

AWARDING GCSE, AS AND A LEVEL GRADES SUMMER 2021

CONTEXT

On 6th January 2021, The Minister of Education Minister Peter Weir MLA, cancelled all CCEA GCSE, AS and A2 Examinations scheduled in 2021. The decision was made in line with other Awarding bodies under the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) who also cancelled examinations in other UK jurisdictions. This decision was made in response to help fight against the spread of the COVID-19 Virus and in recognition of the time pupils have spent out of school due to the pandemic.

CCEA and Ofqual examination boards have provided all schools with details on how grades are to be awarded for GCSE, AS and A level (A2).

At Sperrin College, we want to ensure that the grades awarded will be fair and reliable, based on objective evidence. CCEA and Ofqual have clearly stated that in 2021, centres are asked to use a range of evidence to arrive at a professional and academic judgement of the standard at which each pupil is performing in the context of the specification for which they are entered and from this provide a grade to the Awarding body.

This approach is different from the previous year (2020), when schools were asked to supply an assessment grade based on their judgement of the grade a pupil would likely have achieved if they had been able to complete examinations. For this reason, the process required by both pupils and staff is different from last year.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

All teaching staff, with the Heads of Department, will now engage in the process of gathering evidence to support a centre determined grade (CDG) for every pupil within GCSE, AS and A Level. This judgement must be based on a holistic review of a pupil's performance as indicated by the assessment evidence, gathered, and retained at the centre. In the interest of fairness, each CDG must be realistic and evidence-based reflecting the standard at which the pupil is performing.

The examining boards have the right to amend centre determined grades (up or down) and the school will have no control over this process.

STAGE 1: DETERMINING A SUBJECT GRADE

For every pupil, a centre determined grade will be submitted, for every subject that pupil has been entered for. This grade will be determined using a range of evidence from a selection of key tasks or assessments carried out under appropriate conditions and with a suitable level of demand, which allows the teacher to authenticate the work as the pupil's own giving a good indication of the standard at which the pupil is performing in the qualification.

To make accurate judgements, teachers will use:

- The range of skills, knowledge and understanding covered in the specification,
- The assessment requirements and the subject specification,
- Grade descriptions,
- Level of demand of the qualification assessments and the weighting of each component/unit and assessment type.

The grade will be generated using a holistic judgement derived from the academic evidence.

All grades will be reviewed by the subject teachers, the Head of Department and Head of Centre (The Principal).

GATHERING EVIDENCE

When judging evidence teachers are required to consider its value, both in terms of the individual pieces of evidence and as part of the overall judgement for each pupil. Teachers must exercise caution where work has been completed unsupervised. Whilst this work will not necessarily be discounted, it will only be used if authenticated as a pupil's own and is similar to the actual qualification assessment. (for example, Coursework and Controlled assessment).

Therefore, to ensure evidence has high levels of validity and reliability, pupils will engage in a number of assessment opportunities under controlled conditions. These assessment opportunities will take place on the following dates:

YEAR 13 & 14	YEAR 12
Assessment Period 1: 14 th April-21 st April 2021	Assessment Period 2: 14 th April -27 th April 2021
Assessment Period 2: 5 th May -12 th May 2021	Assessment Period 2: 5 th May -18 th May 2021

ACADEMIC EVIDENCE

1. Every subject area within Sperrin College will use at least **3 substantial pieces** of evidence to Determine grades.
2. Evidence used will vary from subject to subject as every qualification has different weightings and assessment tasks.
3. Performance assessment and evidence will be used from the following:
 - Performance in Assessment Opportunities using CCEA assessment resources
 - Performance in Pre-Mock Examinations (with consideration of the fact that pupils may have improved since this exam)
 - Performance in class tests or assessments
 - GCSE Modular Examination Results-For GCSE students Only
 - Participation in practical assessments subjects such as: Drama, Music, PE etc.
 - Performance in any controlled assessment/coursework or other assessments required for the qualification (even if this is not fully complete)
 - Tiers of Entry for GCSE will be considered.

