

CARRICKFERGUS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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Summary of how GCSE, AS and A Levels will be graded and awarded in the Summer 2020 Series

Following the cancellation of all public examinations, CCEA and Ofqual (relevant to qualifications that are non-CCEA Examinations including Accounting, Photography, Art and Physical Education at Carrickfergus Grammar School) have published details of how grades for GCSE, AS and A Level examinations are to be awarded for the Summer 2020 series.

Please find below the links to the relevant documents:

Guidance on how grades will be awarded in the Summer Series 2020 - CCEA qualifications

https://ccea.org.uk/downloads/docs/ccea-asset/Examinations/Guidance%20document%20for%20Student%2C%20Parents%20and%20Teachers_4.pdf

Guidance on how grades will be awarded in the Summer Series 2020 - non-CCEA qualifications

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcses-as-and-a-level-awarding-summer-2020>

Letter to students from CCEA - Grading Summer 2020

https://ccea.org.uk/downloads/docs/ccea-asset/Examinations/A%20message%20to%20students_0.pdf

Letter to students from non-CCEA qualifications (Ofqual) – Grading Summer 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/880613/Letter_to_students_-_Summer_2020_grading.pdf

We know that it has been an anxious time waiting for CCEA to publish this information and that there are aspects of the process which are not easily understood or immediately clear. As a result, we have provided a summary of key points on the following pages in an effort to explain the process.

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In summary, CCEA's approach will be as follows:

GCSE Awarding:

Year 12

The GCSE CCEA grades awarded this summer will be determined based on a model comprising of a range of factors, including the use of centre assessed grades (grades sent to the examination board by school) and rank ordering (a process whereby school ranks students in a subject in potential order within grade boundaries). The combination of average centre performance as determined by CCEA, centre assessed grade and rank ordering will identify what CCEA refer to as the 'calculated grade' for each student.

Year 11

Year 11 students will not be receiving module results this summer for external modules they were due to sit. Instead, two options will be put in place for next year:

Option 1:

Students may complete ALL modules, including modules they were due to sit this summer, at the end of Year 12 in May / June 2021.

Option 2:

Students can complete their Year 12 (terminal) GCSE modules only at the end of Year 12 in May / June 2021. In this circumstance, they will receive a predicted mark for their Year 11 modules based on a statistical prediction procedure. This prediction procedure for Year 11 modules will be based on their performance in the Year 12 modules. This means, invariably, that student performance in the Year 12 modules will most likely need to be strong in order to secure a good overall GCSE grade. CCEA states that 'whichever option a student chooses, they will be awarded the highest grade'.

Please note that Year 11 students who were due to sit the full GCSE in Mathematics this summer will receive a grade for GCSE Maths in August.

AS Awarding:

Year 13 students will receive a nominal grade this summer for their AS CCEA modules. The model for the awarding of CCEA AS grades will be determined based on a range of factors, including the use of centre assessed grades (grades sent to the examination board by school) and rank ordering (a process whereby school ranks students in a subject in potential order within grade boundaries).

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However, these AS grades will not contribute towards A Level results in 2021. In the summer of 2021, students will have two options for their A Level award.

Option 1:

Students may sit any CCEA AS module(s) alongside their CCEA A2 modules at the end of Year 14 in May / June 2021.

Option 2:

Students can complete their CCEA Year 14 (terminal) A2 modules only at the end of Year 14 in May / June 2021. In this circumstance, they will receive a predicted mark for their AS modules based on a statistical prediction procedure. This prediction procedure for AS modules will be based on their performance in the A2 modules. This means, invariably, that student performance in the A2 modules will most likely need to be strong in order to secure a good overall A Level grade.

CCEA states that 'if (a student) chooses to sit any AS units alongside the A2 units, they will be awarded the highest grade at A Level from either route.'

A2 (A Level) Awarding:

The A Level grades awarded this summer will be determined based on a model comprising of a range of factors, including the use of centre assessed grades (grades sent to the examination board by school) and rank ordering (a process whereby school ranks students in a subject in potential order within grade boundaries). The model for determining grades will also include a statistical prediction undertaken by CCEA based on previous student performance. This statistical prediction is similar to the process already used if, for example, a student takes ill and is unable to complete part of a qualification. The combination of statistical prediction, centre assessed grade and rank ordering will identify what CCEA refer to as the 'calculated grade' for each student.

Please find on following pages an overview of what these grading procedures mean.

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OVERVIEW

The Grading Process

For GCSE, AS and A Level grading, schools will be asked to provide CCEA with “centre assessment grades and centre rank orders” for all pupils on each course. Please note in terms of public examinations, schools are referred to as centres.

Centre assessment grades

These grades should represent “the grade that each student is most likely to have achieved if they had sat their examinations and internally assessed components” (i.e. coursework or controlled assessment). The grades will be calculated by teachers and Heads of Department, drawing upon evidence of the student’s performance across the whole course, using their professional judgement to assess the trajectory of the pupil’s performance and likely final grade if the examinations had taken place.

Centre rank orders

This refers to the rank order of students within each grade for each subject. CCEA state that, “for example, for all those students with a grade C in GCSE Mathematics, a rank order where 1 is the most secure/highest attaining student, and so on.” Subject teachers and Heads of Department will calculate the rank orders in the same way as centre assessment grades.

