

**THE BLANDFORD
SCHOOL**

**Student and Parent
Guide to
Awarding Grades**

Summer 2021

INTRODUCTION FROM OFQUAL

The government has said that many exams and assessments cannot be held fairly this year as a result of the disruption students have faced due to the pandemic.

Your teachers will instead submit grades to the exam boards, based on their assessment of what you have shown you know and can do, enabling you to progress to the next stage of your education, training, or employment.

This guide outlines the arrangements in place for awarding grades in summer 2021, and where you can go for additional information.

How GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded in summer 2021: a summary

How your grade will be determined

- graded by teacher judgement, with grades signed off by your head of department and your head teacher or principal before being submitted to the exam board
- not graded by an algorithm
- school and college assessments can continue - your school or college will let you know the timings of any assessments
- you'll only be assessed on what you've been taught
- your school or college will tell you the evidence they will use to determine your grade y you will not be told what grade has been submitted for you

How Vocational and Technical qualifications will be awarded in summer 2021: a summary

Your results will be:

- determined by teacher or lecturer judgement
- based on evidence of your performance, such as course work and any tasks or exams completed
- issued no later than for GCSEs and A levels

You will be eligible for a result based partly or totally on a teacher-assessed grade. Your teacher or lecturer will make an informed judgement on your result using a variety of evidence, such as any assessments that have already been completed.

As with GCSE and A-levels, these judgements will be quality assured within school, and then by the awarding organisation that you are registered with before you get your result. Examples of these types of qualification are BTECs (Pearson) and OCR Cambridge Technicals in subjects such as business, digital media and health & social care.

You should receive your results at the same time as GCSEs and A levels results.

DELIBERATIONS

What are teachers doing now?

Teachers are now involved in intensive discussions regarding the grade they believe the evidence shows you to be working at. In addition to the evidence, teachers are also consulting the guidance laid out by JCQ and Ofqual, as well as further documents on standardising work and expected levels of performance at each grade.

What is important to emphasise is that teachers can only make judgements on the evidence they have. Teachers cannot base any decision on what they think you may have achieved had exams taken place.

Teachers are taking into consideration:

- evidence about your performance throughout your course
- more recent evidence as it is likely to be more representative of student performance, although there may be exceptions
- any circumstances that may require reasonable adjustments

Students who are entitled to reasonable adjustments

We have a responsibility to put in place reasonable adjustments for eligible students. If some of the evidence has been produced without a reasonable adjustment in place, your teachers should take that into account when determining your teacher-assessed grade. More recent assessments should have already had reasonable adjustments built into them.

Taking exceptional circumstances into account

If you suffered a bereavement, for example, or there were other factors outside your control that might have impacted on your performance when producing evidence, we will also make reasonable adjustments in line with the *JCQ Guide to the Special Consideration Process*.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

We, and the exam boards, will carry out checks to make sure that the necessary guidance has been followed when submitting your grades.

We have our own policy, available on the website, that sets out how we will determine grades this year. The exam boards have reviewed our policy and found no issue with our planned procedures.

We have begun our own quality assurance of your grade, which includes training for teachers on marking assessments accurately, standardisation between teachers and moderating work with other schools where appropriate. No teacher will decide your grade in isolation. Your evidence and final grade is part of a much bigger process.

Mrs Wilson will submit a declaration to the exam board confirming we have met the requirements set by the exam boards when determining your grade and kept to the demands of our policy.

Once the exam boards receive the teacher-assessed grades they will ask us to send them samples of student work. Exam board subject experts, made up of experienced examiners, will review the evidence. The exam boards will also look at our historical results and compare our teacher assessed grades to these. Where grades are much higher or much lower than in previous years, exam boards may seek further evidence.

In these sample checks, exam boards will check that the academic judgement has been reasonable when deciding grades. If the exam board is concerned this isn't the case, they will ask us to look into this and we may be asked to resubmit grades. Exam boards will not issue results until they are satisfied with the outcome.

What to do if you think your grade is wrong

Appeals

All teachers have received training, support and guidance on how to determine your teacher-assessed grades, and there are checks in place to make sure judgements are as fair and consistent as possible.

Every year there are students who are disappointed with the grade they achieve. If you're disappointed with your grade you might consider whether you could sit exams in the autumn series to improve your grade.

If you are concerned that the grade you have received is wrong, there is an appeals process. If you appeal, please be aware that your grade could go up, down or stay the same. **The deadline for submitting an appeal is 17 September.**

The appeals process

1 If you think your grade is wrong, you should first ask us to check whether we made a mistake in determining or submitting the grade.

