

# Addendum to Wyvern St Edmund's Examination Policy – Awarding GCSE grades for the 2020 Summer Exam Series



Alongside our Examination Policy, the following arrangements will apply to the awarding of GCSE grades for the 2020 Summer Exam Series:

## Rationale

On 18 March 2020, the Secretary of State for Education announced that the summer 2020 exam series would be cancelled in order to help fight the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and that students in years 10 and 11 due to sit the exams would be awarded a grade based on an assessment of the grade they would have been most likely to achieve had exams gone ahead. On 23 March, in a written statement to Parliament, the Secretary of State explained the government's intention that results would be issued to the cohorts due to sit exams in 2020 based on a range of evidence and data, including performance on mock exams and non-exam assessment.

On 3 April 2020 Ofqual published further guidance directing schools to "use their professional experience to make a fair and objective judgement of the grade they believe a student would have achieved had they sat their exams this year." Schools have been directed to "take into account the full range of available evidence when they grade students - including non-exam assessment; the results of any homework assignments or mock exams; and any other records of student performance over the course of study." Schools have been further directed to "provide a rank order of students within each grade." This is because the national statistical standardisation process will need more granular information than the grade alone.

This addendum to the Examination Policy sets out how Wyvern St Edmund's (WSE) will fulfil the requirements of Ofqual's guidance in order to provide students with fair and objectively judged GCSE and Technical Award grades.

## Responsible persons

To ensure staff have access to relevant information, advice and guidance when working remotely, the following members of staff are responsible for the correct application of the guidance contained within this policy and should be the main points of contact for all staff queries and concerns.

Role	Name	Email	Priority contact
Head of Centre	Nicola Bull	headteacher@wyvernsted.org	
SLT member responsible for examinations	Nick Martin	nmartin@wyvernsted.org	Direct all queries in the first instance to Nick Martin.
Examinations Officer	Gemma Moody	gmoody@wyvernsted.org	

## Awarding grades to students due to sit exams in the summer 2020 exam series

It is the firm belief of WSE that all students due to sit exams in the summer 2020 exam series must not be disadvantaged by the cancellation of exams due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The futures of our students depend on the professional judgment of their teachers and this is a responsibility WSE takes seriously. Members of staff responsible for making judgments about grades and members of staff responsible for the

quality assurance (QA) of these grades must understand the weight of this responsibility and provide students with fair, objective and positive grade judgments, while maintaining the integrity of the examinations system.

### *Making grade judgments*

WSE will not direct teachers to make grade judgments in a 'one size fits all' way. Heads of Department (HoD) are best placed to know what evidence is most suitable in their subject for making grade judgments. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each HoD to decide what evidence should be used. HoDs must ensure the evidence they use to make grade judgments is the fairest and most objective evidence for deciding what a student was likely to achieve had they been afforded every opportunity to perform to the best of their ability in the summer 2020 exam series. Evidence can be drawn from, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Class work (both examples of work and teacher records of marks)
- Home work (both examples of work and teacher records of marks)
- Formal and informal class room based assessments (both examples of work and teacher records of marks)
- Mock exams (both examples of work and recorded outcomes)
- Non-examined assessments (NEAs) whether fully or partially complete
- Predictions made for the purposes of reports since September 2018.

HoDs must, after discussion with their teams and after careful consideration, record formally (see appendix A) how they will direct their staff to make grade judgments, ensuring that a copy of this record is sent to the SLT member responsible for examinations (Nick Martin, [nmartin@wyvernsteds.org](mailto:nmartin@wyvernsteds.org)). This guidance should then be sent to individual teachers by their relevant HoD.

Individual teachers will be responsible for making grade judgments for each student they teach in accordance with the guidance issued by their HoD. Where classes have more than one teacher a collaborative process must take place. Grade judgments made by individual teachers must be fair and objective and reflect what a student was likely to achieve had they been afforded every opportunity to perform to the best of their ability in the summer 2020 exam series.

### *Moderating grade judgments*

Once each teacher has made and submitted their grade judgments the relevant HoD will be responsible for undertaking a moderation exercise to ensure the accuracy, fairness and objectivity of the grades submitted. It is the responsibility of each HoD to decide how this moderation exercise will take place. Moderation can be carried out by, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Random sampling (selecting students at random)
- Quota sampling (selecting students from every grade level)
- Purposive sampling (deliberately selecting students from every grade level and every sub-group e.g. SEND, MA, PPD)

The only directive that must be followed when conducting a moderation exercise is that every teacher in each department must have some of their grade judgments included in the moderation exercise. Departments with a single specialist teacher must consult with their SLT line manager to decide how best to conduct the moderation exercise.

If the moderation exercise reveals minor concerns over the awarding of grades it is the responsibility of the HoD to consult with the teacher concerned to ensure corrections are made. In the event of major concerns or discrepancies in the awarding of grades the HoD must inform the SLT member responsible for examinations (Nick Martin, [nmartin@wyvernsteds.org](mailto:nmartin@wyvernsteds.org)) who will advise on the appropriate course of action.

