



# The Astley Cooper School

Part of the East Dacorum Co-operative Learning Trust

21 January 2021

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Dear Parents/Carers

Headteacher: Edward Gaynor

## Re: Consultation on how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021

Following the Government's decision that GCSE, AS and A level exams would not go ahead as planned later this year, the Secretary of State for Education has asked Ofqual, the exams regulator, to consult on alternative arrangements for the award of these qualifications.

The overarching expectation is that, this year, GCSEs, AS and A levels will be based on teachers' assessment of the performance of their students (and that there will be no algorithm used to determine grades at national level).

Ofqual has now published the consultation on the proposed 'alternative arrangements', detailing suggested processes and systems required to award grades fairly and consistently in summer 2021. The full set of proposals can be found [here](#) and responses can be made online [here](#) until January 29<sup>th</sup> 23:45. There is a connected and complementary consultation on the arrangements for vocational, technical and other qualifications, which will be covered in a separate letter.

The key proposals for GCSEs, AS and A levels are outlined below and cover the assessment expectations and arrangements, the timescales involved, quality assurance processes, results days and appeals. *(Please note the feedback on these proposals will inform the final assessment process and Ofqual may choose to take forward only certain elements.)*

### Key proposals in the consultation:

- a student's grade in each subject should be based on their teachers' assessment of the standard at which they are performing
- the grade recommended should be evidence-based and that evidence will need to be retained for exam board sampling
- the final assessment should be informed by a breadth /combination of evidence, but there may be limits on what schools can use to inform their judgements
- to account for time missed as a result of the pandemic, assessment should focus on the content students have covered (but there will be a minimum proportion of the overall subject content that will need to be considered)
- exam boards should provide a set of papers (either compulsory or optional) to support teachers in assessing their students' work; these will be marked by teachers
- non-exam assessment should be taken into account in the final assessment
- final assessment should be made towards the end of the academic year, at about the time students would have taken their exams and will involve internal standardisation and moderation
- grades would be submitted to the exam boards by mid-June and results would be issued to students in early July, after the exam board had undertaken quality assurance (including sampling of work)
- students would not be told the grade their school has submitted before results day
- students would be able to appeal but a grade would only be changed if it is found not to represent a reasonable assessment
- A level students would be informed of their results before universities (to allow for an appeal process) to support fairer admissions decisions





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We believe it is important that as many students and parents as possible respond so that those directly affected have their views considered. The attached document lists the questions posed in the consultation to give you an overview of the views being sought. Although the consultation has 68 questions, the majority require either yes/no answers or responses that ask whether you agree/disagree and, therefore, we hope it should not take too long to complete.

We would encourage you and your son/daughter to respond to the proposals outlined in the consultation, if at all possible.

Once Ofqual publishes its final decisions on the process for assessment, we will, of course, keep you informed of the outcome and next steps. This will include further specific guidance from the exam boards on particular subject expectations.

For now, it is essential that students, who were expecting to take exams later this year, continue to work hard so that they are well prepared for whatever assessment process is expected of them and their teachers.

Yours sincerely

Mr E Gaynor  
Headteacher

