



The Astley Cooper School

Part of the East Dacorum Co-operative Learning Trust

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Headteacher: Edward Gaynor

27 January 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers

Re: Consultation on 'Alternative Arrangements for the award of VTQs and other general qualifications in 2021'

Further to our recent communication regarding the consultation for GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in 2021, please find below details on the connected consultation for vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) and other qualifications for 2021. This covers qualifications such as BTECS, Cambridge Nationals, Applied Generals, Functional Skills, EPQ, Pre-U, AEA, Core maths and the International Baccalaureate.

For many vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs), assessments (both internal and external) take place throughout the year. For the rest of this academic year, the Government has decided that written exams for vocational and other general qualifications will not take place and alternative arrangements will be put in place to award results for these qualifications.

Ofqual has recognised 'there is an incredibly wide range of VTQs of different shapes and sizes, using diverse assessment methodologies, and used for different purposes, so there will not be a single solution.' However, it is expected that many of the 'alternative arrangements' put in place for GCSEs, AS and A levels will also apply to VTQs taken alongside or instead of GCSEs and A levels.

The consultation on the proposed 'alternative arrangements', detailing suggested processes and systems required to award grades fairly and consistently in summer 2021 can be found [here](#) and responses can be made online [here](#) until 11.45pm on 29 January.

The key proposals are outlined below and cover the overarching principles, assessment arrangements, quality assurance processes 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:

- Written exams for VTQs that are taken instead of, or alongside, GCSEs and A Levels should not take place from February onwards and alternative arrangements will be put in place to award results for these
- Internal assessment should continue remotely, where relevant, for all students where possible
- The alternative arrangements will apply to all students expecting to take assessments in 2021, whether or not they were planning to complete the course and certificate in 2021
- Exam boards should be permitted to award grades on the basis of incomplete assessment evidence. This applies to where not all internal assessments have been completed as well as where exams did not take place
- Exam boards should identify the minimum evidence of knowledge, skills and understanding needed to issue a result and ask teachers to gather other evidence if required. This might include: a portfolio of student work; student achievement of a centre designed standardised task; partially completed units or assessments





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- 'On-demand' assessments such as Functional Skills should be permitted to proceed. Alternative arrangements should be put in place to issue results for students who cannot take these assessments
- Awarding organisations should seek to issue results to as many students as possible who are taking that qualification
- For those qualifications most closely aligned to GCSEs and A Levels, exam boards should would permit awarding organisations to take similar approaches to appeals
- Awarding organisations should include private students in their arrangements as far as possible

Because these proposals are likely to run alongside those for GCSEs and A levels, we also expect the following timelines to be applied to these arrangements:

- 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
- Level 3 students would be informed of their results before universities (to allow for an appeal process) to support fairer admission decisions

The attached document lists the questions posed in the consultation to give you an overview of the views being sought. The consultation has 33 questions but some can be left blank as they apply to apprenticeships or occupational courses or are targeted at schools and colleges; therefore, 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.

Once Ofqual publishes its final decisions on the process for these qualifications, 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 written exams and complete internal assessments later this year continue to work hard so that they are able to provide a robust evidence base of their achievements.

Yours sincerely

Mr E Gaynor
Headteacher

