

General Guide for Students and Parents

Ofqual have published a general guide for all students who are due to receive GCSE / A Level / BTEC results this year. The national guide covers a range of generic results day related issues such as grading, appeals and the Autumn Exam Series and can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907493/Student_Guide_Summer_2020_6.8.2020_12.30.pdf

Further Centre based information on each of these aspects are also detailed in the sections below.

Requests for Centre Assessed Grades

We have taken the decision to release to all students their Centre Assessed Grades. This is an update to previous information distributed and there will now be no need for students to request their Centre Assessed Grades. These will be sent to all students by email on Thursday, August 13th at 8.30am. These grades are not to be confused with the calculated grades from the Exam Board which are the final official grades.

Appeals / Complaints

Please find the link below to the latest Ofqual support guide for students and their families who have concerns or questions about grades.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907925/Information_for_students_about_malpractice-7-8-2020.pdf

The following points in the guidance are key:

1. Students are not permitted to challenge a school / centre under the national appeals process on individual centre assessment grades submitted or on rank order positions. The grounds for the school to appeal on a student's behalf are limited.
2. Students can ask the school to check whether it made a mistake when submitting your centre assessment grades and / or your position in the rank order – if the school finds a mistake in the data submitted then it will ask the Examination Boards to correct it – please email Miss Duffy (Examinations Administrator) at exams@nsb.northants.sch.uk if you would like the school to check that the CAG and the rank order submitted was correct in any of your subjects.
3. Following the release of the results by the Examination Boards, the school will check for each student that the correct data was accurately applied by the Examination Boards when they used the national standardisation model to award your grades – the school will notify relevant students and appeal to the relevant Examination Board if any errors are identified.
4. If the school believes that the historical data used for the national standardisation process by the Examination Boards was not a reliable basis for predicting its 2020 results in any individual subject then it will appeal to the relevant Examination Board on these grounds. Students of relevant subjects will be notified if such an appeal takes place.
5. All appeals to Examination Boards must be made by the school rather than by students. If you want to ask the school if it thinks there are grounds for appeal then you should email Mrs Topping Shaw at exams@nsb.northants.sch.uk setting out the detail of your request / enquiry. A member of Senior Staff will then respond to you within ten days with a decision as to whether or not the school will appeal your case and the reasons behind the decision.

6. If the school decides not to appeal your case then you may ask the school to review that decision. The review will be carried out by two Senior Staff members or Governors who were not involved in the initial decision of 'not to appeal'. You can ask for a review of the decision to not appeal by emailing exams@nsb.northants.sch.uk. The review of the decision to not appeal will be held within ten days of the request being received.
7. The deadline for the school to appeal to the Examination Boards is September 17th.
8. You may make a complaint if you believe that the school's judgement in determining your Centre Assessment Grade / rank order position was influenced by factors other than evidence about your academic performance. This would potentially constitute bias, discrimination or malpractice. If you think that malpractice or maladministration might have affected you then in the first instance you should make a complaint to the school through the steps outlined in the school's complaints policy: <https://extranet.nsb.northants.sch.uk/Resources/Staff%20%5BFf%5D/Policies%20%5BF2bn%5D/Personnel/Complaints%20Policy%202019.pdf>. If the school finds evidence of bias, discrimination or malpractice then it will appeal to the relevant Examination Board on your behalf.
If you have evidence of malpractice or maladministration and you have concerns about raising it directly with the school then it may be appropriate for you to raise this with the Examination Board directly instead.

Appeals based on higher Trial Examination Grades than the Examination Board Calculated Grade

The Government made an announcement on the night of Tuesday August 11th that schools could appeal on behalf of students if their 'valid' Mock / Trial examination result is higher than their Examination Board Calculated grade. We are still awaiting guidance from Ofqual for further detail on this announcement including the definition of a 'valid' Mock / Trial examination grade and whether or not practical coursework marks can be incorporated into the 'valid' Trial examination grade for relevant subjects.

Once further detail has been released from Ofqual we will be in contact with every student who we believe we can lodge a successful appeal for to get their final calculated grade raised to their Trial examination grade.

Students who wish to appeal a rejection from a University on the possible grounds of a Trial examination result being higher than the Examination Board calculated grade should come in to school on Thursday August 13th at the designated face to face support time for any other UCAS queries (from 12 noon), as outlined in the Examinations Section.

