

## How schools will decide GCSE grades in 2021

Guidance for parents and carers of learners who use English as an Additional Language (EAL)



### What does this guidance cover?

Here you can find practical information about how schools are going to decide your child's GCSE grades in summer 2021. You will also find advice about what your child can do to prepare and how you can support them.

Over the last year many schools had to close for long periods of time because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Because of this, the government has decided it would be unfair to have GCSE exams this year. Instead, teachers will assess your child and decide on their grades in other ways.

This guidance gives you information about:

- How your child's school and teachers will decide on your child's grades
- What your child's rights are and what to do if you are not happy with your child's grade or grades
- What you can do to help your child to prepare for the assessments

To read the full government's guidance, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021>

## 1. How will schools decide on your child's grades?

Over the last year schools were closed for many weeks for most learners and most teaching took place online during that time. This is why the government has decided that exams would be replaced by teacher assessment for GCSE, AS and A levels.

- There will be no exams for your child to sit in summer 2021. Teachers will assess your child's work based on work completed during online lessons and classroom learning. Teachers may use mock exams and assessment papers from exam boards to help decide on your child's grades.
- There are no exams this summer but getting a good grade should not be more difficult than in other years.
- If your child's teachers did not teach all the lessons in their teaching programme ("curriculum"), they will only assess your child on the content they taught.
- To decide your child's grades, teachers will look at all the work they have produced in a subject course, for example, any of the work your child completed in English during Key Stage 4.
- Your child's teachers will decide on their grades later this year. This is because they want learning to continue for as long possible as many lessons were lost during the lockdowns. Teachers must submit grades by **18 June 2021**.
- Some subjects in secondary schools have different assessments to exams, for example subjects such as Dance, and Design and Technology. These are *non-exam assessments* (NEA). Your child will continue to prepare for these NEAs as normal. Teachers will mark NEAs, and they will be a part of your child's final grade in those subjects.
- Your child should not worry if they cannot finish their NEA because of something that happened during the Covid-19 pandemic. If this happens, your child will not get into trouble or lose marks.
- In GCSE, AS and A levels, in Art and Design your child's grade will be based only on their portfolio. ("A portfolio" is a collection of your child's drawings, documents and designs for this subject.)

## 2. What can you do if you do not agree with your child's grade?

If you are not happy with the grade your child receives, you can ask to change it. This formal process is called "appealing a grade". You might want to do this because of two reasons:

### 1. Administrative or procedural errors:

These problems might be because someone has entered your child's grade incorrectly into a computer or a form.

- You should first ask the school to check if they made an error.
- If there is an error, the school will contact the exam board. If the examination board agrees, they will change your child's grade.



## 2. Academic judgement errors:

This is when you do not agree with the grade given by your child's teacher, and you think the grade is not fair.

- If the school does not agree there was an administrative or procedural error, your child has the right to ask the school to appeal to the exam board on their behalf (meaning "in their name"). The exam board will decide if a teacher made an academic error. If they agree there was an *academic* error, the grade will be changed.



- Please remember that *academic* errors made by a teacher or teachers would have to be very serious for the grade to change.

It is important to remember that an appeal process might result in a grade being higher or lower than before.

Your child will receive his or her grades on **10 August 2021 for AS and A levels** and on **12 August 2021 for GCSE**.

## 3. How can you help your child before grades are given?

The time before your child's teachers decide on their grades is very important. Your child should continue working hard to improve their learning and grades. As a parent or carer, you play a very important role in supporting them.

### Preparation for assessment:

- Help your child decide which subjects are the most important for them to work on. There may be subjects in which they are currently below their school targets. There is little time left before grades are given, so it is important to focus on the most important areas.
- Support your child in planning their revision timetable at home so that they know what to do and how much time they have. Check regularly with your child to make sure they are on schedule with their work and help them catch up whenever possible.
- You can check your child's knowledge and understanding on a topic they are studying by asking them questions about it at home. Ask them to present it to you. For example, if they are preparing for a speaking assessment, they can practise it with you at home.
- Support your child with their homework. Set a homework timetable for them and check their progress. If possible, set up a quiet place for study where it will be easier for your child to learn.
- It is important to stay in regular contact with the school as much as possible. If you find it difficult to speak English, ask if the school can provide a translator.
- Speak to the school if you are worried about anything to do with your child.



