Part of **Education and childcare during coronavirus**

Department for Education

Guidance

GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2020 Updated 22 May 2020

cancelled?

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The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is expected to continue having a significant impact on the education system, and the country, for months to come. Therefore, exams and assessments have been cancelled to give pupils, parents, and teachers certainty, and enable schools and colleges to focus on supporting vulnerable children

and the children of critical workers.

2. What will happen to those who have already done some non-exam assessment? Students who were due to sit A level, AS level or GCSE exams this summer will receive a

evidence including, for example, non-exam assessment and mock results. To make sure

assessment grades through a process of standardisation using a model developed with

calculated grade. The calculated grade process will take into account a range of

that grades are fair between schools and colleges, exam boards will put all centre

Ofqual, the independent qualifications regulator. There's separate guidance from Ofqual on <u>awarding GCSE</u>, <u>AS and A levels</u> which includes the implications for non-exam assessment.

3. How will you ensure that certain groups

Ofqual's overriding aim is to make sure arrangements this summer are as fair as possible for all students. Ofqual ran a consultation from 15 to 29 April seeking views on aspects of their proposed assessment arrangements for GCSEs, AS and A levels, including an equality impact assessment informed by a review of the research literature on bias in teacher assessments. Ofqual has taken feedback to its consultation, and the findings from its literature review and equalities impact assessment, into account in finalising the arrangements for these qualifications this summer. Decisions from this consultation were published on 22 May.

would have been likely to obtain if exams went ahead and their prior attainment.

Ofqual has also published additional guidance for schools and colleges on objectivity in grading and ranking. Pupils who do not feel their calculated grade reflects their ability will have the opportunity to sit an exam as soon as is reasonably possible in the autumn.

4. Will A level students get the predicted

No. We know that simply using predicted grades would not be fair to all students. The 'centre assessment grade', which the exam boards will ask schools and colleges to submit for A and AS levels and GCSEs, will take into account an assessment of the likely grade that students would have obtained had exams gone ahead, and these will be

5. Will schools be using mock exam results

as a barometer for centre assessment

as they did not know at the time these

would be used as their final mark?

grades results – and is this fair on students

in this process, alongside others. Ofqual has published guidance on <u>awarding GCSE, AS</u> and A levels which explains to schools and colleges how to do this fairly and robustly, drawing on evidence to reach a holistic judgement. 6. Will the past performance of the school be taken into account when devising the

Mock exam results will be one of the sources of evidence that will be taken into account

7. Is this an entirely new system? This is a new system, but one which builds on existing practices, as education professionals are used to making holistic judgements about their students. These judgements will be standardised at national level to give grades that are as fair as possible.

8. When will students get their results?

sit exams in the autumn, and to prepare for those exams if necessary.

college.

practice.

A and AS level results will be published on 13 August and GCSE results on 20 August, as

originally planned. This will enable progression to higher and further education to take

place in the normal way. It will also allow students time to decide whether they wish to

education will be available on the same days as A level and GCSE results. Students who

are taking such qualifications should check the planned results day with their school or

Results days for other qualifications are set by individual exam boards. Results for

vocational and technical qualifications used for progression to further or higher

9. Will universities, colleges and sixth forms accept these grades? The calculated grades awarded this summer will be formal grades, with the same status as grades awarded in any other year. They will therefore be accepted by all institutions.

10. What if students are unhappy with their calculated grade?

Ofqual and the exam boards are working to ensure that candidates are awarded a fair

does not believe the correct process has been followed in their case, they will have

feel their grade reflects their performance, they will have the opportunity to take an

grade that recognises the work they have put in. If an A level, AS level or GCSE student

access to a right of appeal on that basis. Ofqual has consulted on the arrangements for

these appeals and announced its decisions on 22 May. In addition, if a student does not

they can to support students and ensure they can progress to higher education.

exam in the autumn. Ofqual launched a consultation on 22 May on the details of the autumn series of exams. DfE has also published guidance on centre responsibility for autumn GCSE, AS and A level exam series. Students will also have the option to take their exams in summer 2021, in line with usual

following distance-learning programmes or studying independently), those students should be taken account of in the process of producing centre assessment grades, where the head teacher or principal is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement. Ofqual and the exam boards have been exploring the options for those students who do

who they have not taught themselves, because they have been home-educated,

not have an existing relationship with an exams centre and who need results this

summer for progression purposes. The Joint Council for Qualifications has published

some guidance for exam centres on accepting private candidates which sets out the

options that will be available. Unfortunately, not all external candidates will be able to

provide sufficient evidence to enable their exam centre to include them in their centre

assessment grades and rankings. Students in this position will need to sit exams to get

their grades, either in the autumn or in summer 2021.

there will not be the opportunity to sit them at any centre.

there will not be the opportunity to sit them in any subject.

and/or A level?

be awarded a calculated grade this summer because some will not be in a position to

Ofqual has asked organisations that represent higher and further education providers to consider the steps that providers could take when making admissions decisions this summer for any private candidates who do not receive a grade. They have said that they believe that institutions will consider a range of other evidence and information for these students to allow them to progress wherever possible.

