

Teacher assessed grades for students

Students will receive grades awarded and determined by teachers, with pupils only assessed on what they have been taught, the Education Secretary announced today (Thursday, 25 February).

Fairness and flexibility are at the heart of the Government's plans to ensure young people get to their next stage of education or training.

Teachers will be able to draw on a range of evidence when determining grades, including the optional use of questions provided by exam boards, as well as mock exams, coursework, or other work completed as part of a pupil's course, such as essays or in-class tests. No algorithm will be used.

Teachers will submit grades to exam boards by 18 June, allowing as much teaching time as possible before teachers make their assessments.

Results days for GCSE, A level and some vocational qualifications will take place in the week of 9 August – moved forward from the week of the 23 August. These earlier dates provide additional time for appeals to be completed, so students reliant on those outcomes to achieve their university offer have the best chance of accessing a place.

To support teachers in making their judgements, exam boards will provide detailed guidance before the end of the spring term.

Staff across education have been going above and beyond to support young people through the pandemic, and the guidance published by boards will be designed to minimise any additional burden this year's awarding process may place in teachers and staff.

Students studying vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) that are often taught alongside GCSEs and A levels on one or two year courses, and used for university or college places, will also receive grades assessed by teachers rather than sitting exams.

Exams and assessments will continue in VTQs where they are needed for students to demonstrate the necessary professional standard in an occupation.

Schools, colleges and other educational settings will conduct multiple checks – such as checking consistency of judgements across teachers and that the correct processes were followed – to ensure as much fairness as possible.

At the same time, exam boards will conduct their own checks, through a combination of random sampling and more targeted scrutiny where they identify cause for concern.

Every student will have the right to appeal their grade.

The proposals being taken forward were supported in responses to the department and Ofqual's largest ever consultation, with over 100,000

responses of which just over half (52%) came from pupils.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Young people have shown incredible resilience over the last year, continuing with their learning amidst unprecedented challenges while the country battles with this pandemic. Those efforts deserve to be fairly rewarded.

That's why we are providing the fairest possible system for those pupils, asking those who know them best – their teachers – to determine their grades, with our sole aim to make sure all young people can progress to the next stage of their education or career.

I also recognise many students need their vocational and technical qualifications to enter into work. Exams and practical assessments in these courses are essential for the students to progress to the next stage, and so it's right that these continue.

Ofqual's Interim Chief Regulator Simon Lebus said:

We know how difficult this past year has been for many students, parents, schools and colleges. In normal years, we rely on exams to support students' progression.

This year it is teachers' judgement that will be used to assess what has been learned and determine student grades. Assessment cannot itself serve as an instrument to recover lost learning and compensate for the different experiences students will have had in different parts of the country, and the arrangements being put in place will therefore only take into account what students have been taught, not what they have missed. The aim is to make it no harder overall for this year's students to receive a particular grade than students in other years.

I am confident that these arrangements will allow all parts of the education and training sector to work together collectively to make sure students' grades reflect what they have achieved and provide a sound basis to enable them to make good decisions about their future.

There will also be a clear and accessible route for private candidates to work with a centre to receive a grade this year, at the same time as other candidates. Exam boards will provide centres with clear guidance on the evidence they can use to assess a private candidate. A list of available centres will be published shortly and, we are working with the sector to ensure there are sufficient centres available and at a similar cost to a normal year.

Leora Cruddas, Chief Executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said:

This year the Government has made clear that the process for awarding grades should be based on teachers' professional judgement. There is a reasonable consensus that teacher judgement will need to be both supported, scaffolded and quality assured. This is because although the pandemic has had a damaging impact, we still want assessment outcomes this year to reflect something objective.

The DfE and Ofqual's response to the consultation has had to balance carefully the views of multiple stakeholders. The arrangements that are being announced today will provide welcome certainty as to what schools, trusts and colleges are being asked to do.

John Jolly, Chief Executive, Parentkind, said:

It's clear from our research that what matters most to parents when it comes to their children's exams is fairness. The majority of parents believe that teacher assessment is, under the circumstances, the fairest way to test pupils and award them with grades that reflect their knowledge and understanding. They also want to see a range of evidence taken into account when determining grades.

We therefore fully support the DfE's commitment to avoid assessing on a full curriculum this year, which very few parents want, as well as finding flexible ways for teachers to assess pupils' work based on what they have learnt. Clarity over the new arrangements for this summer's exams, which take parents' views into account, provides parents and students alike with peace of mind. Exam cohorts can now focus on a successful conclusion to their studies.

Martyn Oliver, Chief Executive of Outwood Grange Academies Trust said:

Children have experienced very different levels of learning since last March and the arrangements announced today will bring a great sense of relief. Teachers, who know their pupils best, are being trusted and supported to ensure that all pupils are given a grade based upon what they have covered and not on what they may have missed. In a difficult time for everyone, this is the fairest system possible that will help children progress in their education, training or employment.

Hamid Patel, Chief Executive of Star Academies said:

The arrangements announced by DfE today for 2021 examinations provide fairness, certainty and reflect feedback to Ofqual's wide-ranging consultation with schools, parents and pupils. Our young people can be confident that their hard work and achievement will be properly recognised and that they will have a solid foundation for the next stage of their journey.

Qualification results awarded using alternative assessment arrangements in 2020/21 will not be used to create performance table measures at school or college level for use in accountability. More details on what this means for accountability arrangements in 2020/21 will follow shortly.

