for each of their subjects. These are not their final centre assessed grades. Next week you will receive a letter to book a parents evening appointment for either Thursday 25th or Wednesday 31st March, to discuss these reports in more detail.

Mrs Cook has uploaded a video message to Year 11 in their tutor Google Classroom, talking through the key points of this letter. I will of course continue to communicate updates when and where appropriate.

Yours sincerely,



Mr A Potter
Vice Principal