



Our Ref
MS/LH 26 March 2021

Awarding A Level and BTEC Grades

Dear Parents and Carers

After receiving a letter from the Trust earlier this month, we are now in a position to update you further about the process of awarding A level/BTEC grades this summer. We understand that the last few weeks and months have been a particularly difficult time for you as parents/carers, and for the students under our care at Trinity. However, after reviewing the advice from the Department for Education (DfE) and the exams regulator Ofqual, and through consultation with the other secondary schools in the Trust we believe that there is a fair, consistent and robust system now in place at Trinity to award grades this summer.

The government's decision to cancel public examinations this summer placed the responsibility for awarding grades to all schools and colleges across the country. The process for the Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) needs to follow a coherent rationale that reflects the guiding principles from the DfE and Ofqual, and above all that the decision to award qualifications must be evidence based and objective. At Trinity we have devised a system based on 'baskets of evidence' that teachers will use to make a judgement on their final awarded grade in their subject. In basket A, this is historic attainment data that we have gathered over the last two years from classwork and homework, interim reports, progress on NEA coursework modules, the Year 12 open book assessment mock examinations in June 2020, and the work carried out in remote learning until their return to school on 8 March 2021. In basket B this is the evidence that we are currently gathering ranging from classwork and homework, past exam questions, open book assessments, NEA coursework, the Y13 mock examinations in March 2021 and an in-class formal mini assessment under test conditions that will be no longer than 40 minutes. The final stage will be basket C when the students will have one final formal assessment per subject from 13 May to 26 May 2021, and these assessments will be based on past and previously unpublished exam board questions with valid mark schemes and grade boundaries set by the exam boards.

It is important to stress that whilst we have decided not to ascribe a specific weighting to each basket, some assessments are more significant than others as they are deemed to be more reliable and trustworthy forms of evidence; for example, the basket C assessments, NEA coursework scores, the formal mini assessments in basket B and mock exam results from earlier last year. Once the basket C assessments have been finished they will be marked with the exam board mark schemes and using the prescribed grade boundaries allocated a grade before undergoing a robust standardization process across each department. An A level grade will be awarded based on the basket C assessment, but this should not be seen as the final grade as departments will use the evidence from baskets B and A to arrive at a final awarded grade. The attainment data of each department and the quality assurance process that were used will be verified by members of SLT before the grades are uploaded and returned to the exam boards on 18 June 2021.

We have been conscious throughout our deliberations that the students have had two years of disrupted education, including periods when the school delivered remote learning, and the impact that this has had on their mental health. To that effect we have created a timetable for the basket C assessments whereby the students will only have one assessment per day, and they will be assessed on specific parts of the specification that were either delivered recently



or most effectively. Any access arrangements that your child is entitled to will be fulfilled, and each basket C assessment will be no longer than two hours. Each department will provide guidance to the students as to what topics or areas of the specification are to be assessed, and further guidance about revision techniques and online resources will be made available. The final day of Y13 lessons will be Monday 10 May 2021 where all students are expected to attend school, and they will have an option to study at home or in school from Tuesday 11 May until the end of the basket C final assessments on 26 May 2021. For those students who opt to study in school they will be able to ask for advice and guidance from their subject teachers in timetabled lessons, but it is important to stress that this will not put them at any advantage from students studying at home as staff will not be teaching or discussing the questions in the basket C assessments. A timetable for the basket C assessments will be issued next week after the current mock examinations have finished. The final assessment is scheduled for Wednesday 26 May 2021, and Year 13 students will not be expected to return to school after the May half-term.

The A level results day is earlier this year on Tuesday 10 August 2021, and details of how students will receive and collect their grades will be issued nearer this date. There is a process of appeal for the Centre Assessed Grades, and we are awaiting further details from Ofqual about this procedure and we will contact you again when this information is available.

As a school we recognize that these are unprecedented times that have placed great demands upon students and parents/carers alike, and we hope that this letter has offered clarity on how we will award grades this summer, and that our process is fair, objective and transparent. We have a duty of care to your child to ensure that our quality assurance process will deliver consistency across departments, and from teacher to teacher across the school. Please can we ask you not to contact the school or your child's teachers to ask them about the centre assessed grades, or to try to seek to influence the process as staff have been instructed to keep all aspects of the awarding process confidential.

It is important for all of our students to adopt the mindset that at this moment in time no grade has been finalized or decided upon, and there are still opportunities for students to demonstrate what they have learnt and how they can still shape their futures. As we have stated to the students their public exams may have been cancelled but their grades have not, and it is imperative that they continue to work hard, attend school, engage in learning in class and complete their assessments to the best of their ability.

We would like to thank you for your support at this most difficult time in education, and we hope that you and your family have a peaceful and holy Easter.

Yours faithfully

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