

Education Secretary congratulates GCSE students on results day

The Education Secretary has praised GCSE students receiving their results tomorrow (Thursday 12 August) and championed the range of high-quality post-16 choices available to young people.

While exams remain the fairest and best form of assessment, recognising the unprecedented disruption the pandemic has caused to education, the Government and Ofqual decided it would not be fair for exams to go ahead this year.

Grades instead have been determined by those who know students best – their teachers.

Students were assessed only on what they had been taught and were assessed on multiple pieces of work, giving them their best possible chance to show what they can do.

Students receiving results will have the opportunity to move on to a range of high-quality options. This is the second year that young people can move on to study T Levels, with seven new subject choices available from September, including Healthcare, Science and Onsite Construction.

Today's GCSE results follow results for AS, A level and vocational technical qualifications on Tuesday, which enabled more than 190,000 18-year-olds in England to take up their first choice university place. The results showed an increase in grades for students from all backgrounds, and Ofqual report that the assessment approach this year is likely to have helped prevent previous gaps from widening as much as they would have done without this year's grading process.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Students should feel proud of their achievements and will now be looking forward to taking their next steps.

I am also hugely grateful to teachers and school leaders for their hard work to ensure students get the grades they deserve and need to progress to the next stage of their lives.

There have never been so many great options available for young people, whether that's going on to study A levels, our pioneering T Levels, starting an apprenticeship or a traineeship. Whatever option young people choose, they can do so with the confidence it will give them the skills and knowledge to get on in life.

Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills Gillian Keegan said:

If you want to get really valuable experience in the workplace while continuing your studies, we have seven new pioneering T Level qualifications, including science, health, and more digital routes, launching from September.

There are also a huge number of fantastic apprenticeship opportunities on offer right up to master's degree level, from engineering and software development to dental nursing and electric vehicle technician, to help you reach your goals.

Teachers received guidance and support on grading and making objective decisions, and grades were subject to checks by schools with further checks of samples by exam boards – helping to give students, parents, colleges, universities and employers confidence in grades.

There was also a quality assurance process in place, with all grades being checked by exam centres – and one in five having a sample of their grades checked by exam boards – helping to give students, parents, colleges, universities and employers confidence in grades.

The National Careers Service's Exam Results Helpline is available to help young people and their parents think about their next steps and explore the best pathway for them.

The website provides free and impartial information and advice, with professional career advisers also available to speak to via the webchat. And from 9 August, ahead of Results Days, advice will also be available over the phone on the Exam Results Helpline on 0800 100 900, open weekdays 8am-8pm Sat 10am-5pm.

There are also record numbers of vacancies being advertised on the Find An Apprenticeship service including exciting opportunities in sectors such as construction, social care, digital, health and many more.