

Statement in Relation to the Release of Centre Assessment Grades

On 18 March 2020, the Secretary of State for Education announced that the summer 2020 GCSE, AS and A level exam series would be cancelled in order to help fight the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and that students due to sit the exams would be awarded a grade based on an assessment of the grade they would have been most likely to achieve had exams gone ahead.

Department for Education and Ofqual asked schools to send exam boards two pieces of information for each qualification, based on what they knew about your work and achievements:

- the grade they believed students were most likely to get if teaching, learning and exams had happened as planned
- within each subject, the order of students at school, by performance, for each grade; this information will be used to standardise judgements – allowing fine tuning of the standard applied across schools and colleges

[School Name] considered a range of things like classwork and homework, results in assignments and any mock exams, any non-exam assessment or coursework, and general progress during a course.

To make sure that grades are fair between schools and colleges, exam boards put all centre assessment grades through a process of standardisation using a model developed with Ofqual.

The standardisation model utilised the following sources of evidence: historical outcomes for each centre; the prior attainment (Key Stage 2 or GCSE) of this year's students and those in previous years within each centre; and the expected national grade distribution for the subject given the prior attainment of the national entry.

This means that **the centre assessment grades submitted by schools and colleges and the final grade that students receive could be different**. It also means that adjustments to centre assessment grades might be different in different subjects.

Ofqual and the DfE stated that it is important schools and colleges do not share provisional grades, nor rank orders, with students or parents and carers. This is to **protect the integrity of the process** through which teachers' judgements are arrived at, and to avoid teachers, subject leads, heads of department or Heads of Centre feeling under pressure to submit a grade that is not supported by the evidence. Any inappropriate disclosure of centre assessment grades and rank order information will be investigated by exam boards as potential malpractice.

FOI Act Section 36 Exemption - Prejudice To Effective Conduct Of Public Affairs

Under FOI Section 36, [School Name] is not required to provide information, if in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person disclosure of the information under the Act would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs. In relation to the release of Centre Assessment Grades and the process of determining an individual student's grade or rank, the [Chair of Governors / Chair of the Board of Directors] has decided that, in his reasonable opinion, disclosure of this information under the Act: Would, or would be likely to inhibit –

- i) the free and frank provision of advice, or
- ii) the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation - Section 36(2)(b) or,
- iii) Would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs – Section 36(2)(c).

Section 36 is a qualified exemption and therefore a public interest test has been carried out. In considering the public interest test the following factors have been taken into account.

- It is acknowledged that there is a general public interest in disclosure because of the need for public bodies to be an open and transparent, and the sharing of information with the public should be free and open.
- The release of information regarding Centre Assessment Grades and the process of determining an individual student's grade or rank could compromise the integrity of the process through which teachers' judgements are arrived at, and lead to teachers, subject leads, heads of department or Heads of Centre feeling under pressure to submit a grade that is not supported by the evidence. Those involved in any stage of the awarding of centre assessment grades and rankings need to be confident in the knowledge that the information they submit to exam boards will not be released. Therefore, the release of information regarding Centre Assessment Grades and the process of determining an individual student's grade or rank may jeopardise the any integrity of teachers' professional judgement, teacher and centre assessments grades in the future.
- The release of information regarding Centre Assessment Grades and the process of determining an individual student's grade or rank could cause negative public prejudice against the reputation of the school, which may impact the staff, pupils and parents.
- The release of information regarding Centre Assessment Grades and the process of determining an individual student's grade or rank would negatively impact on [School Name]'s ability to provide free and honest advice, and the exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation.
- The release of information regarding Centre Assessment Grades and the process of determining an individual student's grade or rank would otherwise prejudice, or would likely prejudice, the conduct of public affairs in that future discussions would be less open by affecting on-going and future professional relationships with stakeholders and agencies that [School Name] work with. It would make [School Name]'s stakeholders reluctant to release or provide information if it is likely to be released into the public domain

The arguments for and against release have been considered and it is [School Name]'s view that the balance of public interest falls in favour of the maintenance of these exemptions. This is because after considering the relative weight of the arguments for and against disclosure, [School Name] has decided that the argument against release outweighs the benefit to the public of releasing it.