Summary of how the school determined Centre Assessed Grades and ranking positions for GCSEs / AS Levels / EPQs / A Levels

The school submitted to the Examination Boards the following two pieces of information for each examination entry:

- A Centre Assessment Grade for each student - this is the GCSE / A Level / AS Level or EPQ grade that the school, using a holistic professional judgement in line with Ofqual guidelines, believed that each student is most likely to have achieved in the summer.

- A cohort rank order of students within each grade – the highest attaining / most secure student in a grade at the top of the ranking for the grade and the least secure student for that grade at the bottom of the ranking for the grade – students were not permitted to be tied for a ranking position.

In order to determine the Centre Assessed Grade and the ranking position each subject teacher (or teachers where the class was taught by more than one teacher), was required to use a variety of pieces of evidence to make an objective decision. This evidence included:

- Results from termly assessments and examinations in Year 10/11 or Year 12/13 (including end of Year and Trial examinations)
- Coursework and non-exam assessment which would have contributed to the final grade
- Performance on class or homework assessments (which are not termly tests) over Year 10/11 or Year 12/13
- General in class / lesson levels of attainment
- For students who would have had an agreed reasonable adjustment or access arrangement (for example a reader or a scribe) the final grade judgement / rank order position has been determined by the likely achievement with the reasonable adjustment / access arrangements in place
- For students who would have had a valid special consideration request for circumstances beyond their control which affected performance during Year 10/11 or 12/13 – for example parental divorce or serious family illness / bereavement then the final grade judgement / rank order position has been determined by reflecting on the likely achievement of the student under ordinary circumstances

The Centre Assessed Grades and the rank order positions determined by the subject teacher were then moderated at two levels. Firstly through departmental moderation by the Curriculum Team Leader and the link member of Senior Staff (in discussion with the relevant subject teachers) and then at whole school level by the Senior Team. The departmental moderation process also included setting whole cohort ranking orders where more than one class of students were entered for an examination.

In line with government guidance, work sent to teachers after March 20th (the date of national school closure) was not considered other than in exceptional circumstances. This was to ensure that there was equity for all students as the Ofqual guidance was clear that *'no student should be disadvantaged if they are unable to complete any work set after schools were closed'*. Work completed by a student under the support of a private tutor was not considered as exceptional circumstances unless the student had been long term absent from school prior to March 20th. The positive impact of any work completed before March 20th between a student and a private tutor would have been demonstrated in improved attainment at school when the school was in session.

If a staff member had a family link to a child being graded for GCSE / A Level examinations the staff member was excluded from setting the final grade/ ranking position for their son/ daughter in relevant subjects and from each level of the associated subject moderation process.

Autumn Series of Examinations

There will be an Autumn Series of examinations if you wish to try and improve your Examination Board calculated grade in one or more of your AS / A Levels. The dates of these exams have been confirmed as Monday 5th October through to Friday 23rd October 2020.

The respective timetables for each of the Examination Boards have now been published and can be found online at the AQA, Edexcel and OCR websites. Please be careful when reading the timetable information as many subjects offer multiple specifications and have multiple exam papers for each qualification. The Autumn Examinations offered in the school will be in the specifications which are taught at the school.

The exams will cover all of the normal written papers for the subject and will be entirely paper-based assessments (bar Art and Photography), with no non-exam assessment / coursework carried over for any subject. In Art and Photography students will be set a new task to complete under examination conditions which will be marked by the Examination Board. If you enter for the Autumn Series then your final A Level grade will be the higher of your summer / autumn exam grades. If you enter for a subject then you will need to sit all of the papers for that subject. The examinations will be sat at the school. You will not be required to sit the examinations in normal Sixth Form Office dress.

If you decide that you wish to take an Autumn Series examination in any subject then please make contact with the Examinations Office no later than Friday, August 28th by phone or by email. Payment for entries will be covered by the School.

Revision material (not formal teaching) will be made available to current Year 13 students who wish to enter for an Autumn Series examination. Students who enter for an Autumn Series examination will be emailed (through your current school email address) with details of how to access this revision material in the week following the deadline for entries – week beginning September 1st.

The Autumn Exam series coincides with the new University year being in session. If you are attending University from Autumn 2020, you will need to contact your University / College to discuss whether or not they will permit you time off to come back to school to sit the A level / AS level papers that you wish to enter for.