### *Entering grade judgments*

Once the moderation exercise has been concluded to the satisfaction of the HoD grade judgments must be formally entered onto the spreadsheet designed for this purpose. All students from the topmost grade 9 down to any students who have been graded U must be entered on this spreadsheet in rank order. Students should be ranked on the spreadsheet in order of grade security e.g. the student most likely to achieve the grade 5

their teacher has predicted would be ranked first, and the student least likely to achieve the grade 5 their teacher has predicted would be ranked last.

HoDs will be responsible for conducting the rank ordering exercise and for entering grades onto the spreadsheet. HoDs must consult with their departments to ensure the ranking is fairly and objectively decided. This could be conducted through, but is not necessarily limited to:

- A Microsoft Teams meeting with relevant department staff.
- A Zoom meeting with relevant department staff.
- A separate spreadsheet with the department's provisional rankings sent via email.

Face to face meetings must not be arranged. Such meetings would contravene the government's social distancing regulations as they can be carried out remotely.

### *Further moderation of grade judgments*

Once the grade judgments have been entered onto the spreadsheet the HoD will review, along with their SLT line manager, students at the top and bottom of each grade level. This process will take place in order to ensure that students at the top and bottom of the rankings 'deserve' a higher or lower grade if the national statistical standardisation exercise changes the rankings submitted to the exam boards.

Replicated research has shown that SEND students are consistently predicted grades by their teachers which underestimate their ability. SEND students, therefore, often outperform their predictions in exams. To ensure fairness, objectivity and equality of opportunity for all students, students with a defined SEND need will have their grade judgments moderated by the SENDCO. The SENDCO will have the authority to refer grade judgments back to HoDs and individual teachers to check the evidence used to make the judgments.

Once HoDs, line managers and the SENDCO have reviewed the grade judgments they will be subjected to further moderation by an SLT working party. This moderation exercise will compare judgments across departments, compare judgments with FFT forecasts and ensure judgments 'fit' with what we would have reasonably expected students to achieve. The SLT working party will have the authority to refer grade judgments back to HoDs and individual teachers to check the evidence used to make the judgments.

### **Signing off on grade judgments**

Once all moderation exercises have taken place and grade judgments have been accepted, the HoD and 2<sup>nd</sup> in department (or other designated member of staff) will sign off on their department's grades. A recommendation will then be made to the Head of Centre (Nicola Bull) to accept the grade judgments as entered.

### **Submitting grade judgments and relevant declarations**

It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to submit grade judgments and centre declarations to the relevant awarding bodies and regulators as appropriate.

### **Maintaining security and integrity of grade judgments**

It is strictly forbidden for staff to discuss grade judgments with students, parents and/or carers or anyone not directly involved in the process of making and moderating grade judgments. It is strongly recommended that staff do not discuss their grade judgments with colleagues unless that colleague is directly involved in the process of making and moderating grade judgments. Any request from a student or parent to discuss grades should be forwarded to the Examinations Officer who will issue a standard response.

If a member of staff believes they have been subjected to any undue influence or pressure to reveal, amend or otherwise interfere with the process of making and moderating grade judgments they must report this to the Head of Centre ([headteacher@wyvernsted.org](mailto:headteacher@wyvernsted.org)) immediately.

Members of staff making grade judgments and conducting moderation exercises will be working remotely. They must take reasonable steps to ensure that any documentation or sensitive information is securely stored. Information should, as much as is possible, be accessed and stored on the school's server system,

accessible through the WSE staff portal (Connect to School). Please contact the Network Manager if there are any issues connecting to the school's server system ([acarvalho@wyvernstedts.org](mailto:acarvalho@wyvernstedts.org)).

All staff will be required to sign a declaration confirming their adherence to the fair and objective process as set out in this addendum to the Examination Policy (see appendix B).

### **Breaches of policy and malpractice concerns**

Breaches of this policy addendum will be dealt with formally. Breaches of this policy addendum may constitute malpractice as defined by Ofqual and JCQ and if so found, will be dealt with formally.

If any member of staff has any concerns about the integrity of the processes set out in this policy addendum, or if there are any allegations of malpractice they should contact the Head of Centre. The Head of Centre will be responsible for conducting an investigation (this investigation may be delegated where appropriate).

If concerns are of a sensitive nature please refer to the MLP Whistleblowing Policy which sets out formal processes for raising concerns about malpractice or any other serious and/or sensitive concerning regarding the application of this policy that may arise.

### **Appealing grade judgments**

Ofqual's current position is that students and parents will not be able to appeal grade judgments made by teachers. The only appeal Ofqual is considering is a clerical check of the data logged by the school and submitted to the exam board, and a clerical check of the data used by the exam board to calculate a grade during the national standardisation process. If Ofqual's position changes this policy will be updated accordingly.

### **Autumn 2020 exam series**

Ofqual's current position is that students who believe they could improve upon the grade judgment submitted will have the opportunity to sit an exam in autumn 2020. Should Ofqual's position remain unchanged WSE is committed to providing students with the opportunity to sit exams in line with our previously published Examinations Policy.