

## **TEACHER ASSESSED GRADES**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

#### **ASSESSMENT**

**Q Why are you still teaching new content at this stage, when assessments will take place over the next few weeks?**

*A We are balancing teaching the course and preparing students for the next steps in education along with assessing sensibly.*

**Are you assessing all work the same based on the learning remotely vs being in school?**

*A. All work will be assessed independently using relevant criteria and specifications.*

**Q Will the assessments include topics/elements that were not covered in class?**

*A All the information will be on G4S, so you will be able to see which forms of evidence will be used. Please rest assured that our Heads of Department have thought carefully about this.*

**Q Will past paper questions be relevant anymore? Will questions be set in the same format?**

*A Past paper questions are still relevant and used frequently in class and at home both as revision and as assessed pieces.*

**Q Year 11 have had lots of disruptions in their 2-year GCSE course. I hope this will be taken into account and for them to still reach their full potential.**

*A The assessment system we are working with is designed to be as fair as possible for all pupils.*

**Q After being told that exams won't go ahead as usual, as they will be unfair if they do, why are certain subjects, such as the sciences, giving full papers with all content covered with 3-4 weeks' notice? Students were under the impressions that 'mini-exams' would take place and so many stopped preparing for full exams.**

*A Students are being assessed through a variety of methods, including tests in class, but these are not full exams as they would have previously had. Some departments need to have holistic assessment points due to the design of curriculum and examination content. While some subjects are modular in style, with limited links between such modules, others, such as Science and Maths have significant module overlap. This requires a greater emphasis on end of course assessment. As Mr Freeman mentioned, this is often used to account for lower performance or grades in earlier parts of the course.*

*It has been a very difficult situation, with much speculation in the press (e.g. the mini exams that you mention). We have been as honest and clear as possible in our mailings and the specific circumstances are taken into account when setting assessments.*

**Q Can we have a timetable of up and coming assessments?**

*A This is very bespoke for each child, so all details for each pupil are on their Go4Schools page.*

**Q Is it ok if my daughter is reachable by Teams or Zoom from 7-18 June?**

*A For assessment to be valid, it would be necessary to do so in person.*

**Q How likely (percentage terms) is it that a pupil will need to go in after 28th May? In what circumstances would teachers not have all info by then?**

*A We really do not know. Unlikely, but very hard to quantify. It might become evident through moderation processes. Unlikely, but not impossible.*

**Q How can a student put together and execute a revision timetable if they are only given two weeks' notice of an exam/test and are busy covering learning new material in school?**

*A Students in Year 11 every year at this stage would be taking lessons as well as preparing for exams. We are preparing them in class as we would normally do. We are working hard to balance academic expectations with pastoral care.*

**Q Will CVC students be at a disadvantage if the 2021 assessment materials are not used?**

*A These assessment resources are just a mix of previous materials, all of which we have access to. We will ensure that our students are not disadvantaged. All schools are using a range of evidence.*

**Q How will you mitigate the advantage that students taking the assessments the following day from others in the cohort have (i.e. the after-school statistics classes) have to ensure that the grades awarded are equitable? We are aware that the whole cohort will be used for internal moderation. but also, aware that the students in the two groups are discussing the assessment in between one group taking it and the next, making it unfair on those students sitting the assessments first.**

*A This is part of the reason why we are using a range of data from multiple assessments to mitigate against this. We believe the teachers will use their judgement re what children do in class - We will certainly raise this as something to consider - We know teachers will be aware of this.*

**Q There are comments going around that pupils in Yr 11 have accessed papers so know the questions in some tests in advance. Other pupils have not cheated like this - are you aware of this and how will you straighten this out?**

*A We are aware of this and are therefore providing multiple opportunities for pupils to showcase what they know. Any inflated grades which clearly do not reflect a pupil's true capabilities will be questioned.*

**Q There seems to be increased testing meaning less time for revision / prepare for optimal achievement. Normally they would have a few weeks to prepare before commencement of exams. Is there a risk of underperformance affecting university placement as a consequence with this approach, especially as marked papers will not be returned to facilitate improvement?**

*A The universities are aware of the current system which will of course be helpful. Although students do not have the 'study leave' from a 'normal' year, the assessments are reduced in terms of time and the number of marks which helps to mitigate this concern. In most cases, papers can be returned for feedback, particularly if there are further assessments with the same exam technique.*

**Q How will you assess a student who started with Es, who progressed to Cs, then As at the end. Will they just be given a C, the average though they peaked at As at the end - when exams would have taken place?**

*A Algorithms will not be used. The grade will be a holistic judgement on what has been achieved.*

**Q My child hasn't always been the modal student, how will he be judged?**

*A All students will be judged based on the evidence we have from assessments. It would be expected that students would show improvement over time and so 'rogue' assessment marks e.g representing a 'bad day' can be removed. We do of course need a range of evidence so this scenario would be limited.*

