



Monday 23 March 2020

Year 11 and 13 Examination Grades 2020

Dear Students, Carers and Parents

I write following the announcement from the government regarding this year's public examination grades. We all understand that there will be anxieties for you and all students nationally. I can assure you that we will work effectively with the examination boards to ensure all St Katherine's students are not adversely impacted and that their hard work and ability is reflected by the grades awarded.

A summary of yesterday's announcement:

The Government's priority is now to ensure affected students can move on as planned to the next stage of their lives; going into employment, starting university, college or sixth form courses, or an apprenticeship in the autumn.

This means ensuring GCSE, A and AS level students are awarded a grade which fairly reflects their work that they have put in during their course. Ofqual will develop and set out a process that will provide a calculated grade for each student which reflects their performance as fairly as possible, and will work with the exam boards to ensure this is consistently applied for all students. The exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead.

To produce this, teachers will take into account a range of evidence and data including performance on mock exams and non-exam assessment – clear guidance on how to do this fairly and robustly will be provided to schools and colleges. The exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, including prior attainment, and use this information to produce a calculated grade for each student, which will be a best assessment of the work they have put in.

The aim is to provide these calculated grades to students before the end of July. In terms of a permanent record, the grades will be indistinguishable from those provided in other years.

The guidance at this stage states that if students do not believe the correct process has been followed in their case, they will be able to appeal on that basis. In addition, if they do not feel their calculated grade reflects their performance, they will have the opportunity to sit an exam at the earliest reasonable opportunity, once schools are open again. Students will also have the option to sit their exams in summer 2021.

Next steps

The announcement, so far, only outlines the broad intention of how grades will be awarded. Please understand that we, *including subject teachers*, are not yet in a position to respond to individual queries about student grades. Speculating will only cause more concerns and it may be some time before there is more clarity. There are many more details to work through for Ofqual, examination boards and schools, as referenced yesterday:

'Ofqual is working urgently with the exam boards to set out proposals for how this process will work and will be talking to teachers' representatives before finalising an approach, to ensure that the approach taken is as fair as possible.'

The following holding guidance may answer some of your questions at this stage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020/coronavirus-covid-19-cancellation-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2020#what-will-happen-to-those-who-have-already-done-some-non-exam-assessment>

Destinations

Students will be asking how this may affect their progression to universities, colleges, apprenticeships and all Post 16 provision. I can assure you that St Katherine's students will receive a place in the sixth form if it is in their best interests to follow their chosen curriculum; we know our students' potential and abilities, regardless of a new awarding system for grades. We will have discussions with families, as usual, at the appropriate time. The [St Katherine's Scholars Award](#) will continue to be awarded as originally planned. For Year 13 students, University representatives have confirmed that they expect to be flexible and do all they can to support students and ensure they can progress to higher education. We would encourage sixth form students holding offers to discuss their choices with their tutor before selecting their firm / insurance choice. We will work with all providers in the best interest of our students.

There are implications for the directed work and revision that Year 11 and 13 students are currently doing. We will update you with further guidance next week.

We are all very disappointed that the wider school experience of finishing Year 11 and 13 has ended so abruptly for our students, although there were some memories and a sense of occasion captured last Thursday; we will consider how we might celebrate Year 11 and Year 13 achievements and departure later in the year.

On behalf of all my colleagues, thank you for your continued patience and support.

Best wishes



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