Sperrin College pupils will be informed of the specific evidence used for each qualification taken and this information will also be detailed in the school's Centre Determined Grade Policy. (Available on the school website after 23rd April 2021 when approved by CCEA)

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES SUBJECT SPECIFIC DATES

The scheduled programme for subject specific assessment opportunities is available on the school website. Parents are advised to familiarise themselves with the dates and times of each assessment opportunity.

<http://www.sperrincollege.com/communications.html>

GOOGLE CLASSROOM REVISION MATERIAL

Subject teachers have posted revision material for pupils to complete over the Easter period and prior to assessment opportunity periods.

ENSURING FAIRNESS TO ALL PUPILS

In the context of fairness and in order to ensure an objective, unbiased assessment of evidence is made, the school staff have undertaken guidance and training from CCEA.

It is recognised that some pupils have experienced disruption to teaching and learning due to the pandemic. An assessment of evidence will be given consideration in these circumstances.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments have been agreed prior to the assessment opportunity periods. The school will follow the Joint Council for Qualifications regulations and guidance as per our normal protocols.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to a pupil's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness, injury, or trauma at the time of the assessment. Special consideration in the

usual manner will not apply this summer as public examinations have been cancelled. However, the school will follow the JCQ special consideration process as set out on their website: www.jcq.org.uk

STAGE 2: QUALITY ASSURANCE

INTERNAL STANDARDISATION

In subjects where there is more than one teacher and or class in the department, the school will carry out internal standardisation. The purpose of internal standardisation is to provide teachers with confidence to ensure fairness and objectivity of decisions, and to ensure consistency in the application of assessment criteria and standards.

CENTRE MODERATION

When Centre Determined grades have been assigned to ensure fairness to all pupils that standards are consistent across the school, moderation will take place by the Senior Leadership team. The Head of Centre (The Principal) will be required to confirm that Centre Determined Grades are fair and are a true representation of pupil performance.

STAGE 3: EXAMINATION BOARD STANDARDISATION PROCESS

The examination boards will review all the grades for the school. Centres are required (within 48 hours of the request) to provide evidence for a minimum of one pupil at each grade within one subject area or qualification. If evidence submitted does not support the grades CCEA may request additional evidence for subjects and a larger sample size.

For vocational qualifications and other Awarding Bodies the normal moderation process will take place.

STAGE 4: THE FINAL GRADE

Parents and pupils should be aware that due to the standardisation process, grades submitted by the school and the final grade awarded by the examining board could be different.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND MALPRACTICE

Even in the absence of formal assessments Sperrin College is required to act ethically, to uphold the integrity of the qualifications system and to report potential cases of malpractice or maladministration which will be investigated by the examination board.

There may be instances where schools or teachers are put under improper pressure from a pupil or their parent/guardian to influence the decision-making on a grade. Any improper pressure will be reported to the examination board and may be investigated as potential malpractice.

APPEALS PROCESS

CCEA and the other Awarding organisations are currently working on an Appeals process.

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Pupils will receive their examination results as follows:

AS AND A LEVEL: 10th August 2021

GCSE LEVEL: 12th August 2021

PROGRESSION

ENTRY TO SIXTH FORM:

The normal procedure and admissions process to Sperrin College Sixth Form will apply. Pupils wishing to progress to Study at Sperrin College must complete an options form and meet the admissions criteria for Sixth form study both the academic and pastoral criteria (Behaviour record and Attendance Requirements).

APPLICATIONS TO NRC/WORK BASED LEARNING PLACEMENTS:

All pupils will already have made applications to Technical Colleges during careers lessons. Pupils are advised to ensure they check emails and websites, for important and correspondence on admissions and entry.

Mrs. Martin (Careers) will be available throughout term 3 for pupils who require any support or help to complete applications.

UCAS AND UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS:

Year 14 pupils must ensure they check regularly their UCAS account and emails for information on university admissions.