



26 June 2020

Re: Exams Update

Dear Parents and Carers

Following on from my earlier correspondence which outlined the arrangements for awarding exam grades this summer, I would like to update you with the actions the school has taken in line with the guidance from Ofqual and the examination boards.

We know that:

- 1) The overall outcomes will be kept similar at a national level. Ofqual have made it clear that the grades awarded this summer will be in line with those awarded in previous (and future) years so as neither to advantage, nor disadvantage current Y11, i.e. nationally there will be the same % of grade 4 and above in Maths and English as in previous years, and similarly in other subjects (taking prior attainment of those taking the subject into account)
- 2) Schools across the country including The Warwick School have undertaken a detailed and lengthy process to produce a ranking for each exam subject, listing all the pupils in order, using objective evidence available relevant to the final exam grade. Those ranks and associated grades have been submitted to the exam boards.
- 3) There will be a standardisation process operated by the exam boards and overseen by Ofqual, to ensure that the results at each school in each subject reflect: a) the prior attainment of those taking the particular exam, b) the national grade distribution and c) the results at the centre in previous years.
- 4) The grades awarded by the exam boards will have the same validity, with the same certificates and so forth as in previous years.

We submitted our rank orders and grades just over a week ago and now await Ofqual and the exam boards to use their standardisation model to calculate the grades for each subject in each centre. This model will determine what actual grades are distributed to our cohort of students. It is based on:

- Previous national results in the subject
- The prior attainment of the students this year compared to previous years
- The schools' results in recent years (2018 – 19)

This distribution of grades in each subject will specify how many grade 9s, grade 8s and so on will be awarded. Then the exam board will look at the ranking of the students submitted by the school, and if the model says 5 grade 9s, the first five students in the ranking get a 9 and so on. The grade submitted by the school will not come into play, only the rankings will count. However it is still important that we submitted grades and we have kept them in line with the model as proposed above.

We know that Ofqual will be open to using the information to fine tune their grading to ensure the right grades get to the right students whilst keeping broadly in line with figures as shared above. Staff here have worked extremely hard to get the ranking information accurate using objective evidence such as mock exams and other assessments and then doing the calculations to get the grade distribution in line with the model.



It has been important to do this as Ofqual have made it clear that any school submitting higher grades would have the model grades imposed on everyone. It is hoped that our thoughtful approach will get fairer outcomes for our students.

You may have seen in the media last week reports about the grades, which were submitted by schools. For example, the headline in the '*i* newspaper' was "GCSE and A-level exams 2020: Millions of proposed grades set to be cut down." Please see Appendix A explaining the background for this statement.

One of the frustrating aspects of this standardisation is that it does not take account of improvements during the current academic year at schools. Many schools around the country have protested strongly about this, but in the absence of any objective way of collecting evidence across all pupils and schools, Ofqual decided that it had to base the grades awarded to the students this year in line with the results gained over previous years. When Ofsted reported on the school last year, they were very clear that The Warwick was set for strong improvement in the 19-20 academic year after a period of weaker results, and external professionals confirmed this in their monitoring visits right up to the closure of schools in March. After all the hard work of staff and students, it is incredibly disappointing that this may not be reflected in the calculated grades awarded in August

We were looking forward to celebrating their achievements with them in summer. Whilst we may not be able to celebrate all together because of the pandemic, we have ensured we get them the best results we can within the model and have tried to do this so Ofqual do not need to assert their standardisation process and re-distribute grades within the ranking we have provided.

To safeguard college courses next year I have met with the Head of Reigate College this week to discuss entry requirements and put a process into place to ensure students can access the courses they applied to using a School Estimated Grade alongside the internal evidence that has been provided to inform the ranking process. East Surrey College have also shared their commitment to ensure students get onto the most appropriate courses for them.

For now all we can do is await the results. We recognise that this is always an anxious period, especially in the current context, and we will make sure that we have a team available for them to access once the results are released, towards the end of August. It will be our priority to get your child(ren) onto the courses they want to take and will enjoy; it is the very least they deserve after these challenging few weeks which resulted in such an abrupt end to their Warwick experience.

I do hope that you are all keeping well and are beginning to find a new way forward with the gradual easing of lockdown.

My very best wishes

Kerry Oakley

Headteacher