

20 April 2020

Schools

- The Bicester School
 - Bicester Technology Studio
 - Theale Green School
 - UTC Heathrow
 - UTC Oxfordshire
 - UTC Reading
 - UTC Swindon
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Dear Parents/Carers of Examination students

We wrote to you on 3 April 2020 regarding the most recent announcement by OFQUAL about the summer exams and promised to give you further details about our processes once we had the opportunity to both digest and then develop a Trust response to the announcements.

Today, we are able to give you some further information, but in essence, there is little further at this stage, other than the information previously released on how OFQUAL and examination boards will award grades to students for each examinations subject.

We have been asked to provide the examination boards with two pieces of information:

- the grade the student would most likely have received had the exams taken place
- the rank order of each student at each grade in each subject in that centre

All of our staff will be briefed on the robust process that all of our schools will follow to ensure that our processes are fair and do not advantage or disadvantage any of our students. Our process to provide the information required will begin today. This process will be data driven and it has been made clear that OFQUAL and examination boards will be taking the decisions on the final grades based on the information we provide, along with other data they hold nationally. Below is an important extract from the guidance provided:

*“Centres must not, under any circumstances, share the centre assessment grades nor the rank order of students with students, or their parents/carers or any other individuals outside the centre, before final results have been issued. This is to protect the integrity of teachers’ judgements, and to avoid teachers, heads of department, senior leaders or Heads of Centre being put under pressure by students and parents, to submit a grade that is not supported by the evidence. **Since the final grades for some or all students in a centre could be different from those submitted, it also helps to manage students’ expectations**”*

Should we breach the above, we will be in breach of regulations and likely to face an investigation for malpractice.

At this time, we are being told that examination results will be released on the planned release dates in August:

- AS and A-level results day is Thursday 13 August
- GCSE results day is Thursday 20 August

These are unusual times and our teachers and leaders are being asked to complete a process which is new and will require considerable time to ensure it is suitably robust and has the required moderation at various levels to ensure fairness. Therefore, we will not be setting any further work for examination students in Year 11 and Year 13 from this point forward. We will be providing a further update later this week for Year 11 students to support them in preparing for their chosen pathway at Post 16. For many, this will be moving on to courses on offer at their current school, where we will be able to provide very specific preparation materials for study over the summer

months and before the courses start in earnest in September 2020 (assuming it is safe to do so and following government guidance).

We know that this period is particularly challenging for examination students but please be rest assured that we will continue to communicate with you any changes or new information as we receive it. There is currently a consultation period about the way in which grades will be awarded, including appeals, data requests etc, which will be completed toward the end of April and once we have any further information from that consultation we will communicate this to you directly (this is not likely to be until late May, at the earliest). A further consultation will follow shortly from OFQUAL in relation to the details behind the opportunity in the Autumn for students wishing to take the actual examination. For now though, students need to be considering preparation for Post 16 and Post 18; as difficult as this may seem with continued uncertainty. However, please be confident that in the background we are doing all that is expected of us by OFQUAL and examination boards and will continue to update/support you and your child as we move through this process together.

With very best wishes



Joanne Harper
Chief Executive Officer - ALET

Copy to: Year 11 and Year 13 students

