



Re-founded 1555

# Ripon Grammar School

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19 January 2021

Dear Parents

On Friday, Ofqual issued a consultation exercise with regards to the awarding of GCSE and A Levels this summer. The deadline for this consultation is the 29 January after which Ofqual will issue definitive guidance at some point in February. The consultation can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-how-gcse-as-and-a-level-grades-should-be-awarded-in-summer-2021>.

As a school we will be considering the consultation carefully and will give a considered response. However, in the interim, there will inevitably be a degree of anxiety about what might or might not be implemented and it is with this in mind that I am writing to you today.

Last year we were asked to compute the work students had completed up to the point of their departure in late March and then extrapolate forward to a point where we were asked to give a Centre Assessed Grade and ranking based on what we *thought* students might achieve had they been able to take exams. This, we assumed, would be subject to a statistical moderation process.

This year the consultation document proposes that students, returning to school at some point this term, will then complete a set of school-based assessments, within a given timeframe, next term. This process would be similar to 'coursework' or 'controlled assessments' or the current 'non-examined assessments' that students complete. Inevitably there are a number of questions as well as possible answers to such a structure of assessment, not least concerning the content of such assessments, the timing and the conditions under which they are taken, all of which can potentially contribute to student [and teacher] anxiety.

The key message is that until we know the finalised detail of what Ofqual proposes, we cannot make assumptions or second guess what will be in place. What I would like to say to all students is that their main focus should be on continuing to cover the content being delivered by teachers, seeking to develop their understanding and that they should not worry that any assessments taken at present constitute 'evidence' that may be used in the final grading.

In relation to planned 'mocks' after half term we will be considering what their role and purpose are and an update on this will be circulated next week. I am aware that some schools have chosen to proceed with 'online mocks' but our view is that, until we know the assessment framework we are working towards, any 'mock' cannot have an 'evidential role'. Consequently, any test or assessment set online by departments needs to be seen as a formative exercise i.e. supporting future understanding of the material for both students and teachers.

Needless to say, once we have the full details of the consultation's outcome, I will be in touch to summarise our approach.

Best wishes

**Jonathan M Webb**  
Headmaster