

19 October 2021

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

Re: Mock Examinations, Examinations Summer 2022 and Coronavirus Contingency Arrangements

A number of adjustments have recently been announced for A level and GCSE examinations next summer. For example, A level Visual Arts courses will be assessed only on the basis of student portfolios. Changes have been made to practical requirements for A level Science courses. For A level and GCSE courses, examination boards will publish advance information in February 2022 about the focus of content of the exams in the summer. Further details can be found at the following two sites:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2022/outcome/decisions-proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2022>

<https://www.icq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Advance-Information-for-General-Qualifications2021-22.pdf>

Although our current expectation is that external examinations will take place this academic year, there remains the possibility that examinations could again be disrupted as a result of the pandemic. External examinations are due to take place in November 2021 for GCSE maths and English, in January 2022 for a number of applied general qualifications, and in the summer of 2022 for the majority of qualifications, including A levels. The government and examination boards have asked schools and colleges to make contingency arrangements, detailing how teacher assessed grades (TAGs) would be determined in the event that external examinations do not go ahead.

A level courses

If A level examinations do not go ahead in summer 2022, we intend to determine teacher assessed grades (TAGs) by considering student performance in four internal assessments. There will be no formula, but we will place greatest emphasis on the March 2022 mock exams, followed by the November 2021 mock exams, due to their formality and the greater amount of subject content they will assess. We will also take into consideration, to a far lesser degree, student performance in the shorter Cedar assessments in May 2022 and in January 2022. As external examinations are not going ahead this year for A level Fine Art, Photography, Textiles and Graphics, students in those four A level courses will be assessed entirely on the basis of their completed portfolios.

GCSE courses

If GCSE examinations do not go ahead in summer 2022, we intend to determine teacher assessed grades in a very similar way to A level courses. There will be no formula, but we will place greatest emphasis on the March 2022 mock exams, followed by the published result from the November 2021 external examination (for students that sat this exam). We will also take into consideration, to a far lesser degree, student performance in the shorter Cedar assessments in May 2022 and in January 2022.

Further Information regarding both A level and GCSEs

In order that students do not have an unfair advantage or disadvantage when teacher assessed grades are determined, we will only consider assessments completed under staff supervision, and reduced emphasis will be placed on an assessment if a student completes it at a later date than planned (for example because of absence). It is therefore particularly important that students attend their Cedar assessments and mock exams on the planned dates and that students work hard to achieve the best possible results in them. If external examinations do not go ahead next summer, student performance in all of these assessments and mock exams will be used to determine teacher assessed grades. Students should now be working hard in preparation for the mock exams taking place before Christmas.

Even if external examinations do go ahead as planned next summer, which is very much our hope, effective preparation for Cedar assessments and mock exams will have a very significant impact on student confidence, progress and readiness for the very final examinations. Students should therefore approach their mock exams and Cedar assessments with the recognition that their final grades will be strongly influenced by their performance in them. In advance of each mock exam or Cedar assessment teachers will share with students a list of topic areas or skills that will be assessed. As always, any students that have approved access arrangements (such as extra time) will continue to be provided with them for these mock exams and assessments. If there are very significant extenuating circumstances at the time of any of the mock exams or Cedar assessment it is very important that students make their Progress Tutors aware at the time. Only in situations where these circumstances are significant and in line with the Joint Council for Qualifications guidance on special consideration will we be able to place reduced emphasis on any affected results when determining teacher assessed grades.

Applied General Qualifications

We will share information with students, parents and carers about contingency arrangements for applied general qualifications (such as BTEC courses) when they are published by the government and examination boards. Students should anticipate that November mocks (for any external examinations due to take place in January) and March mocks (for any external examinations due to take place in the summer) might be used to determine grades for those units if external examinations do not go ahead. For Year 13 students studying applied general qualifications, who were due to sit external assessments last year, we have been asked to submit unit level teacher assessed grades (UTAGs) to the relevant awarding bodies. Via Cedar, students are aware that they can view the UTAGs that we plan to submit and we have shared with them information about how these have been determined.

Yours sincerely



Vicky Marks
Principal