



13 August 2020

Dear year 13 students and parents,

First, you should know how proud of our year 13 students we are. Our students have been incredibly resilient in the face of an enormous challenge, a global pandemic. This has been a very uncertain time and our students have responded with dignity, maturity and patience. We are immensely impressed by you all.

We know that the news reports over the past weeks about how A level grades were calculated this year created confusion and uncertainty. Today lots of students were awarded grades in line with their expectations, however, some students were not. We want parents and students to know that we are here to support you, and we are doing everything we can to help students go on to the appropriate university course, apprenticeship or other destination.

Ofqual, the examination regulator, calculated the grades that were awarded. Those grades were based on different pieces of information, including how young people in our school have done in their exams in recent years, as well as how teachers believed students would do in the final exams, had students sat them. The prediction given by teachers is called the Centre Assessed Grade (CAG). Nationally about 40% of CAGs were lowered by Ofqual. Our experience at Highlands was similar to this. This week, once it became clear that so many grades were to be lowered by Ofqual, and following concern from the public, the government announced that students who wish to appeal their Ofqual calculated grade, could use a 'valid' mock examination result as evidence. We are still waiting for details of what this will look like, an announcement is due next week.

To help support students and to ensure all relevant information is available, as well as the Ofqual calculated grades, students have access to the CAGs and mock examination results. Teachers were on hand to discuss these grades with students today, but they can also be requested by following the steps outlined below.

If the Ofqual calculated grades were not the ones students and parents were hoping for, please do not worry – we are here to provide you with support. Universities and other higher and further education providers know that this year has been a difficult one, some will be flexible about their entry requirements and students may still get on chosen courses.

We are very experienced at supporting young people through the clearing process, to help find a course which is right. Again, many universities will be flexible about their requirements, so even if results were not the ones students wanted, it may be possible to find an appropriate course.

This has been a tough year for students and their families, for the teachers at Highlands, for all of us living in a time of such challenge. We want you to know that Highlands school is doing everything we can to make sure students get the outcomes they deserve so they can move on to the destinations they want.

Information regarding CAGs, appeals and resits:

We understand that some students feel disappointed with the results and have further questions. We hope that the information below will help inform the next steps students and families can take.

1. **Post result service:** this summer the standard post-results services such as access to scripts and reviews of marking will not apply.
2. **Requesting centre assessed grades and rank:** students can request details of centre assessed grades and rank order. To do this students should submit a request, in writing, to the exams officer, Mrs C Bell, bellc@highlearn.uk. The deadline for this is Tuesday 25 August. As explained above, like most schools, many of our teacher CAGs were moderated down. Please remember that Ofqual have stipulated that students cannot appeal for this grade to be used in place of an awarded grade.
3. **Appeals:** the appeals process for this summer is not like the usual reviews of results process – so it is not possible to appeal grades unless they meet specific criteria set out by Ofqual. Any student who would like to improve their grades will have the opportunity to take the full suite of AS and A-level exams in October, and GCSEs in November. They could also resit in summer 2021.

Information regarding appeals based on mock grades has not yet been released from the exam regulator. Once it is released the school will update you on the details of this process.

Ofqual have confirmed that students cannot challenge their individual centre assessment grades this year, as any appeal will have to be undertaken by someone better placed than a teacher to judge the likely grade if assessments had taken place. In the unique circumstances of this summer, Ofqual do not believe there is any such person. However, if students or others have concerns about bias, discrimination or any other factor that suggests that a school or college did not behave with care or integrity when determining the centre assessment grade and/or rank order information then these should be raised with school first.

Ofqual has confirmed that appeals will be allowed where a school believes it has made an error when submitting its information - or if the school believes an exam board made a mistake when calculating, assigning or communicating a grade.

The arrangements for awarding qualifications in summer 2020 state:

- Highlands can appeal to the awarding body if we believe there has been an error in the process of awarding the calculated grade. We will check the rank order has been preserved and that any adjustments made look reasonable in comparison with our expected outcomes. The awarding body must provide us with details of the process followed to make any adjustments.
- Students can raise a concern with Highlands if they believe the centre assessed grade was calculated in a biased or discriminatory way, and that teachers did not behave with integrity or care during the process.
- Students cannot appeal against the professional judgement of the teachers in the awarding of the grade itself, and cannot request a review or second opinion of that grade.

The deadline for appeals is Friday 11 September. Please contact Mrs Bell to discuss concerns in the first instance.

Ofqual information relating to appeals following the release of the calculated grades can be found [here](#). Please read in full before contacting the school with concerns regarding the awarding of grades.

Autumn 2020 Exam Series:

AS and A-level exams: Monday 5 October to Friday 23 October
GCSE exams: Monday 2 November to Monday 23 November

Entry to the autumn exam series will be open to all students who entered for GCSEs, AS and A levels in the summer series or to those who the exam board believes have made a compelling case about their intention to have entered the summer series. Students who would normally be entitled to take GCSEs in English language and maths in November should also be able to take exams in those subjects.

If students wish to re-sit any of their exams they **MUST make an appointment** with Mrs Bell to complete the paperwork and pay for the re-sit. The deadlines for payment and completion of paperwork are:

AS & A levels	Wednesday 2 September
GCSE (except Eng lang and maths)	Wednesday 16 September
GCSE (Eng lang and maths)	Wednesday 30 September

The exams office will be open as follows:

Thur 13/8	08.00 to 15.00
Fri 14/8	10.00 to 14.00
Tue 18/8	10.00 to 14.00
Thur 20/8	08.00 to 15.00
Fri 21/8	10.00 to 14.00

Week commencing 24 August – to be arranged (please see website).

Email: bellc@highlearn.uk
Tel: 0208 370 1182

Certificates:

Certificates should be ready for collection from the exams office in Dec/Jan.

Should you have any queries regarding your results please email our exams officer bellc@highlearn.uk

Mr McInerney
Headteacher