

Dear student

I am writing to you to outline the expectations for our Year 13 students over the remaining months of this academic year.

There has understandably been a great deal of uncertainty over the cancellation of the summer exams and I have received many emails from students and parents asking for clarification about what is going to happen with regard to the awarding of grades in the summer.

We have today received the guidance from Ofqual (The office of Examination and Qualifications Office). The guidance outlines a fair and robust process that takes into account a broad range of evidence, including teacher assessment, mock examination data, NEA assessments and prior attainment to award grades to students. Ofqual has worked to ensure that the process agreed does not disadvantage any particular group of students.

Ofqual has now released the protocol for calculating and awarding grades and the details are below:

- Exam boards will ask Copleston to generate, for each subject, the assessment grades for their students.
- The assessment grades submitted to exam boards must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely grade a student would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment.
- So that the final grades awarded are as fair as possible, exam boards will standardise the judgements across different schools once they have been submitted, using a statistical methodology developed in conjunction with Ofqual. This will take into account the past performance of the school, which stands Copleston in good stead, as we have been a strong performing school over the last four years.
- Judgements should be based on records of each student's performance over the course of study, including for example progress review data, classwork, bookwork, and/or participation in performances in subjects such as music, drama and PE, where already undertaken. Ofqual will also look at performance on any non-exam assessment (NEA), even if this has not been fully completed.
- Grades will be standardised based on
 - expected grade distributions at national level
 - results in previous years at individual centre level
 - the prior attainment profile of students at centre level
- The aim is then for Ofqual to provide these calculated grades to students as scheduled in August or even earlier.. These grades will be formal grades and carry the same legal status as grades awarded in previous years.
- In terms of a permanent record, the grades will be the same as those provided in other years and the distribution of grades will follow a similar pattern to that in other years, so that students do not face a disadvantage because of these extraordinary circumstances.
- Students who feel that their grades from the summer do not reflect their ability will have the opportunity to take their exams in the autumn series or in summer 2021. If they choose to do this, both grades will stand.

Ofqual have released a letter to students explaining the way grades will be calculated and you can view this letter here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877830/Letter_to_students_-_Summer_2020_grading.pdf

It is important to reiterate that the school does not have the authority to just allocate a student their final grade and that we will have to provide both Ofqual and the Department for Education with concrete evidence on how we have arrived at the grade we have given. We strongly advise all students to complete their programmes of study and in order to help you to do this, your teachers have uploaded any remaining work into the Year 13 share point area.

I will be monitoring closely to check the Year 13 students are engaging with their subjects and working with their teachers to complete all of their courses.

In order to help prepare you for further study, we have managed to secure a fantastic opportunity for our Year 13 students to access an online course run by Etonx in Research Skills free of charge. Etonx courses allow students to benefit from Eton's acclaimed expertise in developing well-rounded, high-achieving students. The Research Skills course will teach students how to manage their research time in the most efficient way, help you to evaluate sources for credibility and how to reference your sources correctly. I will be sending you further details of how you can sign up for this online course shortly.

There are also lots of useful resources and courses that you can access whilst you are working at home in order to help you prepare for the next stage of your education. I hope you will find the links below useful:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/events/find/scheme/virtual-and-digital?keywords=>

Many universities are holding virtual open days that you can attend.

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/study/short-courses/online-learning/preparing-for-uni>

Link to a useful free online course about preparing for university.

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/study/webinars>

Link to a range of webinars offered by The University of East Anglia.

<https://www.uea.ac.uk/study/info-for/young-people/revision-skills/subject-revision>

Link to a range of free resources from The University of East Anglia

I have also had a lot of enquires and questions regarding the UCAS process and how this situation will impact on students moving to Higher Education. I strongly recommend that you follow the UCAS Twitter feed and refer to the UCAS Coronavirus updates website:

https://twitter.com/UCAS_online

<https://www.ucas.com/coronavirus>

The key messages at this point are:

- Universities UK and UCAS are committed to delivering the government’s stated intention that progress on to Higher Education courses starting in 2020 should happen as normal. Once the system for the awarding of grades has been completed, those will form part of how that progression happens.
- The Government has asked universities to stop making unconditional offers or amending existing offers for two weeks. This is because they’re worried, you’ll feel pressured to accept these offers over others you might be better suited to.
- Therefore, applicants should not rush to accept or reject offers sooner than they otherwise would have. This is especially true of Unconditional Offers. Nobody should accept an Unconditional offer simply due to the appeal of the certainty it provides in such uncertain times. Applicants should only accept offers as “Conditional Firm” and “Conditional Insurance” if they would have done so anyway.
- If you have rushed in to accepting an Unconditional offer and now regret it, you can reverse this decision as UCAS has a two week “cooling off period” for all decisions of this kind.
- To give you time to make your decisions – and to understand more about how qualifications will be awarded this summer, UCAS have extended the May offer deadline for Undergraduate applicants:

Original date	UCAS Undergraduate deadline	New date
5 May 2020	The deadline for applicants to reply if they received decisions from all their choices by 31 March 2020.	19 May 2020
6 May 2020	The deadline for universities and colleges to make decisions and reply to applications received by 15 January 2020.	20 May 2020

I hope this clarifies how student grades will be calculated for Year 13 students and our advice on progression into Higher Education.

As stated by Ofqual, teachers are not allowed to discuss estimated grade with students. Please be assured that we will be using the criteria that Ofqual have given us and that this will be fair and equitable for all our students.

Yours sincerely
Mr A Green
Principal