



## **For the attention of families with children in Years 10, 11, 12 & 13**

### **Qualifications 2021 – FAQ Updated Friday 29<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021**

On 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 the Minister for Education made the announcement that learners undertaking GCSE, AS and A levels approved by Qualifications Wales will now have their qualifications awarded through a “Centre-Determined Grade” model and we wrote to you on 21<sup>st</sup> January to try to clarify what this meant for our students. As we said in that letter, there is still much to be decided at government and examination board level, and this remains the case at the time of writing this update. A group of experts called the Design and Delivery Group (DADG) set up by Welsh Government is currently working on the detail of the assessment framework. However, we wanted to write to you today to offer some reassurance and advice for students who are trying to cope with this situation. We have endeavoured to, as far as is currently possible, provide answers to some of the questions that learners may have at this time. Our main message remains the same. The best thing learners can do at the moment is to fully engage with their blended learning timetable.

#### **How will my grades be decided?**

Your grades will be determined by the school based on a range of assessment information. Due to the pandemic, different schools will have covered different amounts of material and in different orders from each other. They will also have done different types and amounts of assessment so far. This makes it really difficult to have one fixed system to award a grade. As we understand it, the system of assessment being worked out will allow flexibility for schools to use the most appropriate forms of assessments for the situation they are in. This will be called an Assessment Plan.

#### **What about NEAs (Non-Examined Assessments or coursework)?**

Your NEA, or part of it, is very likely to form some part of the assessment plan in many subjects. This is good news – it means that, where it is appropriate, you will get credit for the hard work you have already put into this aspect of your GCSEs, AS or A Levels. Your teachers will guide you as to what you should be doing now regarding your NEA. Trust them that anything you are being asked to do has value and will help you achieve a better grade.

#### **So, does this mean that every single piece of work I do at the moment contributes to my grade?**

In every lesson your teachers identify what you need to do in order to move your learning forward. We need to know what you understand and what you don't; what skills you have mastered and which ones need further development. Your teachers make these decisions by reacting to your responses in a variety of activities such as questioning, discussions, skill practice activities, quizzes, challenges, and numerous other techniques, so that they can teach you effectively. We really do understand that the current situation may make you feel under constant pressure to perform. However, we would like to reassure you that, once we have more information, we will make it very clear which assessments will have a greater

impact on the grade determining process. For now, we would appeal to you simply get involved in your lessons as fully as you possibly can. Please do not be afraid to make mistakes – this is how we learn.

### **So when will I know which assessments will contribute to my grades?**

The government group will share the details with schools as soon as possible and we will keep you informed.

### **I'm in Y12 – will my AS grades contribute to my A2 grade?**

It was decided by the government group that there was no fair way of allowing AS grades awarded in 2021 to contribute to A2 grades in 2022. However, you will be awarded AS grades to use for UCAS applications and to progress onto A2.

### **I'm in Year 10 – does all of this apply to me?**

Year 10 were due to sit a limited number of external examinations in summer 2021. To clarify, all summer module examinations have been cancelled, so the external module exams you were due to sit in Science, History and ICT will no longer go ahead. It has not yet been confirmed how this will impact on how you will be assessed in 2022, but we will keep you updated as soon as any further information becomes available. Year 10 pupils were also due to sit the whole Maths Numeracy GCSE qualification in summer 2021. As this entry was for a complete GCSE qualification, your grade for Maths Numeracy will be awarded as described above.

### **What can I do at the moment to ensure that I reach my potential?**

The best thing you can do at the moment is to engage with the lessons and the tasks you are being given by your teachers. Involve yourself in lessons, ensure you are up to date with any deadlines and make sure that your notes are complete. We are here to help you with this. We do understand that you will be anxious about your grades, but remember that what is also important is that you are still learning and developing for what comes next. By adopting a mature and conscientious approach, despite all the difficulties surrounding 2020 and 2021, you can continue to learn and so you will be able to confidently move forward to the next stage of your education, into training or employment.

We hope that this document goes some way to clarifying things and reassuring you at this difficult time. Please rest assured that we are looking at this issue very closely and as soon as we have further information to share we will be in touch.