

## Summer exam changes 2021

The government announced their intended plans for the Summer 2021 exams last week, and although they were clear that they intend for the exams to go ahead this summer, it has unfortunately raised a lot more questions for students.

The main key points of the plans are:

- For the BTEC and other Vocational Qualifications the number of units required to complete the qualification may be reduced.
- For the A Level and Pre-U qualifications, which are largely based on exam assessment, the students will be given some indication of some topics to focus on. But again there is no clarity as yet as to how much guidance this will give students and this will not be confirmed until January 2021. Teachers will therefore continue to teach and complete their courses until there is greater clarity on this.
- Additionally, in some subjects, supporting materials such as formula sheets, will be provided on the day of the exams.
- They have said that the grading will be more generous than in previous years and they will expect the overall outcomes to be the same as last year. This means that the average grade a student can expect to achieve will be higher than before 2020.

The government has also made some announcements for what will happen if students miss exams:

- The exams have been timed so they are spread out so it is less likely for a student to miss all the exams in one subject.
- If a student misses only one paper due to ill health or Covid related issues, then there will be a special consideration process that will be applied. However, there is not clarity of what evidence will be required as yet.
- If students miss all the exams for a subject then they will be able to sit one single contingency paper in the subject to achieve a grade. These contingency exams will take place between 28 June to 16 July 2021 and timetabled to allow at least a 10-day gap after each subject's final paper in the main exams. The dates for these have not yet been confirmed.
- If students miss all the exams, including the contingency papers, then a teacher assessed grade can be applied. However, there is no clarity on how this will be calculated nor what evidence would be required to qualify for this.

Obviously, it is likely that there will be more changes and announcements as we progress towards the exams. I will keep you updated as we have more information, but have summarised the main points of the government's announcement above.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries or concerns. I recognise that this is a very stressful time for students, so please encourage your son/daughter to speak to me or Ms Oxley-Hughes (MSN) or Ms Taggart (WRI) if they are worried about anything.

Kind regards

Mrs K Ward - Director of Sixth Form.