



Ref: Year 11 update

March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

As promised, I am now in a position to send you further information regarding how Y11 final grades will be awarded this year. There is still further information and guidance which has not yet been shared with schools. However, at this stage I wanted to share with you what we do know and the approach we plan to take at BIGS to ensure that students receive the grades that they deserve and that they are well prepared for their next steps.

How will Grades Be Awarded?

- Student grades will be awarded based on teacher assessed grades (TAGs).
- Teachers will be asked to award a grade based on national standards which will be issued by the exam board.
- TAGs have to be based on evidence.
- Students will only be assessed on what they are taught.
- This evidence can be gathered from any point in KS4 courses.
- Evidence should continue to be gathered as late in the academic year as possible.
- Schools and colleges must ensure that there is a broad range of evidence taken from across their courses.
- Schools are required to have internal standardisation and checking processes in place to ensure that grades awarded are accurate, robust and fair.
- Exam boards will also have checking processes in place to ensure that grades awarded are accurate, robust and fair.
- Schools will have to submit grades on the 18th June.
- Results day has been brought forward to the 12th August.
- Students will have the right to appeal their grade however we have designed a robust, evidenced based system with considerable quality assurance, so we hope appeals will not be necessary.

Our approach at BIGS

We have adapted the curriculum in each subject

During lockdown every department has reviewed its curriculum and made adaptations. In most cases the content of the course has been slightly reduced to account for missed curriculum time. When making adaptations to the course, Heads of Department have ensured that all topics key for progression onto level 3 courses (e.g. A levels and BTECS at College / 6th form) have been covered. If any crucial topics have been missed they will be taught between now and May. **In each subject students are given a clear breakdown of their adapted curriculum.**

Formal assessments between now and June 18th

In line with Government guidance, students will have the opportunity to complete assessments that will feed into their overall grade from now until the June deadline for submission.

Each department is now formulating a programme of formal assessments between now and the beginning of June. The dates of formal assessments will be clearly communicated with young people and families and students will have time to prepare for these assessments. Please note these formal assessments may not all be examinations/tests, in some subjects e.g. art students will be continuing to complete their portfolio.

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Whilst it is important that young people take these assessments seriously and prepare, they must also remember the luxury of having multiple assessment points is that they are lower stakes than one examination that everything rests on. This system will give young people plenty of opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

We will regularly share with students and parents how young people have done in their assessments. Whilst we await further guidance from examination boards regarding grade allocation, we will be sharing percentage scores only alongside the class average and an indication of whether this is broadly in line with students target grade e.g. on target, above or below.

How we will ensure formal assessments going forward are fair

We want students to have the best possible chance to demonstrate their learning in their formal assessments whilst also making sure they are carried out fairly and robustly.

To do this we will:

- Share the schedule of formal assessments students will complete and that will be used to help teachers award their grades.
- Share the content and skills they will be assessed on in each formal assessment and how the assessment is structured.
- Teach and revise the content and skills that students will be assessed on in lessons prior to their formal assessment.
- Time formal assessments so that they align with what students have been learning in classrooms.
- Arrange for formal assessments to take place in controlled conditions. This will mean that students are not disturbed, are able to focus and have the best possible chance to demonstrate their learning. (For larger subjects e.g. maths and English this may mean that formal assessments are completed in the Hall/Gym; smaller subjects e.g. music may take place in their classroom.)
- Students will complete significant formal assessments at the same time and will complete the same formal assessment as their peers. (N.B. In subjects where there are tiers of entry, we will tier assessments. Students will complete the tiered assessment which corresponds to their tier of entry.)
- Students who are entitled to access arrangements will continue to receive them in any formal assessments.
- Where students are unable to attend school e.g. due to illness/self-isolation, we will arrange for them to complete their formal assessment on their return. (N.B. In this event their formal assessment will be different to that completed by their peers.)

To what extent will we use previous formal assessments e.g. Y10 Summer Exams and Mocks

Students final teacher allocated grade will be a holistic grade summarising their achievement across the whole course. In accordance with the process set out by the government, we will consider the formal assessment scores from across the course e.g. pre-pandemic and mock grades but our focus will be on the assessments that they are completing now at the end of the course. **The die is not cast, students still have the opportunity to shape their final grade.**

Next Steps

Putting all of this into place is a significant undertaking and it's important that it's right for our students. Over these weeks, we will be finalising the formal assessment schedules with Curriculum Leaders. Once complete

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we will then collate these and share them with students and parents/carers. This will include an overview of what is being assessed and when these formal assessments are scheduled to take place.

As I alluded to at the beginning of my letter, OFQUAL and exam boards will be issuing further, more detailed guidance, to schools before the Easter break. When further information has been shared with us, I will write again to parents and carers again with any key updates. **Below is an OFQUAL produced summary of the key information issued to date in the form of an infographic.**

Please note I will confirm Y11's official leaving date after the Easter break. However, I foresee this being after grades have been submitted to the examination boards. Our Y11's need as much teacher support as possible in preparation for their formal assessments.

Understandably, our Y11 students want to achieve their very best and are anxious about making sure they achieve the grades they have been working so hard for. Please reassure them that over the next three months we will do everything we can do support them, so they secure the grades they deserve.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Zakia Maqbool

Headteacher

How GCSEs, AS and A levels will be awarded in summer 2021



Ofqual/21/6751/2

Working out your grade	Evidence	Results and appeals
Graded by teacher judgement	Mocks, tests and work already done can be used as evidence	Results days AS and A level 10 August GCSE 12 August
Not graded by an algorithm	Non-exam assessment should continue	If you're unhappy with your grade, you can appeal it. First step is to submit an appeal to your school or college.
School and college assessments can continue	Non-exam assessments can be used as evidence even if incomplete	<p>You can find out more details from your school, college or exam board, or by visiting the Ofqual website</p>
You'll only be assessed on what you've been taught	Art & design grade based only on your portfolio	
Your teacher will tell you what evidence is used to grade you	Teachers can use question banks provided by exam boards if they want to	www.gov.uk/ofqual
Private candidates to work with a school, college or exam centre to provide evidence for them to be graded	Results will be based on completed and future work, so keep doing your best	

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