

Briefing to Members and Senior Leaders

How GCSE and A Level results will be awarded in August 2021

The government announced on 26 February 2021 how schools should award teacher assessment grades for Year 11 and Year 13 students in schools. The full detail can be found at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/965005/6747-1_decisions - GQ consultation on awarding grades in 2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/965005/6747-1_decisions_-_GQ_consultation_on_awarding_grades_in_2021.pdf)

In addition, further guidance was issued on 25th March from the Joint Council on Qualifications about how schools will assign grades to students this year.

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JCQ-Guidance-on-the-Determination-of-Grades-for-A-AS-Levels-and-GCSEs-Summer-2021.pdf>

Summary of Content

- Teachers must assess their students' performance, only on what content has been delivered to them by their teachers, to determine the grade each student should receive.
- Teachers can use evidence of a student's performance from throughout the course to inform their judgement. This will also include any completed or incomplete coursework.
- Teachers should determine the grades as late in the academic year as is practicable, and not confined to a defined window, to enable teaching to continue for as long as possible. Schools will need to submit these in June 2021 with results being issued on 10 August (A Level) and 12 August (GCSE)
- Schools and colleges should use a broad range of evidence across the taught content to determine the grades before submitting the grades to the exam boards. Exam boards will provide additional guidance and exemplar material to help schools.
- Heads of centres will have to confirm that students have been taught sufficient content to allow progression to the next stage of their education. External private candidates who are not on roll in a school or college, will be offered an opportunity to submit work to approved centres for assessment.
- Overall, it will be no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular grade this year compared to previous years. Schools will be given supporting materials to help them make their grading decisions. This will include booklets of examination questions from past papers and new questions, along with mark schemes, that schools may choose to use to assess students in the Summer Term before the grades are to be submitted.
- Schools will need to use their historic performance data to ensure that their marking is not too harsh or too lenient. In addition exam boards will sample centre's marking in one or more subjects as an additional QA process.

- Schools will need to submit a Centre Assessment Policy to the exam boards, setting out the school's approach to assessment which will be scrutinised. Exam boards will contact centres where there are concerns or questions about this policy.
- All results will be signed off by the Head of the Centre to confirm that internal Quality Assurance processes have been undertaken.
- Exam Boards will randomly sample schools to quality assure assessments submitted after June 18 2021.
- Students will be able to appeal their grades. They will first ask their school to check if an administrative error has occurred and then if they choose to they can appeal directly to the exam board who will consider the evidence that the school used to assess the student's attainment. If the exam board thinks the grade should change then it will re-issue the new grade based on the evidence of student's work that the school provided them with. The exam board will also check that the school complied with its own process. Grades may go up or down following an appeal.
- Additional guidance will be provided for the award of additional vocational qualifications such as the BTEC. Again, these awards will be made based on teacher assessment of student's work and other assessment evidence.

Implications and Support for Salford Secondary Schools

- Schools have all been provided with the guidance from Ofqual and JCQI. They will need to make decisions on a subject-by-subject basis as to which evidence will be used to inform their overall assessment. An additional network meeting has been arranged by the secondary school improvement lead, to support curriculum and assessment leads.
- The majority of Salford secondary schools have already asked students to sit mock exams and further assessment is planned for the summer term. Some assessment and other tasks have already been completed remotely by students when they were working from home.
- Schools need to be as transparent as possible with students and parents in terms of what evidence is being considered for each subject. They should not tell parents or students the final grade that is being submitted, but they can tell them what grades individual work has been given. Schools will need to maintain clear records pertaining to evidence used and how mitigation for students with special needs or were ill was put in place. They will need to keep a copy of the evidence in case of appeal.

- As the majority of secondary schools are in Multi Academy Trusts or another collaborative arrangements, they are encouraged to use these networks to moderate their assessments internally across a group of schools prior to submitting them to the exam board. The LA is already supporting schools to broker moderation where it cannot be arranged internally within the trusts that schools work in.