



LYDIARD PARK ACADEMY

10th March 2021

Year 11 Examination Update

Dear Year 11 pupils and parents,

As you may be aware Ofqual and the DfE have recently published the outcomes from the consultation into the how grades will be awarded this year, in light of the Secretary of State's announcement regarding the cancellation of the summer examinations. We are still awaiting some of the finer detail from the exam boards but we can share the following information with you:

How will grades be awarded this summer?

Grades for GCSEs, A levels, and most other qualifications including applied generals will be based on a process involving teacher assessment against national standards, internal quality assurance, and external quality assurance by the exam boards.

The national process defined by the Department for Education and the exams' regulator, Ofqual is as follows:

1. Teachers will assess pupils against a national standard, which will be defined by the exam boards before the Easter break.
2. Departments will submit grades which will be quality assured by the school. This internal quality assurance process will have to be signed off by the exam board to ensure it is rigorous and in line with national standards.
3. Grades will be based on the level that the pupil can demonstrate they are working at consistently rather than a predicted grade.
4. Our school results will be quality assured externally by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of our school's evidence.
5. If the exam boards are confident in our submitted results, then the exam boards will award pupils their final grades.
6. If pupils do not think their results are accurate, they will have the right to appeal. Please note that grades can go down as well as up as a result of appeals.

So, do teachers award the grade?

Simply: no. The grade pupils achieve will start with their teacher's assessment of their performance across a range of evidence. This is against a nationally-defined standard, not the teacher's own opinion. This assessment is then subject to both internal and external quality assurance before the final grade is awarded by the exam body as usual.

Does this mean grades are decided by an algorithm?

No, unlike last year, pupils' grades will not be changed by a formula. The internal and external quality assurance measures will all be done by humans, not an algorithm. There is no limit on the achievement of pupils, providing they have evidence that they are working at that grade.



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What about loss of learning / impact of Covid?

This year, teachers will only assess pupils on content they have been taught – because of the continued disruption of the pandemic. This means pupils will not be disadvantaged if they individually, their whole class or whole year group have been unable to complete their full course. However, grades can only be submitted on the basis of the evidence we have of pupils' performance, even if that evidence covers less of the course than usual. Pupils who would usually have extra time in the exams will benefit from the same arrangements in teacher assessment.

In terms of content most subject areas have covered the content needed in order for you to have had a broad and balanced understanding of the subject. Where content is identified that is required for continual studies at A Level, teachers will be communicating with you in how we will facilitate this learning after the assessment process.

Will grades be different between different schools and colleges?

No, the standard against which teachers will be assessing pupils is set nationally by the exam boards. This is the standard that will be used during external quality assurance and appeals to ensure consistency and fairness across the system.

What evidence will be used?

Teachers are able to draw on a range of assessment evidence from across a pupil's study of the course, up until 28th May, allowing time afterwards for internal and external quality assurance. This may include homework tasks, mock exams, and papers set by the exam boards. This may include evidence from before the second lockdown, as well as evidence from March – June. The exam boards are producing assessment materials that will be sent to us before Easter. Different departments may use different sources of evidence, and there is no requirement for any one type of assessment to be used – it's about a performance across a range of evidence.

Can pupils and parents make the case for why a pupil should get a higher grade?

Our teachers are already using their professional expertise to assess pupils on the content they have been taught. Teachers are unable to submit higher grades for pupils unless they have the evidence that they are consistently working at this level. If teachers submit higher grades without evidence they are committing exam malpractice.

In 2020, any undue pressure by pupil or parent who placed undue pressure on teachers to increase grades was also considered exam malpractice. It is likely to be the same for 2021. If pupils or parents are found to be putting teachers or leaders under undue pressure to increase grades, then this matter will be referred to the exam boards and an investigation into malpractice may ensue. This may result in the pupil's certificate being removed entirely if malpractice is deemed to have taken place.

Can pupils discuss their grades with teachers?

Teachers will be able to discuss which evidence they are using to inform their judgement with pupils, including marked or graded pieces of work. However, we are not allowed to disclose their final



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submitted grade we give to the exam board. Pupils should not attempt to second-guess the grade submitted, as teachers will be using a range of evidence to inform their final judgement. Pupils must not pressure teachers to reveal the grades they are submitting, or to increase the grades, as doing so may be considered exam malpractice.

Therefore, as we are unable to share any additional data with you at this point in the form of an academic report, we will not be running Tutor Consultation Day for Year 11 on the 1st April. Instead, we would like pupils to use this time at home to consolidate their learning. Subject teachers will provide more detail to pupils nearer the time. Some pupils will be invited into school to work on the creative subjects; art, photography, textiles and food and nutrition.

My college/sixth form provider has asked for my predicted grades. What can I give them?

College and sixth-form providers are aware of the restrictions that schools have been placed under with regards to sharing grades at this point. The last report we are able to share with you is the December 2020 RP2 report that had your last working at and predicted grades, taking into account your mocks.

I am entitled to access arrangements for examinations. How will this work?

Our SENCO will be working with teachers to ensure that where pupils have access arrangements these will be provided for during the key assessment points.

What should pupils do to improve their grades?

The best thing pupils can do is to continue to attend classes, learn, act on feedback from their teachers, revise, and read around their subject. Their grade will be based on their performance, and so their outcomes are ultimately in their hands.

So, what will this look like at Lydiard Park Academy?

We have planned three cycles of assessment between now and June. All assessments will happen in class and will include lesson and homework tasks that enable you to revise key areas of content already learned which will then be assessed in a variety of tasks. We are putting together a guide for pupils so you will have a clearer plan of each subject areas key assessment themes to inform your independent and revision work at home. The key thing is that every lesson and task counts, everything will lead into an assessment where we are preparing for you to achieve your very best. This data will then be used with the work you have already completed to agree and quality assure your final grade.

When will I find out my grades?

The DfE and Ofqual have stated that GCSE results day will take place on 12th August 2021.

What the leaving date for Year 11?

The leaving date for Year 11 is currently under review with the DfE. We will let you know when this has been clarified. At the moment, Year 11 remain on-roll until the last Friday in June.



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We have been very impressed with your continued commitment throughout the whole of lockdown with this continued work ethic we know you will all achieve your very best ready for your next steps in September.

Yours sincerely

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