2 If we identify a mistake, we can submit a revised grade to the exam board to consider.

3 If we don't identify an error but you still believe that your grade is wrong, you can ask us to submit a formal appeal to the exam board for you.

You can appeal for any of the following reasons:

- there was an error in the way we applied our procedure for determining your teacher assessed grade
- we did not make a reasonable judgement when deciding which evidence to use to determine your teacher assessed grade
- we did not make a reasonable judgement about your grade based on the evidence gathered

4 The exam board will then consider whether we followed its written process, and review the evidence your grade was based on.

5 The exam board will consider if your grade needs correcting. They may do this if they believe your grade is not a reasonable judgement or they find a mistake in the procedure which affected your grade. **A corrected grade could be higher or lower than the grade you were given on results day.**

6 The final route of appeal is Ofqual's Exam Procedure Review Service (EPRS). You can apply to EPRS if the exam board decides that the grade you were awarded is reasonable, and we correctly followed our procedure, but you are still concerned that there may have been an error in the procedure used by the exam board to conduct the appeal. The EPRS can consider whether the exam board has followed its rules and procedures. It will not consider whether you got the right grade based on the evidence of your work.

Important things to remember:

- we will carry out multiple checks on your grades. Exam boards will check our approach and will be checking a sample of grades across subjects
- the appeal questions whether the original decision was a reasonable one, and not whether other reasonable decisions could have been made
- a grade will only be changed if there was an error when determining or submitting the grade, or if the grade given could not have reasonably been reached based on the evidence
- the appeals arrangements will provide an important safety net if there is clear evidence something went wrong when a grade was determined
- we are expected to submit an appeal on your behalf if you ask for one. If you're concerned that we won't submit an appeal on your behalf, you should contact your exam board
- when your appeal is submitted, you will need to explain why you think your result was incorrect and should be changed
- if you appeal, your grade can go up, down or stay the same
- if you are concerned there may have been wrongdoing when developing your teacher-assessed grade you should first discuss this with Mr Smith, Deputy Headteacher, or Mr Williams, Assistant Headteacher
- if you have evidence of malpractice, you can contact your exam board directly

Prioritising appeals for access to university and college admissions

Awarding organisations and exam boards will support us to prioritise appeals where results are needed to progress to higher education.

The deadline for us to submit a priority appeal is **23 August 2021**. This is for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice.

The deadline for non-priority appeals is **17 September 2021**.

If you choose to appeal, you should contact your preferred university or college straight away to make them aware of your situation.

UCAS have extended their deadline for you to meet any conditions of your offer to 7 September to allow more time for appeals.

Autumn exam series

Exam boards will be offering exams in October for A levels, and in November and December for GCSEs. Exams will be available for all GCSE and A level subjects.

The exams will be in a standard format with reasonable adjustments for eligible students.

If you get a higher grade in your autumn exam, you can ask the exam board to provide a new certificate showing your higher grade.

More information on 2021 qualifications and grading

There is more information from Ofqual on GCSEs, A levels and vocational, technical and other general qualifications in 2021.

[GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

JCQ have also published information on GCSEs and A levels in 2021.

If you need more information on what's happening with a specific qualification that was scheduled to be taken in summer 2021, you can use our summer 2021 qualification explainer tool.

[Summer 2021 Qualification Explainer Tool \(ofqual.gov.uk\)](https://ofqual.gov.uk)

RESULTS AND NEXT STEPS

Results days

- AS and A level: 10 August
- GCSE: 12 August

If you want more information on your next steps once you've received your results, contact the National Exam Results Helpline. **Mrs Moore and the Sixth Form team will be available for you to make an appointment with on the results days should you wish to discuss progression to the Sixth Form at TBS or university.**

National Careers Service website

[Careers advice - job profiles, information and resources | National Careers Service](https://www.nationalcareersservice.org.uk)

Tel: 0800 100 900

Lines are open from 08:00 to 22:00, 7 days a week. Calls are free from landlines and most mobile numbers.

Higher education applications and admissions

For any questions about higher education application and admissions you should contact the relevant institution directly.

You can also contact UCAS for more information.

[Who to Contact - Talk to the right people for your Clearing questions \(ucas.com\)](https://www.ucas.com)

Tel: 0371 468 0 468

Lines are open Monday to Friday, 08:30 to 18:00. UCAS will be running a series of live events on the UCAS Facebook page where you can ask questions about your application.