

Report to Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

Monday 15th March


Subject:	Examination - A level and GCSE moderating
Director:	Director of Education Chris Ward
Contact Officer:	Group Head - Education, Skills and Employment Andy Timmins andrew_timmins@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

1.1 That members note the information in this report and attached presentation.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 Members requested an update on the examination system to be operated in schools in Summer 2021.

	Best start in life for children and young people
---	--

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The Prime Minister, announced on 4th January that schools and colleges would close from the 5th January and that primary schools, secondary schools and colleges across England would move to remote provision until at least the February half term. He added that it was therefore not possible or fair for all exams to go ahead this summer as normal and



that the education secretary would now work with Ofqual to put in place alternative arrangements.

- 4.2 A consultation was later published on 15th January to seek views on a range of proposals to maximise fairness and help young people progress to the next stage of their education or training. The consultation was open to views of students who were due to take their exams, their parents and carers, their teachers, school and college leaders and others who had an interest, including further and higher education providers, and employers. The consultation closed on 29th January.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 Summary of decisions following the consultation (Taken from *Ofqual: Decisions on how GCSE, AS and A level grades will be determined in summer 2021* and the Direction from the Secretary of State for Education.)

Assessment and evidence

- Teachers must assess their students' performance, only on what content has been delivered to them by their teachers.
- Teachers should determine the grades as late in the academic year as is practicable (submission date 18 June).
- Schools and colleges should use a broad range of evidence across the taught content.
- Private candidates should work with a centre to provide evidence in line with the sort of evidence that other students will produce.
- Overall, it will be no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular grade this year compared to previous years.

Support materials

- Exam boards will provide a package of support materials to include questions, mark schemes, data about how students typically performed in individual questions and exemplar materials, as well as advice for teachers about content coverage, topic selection, marking and making grading judgements. This will be based on past questions



and will include a proportion of previously unpublished questions for every subject.

- Use of these exam board support materials is not compulsory; they will be part of the range of evidence teachers could use to determine the grade.

Quality assurance

- Centres' internal QA arrangements will include consideration of the centre's profile of results in previous years.
- Exam boards will put in place arrangements for external QA to check each centre's internal QA process and, in a sample of centres, to review the evidence for one or more subjects. Sampling should be both random, and risk-based.

Appeals and results

- Students will be able to appeal their grade.
- A student who is unhappy with their grade will first ask their centre to check whether an administrative or procedural error had been made.
- Where a centre does not believe an error had been made, a student can ask the centre to appeal to the exam board on their behalf.
- Results days will be on 10 August for AS and A level, and 12 August for GCSE results.

Autumn exam series

- A full series of GCSE, AS and A level examinations will be held in the autumn.

Vocational, technical and other regulated qualifications

- Results for VTQs most similar to GCSEs, AS and A levels that are used for progression to further or higher education should be awarded using similar arrangements to these qualifications.
- Exams or assessments for VTQs used to enter directly into employment should continue where they are critical to demonstrate occupational or professional competence and can be delivered in line with public health measures.



- Exams and assessments for smaller qualifications taken for mixed purposes, such as Functional Skills Qualifications and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) should continue in line with public health measures, but with alternative arrangements available for those who cannot access the assessments.

6 Implications

Support for schools may be needed in the following areas:

- Ensuring that staff can access appropriate training, support and to help them to make teacher assessments.
- Identifying which evidence from pupils' work will be used as the basis for teacher assessments, in line with exam board guidance.
- Ensuring processes in place for quality assuring teacher assessments are robust.
- Facilitating opportunities for schools to moderate/quality assure samples of evidence supporting teacher assessments and to benchmark judgements.

Resources:	School Improvement Advisory Team support for schools.
Legal and Governance:	Compliance with the Direction from the Secretary of State for Education under S 129(6) of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.
Risk:	Centres could become subject to a malpractice investigation if they do not comply fully with regulations. To mitigate against this, they should ensure that they have robust quality assurance procedures in place, in line with awarding body requirements.
Equality:	As part of the consultation, Ofqual carried out an analysis of how arrangements could have a positive or negative impact on students because of their protected characteristics and how any negative impacts could be removed or mitigated. This was undertaken in line with the public sector equality duty in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.



Health and Wellbeing:	The proposals are designed to give students confidence that their awarded grades will reflect the standard at which they are performing based on what they have been taught.
Social Value	The proposals are intended to enable young people to progress fairly to further education, training and employment, taking account of the disruption to their studies caused by COVID 19.

7. Appendices

- Ofqual: Consultation on how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021 (No longer online, but a PDF copy is available if required)

8. Background Papers

- [Direction from the Secretary of State for Education to Ofqual's Chief Regulator about how GCSE, AS, A level and vocational and technical qualifications should be awarded in 2021.](#)
- [Ofqual: Decisions on how GCSE, AS and A level grades will be determined in summer 2021](#)
- [DfE: Awarding qualifications in summer 2021](#)

