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Plashet School Response to Ofqual Guidance on Summer 2020 GCSE Grades

How will the school decide on my grade?

The guidance is clear that schools should base their judgement on 'the full range of available evidence when they grade students - including non-exam assessment (NEA); the results of any homework assignments; mock exams; and any other records of student performance over the course of study.'

What does this mean for my study programme now?

When the school closed on 20th March subjects were still in the process of teaching the entire course, and your teachers will be submitting estimates based on completion of the entire course. It follows that Year 11 teachers will continue to set work until the May half term, and your engagement with the study programme is important to both give teachers' the most comprehensive insight into your subject knowledge, skills and communication in all aspects of the syllabus. In line with the government guidance, teachers will not however be attempting to set summative assessments to formally 'examine' students during this time. Teachers will though continue to assess your learning to give you feedback to help you improve your subject knowledge and skills.

Why should I continue to engage in the study programme?

Perhaps a more important reason to remain fully engaged in the study programme is to bear in mind that you don't just come to school to pass examinations. What you are learning is also important in its own right: 'knowledge is power' and the ability to think, talk and write like a scientist or mathematician is the product of your meaningful engagement in the study programme. It's also important to note that A-Level and any other post-16 qualifications build directly on subject knowledge and skills at GCSE, and so by continuing to engage you are helping to ensure your future success. A further consideration is that if you are not content with your grade awarded in the summer, the government has made clear that you will have an opportunity to resit in the Autumn. This will again require your knowledge and skills across the whole course.

What if I'm unable to complete any further work?

If since the closure of the school there are circumstances outside of your control, such as falling ill, or caring responsibilities that have prevented you from completing your study programme, you should notify Miss Sanderson via email. She will then liaise with your subject teacher, and Subject Leader, to ensure that they are aware of your circumstances so that you are not disadvantaged in any way.

If you are having problems accessing the study programme due to insufficient IT resources, then please email Miss Ali, my PA on info@plashet.newham.sch.uk as we are continuing to arrange non-IT provision for students.

Can I speak to my teacher to ask them to raise my grade?

We have instructed teachers not to engage in any discussion with students or parents about any grades that they may be estimating for students. Teachers will be working with colleagues in departments to make objective judgements when estimating grades.

When will I be told what my grade is?

The guidance is very explicit that teachers may not disclose the grade, or the ranking, that they have estimated for students. Teachers are not in a position to 'determine' grades, merely to 'estimate' the grade - all grades submitted will be in effect standardised by the awarding bodies - so teachers will not know your final grades until you do! We have not been told when Ofqual and the examination boards will release grades.

What does this mean for my Non-Exam Assessment (NEA)?

The guidance makes clear that your NEA marks will not be formally submitted to the exam board. However, your performance in the NEA or what you have completed thus far, will be a significant source of information that teachers use to submit your estimated grade. It is therefore important that you follow any instructions on submitting your work to your class teachers, to help provide evidence for your estimated grade. If there is a chance that you will want to enter a later set of exams, you should keep your NEA work in a safe place for submission then. Any NEA work at school will be stored and kept.

What about BTEC and other qualifications?

Unfortunately the guidance does not cover BTEC and other technical and vocational qualifications. The guidance states: 'While this process does not apply to those qualifications, the same aims apply. We are working urgently to develop an approach and we will provide further information as soon as possible. We will let students and parents know once we have received such guidance from Ofqual.'

Will I get a chance to 'appeal' my grades?

We are awaiting further guidance on this, but so far we have been told you will only be able to appeal if you think Plashet have not correctly followed the guidance from Ofqual. If you disagree with the grade given on results day you will have the chance to enter the Autumn exams.

Can I retake in Autumn?

Yes - but we don't know the dates or process for this yet - this is why it is so important that you complete your courses and familiarise yourselves with the exam papers and questions and the skills required to answer them.

When will I get my results?

The guidance states that there will be a Results Day - it just may not be on the date you expected in August. We are awaiting further guidance.

Will I be disadvantaged in the long term by not sitting examinations?

No. The government has committed that no student will be disadvantaged by the exam arrangements this summer. Your grades will be worth the same as any other year.

Will Colleges and Sixth Forms accept these grades?

Yes, they will accept the grades as they would in any other year.

For the letter to students (we sent you this on Friday 3rd April 2020, see here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877830/Letter_to_students_-_Summer_2020_grading.pdf

For the full guidance see here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877842/Summer_2020_grades_for_GCSE_AS_A_level_EPQ_AEA_in_maths_-_guidance_for_teachers_students_parents.pdf