

Frequently Asked Questions

What were all schools asked to submit?

For each candidate in each subject, a centre assessment grade (see above for the definition) and their rank within each grade band.

Can there be tied ranks within grade bands?

No. "Tied ranks (that is, giving two students position 1) will not be allowed".

What are the principles for determining the centre assessment grade and the rank order?

"The centre assessment grades submitted to exam boards must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement the most likely grade a student would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment".

What evidence was taken into account when arriving at centre assessed grades?

The Department for Education and Ofqual were clear that there were many sources of evidence that could be used in arriving at judgements for Centre Assessed Grades. Evidence such as:

- Mock examinations
- Other internal assessment
- Bookwork/ Folder work
- Homework
- Practical elements where applicable
- Non-examined assessment (NEA) where applicable
- Likely attendance to revision sessions
- Historic performance within subjects
- Historic data that illustrates progress made by students between final predictions made by class teachers and actual exam outcomes

What evidence was not taken into account when arriving at centre assessed grades?

The Department for Education and Ofqual were clear that some evidence could not be used when arriving at judgements for Centre Assessed Grades, including;

- Socioeconomic background
- Character
- Behaviour

How were vocational qualifications such as BTECs different to GCSE and A Level qualifications?

The guidance for vocational qualifications was issued later than that for GCSE and A Level qualifications. Due to the complex nature of many of these qualifications within the national picture we waited for exam boards to provide advice for arriving at Centre Assessed Grades within these subjects. Once this advice arrived we undertook the approach outlined by the exam board, but ensured that the same rigour and quality assurance was in place across all subjects and qualifications.

Do schools have the final say on the grades awarded?

No. "So that the final grades awarded are as fair as possible, exam boards will standardise the judgements across different centres once they have been submitted, using a statistical methodology developed in conjunction with Ofqual".

What happens after the school submits the grades to the exam boards?

After the school submitted the grades to the exam boards the DfE and Ofqual directed the exam boards to 'standardise' the entries submitted. In order to do this they compared entries nationally and used students' scores in Key Stage 2 / Key Stage 4 assessment points to look at likely outcomes. They may have then changed the grades of some students as part of this process. As a school we will not receive notification of this until exam results are issued to students on the GCSE/ A Level results days.

Can the school share with us what was submitted to the examination boards?

I am afraid the answer to that is no. Given that we submitted recommendations rather than the final outcome, we are not permitted to share any of this information with you. "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. 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"

What happens if I/ my child is not happy with the grades that they receive?

The DfE and Ofqual have been consistent in stating that there will not be an appeal process for students that are dissatisfied with the grades they are awarded. The only right of appeal to change an awarded grade is if there has been a mistake in entering the grades by the Centre or by the Exam board in any standardisation / confirmation process. In terms of the school, we have had extensive control measures in place to protect the grade entry process prior to submission to avoid any entry mistake. The DfE have been clear that if a student is unhappy with the grade they are awarded they should sit the examination in the Autumn term. In the event they receive a lower grade than the grade they were awarded in this attempt then the higher of the two grades will stand.

Where can I find out more about Centre Assessed Grades?

Much of the information available regarding Centre Assessed Grades can be found on the St John Payne School website. There are links to various Ofqual guidance documents and letters. Whilst we can't share information we are sending to the exam boards with you, this does not mean we cannot support you more generally so please contact us at the school office@sjp.essex.sch.uk if you have any questions.