[Joint statement by the co-chairs of the EU-UK Joint Committee: 24 February 2021](#)

News story

Joint statement following the meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee, 24 February 2021.



The European Union and the United Kingdom today held the first meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee following the end of the transition period.

The parties welcomed the progress made on citizens' rights in recent weeks in implementing the rights of UK nationals in the EU and EU citizens in the UK under the Withdrawal Agreement, and reiterated the importance of communication and support to the most vulnerable.

Further to the meeting of the Joint Committee co-chairs on 11 February 2021, the EU and the UK also took stock of the implementation of the Protocol on

Ireland and Northern Ireland and of work to find pragmatic solutions. The parties acknowledged the importance of joint action to make the Protocol work for the benefit of everyone in Northern Ireland. In that spirit, the EU and UK reiterated their full commitment to the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement in all its dimensions, and to the proper implementation of the Protocol. Building on the recent outreach by the Joint Committee co-chairs, there would be further joint engagement with business groups and other stakeholders in Northern Ireland. The UK and the EU underlined their shared commitment to giving effect to those solutions agreed through the Joint Committee on 17 December 2020, without delay. The UK noted that it would provide a new operational plan with respect to supermarkets and their suppliers, alongside additional investment in digital solutions for traders in accordance with the Protocol.

Noting the need for ongoing engagement and the shared desire to act at pace, the UK and EU agreed that a further Joint Committee would be held to provide further steers and where appropriate approvals, and would liaise on timings.

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[PM call with Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala: 24 February 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organisation, this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organisation, this afternoon.

He warmly congratulated Dr Okonjo-Iweala on her appointment, noting the importance of a strong WTO in today's globalised economy.

They discussed the international vaccine roll-out and the barriers to trade that risk impeding the global response to the pandemic.

They also spoke about the opportunities for driving a green economic recovery from Covid-19, and the Prime Minister welcomed her support for COP26.

The Prime Minister looked forward to working closely with Dr Okonjo-Iweala in the coming months and to welcoming her to Cornwall for the G7 Summit in June.

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[Surge testing to be deployed in targeted areas in Buckinghamshire and Lambeth](#)

Press release

Further targeted areas will have additional testing made available to control and suppress the potential spread of a coronavirus (COVID-19) variant.



Working in partnership with the local authorities, additional testing and genomic sequencing is being deployed to targeted areas within the HP10 postcode in Buckinghamshire and SW8 and SW9 postcodes in Lambeth, where the COVID-19 variant first identified in South Africa has been found.

The increased testing is being introduced in addition to existing extensive testing and, in combination with the current lockdown rules and remembering 'hands, face, space' advice, will help to monitor and suppress the spread of the virus. Positive cases will be sequenced for genomic data to help understand COVID-19 variants and their spread within these areas.

People living within targeted areas in these postcodes are strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 test when offered, whether they are showing

symptoms or not.

People with symptoms should [book a test](#) in the usual way, and those without symptoms should [visit their local authority website](#) for more information.

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Defence Secretary opens £70-million British Army facility in Kenya

Nyati Barracks, a £70-million facility, was built for the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) to replace their previous infrastructure.

Facilities at the new site include a new training headquarters, welfare facilities, 158 Single Living Accommodation and 1,400 transit accommodation bed spaces, a combined mess, a finance building, offices, stores and Joint Forces Enabling Exercise buildings which enable the Royal Engineers to undertake vital training in the construction of permanent infrastructure.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Kenya is one of our leading defence partners in East Africa and this new facility will cement our partnership for decades to come, supporting stability and security in the region.

It is only right we provide our personnel stationed overseas with high-quality accommodation and I was delighted to attend the opening of Nyati Barracks.

The programme provided approximately 400 jobs for Locally Employed Civilians and local contractors and included around 30 women working in traditionally male dominated trades, including electrical and plastering work.

To ensure all employees were operating in a safe environment, DIO worked closely with local authorities and supply chains to introduce UK certified health and safety practices.

A major programme of upskilling for Kenyan staff at the base also took place enabling the transfer of skills into the local community and assisting workers with future employment.

David Graham, Deputy Head Major Programmes and Projects, said:

DIO supports our armed forces by providing what they need to live, work and train and we are proud to have been a part of delivering this superb new facility in Kenya.

The programme was a testing one with seasonal rains and other challenges. However, together with our Overseas and Training Region colleagues we overcame these issues and have delivered a first-class facility that will benefit the army.

Our training unit in Kenya is a vital facility where UK soldiers prepare for operations around the globe. The UK currently has around 230 military personnel based permanently in Kenya, most of them at BATUK, with thousands more visiting the country every year to take part in joint exercises.

Aerial view of the new Nyati Barracks. MOD Crown Copyright 2021.

Over the past two years, the British Army and the Kenyan Defence Force have conducted 5 joint training exercises from BATUK, involving around 600 Kenyan troops and 4,500 British troops.

Lieutenant Colonel Finlay Bibby, Commander Kenya, Overseas and Training Region said:

BATUK delivers combined arms light role infantry battle group exercises in Kenya.

It is fantastic to have this new, purpose-built infrastructure that enables BATUK to deliver world class training to our battle groups here in Kenya. For many years we were renting land from the Nanyuki Agricultural Society, which had to be vacated every year for the agricultural show.

The new facilities at Nyati Barracks are permanent and will enable a significant increase in training capability and provide more secure facilities for the army to train.

The MOD has secured a substantial settlement of more than £24 billion over four years, allowing us to strengthen our investment into defence accommodation, training facilities and bases for our service personnel at home and across the globe.