

## Awarding GCSE and A Level grades at University of Birmingham School

### Principles

Grades awarded for GCSE and A Level qualifications in summer 2021 will be teacher judgements, based on an assessment of the standard at which pupils and students are performing. University of Birmingham School will be following the guidance set out by the Ofqual (the examinations regulator) for determining grading:

1. Determine the grades as late in the academic year as is practicable to enable teaching to continue for as long as possible.
2. Assess pupils' and students' performance, only on the content which has been delivered to them by their teachers, to determine the grade each student should receive.
3. Sample a broad range of evidence across the taught content before submitting the grades to the Exam Boards.

The School will utilise a methodology that will allow for pupils and students to be awarded qualifications objectively through a robust assessment process, and that will give appropriate agency to pupils and students in the remaining months of their studies to ensure that all have the opportunity to showcase their capability, whilst maintaining the integrity of the Centre.

### Evidence for grading

#### *Final Grading Assessments (FGA)*

These assessments will take place during the weeks commencing 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May, and will have a significant weight in determining the final awarded grades as they will be testing students' knowledge and understanding of the subject content students have covered throughout the A Level/L3 course and GCSE/L2 course. The FGAs will contain questions on topics within the specification students and pupils have been taught. A list of topics that will not be included in these assessments will be published.

#### *Continuous Assessment (CA)*

Departments will identify particular pieces of evidence that have been collated over the course of study (from September 2019) that will contribute towards the final awarded grades. The nature of this evidence will vary between departments, but examples may include: Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs), assessments completed in class or during remote learning, and any assessments due to be completed in the weeks and months ahead. For performance-based subjects such as music and PE, records of pupil and student capability and performance collated over the course of study will be used. Evidence will be weighted when assessing pupils' or students' capability, with evidence completed towards the end of the course generally considered to give a more accurate representation. The selected bank of evidence for each department will be published before final grades are submitted in June.

#### *Non-examined assessment (NEA)*

Not all subjects have NEA. NEA is the coursework element of subjects and is the means of assessing essential knowledge and skills that cannot be tested in an examination. The School will protect the proportion that NEA would normally contribute to an overall grade in a subject e.g. in GCSE Design Technology, NEA contributes 50% towards the final grade. Pupils and students will not be penalised if they have been unable to complete their NEA by the date set by departments, due to circumstances beyond their control caused by the pandemic.

Where possible, the School will use evidence that has been supervised, unseen, and undertaken in conditions that were intended to secure the pupils' or students' own and independent work. These include:

- Appropriate invigilation.
- No access to materials or resources that would not be permitted in exams.
- No possibility of corrections or revisions.

### *Reasonable adjustments and special consideration*

The School will ensure that pupils and students who are eligible for reasonable adjustments will be supported in any assessed pieces of work that will be used as evidence for awarding grades. If a historical piece of work is to be used where adjustments were not practicable, the School will take that into account when coming to a judgement.

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a pupil or student's mark or grade. This is to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury, or some other event outside of the pupil or student's control at the time of the assessment. Special consideration requests, in the event that a pupil or student is unable to take a Final Grading Assessment or suffers a traumatic event that might affect their performance, will be assessed in line with [JCO guidelines](#).

### *Reporting the evidence*

To aid transparency the School will produce a report for each pupil and student to be distributed in August 2021 with their final grade that will include the score for each piece of evidence and the weighting applied.

## **Calculating and awarding grades**

The School recognises that pupils and students should not be penalised for work completed early in the course, given that the intention was for terminal examinations to go ahead as is the case in a normal school year. Consequently, the School will calculate grades using a 'best of' methodology, which is best explained with an example:

A student is studying a subject that is assessed based 80% on a final examination, and 20% on NEA in a normal school year. The School will calculate three grades for the individual:

1. The weighted average grade of the three sources of evidence: 40% Continuous Assessment (CA), 40% Final Graded Assessment (FGA), 20% Non-Examined Assessment (NEA).
2. The weighted average grade of the Final Graded Assessment (FGA) and Non-Examined Assessment (NEA): 80% FGA, 20% NEA
3. The weighted average grade of the Continuous Assessment (CA), and Non-Examined Assessment (NEA): 80% CA, 20% NEA

The school will then award the highest of these grades, with the third only used if the pupil or student was unable to complete the FGA, or if in the professional judgment of the teacher, the score achieved in the FGA was wholly unrepresentative of the individual's capability. In circumstances where, through absence for example, pupils or students have very limited evidence from the list which has been selected by departments, the school will draw on additional sources of evidence to ensure that grades are not unreasonably harsh or lenient as a result of a small data set.

## **Moderation and benchmarking**

The School will safeguard that no pupil or student is disadvantaged by:

- Collaborative marking and moderation of assessed work in departments using materials produced by examination boards to ensure consistency where there is a subjective element to the assessment.
- Calculating grades in a manner which does not penalise an individual if they have missed a piece of work that will be used as evidence, and does not allow bias to influence a grade.
- Ensuring that all assessments used as evidence have been completed consistently between classes across a subject.
- Using modelling and statistical projections to be satisfied that grade distributions in each subject are not unduly lenient or harsh compared to the Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) of 2020 and available national datasets, having regard to the prior attainment profiles of the cohort.