

13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Dear Candidate and Parent

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) issued more detailed guidance over the Easter break about how grades will be awarded this summer. Examination boards have also issued guidance, including sample questions and mark schemes. Our teachers will use these and other assessment evidence over the coming weeks to award grades in GCSE, A' level, vocational and technical qualifications. This letter helps explain how this will work and highlights where you can find more information. There is a lot to take in, so please do not hesitate to ask teachers or contact your son or daughter's school if you have any more questions.

JCQ have provided a useful guide for parents and students, which you can find here:

[JCQ-Guidance-for-Students-and-Parents-on-Summer-2021.pdf](#)

The guide covers key dates and tells you when grades will be issued.

There is not an equivalent guide for vocational and technical qualifications but the following page describes the different approaches examination authorities have adopted:

[Microsoft PowerPoint - 2021-03-25 JCQ TAF VTQ Sides V.1 \(003\) - Read-Only](#)

Each academy is writing a more detailed Centre Policy, which will be completed well in advance of JCQ deadlines. This will describe all our processes in detail.

We are also training our staff, to ensure they are familiar with all the new regulations, including guidance about making objective judgements, grade descriptors and examination board guidance. This will help ensure we award grades fairly and give students the best opportunity possible to demonstrate what they know.

Assessment materials and mark schemes will be shared online this year. We will use some of these materials but also mix other forms of evidence to ensure our assessments are fair. However, the risk of malpractice is greater this year and it is vitally important students understand they must not do anything that could be interpreted as cheating, even unwittingly. Sharing the content of one of our tests with another student, for example, could place both parties at risk of malpractice. I apologise for making the warning so stark but it is essential I make you aware of the risks. The following passage is taken directly from JCQ:

“It is possible that some students may attempt to influence their teachers’ judgements about their grades. Students might attempt to gain an unfair advantage during the centre’s process by, for example, submitting fabricated evidence or plagiarised work. Such incidents would constitute malpractice and



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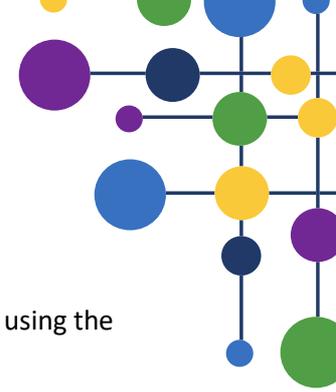


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centres are asked to report these to the appropriate awarding organisation in the normal way using the JCQ M1 form.

Students, or individuals acting on behalf of a student, such as parents/carers, might also try to influence grade decisions by applying pressure to centres or their staff. The awarding organisations anticipate that the majority of such instances will be dealt with by the centre internally – in such cases, we ask that the centres retain clear and reliable records of the circumstances and the steps taken, and that students are made aware of the outcome. However, if a student continues to inappropriately attempt to pressure centre staff then please inform the relevant awarding organisation using the JCQ M1 form 4. The awarding organisations will contact your centre if we receive credible allegations that such pressure has been applied in order that appropriate steps can be taken.

In all the scenarios listed above, as well as any others that have not been explicitly identified here, the JCQ suspected malpractice policies and procedures 2020-2026 continues to apply. Please be aware that, as always, all investigations into alleged malpractice remain confidential and the findings, including any sanctions imposed, are not publicly disclosed.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding malpractice, please contact the appropriate awarding organisation via the contact information detailed at the end of the JCQ suspected malpractice policies and procedures 2020-2021.”

Please do not take a chance with possible malpractice. If in any doubt, check with your teacher.

We have a planned a series of assessments over the course of this half-term. Teachers will not be able to share grades or marks under JCQ rules. However, we will share the evidence we will use to assess the final grade in each subject and ask students to confirm it is their own work. This could include older pieces of work, including mock examinations and other assignments. You will also have an opportunity to inform us if there are any potential problems with the evidence before teachers assess your grade.

The guide for parents and students mentions special consideration, reasonable adjustments and access arrangements. Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements can only be granted to students with a known special educational need, disability or injury. We will make suitable arrangements automatically and explain the adjustments to you. However, parents should contact your son or daughter’s school if they believe we are not aware of a reason these adjustments should apply.

JCQ state the use of special consideration should be limited this year because teachers should be able to use a wider range of evidence. However, there may be some circumstances in which we can apply adjustments. The following guidance may be useful:

“...a temporary illness, a temporary injury or some other event outside of the student’s control may have affected their performance in assessments which will be used to determine a grade, teachers should take this into account and document how they have done so. Special consideration cannot be applied due to lost teaching and learning. This can be addressed through the flexibility of the range of evidence centres may use to determine students’ grades. Students should only be assessed on the content of the specification covered.”



I do hope all this information is not overwhelming. We will continue to explain our approach over the coming weeks and it might be useful to keep this letter to refer back to. Again, if in doubt, please do not hesitate to ask staff about any of the points raised in this letter.

We will contact you again about results days, support for university or college applications and appeals processes later this term.

Finally, good luck to all candidates. I know you have worked hard to get ready for these assessments and deserve your efforts to be recognised and rewarded. We will do our best to ensure they are.

I wish you every success in the assessments and for the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John McNally". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John McNally  
CEO