



ALL Briefing No. 21

Date: April 2020

Theme: 2020 School Exams cancellation arrangements

Background:

This year's summer exam series in UK, including A levels, GCSEs and other qualifications, and all primary assessments have been cancelled to fight the spread of coronavirus.

On 20 March 2020 the DfE announced that the exam regulator, Ofqual, and exam boards would work with teachers to provide grades to students.

On 26 March Ofqual held a webinar for Subject Associations and on 3rd April published a news story and other documents on which this Briefing is based.

Key messages from the Ofqual news story:

The Department for Education have published a letter from the Secretary of State for Education directing ... Ofqual to make changes to allow students to receive calculated results for GCSEs, AS and A levels this year.

Extracts selected for their relevance to Languages teachers:

a) Providing of centre-based grades

For this summer's awards, schools and colleges are being asked to provide centre assessment grades for their students. These should be fair, objective and carefully considered judgements of the grades schools and colleges believe their students would have been most likely to achieve if they had sat their exams, and should take into account the full range of available evidence ... schools and colleges are best placed to judge the likely performance of their students at the end of the course.

Exam boards will be contacting ... exam centres after Easter asking them to submit, by a deadline that will be no earlier than 29 May 2020, the following:

- a centre assessment grade for every student in each of their subjects: that is, the grade they would be most likely to have achieved if they had sat their exams and completed any non-exam assessment.

Judgements should balance different sources of evidence such as:

- classwork
- bookwork
- any non-exam assessment – whether or not complete
- the results of any assignments or mock exams
- previous examination results – for example, for any re-sitting students or those with relevant AS qualifications
- any other records of student performance over the course of study
- the rank order of students within each grade for each subject – for example, for all those students with a centre assessment grade of 5 ... a rank order where 1 is the most secure/highest attaining student, and so on ... a declaration from the Head of Centre making the submission ... *(more detail in the full news item.)*

b) Private Candidates

... Heads of centre have been asked to provide centre assessment grades for private candidates registered ... We are urgently exploring whether there are alternative options for students who need results this summer to progress and for whom a centre assessment grade is not possible... *(more detail in the full news item.)*

c) Standardisation by Exam boards

To make sure that grades are as fair as possible across schools and colleges, exam boards will put all centre assessment grades through a process of standardisation using a model being developed with Ofqual. We will consult on the principles of our model shortly ... *(more detail in the full news item.)*

Schools and colleges ... must not share their centre assessment grades with students, parents or carers ... until after final results are issued ...

... results won't be delayed after the dates they were expected in August and ideally will be released a little earlier, so students can have the certainty they need.

We will consult on proposals for specific appeal arrangements soon.

Students will also have the opportunity to sit exams at the earliest reasonable opportunity in the new academic year ...

d) Other qualifications

... students ... taking other general and vocational or technical qualifications ... While this process does not apply ... the same aims apply. We are working as quickly as possible to develop an approach and we will provide further information as soon as we can.

OFQUAL's letter to students reiterates the information above and adds potential FAQ responses of which these are extracts:

Do I need to complete any new work for my school/college to submit a grade?

Your school or college is not required to set additional mock exams or homework for your centre assessment grade, and you won't be disadvantaged if you were not set, or were unable to complete, any work given out after schools were closed.

Can I see the grades my school/college submits for me? *No, this information will be confidential ...*

I am a private candidate – what does this mean for me? *... the centre you are entering with should include you where the head teacher or principal is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of your achievement to make an objective judgement ...*

Please be reassured that the grades you get this summer will look exactly the same as in previous years, and they will have equal status with universities, colleges and employers, to help you move forward in your lives as planned.

References :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced>

Other pdf documents from OFQUAL on links from same url.

Information for Heads of Centre, Heads of Department and teachers,
Guidance for teachers, students, parents and carers.

The earlier DfE Press Release stated:

Ofqual will develop and set out a process that will provide a calculated grade to each student which reflects their performance as fairly as possible, and will work with the exam boards to ensure this is consistently applied for all students. The exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead.

... if they do not feel their calculated grade reflects their performance, (students) will have the opportunity to sit an exam at the earliest reasonable opportunity, once schools are open again. Students will also have the option to sit their exams in summer 2021.

The Government will not publish any school or college level educational performance data based on tests, assessments or exams for 2020.

University representatives have confirmed that they expect universities to be flexible and do all they can to support students and ensure they can progress to higher education.

Points for reflection / action:

Colleagues involved in these arrangements will wish to clarify with senior colleagues the approach being taken, and the information available.

You may wish to read the whole of the Ofqual documentation from the url above, especially if involved in disseminating information to parents, students, governors or others.

You may be keen to respond to any consultation that Ofqual puts in place (or be informed of it) in which case ALL Members can look out for information in ALLNet messages.

This Briefing has been prepared by volunteers from the ALL Council and is for the benefit of ALL members.

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