



NORTON COLLEGE

Beyond Expectations

Our Ref: SST/JJA

24th March 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

In February 2021, the Government confirmed that exams can no longer take place in summer 2021. The Government has since published extensive guidance for schools and colleges on the grading process for GCSEs, A Levels and Vocational & Technical Qualifications for this summer. The guidance that schools and colleges must follow has been designed to ensure that students receive grades that are fair and recognise the learning that has taken place. Outlined below is a summary of this guidance.

- Students will only be assessed on the curriculum content that they have been taught (through face-to-face teaching or remote learning)
- The grade that a student receives will reflect the standard at which they are currently working rather than a prediction of what they might have achieved had they sat examinations
- Teachers will use a range of evidence from more than one source to make a professional, evidence-informed judgement on the grade that a student receives
- If a course includes non-exam assessment (for example coursework, investigations, portfolios or practical performances) then these will be completed as normal (wherever possible). These pieces of work will be marked and moderated internally rather than by an examination board. This evidence will be used to support teachers' professional judgements when grading decisions are being made
- Examination boards will provide us with assessment material that we will use to support the assessments that take place internally. We have not yet received these materials and we anticipate that they will be similar in content and format to the examinations that have taken place in previous years
- For students in receipt of an access arrangement, these will be applied to all internal assessments in summer 2021
- In GCSE English Language (Speaking), GCSE Modern Languages (Speaking) and A Level Sciences (Practical), students will still receive an endorsement (which will remain separate to the grade that they receive)

Please note that this guidance relates specifically to students in Year 11 and Year 13 as these students will be receiving their qualifications in summer 2021.

It is clear from this guidance that it is necessary for us to carry out formal assessments of students' knowledge and understanding of the course content that they have been taught. This will enable teachers to make robust, accurate and fair professional judgements on the grades that students receive. Outlined below is an overview of how we will make these decisions for students in Year 11 and Year 13.

Grading and Assessment for Students in Year 11

For Year 11 students studying courses that would have been assessed only by examination in summer 2021, teachers will collect and consider the following evidence when making professional judgements on grading for each subject studied:

- The mock exam/PPE (Pre-Public Examination) that students sat in November 2020. This assessment activity took place in the majority of subjects within the college
- Two in-class assessments that will take place between Monday 12th April and Friday 7th May. These assessment activities will each take between 30 and 45 minutes and provide students with an opportunity to complete exam-style questions
- One further assessment taking place between Monday 10th May and Friday 21st May. These will be scheduled in advance so that students receive a timetable of assessments. Each assessment will be comparable in

length and format to examination papers from previous years. A copy of this timetable is available in the revision booklet that has been produced for students

For these assessments, students will be supported to revise material that is relevant to the topics that they can expect to be assessed on. These topics will be detailed in the revision booklet that will be shared. In addition, this resource will signpost students to revision material that can be completed during the Easter break as part of the 40-hour revision challenge. Students have received guidance on this and will continue to receive further support through our whole-school assembly programme as well as within subject lessons.

These principles will also apply to **Year 11 students studying a course that would have been assessed by both examination and non-exam assessments in summer 2021**. These courses include Vocational & Technical Qualifications (VTQs) such as BTECs and Cambridge Nationals. Non-exam assessments may include coursework, investigations, portfolios or practical performances. Wherever possible, these will be completed as normal and will be marked internally to provide an additional source of evidence to support the grading judgements made by teachers. Where relevant, teachers will also consider any external assessments that have already taken place. These may include, for example, external examinations from last year or January 2021, or coursework components that have already been moderated externally.

For Year 11 students studying a course that would have been assessed only by non-exam assessment, including Art and Design, teachers will consider students' evidence of the course components that have been completed. Where possible, students will be supported to complete these components before they finish their studies. Teachers will mark this work internally and use this as a source of evidence to underpin the judgements that they make. Where relevant, teachers will also consider any external assessments that have already taken place.

Grading and Assessment for Students in Year 13

For Year 13 students studying courses that would have been assessed only by examination in summer 2021, teachers will collect and consider the following evidence when making professional judgements on grading for each subject studied:

- Two in-class assessments that will take place between Monday 12th April and Friday 7th May. These assessment activities will each take between 45 and 60 minutes and provide students with an opportunity to complete exam-style questions
- One further assessment taking place between Monday 10th May and Friday 21st May. These will be scheduled in advance so that students receive a timetable of assessments. This timetable will be made available to students before the Easter break. Each assessment will be comparable in length and format to examination papers from previous years. A copy of this timetable is available in the revision booklet that has been produced for students

For these assessments, students will be supported to revise material that is relevant to the topics that they can expect to be assessed on. These topics will be detailed in the revision booklet that will be shared. In addition, this resource will signpost students to revision material that can be completed during the Easter break.

These principles will also apply to **Year 13 students studying a course that would have been assessed by both examination and non-exam assessments in summer 2021**. These courses include Vocational & Technical Qualifications (VTQs) such as BTECs and Cambridge Technicals. Non-exam assessments may include coursework, investigations, portfolios or practical performances. Wherever possible, these will be completed as normal and will be marked internally to provide an additional source of evidence to support the grading judgements made by teachers. Where relevant, teachers will also consider any external assessments that have already taken place. These may include, for example, external examinations from last year or January 2021, or coursework components that have already been moderated externally.

For Year 13 students studying a course that would have been assessed only by non-exam assessment, including the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), teachers will consider students' evidence of the course components that have been completed. Where possible, students will be supported to complete these components before they finish their studies. Teachers will mark this work internally and use this as a source of evidence to underpin the judgements that they make. Where relevant, teachers will also consider any external assessments that have already taken place.

Quality Assurance Procedures

Schools and colleges are required to implement internal quality assurance procedures to ensure that students' grades are fair and underpinned by reasonable academic judgement. Collecting evidence from a range of different sources is one way in which we can quality assure grading decisions. These decisions will also be internally moderated within and across our subject areas and where possible students' assessments will be marked anonymously. These processes remain subject to external quality assurance by the examination boards.

Appeals Process

We are confident that our assessment and quality assurance systems will ensure that all students receive a fair grade that recognises the level that they were working at in each of their subjects. However, students will be able to appeal their grade(s) if they decide that they would like to. The first stage of the appeal process will be to ask us to check that an internal administrative error was not made. If an administrative error was not made, and a student would like to proceed with their appeal, then the school would submit an appeal to the examination board(s) on the student's behalf. Examination boards have been directed to amend grades only when they find evidence that academic judgement was not reasonably exercised by the school. The decision of the examination board will be final. Students' grades can go up as well as down following an appeal and appeals cannot be reversed.

Release of Results

Qualification results for A Levels and other Level 3 courses will be released to students on Tuesday 10 August 2021. Qualification results for GCSEs and other Level 2 courses will be released to students on Thursday 12 August 2021.

Further Information

The information contained within this letter is underpinned by, and based upon, the guidance that we have received from the Government. This guidance can be accessed directly:

- [Ofqual: How qualifications will be awarded in 2021](#)
- [Ofqual: How GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded in summer 2021](#)
- [Ofqual: Decisions on how GCSE, AS and A level grades will be determined in summer 2021](#)

We hope that this information is helpful and that it has addressed any questions that you may have had about the grading and awarding process for students receiving qualifications in summer 2021. We will continue to provide further updates to you on the approach that we are taking to ensure that all our students receive the grade that they deserve. In the future, we will provide further information relevant to those students in Year 10 and Year 12.

In the meantime, please continue to help, support and encourage your child to make the most of the opportunities that they are offered over the coming weeks. If you do have further queries or questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

Mr S Stones
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