



Whitburn Church of England Academy

An Academy with Specialist Status in Maths and Computing

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'Excellence for All'

20th April 2020

Advice for Year 13 students following release of detail about awarding of grades

Dear Year 13 Student

We have received some clarification from Ofqual about the awarding of grades this summer; I know many students have been waiting anxiously for this guidance. The Academy is reviewing this information but please be reassured Ofqual have publicly stated that:

'We want to reassure students waiting for news that we are doing everything we can to make sure they are not disadvantaged by these unprecedented circumstances.'

Staff in schools and colleges are being asked the question, 'What grade would this particular student most plausibly have achieved if they were taking the exam?' Ofqual have said:

'For this summer's awards, schools and colleges are being asked to provide centre assessment grades for their students. These should be fair, objective and carefully considered judgements of the grades schools and colleges believe their students would have been most likely to achieve if they had sat their exams and should take into account the full range of available evidence.'

To determine this, staff are being asked to take into account the evidence available to them including a range of things like your classwork and homework; your results in assignments and any mock exams; any non-exam assessment or coursework you might have done; and your general progress during your course. If you are worried about a disappointing mock examination grade remember a holistic view of your performance will be considered.

Further information can be found by visiting the Ofqual website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-update-on-2020-exams>

Vocational Qualifications – Update

The guidance regards vocational qualifications is slightly delayed when compared to GCSE and A level due to the number of awarding bodies and types of assessment. Ofqual has said:

'It is my intention that students enrolled on these qualifications are not disadvantaged with respect to their peers in the same cohort taking GCSEs, AS and A levels'

PTO

Document available in large font, alternative language or audio format on request



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Can I do anything now?

Unfortunately, there is little you can do now in the circumstances. You must trust the professional judgement of your teachers. We have a lot of experience in teaching and assessing at GCSE and we are confident we can award grades that reflect your likely outcomes.

Please do not contact staff.

Your teachers are unable to enter into any discussion about your grades and it will be the exam boards who award your final grade not the Academy. Ofqual states:

'the final grade you get could be different from the one your school or college sends to the exam board.'

When will my grades be issued?

Ofqual has stated A-level results will be published on 13th August 2020. UCAS has stated that the Clearing process will run as usual; Whitburn Sixth Form staff will be available to advise and support throughout.

EAR service (appeals)

The process for appeals has not been confirmed. However, Ofqual has stated:

'Under the circumstances, the normal arrangements for reviews of marking and appeals will not apply. We are considering what arrangements might be put in place to allow an effective appeal and will consult on proposals shortly.'

'Students who feel that their grades from the summer do not reflect their ability will have the opportunity to take their exams in the autumn series or in summer 2021. If they choose to do this, both grades will stand.'

Read Ofqual's full letter to students here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877830/Letter_to_students_-_Summer_2020_grading.pdf

See Ofqual's video for students here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXuDOrtJY1Q>

What to do in the coming weeks:

There are several things you can be occupying yourself with during the school closure when you would have been still in school. Some staff have set activities for you to do based around skills in preparation for Higher Education. We would encourage you to use the MOOC finder tool on Unifrog to find a MOOC relating to your chosen HE course. Maintaining some structure, keeping up your study skills and maintaining your academic curiosity during this period will help your wellbeing as well as easing your transition to HE.

Student finance and accommodation applications are also important things to be getting on with at this time. You do not need to have confirmed your university place to be able to start the [Student Finance application](#).

If you recently 'dropped' EPQ or made other changes to your timetable, then make sure you have notified UCAS via their '[Request to amend qualifications form](#)'.

Keep checking your email inboxes and university websites for opportunities to attend virtual events in lieu of Post-offer Days or Offer-holder Open Days. All UCAS applicants are advised to have a well-researched 'plan B'. Please ensure you have an Insurance offer you would be actually happy to take up. It is worth researching alternative courses at your chosen universities, or your chosen course at alternative universities in case you have to be open-minded on results day.

Do not hesitate to get in touch with myself or Mr Moore for advice and guidance during normal working hours. We will endeavour to get back to you as soon as possible.

Progression to non-University routes (repeated from first letter)

Mr Moore is the guru when it comes to the options outside of the UCAS system and most of you considering this route have been working closely with him. This support continues and you should maintain regular contact so he can support your searches and applications. Unifrog is a good resource with their Apprenticeships tool and you should, by now, have registered with the [National Apprenticeships Service](#).

PSHE Activities (repeated from first letter)

There were a couple more activities we had planned to support you moving out and starting to live independently. We would really encourage you to complete both of the PSHE activities linked to our website (<https://www.whitburncofeacademy.org/sixth-form/next-steps-ucas.html>) and also available via O365/SixthFormStudentResources/PSHE

Leavers' Events

We will send out further instructions for issuing results, Confirmation, Adjustment and Clearing when these things become clear.

We are continuing to plan leavers' events and will try to host something ideally, before (some of) you go away to university. If not, we will look at our Certificate Presentation Evening in December and maybe extend that to incorporate a Prom, awards etc.

I will contact Alice and Matthew about student awards as I usually would and we will issue the leavers' questionnaire after Easter as normal. Hoodies are due to arrive shortly and we will contact you about arrangements for collection. I may have to drive around the region and leave them at the bottom of your driveway! Either way, we will ensure you get them.

Anything not yet collected from lockers will have to wait until we can safely return. Office 365 will remain active for you until further notice.

Please continue to check the Academy website and our official social media channels for further updates. If you have further queries, please contact me via lraggs@whitburncofeacademy.org

Please heed the advice and stay at home in the coming weeks. Observe social distancing and keep washing those hands!

Yours faithfully



L M Craggs
Head of Sixth Form