



Grades Strategy Summer 2021– Information for Students and Parents

Maiden Erlegh School, Maiden Erlegh in Reading, Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge, Hamilton School, Cranbury College

Introduction

Following the government announcement that formal examinations are cancelled in Summer 2021, Ofqual is currently consulting about how grades should be allocated to candidates this summer. This consultation concludes on the 29th January 2021 and the outcome from this due to be announced in February 2021. As a Trust, we will be developing a process and set of principles which will guide teachers, subject and school leaders within the Trust. This centrally coordinated process will ensure that the system is fair to all students.

Until the consultation outcomes are published to schools we have to use the consultation documentation to guide our initial thoughts. In the consultation, some of the guiding principles are clear but there are some notable differences to the emphasis and focus of the process applied in the summer of 2020. The context, due to the continuing Covid 19 pandemic, is that there will be no formal examinations set and marked nationally. Rather, the grades awarded to students will be based on their teachers' assessment of the standard at which the student is performing. The focus here is stated quite clearly: '**Grades must reflect what a student knows, understands and can do, and they must be widely understood and respected.**' Unlike last year, where teachers were asked to judge the grade a student would have achieved had there not been any disruption to learning and the examination process, this year the focus is on judging what the student knows, understands and can do at the end of the course. To this end, the guidance is that learning time should continue as long as is practicable to address any gaps in learning caused by lockdown or self-isolation. It is also implied that students will have some form of final assessed tasks or papers to support the teachers in making their final judgements.

Next Steps

Over the next few months, while the courses are being completed, teachers will continue to formatively assess student work and use the already planned formal assessments (PPEs/ Pre-Lims) to inform the DCP (Data Collection Points) reports. These assessments are intended to support the student in determining the areas of in which they need to improve.

Important Dates for the Diary

We have reviewed our DCP and internal examination dates to ensure we have the latest information from OfQUAL. The dates are outlined below:

Year 11 DCPs home: W/B 8th March

Year 13 DCPs home: W/B 8th March

Year 11 PPEs(including a Year 10 RP PPE): W/B 22nd March for 2 weeks

Year 13 Prelims: W/B 15th March for one week

The format of the exams will be communicated in due course as much of this will depend on the situation with regards school opening.



Meaning and Use of the DCP Grades

The Current Attainment and Predicted Grades used in the reports retain their previously published meaning found on the report themselves and in our Assessment and Reporting Policy.

- The **Current Attainment** grade reflects where the teacher judges the student's knowledge, understanding and skills at the time of reporting.
- The **Predicted Grade** indicates the teacher's best judgement of the most likely grade the student will achieve at the end of the course.

While these grades may form part of the background evidence used to determine the final submitted grade, their primary purpose is to inform students now about their current learning and likely final grade.

Final Submitted Grade

The actual calculation of the final submitted grade will be guided by the outcome of the Ofqual consultation but it is already clear that:

- 'If teachers do not use the exam board set papers, or even where they do, they should use additional ways to assess students and to gather evidence of the standard at which their students are performing.'
- '...greater weight should be given to evidence of a student's performance that is closer to the time of the final assessment.'

To this end it is our intention for each student to have some form of final assessed work at the end of the course which will have the greatest weight when deciding the final grade to be submitted.

Non Examined Assessment (NEA) and Vocational Exams

The advice from all exam boards, is that's students should continue to complete their NEAs as this will form part of their teacher assessment. Where there have been changes to the guidance, this has been communicated via individual subjects.

Vocational Exams such as BTEC exams are also cancelled for summer 2021. The outcomes of the OFQUAL consultation will provide further guidance around assessment of these units.

Final Formal Assessment

There is a strong indication that some form of final assessment will happen at the end of the course. The details of how this will take place and what papers will be available is not yet clear. Within Maiden Erlegh Trust we will endeavour to make this process as fair and consistent as possible. Where schools across the Trust enter students for subjects with the same examination board, it is our intention to use the national resources, where available, to create a Trust wide assessment with a consistent and moderated process for assigning final assessed grades. These assessments would become the most highly weighted piece of evidence towards the final submitted grade for each student. Alongside this, teachers will bear in mind a range of other evidence to inform their judgements of their teacher assessed grade for each student. These judgements will be moderated by leaders within both the school and the Trust. Once more is known about the outcomes of the Ofqual consultation we will inform you with further detail to support your understanding of this process.

What this means for the students now

This means that students should continue to:

- Do their best to engage with their learning.
- Benefit from the formative feedback given in the course of their studies and prepare well for the upcoming formal assessments.

By doing this they will be not only improve their understanding but they will also be providing their teachers with clear evidence of how they are performing. In this way the DCP reports will reflect more accurately



their actual current knowledge and give the staff a clear guide as to their likely final grade. This work will also form a firm foundation for any final assessed pieces of work that may be used at the end of the course to help determine a fair grade that will genuinely reflect what they know, understand and can do.

Once we have received guidance from Ofqual and the government we will be putting together a clear plan of the process for students, parents, staff and school leaders. Please bear in mind that the schools and Trust usually find out this information at the same time as the general public and whilst we will endeavour to turn this around as quickly as possible, we will also need time to ensure that what we are proposing is fair and consistent within the Trust.

We understand that this uncertainty can cause an increase in anxiety so please do contact your child's school Head of Year who will endeavour to offer some appropriate support for your child at this time. Please be assured that we will communicate our plans and process with you at the earliest opportunity.

Yours

Mr Graham Attridge

Trust Lead for Assessment and Reporting