**Q How much weight do the current assessments have in terms of the final teacher assessed grades?**

*This will be different for each subject.*

**Q How much weight do the current assessments have in terms of the final teacher assessed grades? Given that students have only been back in school for 4 weeks of in person teaching and have in some subjects have still been being taught new subject content during this time, this seems to be a very intense period of pressure.**

*A The weighting will differ by subject area but be uniform across a subject cohort. We are working to manage the pressure but need to meet the expectations of Ofqual and the exam boards.*

**Q Are the assessment criteria the same this year as previous years or has there been an adjustment? We were expecting to use the revision time very differently, I don't think students have been able to make the best use of that time, at least not in the same way as in previous years.**

*A The assessment criteria remains a nationally determined scenario, with exam boards and Ofqual providing details of expectations. The volume of assessment has been adjusted to account for the content that students have been taught and the time available for study.*

**Q How will final grades reflect the potential for students who excel in exam situations as evidenced by progression from mocks to final grades in GCSEs?**

Students are assessed on the work that they have produced, similar to how they are assessed in examinations.

## GO4SCHOOLS

**Q Is G4S also available for Y13 parents?**

*A Yes, Go4schools is available for Yr 12 and 13 parents also. If you have never used your login or cannot find any automated emails, please contact [sthomas@combertonvc.org](mailto:sthomas@combertonvc.org)*

**Q Some subjects put hardly any information on G4S - will you standardise reporting across subjects, because there is a vast difference in how departments use G4S?**

*A We will be providing the 2021 assessment and outcome sheet for all of our KS4 and KS5 subjects to ensure fairness and clarity*

**Q When will the info be available on Go4Schools?**

*A The information is already live on GO4Schools.*

**Q Can the students see the 2021 assessment evidence or just parents?**

*A Students can too.*

**Q Can you email out notice of tests please, as I can never seem to access G4S?**

*A Unfortunately, no, as this is very different for every pupil. We can get you log in details for G4S if you need them.*

**Q We were living abroad during the SATS which informed the KS3 prediction, so my daughter was allocated national average for her pathways when she joined CVC at the start of yr 7. Will this impact her grade assessment or will her performance pathways since then inform her grades?**

*A No - the grades will reflect the work your child is producing in the assessments we have set.*

## EXAM BOARD

**Q If other schools use the exam board provided exams, won't their grades be better than Comberton's?**

*A The exam boards are required to moderate to ensure consistency of grade boundaries nationally.*

**Q What happens if the exam boards do not agree with the Centre grade?**

*A There will be a process of appeal - the 'safety net' that Mr Freeman explained.*

**Q What evidence will be sent to exam boards for moderation of grades?**

*A We will be sending the data which we are making available via Go4schools, along with details of our curriculum coverage and assessment plans. We are required to hold copies of all assessment this half term and make this available should it be needed. This will show the marking and decision making of teachers.*

## **SIXTH FORM**

**Q Will a student be disadvantaged at A-Level if they are in a high achieving class with a small cohort?**

*A No, this would not be the case. In 2020, this was potentially a concern, but the guidance is different in 2021. Students will be assessed based on their own holistic grading e.g. if there was a class of 5 and they all met the criteria for an A grade, then they would all receive a A grade.*

**Q Will 6th form colleges be more lenient if my child doesn't get the correct grade to do their chosen course?**

*A This would be down to individual sixth forms - if there were concerns, we would happily talk with the sixth forms regarding the judgements made.*

**Q Is there a date for Comberton Sixth Form transition events for the current Year 11s?**

*A Yes, details of our events have been sent home (with more detail to follow). CSF students have their last day celebrations on the 28th May and we have our leavers' party booked for Thursday 1st July.*

**Q When is the year 13 celebration going to be?**

*A Our on-site celebration day is also the 28th May and our off-site Leavers' Party/ball is scheduled for 1st July.*

## **APPEALS**

**Q If unhappy with an appeal, can the awarded grade be rejected and opt to take a proper exam in October? Would that be counted as a retake and not be looked upon favourably by Universities?**

*A While we cannot speak for an individual university, it is unlikely that this approach would be looked upon favourably. Many universities have different entry requirements (normally higher) if a student has had a re-sit opportunity. We certainly saw this in 2020.*

## **GENERAL**

**Q If my son wants to do arrange the work experience that he couldn't do last year during the last part of term, is that acceptable?**

*A This would not be a possibility before the 28th May but could be arranged after 18th June (when all evidence for TAGs have been sent to the exam board).*

**Q What are the implications of students not being available on site 7-18th June?**

*A If there were gaps in the assessment data (which might only be generated through the moderation process) we might ask pupils to attend for other assessments. This is unlikely but possible. If pupils were not available, then we would have to make a judgement from partially incomplete data.*

**Q When is the Promotion?**

*A 28 May.*

**Q Will there be a bouncy castle at the Promotion?**

*A Details will be confirmed by the student group overseeing the plans*

**Regina Lawrence and Jamie Freeman**

**23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021**