

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

I would like to share with you information about changes announced on 17 August relating to the awarding of A level grades. This information is based on published information from Ofqual which will be kept under review and may be subject to change. **It does not apply to BTEC results.**

Announcement regarding A level results on 17 August

Ofqual announced a major change of position regarding A level results that were published on Thursday 13 August. Students will be awarded the centre assessment grades submitted to the exam boards or their original grade awarded on 13 August, if this is higher. For many students, their grades will remain unchanged, however a significant number will see an increase in their grade.

New College will publish the centre assessment grades awarded to students via Cedar on 18 August at 10am. (You will find them under Curriculum achievement>Markbook summary>Previous markbook). Our understanding is that your centre assessment grade (or original grade if it is higher) will now be your final grade and your mock results will not be taken into account.

Determining Centre Assessment Grades

Teachers and leaders at New College worked hard to develop centre assessment grades (CAGs) that we felt were fair and which reflected the most likely grade students would receive this summer had students been able to sit the exams.

There is no single indicator that determined the CAGs that were awarded. In line with Ofqual guidance, teachers balanced a range of different considerations including monthly assessment results, mock exams, classwork, coursework and historical results for the course within the college. Teachers have used their best professional judgement in producing centre assessment grades.

Although rankings were not ultimately used by the exam boards, we created them alongside the centre assessment grades at the request of the exam boards, determining the students we believed were the most likely and the least likely to achieve each grade.

Comparisons of centre assessment grades with mock grades and UCAS predicted grades

On results day, there will always be a mix of students whose grades are higher than they expected, in line with what they expected, and lower than they hoped.

It is important to stress that in normal years, some students will achieve higher results than in their mock exams, some will achieve the same grade, and some will achieve lower grades. Each assessment is simply a snapshot and no single assessment is a perfect indicator of likely results, which is why teachers have taken a wide number of factors into consideration. Accordingly, some students' CAGs will be higher than their mock exam results, some will be the same and some will be lower.

It is also important to stress that UCAS predicted grades submitted at the end of Year 12 may be different to the CAGs submitted at the end of Year 13. UCAS predicted grades are often a 'best case scenario' based on limited information from Year 12 alone. CAGs take account of evidence across the two years and are intertwined with rankings, which take into consideration the performance of students relative to other students in the year group.

For any students that would ordinarily have had access arrangements, such as extra time, in accordance with Ofqual guidance, this was taken into consideration when generating centre assessment grades.

Guidance from Ofqual about grade distributions

Consistent with guidance from Ofqual, where the prior attainment of students within a course this year was similar to previous years we would expect to see broadly similar results. Equally, if students within a course have stronger GCSE results overall than in previous years we would expect results to be stronger. We have taken this into account when developing centre assessment grades so that student grades take account of the ability of the group of students this year. We have used professional judgement to the best of our ability, with middle and senior leaders reviewing CAGs before they were submitted to check that the overall results were fair, credible and realistic. To further support robust quality assurance, results were further reviewed by a panel including College Principals and the Trust CEO.

Significant grade increases

We believe that teachers are generally optimistic people that see the best in their students and want them to achieve fantastic results. That is why the CAGs submitted nationally were higher than results awarded in previous years. This is also true at New College. As a result of the recent announcement accepting centre assessment grades, significant numbers of students at New College will see grade increases and more students will have achieved A*-B grades than in previous years. We offer our congratulations to students, particularly as we know that many will have been disappointed with the results previously published by exam boards. The awarding of results on the basis of centre assessment grades has produced the strongest set of student results in the history of our colleges.

Appeals and Complaints

Ofqual have indicated that students cannot challenge their individual centre assessment grades this year, as any appeal would have to be undertaken by someone better placed than their teachers to judge a student's likely grade if assessments had taken place. In the unique circumstances of this summer, Ofqual do not believe there is any such person.

The Ofqual appeals guidance does not currently provide an opportunity for students to appeal directly to the exam board if they simply disagree with the centre assessment grades submitted by schools and colleges. In order for the college to consider a request for an appeal on a student's behalf you must provide significant and compelling evidence of bias or discrimination to the College Principal. When a school or college submits an appeal on a student's behalf because it believes it has made an error, guidance from Jcq indicates that a grade may increase, decrease or stay the same.

It is worth considering that sitting exams in October could be a good option for disappointed students, given that all candidates will have been equally disadvantaged by the extended gap in learning. Please email exams@nclt.ac.uk by 28 August if you decide to do so.

You can see Ofqual's guidance about appeals here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/909525/information_for_students_about_malpractice_20200814_1218_-_access.pdf

If you wish to make a formal complaint you should put your complaint in writing to lauren.walker@nclt.ac.uk. You can find our complaints policy on the college website.

We find ourselves in unprecedented times for both students, parents, carers and teachers. We appreciate how difficult the situation has been for all concerned. I would like to finish by offering my congratulations to students for all their hard work and achievements this year.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Fletcher
Chief Executive Officer