



MAHARISHI SCHOOL

Exam Newsletter Summer 2020

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

We understand how unsettling the past few months have been for you, since the announcement to cancel this summer's exams due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We wanted to reassure you that we have been working hard, and following the guidance from Ofqual, JCQ, AQA and Pearsons at every step of this process.

Ofqual's overriding aim is to be fair to students this summer and to make sure you are not disadvantaged in your progress to sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, training or work because of these unprecedented conditions.

GCSE Award

We have been required to submit for each pupil two pieces of information (centre assessment grades) for each of your subjects, based on what we know about your work and achievements.

1. The grade we believe you were most likely to get if teaching, learning and exams had happened as planned.
2. The order of students by performance, for each grade within each subject. (This information will be used by Ofqual to standardise judgements – allowing for the fine tuning of the standard applied across schools and colleges).

We have considered a range of things like your classwork and homework; your results in assignments and any mock exams; any non-exam assessment or coursework you might have done; and your general progress during your GCSE course.

The exam boards will all follow the same standardisation process set out by Ofqual.

Exams boards will take the schools' centre assessment grades and consider them against:

- past results for each school or college and changes in its year-on-year entry profile
- prior attainment information for this year's students
- national outcomes for each subject in previous years.

Combining centre assessment grades with this data ensures consistency of grading standards across the country. This is important as some schools may have been more generous than others when making their judgements. It also ensures the exam boards are treating this year's cohort consistently with any other year.

As a result, individual grades may be adjusted upwards or downwards. This means that the final grade awarded to a student could be different from the one we have submitted.

For further reading on this topic:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-an-additional-gcse-as-and-a-level-exam-series-in-autumn-2020>

Ofqual have consulted on a range of topics and have published a summary of its decisions below (published 2/7/2020):

Summer 2020 Results day (Thursday 20th August)

At present we are waiting for guidelines from the exams boards, as to how the results will be delivered. We will send you more information soon as it is available to us.

Summer 2020 appeals

- Appeals will be allowed where a school believes it has made an error when submitting its information - or if the school believes an exam board made a mistake when calculating, assigning or communicating a grade.
- This includes cases where a school believes that significant changes in this year's cohort haven't been properly taken into account during the standardisation process. However, Ofqual says these cases will be rare, as the changes would have to be very big to affect calculated grades.
- A student with concerns about bias, discrimination, or any other reason why a school didn't fairly assign a grade or ranking, should normally raise this with the school in the first instance. However, if they have evidence of serious malpractice by the school, it may be appropriate for them to go directly to the exam board.

We currently don't know how the appeals process will work. The exam boards are working with Ofqual and will inform us as we approach the GCSE results day. (20th August 2020).

Sharing of centre grades and ranking

Prior to results day the guidance is very clear - centres cannot inform students of centre grades and ranking. The exams boards are waiting for further guidance from Ofqual with regards to what happens after results day.

There will inevitably be some students who will be disappointed with the grade they receive, as there are every year. Ofqual has therefore, given priority to the government's intention that students should be given the opportunity to take exams in the Autumn.

Additional Autumn Exam Series (November 2020)

- exam boards will offer a full suite of exams
- exam boards must base results on students' performance in exams alone and not on any non-exam assessment, with the exception of art and design qualifications
- exam boards must issue replacement certificates for the summer results if students request this
- exam boards must adopt the normal arrangements for reviews of marking and appeals.
- there won't be any non-exam assessment (NEA), apart from art and design
- Ofqual will confirm timings in due course, and are aiming for GCSEs to be held in November.
- Ofqual and the Department for Education are looking at how to help schools with the logistical challenges a November exam series will create.

I hope this newsletter gives you the answers to some of the questions you may have. Please see the links below if you wish to explore any of the topics mentioned. If you have any further questions please address them to parents@maharishischool please put in the subject line: Exam etc. to ensure it will be prioritised.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual>

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/>

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/>

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/home.html>

I wish you all the best for your future and look forward to seeing you soon.

Paula Webster

Secondary phase Exams

Officer



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