

Education Secretary congratulates students on A level results day

Students have been praised by the Education Secretary for their resilience and hard work as hundreds of thousands prepare to collect A level results tomorrow (10 August), enabling them to progress to their next stage of their education or working life.

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.

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

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Students have worked very hard in what has been an extraordinary and challenging year, and each and every one of them should feel incredibly proud of their achievements. We should all celebrate their resilience and ability to overcome adversity.

Teachers and staff have ensured that, despite the disruption caused by the pandemic, all students are able to get grades this year and so can take their next steps and make their choices about further study or entering the workplace.

I am hugely grateful to teachers and also parents for supporting our young people in progressing to the next stage in their lives with confidence.

Universities Minister Michelle Donelan said:

Results day is the culmination of years of schooling and dedication and I want to congratulate students, teachers and parents on all their hard work.

Despite the challenges of the last 18 months, students will today

receive a qualification that carries weight and acts as a passport to wherever they want to go, whether that be to university, or into further education and apprenticeships.

Students were able to be assessed on a range of evidence, including in-class tests, mock papers, optional questions provided by exam boards and coursework – giving them the fairest and greatest opportunity to show their knowledge and abilities.

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of National Association of Head Teachers, said:

All students receiving their results this week deserve our congratulations. This is the culmination of a huge amount of work in the most challenging of circumstances. Students have shown great resilience and determination this year. For each individual student, their grades are a passport to the next phase of their education, training or employment.

Students, parents, education providers and employers have every reason to be confident in this year's results, even though there have been no exams. This year's grades are based on students' actual work, assessed by their teachers, moderated and quality assured. There are no algorithms this year, just human effort and human expert judgement.

Education is a devolved matter for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, however all four nations adopted a system of awarding grades this summer based on teacher based assessment.

While UCAS have predicted that we may see a record number of students get their first-choice places, as in other years, where students have not achieved the grades to take up a conditional course offer, they should speak to their school or college, university or prospective employer, to discuss their options.

The Exam Results Helpline is also available for those students who want additional advice, and just as they do in any normal year, UCAS will help thousands of students to find places through Clearing if they do not receive the grades they were hoping for.

The Government has also worked with the higher education sector to ensure there are additional places on medicine and dentistry courses where there is capacity, to help students progress to their preferred choice. The measures bring the total of fully funded medical and dentistry places to over 9,000 in universities in England, alongside up to £10 million, to support courses which are essential to building back better from the pandemic.