

## Awarding of GCSE and A level Grades this summer (2021)

I hope the return to school has been smooth, and being back in the school community has been a positive experience for your son or daughter.

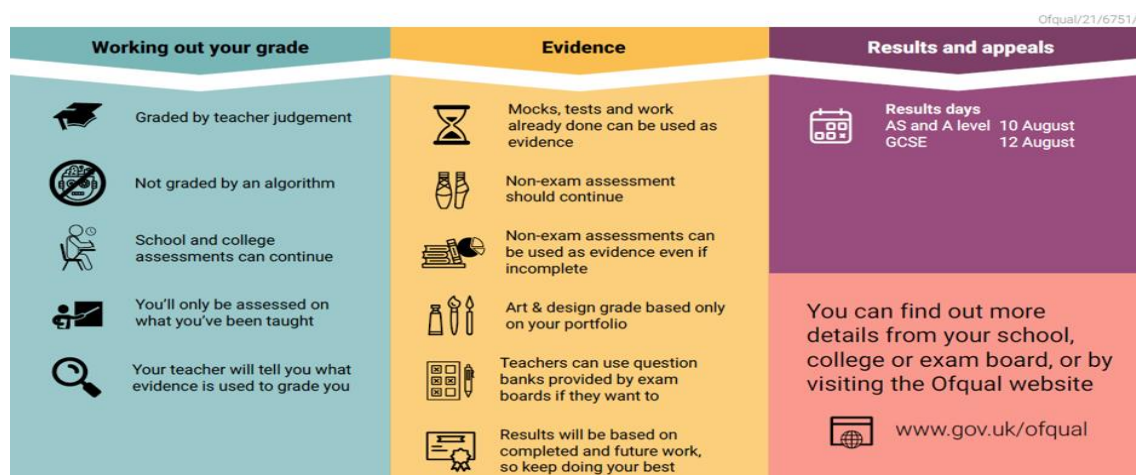
I wanted to follow up on my recent communication and give you the latest information on what is happening at Herschel over the coming months and offer you some reassurance regarding the awarding of grades.

On Tuesday, 9th March, I met with Year 11 and Year 13 teachers to share the latest Department for Education and Ofqual guidance. I also set out more information on how the school will be approaching the awarding of GCSE and A level Assessed Grades and what departments should be doing over the coming months.

Over the next few weeks, departments will be putting together an 'Assessed Grades' overview document that will clearly explain how each subject will award GCSE and A level grades and, significantly, the evidence from which these grades will be based.

### How GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded in summer 2021

ofqual



As you can see from the above graphic, departments can use a range of evidence methods.

Teachers will not be making any snap judgements. In all subjects (apart from Art and Design), there will be further opportunities for students to be assessed using newly released exam board material (end of March). These assessments give students an excellent opportunity to showcase their knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities, which I know they have been working hard on.

Whilst these assessments will not be formal exams, they will be **necessary**. Students will only be tested on what has been taught, and teachers will give as much notice as possible, along with any helpful guidance. We expect students to attend every lesson (following appropriate advice), learn, act on feedback from their teachers, revise, and read around their subject. Their grade will be based on their performance, and so their **outcomes are ultimately in their hands**.

The guidance is clear. Assessed Grades must be evidence-based, which is **not the same as a predicted grade**. The evidence can be based on valid tests, assessments, classwork, coursework, essays, practical assessments and performances across the two years of study and, importantly, the future assessments which will be taking place.

As you can appreciate getting the balance of evidence right to award grades that are a fair, accurate and just reflection of the standard achieved by every student is no small undertaking.

We are also awaiting further information from all the awarding organisations who will be providing training and supplying additional assessment material that teachers will use to help determine each

student's standard. So we do ask for patience. Hopefully, the timeline below summarises what is likely to be happening in lessons over the coming months.

Date	Year 11	Year 13
Now until Easter Holidays	Reviewing December Mocks. Revisiting prior learning Revision for assessments Continuation of course teaching. Limited assessments. NEA completion	Preparation for Mock exams starting 15 <sup>th</sup> March. Mock examination Reviewing Mock exams. Continuation of course teaching. NEA completion
19th April to 25th May	Teachers sharing the evidence to be used. Completion of exam board assessments. Teaching and review of prior learning.	Teachers sharing the evidence to be used. Mock examination review Revisiting prior learning & revision for assessments Completion of exam board assessments.
17th May to 25th May	The final week of consolidation.	The final week of consolidation.
26th May	Teachers decide on grades.	Teachers decide on grades.

After the Easter holidays, teachers will discuss the evidence they are using to inform their students' judgments.

However, we are not allowed to disclose the final grade submitted to exam boards.

Students should not attempt to second-guess the grade, as teachers will be using a range of evidence to inform their final judgement, and each piece of evidence will have a different weighting.

I would also like to point out a comprehensive **quality assurance** programme completed by departments, and the senior leadership team will be in place. (more information on this at the information event) On top of this, exam boards will carry out several checks and will review our processes before grades are submitted and will visit schools if they feel results are not correct.

Students and parents must not pressure teachers to reveal the grades they are submitting or try to influence the grades, as doing so may be considered *exam malpractice*. Teachers cannot submit higher grades for students unless they have evidence that they are consistently working at that standard. If teachers submit higher grades without evidence, they are committing exam malpractice, which jeopardises the grading process and risks grades being lowered.

Again, the most important message for today is that your son or daughter should continue to work hard, engage in all learning opportunities, do all that their teachers are asking of them. If they complete all the assessments to the best of their ability, they will all have the chance to receive grades that objectively reflect their performance and move on to the next stage of learning. In addition to this information we are also holding a live Team Event the 30<sup>th</sup> March to explain the awarding process and also answer any questions you may have. Please find the join codes below.

GCSE Information event	30 March 2021 4:30 pm	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/gcseEVENT">https://rebrand.ly/gcseEVENT</a>
A Level information event	30 March 2021 5:30 pm	<a href="https://rebrand.ly/alevel-event">https://rebrand.ly/alevel-event</a>

Thank you so much for all your support, especially over the last 12 months, and let us hang on to the hope we can all celebrate fantastic achievements in the summer.

Best wishes.

Mr Devereux