The grades and rank orders calculated by subject teachers and Heads of Department will be submitted initially to senior staff in Carrickfergus Grammar School for review who will also refer to whole school data for current cohorts. Once any refinements have been agreed and the final grades and rank orders for each student in each subject have been completed, we will send this information to Exam Boards. Schools have been told by CCEA that further guidance on this aspect will be forthcoming. The final grades submitted will be signed off by the Principal. Schools will be asked to provide their grades and rank order information to CCEA no earlier than 29th May 2020.

CCEA will use the centre assessment grades and rank order information provided by the school, alongside historic data about a school’s results and computer modelling in order to prevent grade anomalies at subject and/or school level i.e. grades that are too high in GCSE subject X or grades that are too low in A Level subject Y. This is CCEA’s standardisation process to ensure fair outcomes across schools and subjects at each examination level.

On the standardisation process, CCEA state that, “We will apply the statistical standardisation to align the judgements across and within centres, so that, as far as possible, your students are not unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged this summer. This means that the centre assessment grades you submit and the final calculated grades that students receive could be different.”

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CCEA are clear that the grades submitted by schools could be changed by CCEA after computer modelling and standardisation. Indeed, it is certain that some such changes will take place within this process overall.

Students' final grades will be the grades awarded by CCEA.

How will Schools work out grades and rank orders?

CCEA have stated that, "Teachers should draw on all existing records and available evidence" when determining centre assessment grades and rank orders. Teachers are therefore expected to use their holistic professional judgement drawing upon a range of possible sources of evidence. These could include, amongst other things:

- previous performance by a student;
- records of each student's performance over the course of study, including tracking marks and school examinations;
- performance on any coursework or controlled assessment (known as 'non-exam assessment' or NEA), but students are not required to complete their NEA work and schools should not submit any marks for any completed NEA work;
- performance on any class or homework assessments taken over the entire course of study (e.g. Year 11 and Year 12 at GCSE; Year 13 and Year 14 at A Level);
- participation in performances or practicals in subjects where this is assessed, e.g. music, Physical Education;
- tiers of entry in a GCSE subject, to reflect the overall balance of foundation and higher tier exams entered by a pupil;
- any other relevant information.

Special Consideration / Access Arrangements

Where students have agreed reasonable adjustments or access arrangements, such as a reader or scribe, judgements on centre assessed grades should take account of likely achievement with the reasonable adjustment / access arrangement in place.

Special consideration requests will not apply this summer due to the fact that exams are not taking place. Instead, judgements will reflect how students would have performed under ordinary circumstances.

Where illness or other personal circumstances might have affected performance in mock examinations, schools have been asked to bear that in mind when making their judgements. If you feel that your child has experienced very extenuating circumstances that may have impacted upon their performance / progress in school at any point over the past two years, it is incumbent that you make school aware of this by e-mailing details to the info account at info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk.

School reserves the right to request further documentary evidence if necessary. It is also anticipated that you may have alerted school to these circumstances at the time. Whilst we may wish to bear such extenuating circumstances in mind when determining Centre Assessment Grades, they are not a guarantee that grades will be modified, and school will not be in a position to share information on Centre Assessment Grades with parents or students.

When will students get their grades?

Students will receive their final grades no later than the following dates:

- A Level and AS Level – Thursday 13 August 2020
- GCSE – Thursday 20th August 2020

Appeals

CCEA will not be able to run the normal appeals process as there will be no examination answers from pupils to scrutinise. CCEA are looking at constructing a new appeals process for summer 2020 which reflects the unique circumstances of 2020 and once we are informed about this new process we will pass that information on to students and parents.

Early opportunity examinations

CCEA have decided not to offer any early opportunity examinations i.e. a chance to sit an exam in autumn 2020 in any GCSE, AS or A Level subject. The exam regulators in England and Wales have declared an intention to offer these exams and are currently consulting about this option. CCEA will offer their normal exam schedule for 2020-21, with a very small number of GCSE subjects available in November 2020, January 2021 and March 2021.

The earliest opportunity to re-sit CCEA A2 modules and GCSE modules will be in the first half of 2021.

What do students and parents need to do now?

CCEA state simply that, “You do not need to do anything”. This will be the case for the vast majority of students. They will have completed all that is necessary in their courses and the school will have all the information needed to calculate a centre assessment grade and rank order to send to CCEA. Students and parents can rest assured that subject teachers, Heads of Department, Class Teachers, Heads of Year and school leadership have a very good range of information about their students from which they can calculate their grades.

Conclusion

It will be evident from the information above that CCEA expects schools to oversee this unique task with professionalism, integrity and in a spirit of fairness for all, and there will be measures in place to ensure that approach occurs across centres and any anomalies are controlled. At Carrickfergus Grammar School, we have a wide range of useful evidence about a student's performance in a subject over the entire duration of the course which will help teachers plot their trajectory towards the most likely grade they would have achieved by the end of that course, as if the student had taken the examination under normal circumstances. Teachers will award grades using their holistic professional judgement, with the support of senior staff, and it is our collective aim to reflect the high-quality outcomes that our students attain year on year, whilst respecting the integrity of the process.

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