



07 May 2021

Dear Students, Parents and/or Carers,

As you will no doubt be aware, in January this year the Government announced that external examinations would be cancelled and replaced with Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). I am writing to you to provide you with key information regarding the allocation of Teacher Assessed Grades for the 2021 exam season. More information regarding this process can be found in Mortimer Community College's Centre Policy, which is in the Policies section of the school website.

Determining grades

Grades will be determined based on evidence which is commensurate with the standard at which students are performing. Our teachers will determine grades as a holistic, objective judgement based on the available evidence collected throughout the course of study, including work that was completed during the most recent period of remote learning. Teacher Assessed Grades will be determined based on evidence of the content that has been taught and assessed, and students will not be assessed on content that has been missed due to lost learning as a result of the disruption caused by the pandemic. The evidence gathered will then be reviewed against a set of grade descriptors and exemplification materials provided by the exam boards to ensure that grades awarded are accurate and fair. This means that Teacher Assessed Grades will not be solely based on individual marks or particular grade boundaries.

To ensure a fair and valid assessment process for all of our students, where possible the school has made, and will continue to make, provision for access arrangements or reasonable adjustments for those students with special educational needs. This was overseen by our SENCO who liaised with subject teachers. For evidence gathered where it was not possible for access arrangements to be implemented, teachers will take this into consideration when reviewing those particular pieces of evidence. Therefore, no student will be disadvantaged because of their specific learning needs.

Grades will be derived at using a range of types of evidence, such as the mock examinations from April 2021, other class-based assessments, non-exam assessment work (often referred to as coursework), records of performance in practical-based subjects, and substantial pieces of classwork and homework. Students will be informed of the exact pieces of evidence to be used in individual subjects by their teachers in the forthcoming week, and by no later than Friday 14th May 2021. A copy of this information will be available for reference in the Policies section of the school website after the above date. Where a student is missing evidence due to circumstances beyond their control, alternative sources of evidence will be selected by teachers.

Once students have been informed of the evidence to be used in specific subjects, they should raise any concerns regarding the evidence, or inform the school of any other circumstances



to be considered by teachers. This should be done via email to Mr D Thornton at dthornton@mortimer.school so that genuine concerns can be investigated and addressed if necessary. It must be stressed, however, that these concerns must relate to lost learning as a result of the pandemic, as opposed to other circumstances such as lack of engagement to remote learning or general poor attendance etc.

It is worth noting here that the assessment process, and evidence gathering, will continue until students officially leave. Teachers may choose to use historic pieces of evidence, and mock examinations, but they may also intend to use work that is yet to be completed. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that students continue to attend school and engage with their learning until grades are submitted to exam boards. Students still have agency over their learning, and have the opportunity to improve their grades over the next month or so.

Confidentiality and malpractice

The Government have been very clear that Teacher Assessed Grades must remain confidential until results day. This means that teachers will not be able to share their judgements with students. Teachers may choose to share the results of individual assessments etc. but it should be noted that this is not the final grade to be submitted, and is just one of the pieces of evidence to be used.

To ensure that the Teacher Assessed Grades process is carried out as fairly as possible, students will be required to sign a declaration sheet to say that any work that is to be submitted as evidence is their own work, and has been completed without inappropriate levels of support. Students must be made aware that trying to submit work that is not their own will be treated as malpractice, and could result in grades being cancelled. Awarding organisations will investigate instances where it appears that evidence submitted is not authentic.

Results and appeals

Results will be released on Thursday 12th August. Further information regarding these arrangements will be released in due course.

Students and parents / carers can be confident that the grades awarded are both fair and consistent. It is highly unlikely that grades will be altered as a result of an appeal. This is a result of the school's policy being adhered to by teachers, including robust internal and external quality assurance mechanisms implemented, along with the school's transparency regarding the decision making from teachers. As discussed previously, students who have concerns surrounding the evidence to be used should have highlighted this prior to the Teacher Assessed Grades being submitted.

In the unlikely event that a student may wish to appeal a grade that they have been awarded, there are two stages to the appeals process.

1. Centre Review: If a student does not consider that they have been issued with the correct grade, they can ask their centre to check if an administrative or procedural

error has occurred. It is important to be aware that a student's grade could go down, up or stay the same. If an error has occurred, the school can submit a request to the awarding organisation to correct the error without the need to make an appeal to the awarding organisation.

2. Appeal to the awarding organisation: This appeal will be submitted by the school on the student's behalf. An appeal should be submitted if the student considers that the centre did not follow its procedure properly, the awarding organisation has made an administrative error, or the student considers that the grade awarded was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement. Again, a student's grade can go down, up or stay the same.

If the student or centre considers that the awarding organisation has made a procedural error, they can apply to Ofqual's Exam Procedures Review Services (EPRS) to review the process undertaken by the awarding organisation.

In summary there are four grounds upon which a centre review or an appeal to an awarding organisation may be requested:

- At stage 1: The centre made an administrative error, e.g., an incorrect grade was submitted; or an incorrect assessment mark was used when determining the grade.
- At stages 1 and 2: The centre did not apply a procedure correctly, such as the centre did not follow its Centre Policy, did not undertake internal quality assurance, did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances such as illness.
- At stage 2: The awarding organisation made an administrative error, e.g., the grade was incorrectly changed by the awarding organisation during the processing of grades.
- At stage 2: The student considers that the centre made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/or the determination of the grade from that evidence.

If a student does submit a Centre Review (Stage 1) appeal, they will need to be informed of the outcome of this prior to making a decision whether or not to appeal to the awarding organisation (Stage 2).

If a student wishes to appeal any of the grades awarded, they must do so by providing a written statement of the grounds on which they wish to appeal, and provide their consent for an appeal to take place. This statement will also act as confirmation that the student is aware that their result may also be downgraded by the awarding organisation.

Finally, if you have any further questions regarding the Teacher Assessed Grades process, please contact me at dthornton@mortimer.school or by telephone on 0191 456 6511.

Yours sincerely



Mr D Thornton
Senior Lead Practitioner - Assessment