

Triple lock for students ahead of A level and GCSE results

A new 'triple lock' process will give young people added security as they receive their grades this year, the Education Secretary has announced.

Students could accept their calculated grade, appeal to receive a valid mock results, or sit autumn exams to ensure the achievements of young people are recognised.

Ofqual has been asked to determine how and when valid mock results can be used to calculate grades.

All outcomes will hold the same value for universities, colleges and employers, building on the significant number of students who will still progress as a result of their calculated grades. Similar arrangements will apply to vocational and technical qualifications.

The move comes as the Government also announces an extensive support package for all schools, colleges and further education providers to run a full exam series in the autumn.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Every young person waiting for their results wants to know they have been treated fairly. By ensuring students have the safety net of their mock results, as well as the chance of sitting autumn exams, we are creating a triple lock process to ensure confidence and fairness in the system.

No one wanted to cancel exams – they are the best form of assessment, but the disruption caused by Covid-19 meant they were not possible.

This triple lock system will help provide reassurance to students and ensure they are able to progress with the next stage of their lives.

This will provide an additional safety net to the system of calculated grades, which is the fairest possible approach in the absence of exams. The grades students receive on Thursday will be based on the judgement of their school or college, and have been moderated by exam boards to make sure the same standard is applied for all students, whichever school, college or part of the country they come from.

Students who would like to use a valid mock result will be able to do so through the appeals process, with individuals notifying their school or college who will provide evidence of their mock results to their exam board.

As set out by Ofqual last week, schools and colleges will also be able to appeal if they believe their historic data does not reflect the ability of their current students – that may be because they have experienced a recent change in leadership or because they have one or a number of exceptional students.

For those wishing to try and improve their grades by taking exams in the autumn, the support package will help schools with the costs associated with running these exams including booking venues, sourcing invigilators, and meeting the cost of autumn exam fees if they exceed summer fee rebates.

Where it is not possible to run exams on their own premises without disrupting study, schools and colleges will either be able to book sites through the Department for Education at no cost, or arrange sites themselves and claim back those costs.

Schools and colleges will be able to use the Government's specialist staffing and events agencies to book invigilators and sites from September as well as being able to claim back costs later in the autumn term.

While £30 million is being earmarked to deliver this support, funding will be demand-led and driven by the number of students who choose to sit exams.