(VTQs) and our priority is to ensure that students and adult learners taking these qualifications can move on as planned to the next stage of their lives, including starting university, college or sixth form courses, apprenticeships in the autumn, getting a job or progressing in work. We know one approach to assessment of vocational and technical qualifications will not fit all, given the diversity of the VTQ landscape.

awarding results this summer on 22 May. The measures set out that qualifications used

GCSEs, AS and A levels. For other vocational qualifications, such as those that are used

for entry into employment where demonstration of practical competence is necessary,

awarding organisation to determine whether the assessment can be adapted. Only as a

assessment process was not followed correctly. Students who do not feel their result

reflects their ability will be able to sit an assessment at the next available opportunity.

during the year. Ofqual will require that where awarding organisations normally offer an

autumn assessment opportunity, they must take all reasonable steps to continue to do

so. Where they do not normally offer an autumn assessment opportunity, they should

do so where there are enough learners who need to take an assessment or where it

Most vocational and technical qualifications have a number of assessment windows

for progression to further or higher education, such as some BTECs, should wherever

possible be issued with a calculated result, in line with the approach proposed for

it won't be appropriate to calculate a result. For these, Ofqual will work with the

VTQ students will have access to a right of appeal if they believe any part of the

last result should assessment be delayed.

would be unfair not to.

Ofqual published the response to its consultation on VTQs and its framework for

work to contribute towards their grade? Ofqual's guidance on <u>awarding GCSE</u>, <u>AS and A levels</u> makes clear that there is no requirement for schools and colleges to set additional mock exams or homework tasks

for the purposes of determining a centre assessment grade, and no student should be

disadvantaged if they are unable to complete any work set after schools and colleges

were closed. Where additional work has been completed after schools and colleges

were closed on 20 March, Ofqual is advising head teachers and principals to exercise

caution where that evidence suggests a change in performance. In many cases this is

Ofqual's guidance on awarding GCSE, AS and A levels makes it clear that schools and

colleges do not need to ask students to complete any unfinished non-exam assessment

coursework completed after 20 March, Ofqual is advising head teachers and principals

to exercise caution where that evidence suggests a change in performance. In many

cases this is likely to reflect the circumstances and context in which the work is done.

likely to reflect the circumstances and context in which the work is done.

incomplete coursework into account?

work for the purposes of grading. Where they do choose to take into account

16. Can schools and colleges take

awarded in any other year. There is no reason for the usual admissions cycle to be disrupted. University representatives have already confirmed that they expect universities to do all they can to support students and ensure they can progress to higher education. 18. Do universities need to start making unconditional offers / should students

accept an unconditional offer now that

Universities should not begin making new unconditional offers and applicants should

feel no pressure to accept such offers, as they will be awarded a formal calculated

unconditional offer, does that remain?

Yes. An unconditional offer means you have already met the entry requirements, so the

exams are cancelled?

grade for each exam they would have taken.

place is the student's if they want it.

receiving their calculated grade in the summer.

their education?

19. If students already have an

year? Students who do not feel their calculated grade reflects their performance will have the opportunity to sit an exam as soon as is reasonably possible after the beginning of the new academic year.

they still be able to go to university this

20. If students take the exam option, will

international GCSEs have published information about the arrangements they are putting in place for this year which reflect those being made for qualifications covered by Ofqual's consultation decisions.

Yes. Summer exams for both international GCSEs and the International Baccalaureate

have been cancelled in all countries this year. The awarding organisations that provide

Cambridge International: guidance for schools on awarding grades OxfordAQA: May/June 2020 exam series ←

These are extraordinary circumstances. We are working with schools, sixth-forms,

prepare for and progress to the next stage of their education.

1. Pearson: International Centres (not including UK)

colleges and universities to ensure that we do everything we can to best help students

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Coronavirus (COVID-19): cancellation of

1. Did exams and assessments need to be From Friday 20 March, all educational settings were closed to everyone except the children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

of students (for example those from disadvantaged backgrounds) do not lose out because of bias in teachers' assessments? Ofqual is developing a fair and robust process that takes into account a broad range of evidence, including assessments by schools and colleges of the grades that students

grades that were used for university applications? standardised across schools and colleges. For this reason, students' final calculated grades will not necessarily be the same as either the predicted grades used for university applications, or the centre assessment grade put forward by their school or college.

calculated grade? Ofqual's guidance says that one of the sources of evidence schools and colleges should draw on is the performance of this year's students compared to those in previous years. However, this is only one of the sources of evidence that will be taken into account. Ofqual's consultation, which ran from 15 to 29 April, included proposals for how the standardisation process at national level should take the past performance of schools and colleges into account. Responses have been reviewed and <u>decisions from this</u> consultation were published on 22 May.

University representatives have already confirmed that they expect universities to do all

11. What about private candidates or home educated students? Where schools and colleges have accepted entries from external candidates (students

12. Can private centres run GCSEs, AS levels or A levels if they choose to do so?

No. Exam boards will not be issuing papers for this summer's GCSE, AS and A levels so

13. Does this mean that every exam in every

module in every subject has been cancelled,

or will a limited number go ahead at GCSE

Exam boards will not be issuing papers for this summer's GCSE, AS and A levels so

14. What about vocational and technical

qualifications? We recognise that many students will be taking vocational or technical qualifications

15. Will students be required to do further

17. What will young people with university offers do? The grades awarded this summer will be formal grades, with the same status as grades

Our aim is for results to be awarded before Christmas, and Ofqual is working with exam boards to work out how this could be delivered. Universities representatives have assured us that universities will be as flexible as possible in their admissions. Any student wanting to understand the implications on university admission of taking

21. Are iGCSEs and the International

Baccalaureate also cancelled?

these autumn exams should speak to the university from which they have an offer after

22. How will colleges, sixth-forms and universities cope with the fact that these students will have missed out on some of

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