

18th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

RE: Year 11 Exams 2021

I am writing to inform you that on Friday, two joint Department for Education and Ofqual consultations were opened, both of which relate to Year 11 students at Oak Academy.

These consultations are about:

- 1) GCSE, AS and A Levels
- 2) Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs)

You may wish to respond to these consultations because the outcome of each will determine the approach that is taken to grading exams this year.

Please see a one-page summary below of each consultation.

Links are enclosed on each page, should you wish to respond.

These consultations will end on 29 January 2021 at 23:45.

There are differences compared to the approach used in 2020 so it is important the Department for Education and Ofqual hear directly from parents, carers and students as well as school leaders and teachers.

As soon as the consultation outcomes are finalised, I will contact you again to share the details with all parents, carers and students.

Yours sincerely,



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Principal

Oak Academy

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Consultation on how GCSE, AS & A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021

THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN THE PROPOSED APPROACH FOR 2021 COMPARED TO 2020

Proposals at a glance

- A student's grade in each subject will be based on their teachers' assessment of the standard at which the student is performing
- Teachers are best placed to assess the standard at which their student is performing
- All students who do not believe their grade reflects the evidence of the standard at which they were performing can appeal

What will happen?

- The grades in 2021 will be determined by teachers and then, following quality assurance, the results will be issued by the exam boards, who remain accountable for the results
- We propose grades this year should be based on teachers' assessments of the evidence of the standard at which their students are performing; it should indicate their demonstrated knowledge, understanding and skills

How will this happen?

- Exam boards should provide guidance and training, and make available a set of papers, which teachers use with their students as part of their assessment
- Where it is part of the qualification's existing specification, teachers will continue to assess any non-exam assessment that a student has undertaken in a subject
- Teachers should draw on a range of broader evidence of a student's work in making their final assessment
- Teachers should only take evidence-based decisions about the grade they recommend their students be issued. A breadth of evidence should inform a teacher's assessment of their student's deserved grade
- Teachers should assess their students objectively

When will this happen?

- Students would be assessed by their teachers in a period beginning in May into early June
- Teachers would submit grades to the exam boards by mid-June
- External quality assurance by the exam boards would be ongoing throughout June
- Results would be issued to students once the QA process is complete, most likely in early July
- Student appeals could be submitted immediately following the issue of results and would first be considered by schools and colleges

Other key points:

- Given students' education has been disrupted by the pandemic, their interests will be best served if they engage fully with their education for the remainder of the academic year, if they are taught for as long as possible and if they cover as much of the curriculum as possible
- Exam boards should provide guidance on adjustments that could be made to the way non-exam assessments are completed, to account for current circumstances
- The nature of the papers set by the exam boards will need to be appropriate for the subject

Why does this need to happen?

- Qualification grades indicate what a person who holds the qualification knows, understands and can do, and to what standard
- For qualification grades to be meaningful, a person who holds a qualification with a higher grade must have shown that their knowledge, understanding, or skills are at a higher standard than a person who holds a qualification with a lower grade
- Students who were expecting to take exams this summer will want to be confident their grades are still meaningful and serve their usual purpose
- Grades [need to] be indistinguishable from grades issued by exam boards in other years

Respond: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/8BYI4T/>

[Alternative arrangements for the award of VTQs and other general qualifications in 2021](#)

THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN THE PROPOSED APPROACH FOR 2021 COMPARED TO 2020

Proposals at a glance

We want students and other learners to be able to be awarded a qualification and access the same progression opportunities as normal

Awarding organisations will need to take decisions regarding the most appropriate approach to awarding based on the detail of their qualifications

For some VTQs and other general qualifications, this would therefore require some form of teacher assessment to replace exams for the qualifications in scope of alternative awarding arrangements, in line with the proposals for GCSE, AS and A levels

What will happen?

Some form of teacher assessment is likely to be the most appropriate way to replace exams for VTQs and other general qualifications so that they can be awarded

Internal assessment should continue to go ahead remotely, where relevant, for all learners where possible and should be taken into account when determining a result

We propose to permit awarding organisations to make awards where not all internal assessments have been completed as well as where exams have not taken place. This is so learners can receive results and progress to the next stage of their lives

How will this happen?

We propose to permit awarding organisations to make awards where not all internal assessments have been completed as well as where exams have not taken place. This is so learners can receive results and progress to the next stage of their lives

We do not consider that it is appropriate or possible to prescribe a single approach for all qualifications and that awarding organisations are best placed to determine approaches for their qualifications and how to award qualifications based on incomplete evidence because learners have not been able to complete their assessments, whether exams or internal assessments

When will this happen?

We will require awarding organisations to provide clear and timely guidance to teachers on the assessment approaches to be implemented, the records that they should maintain, and on the nature of any centre-base quality assurance, where moderation of centre marking will take place

Other key points:

The vocational and technical qualification landscape is complex. There are approximately 12,500 vocational and technical qualifications, across all education levels, approved for funding

As established when agreeing the approach for awarding VTQs and other general qualifications in the summer of 2020, a one-size-fits-all approach is not suitable for VTQs

Why does this need to happen?

From April onwards, written exams for Vocational and Technical qualifications that are taken instead of, or alongside, GCSEs, AS and A levels should not take place. Alternative arrangements will be put in place to award these results

Respond: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ACIHL2/>