



Dear parent/carer,

I am writing to you about your son/daughter's recent GCSE or A level grades.

As you know, this year's GCSE and A level results had to be awarded differently from usual, after exams were unable to go ahead due to Covid-19. Schools and colleges were asked to use their professional experience to make a fair and objective judgement of the grades they believed a student would have achieved had they sat their exams this year, based on work that the student had already done, then to submit these centre-assessed grades (CAGs) to the relevant exam board.

Groups of teachers and leaders in each subject worked together to discuss and agree CAGs for each student. They took into account a wide range of available evidence, including class work, mock exams and other records of student performance.

Schools and colleges were also asked to make sure that, unless there had been major changes in their school or college this year, the CAGs they submitted were broadly in line with the institution's previous results in a subject. This is because, although there can be some variation from one year to another, data shows that this is normally quite small.

At Cedars, we closely followed Ofqual's guidance on determining CAGs, as we were required to do. You can see this guidance [here](#). This document includes, on pages 6 and 7, the instruction to consider the previous results in this subject in our school when determining students' CAGs.

The process we undertook, therefore, was as follows:

1. Senior leaders agreed the objective evidence that teachers and subject leaders would use when assessing students.
2. Teachers and subject leaders worked together to propose a CAG for each student in each subject.
3. Senior leaders reviewed all the proposed CAGs, moderating them as instructed by Ofqual.
4. The final agreed CAGs were submitted to the exam boards.

As mentioned above, the CAGs were therefore the school's considered assessment of the grade each student would have been most likely to get if they had taken their exams and completed any non-exam assessment this summer. As the Ofqual guidance linked to above makes clear, these are not the same as:

- age-related grades (usually defined as the grade a student would receive if they took the relevant exam now)
- 'working at' grades (the grade a student is currently working at)
- target grades (often set a little higher than likely to be achieved, to motivate students), or
- (for A levels) predicted grades provided to UCAS in support of university applications.

The intention was that the exam boards would moderate the submitted CAGs, to check that schools and colleges had approached this task consistently, before providing students with their final calculated grades. Unfortunately, as you will no doubt be aware, the method they used to do this proved problematic, and was likely to lead to many grades being unfairly downgraded.

The government therefore made the decision that GCSE and A level students would be awarded whichever was higher for each subject – their CAG or their calculated grade. This is what the grades students received are based on.



The late decision to change to a different method, while necessary in the circumstances, is also far from perfect. While most students will have received grades which accurately reflect their performance and enable them to move on to their next stage of education or employment, some will be disappointed, and may feel they have not been fairly treated.

The grounds on which students can appeal their grades are fairly limited this year. This [document](#) from Ofqual explains the grounds for appeal, and the process that would be followed. Essentially, students are only able to appeal, through their school or college, if they believe there has been an administrative error in communicating their grades.

If you believe your son/daughter's grades were wrong as a result of bias, discrimination, malpractice or maladministration, you are able to raise a complaint with the school directly, or with the exam board. The Ofqual guidance explains the process for doing this.

Finally, the government has said that there will also be an opportunity for your son/daughter to resit exams in Autumn. I have yet to receive all the necessary information from the exam boards but as soon as I do, this will be uploaded to the website. GCE exams will take place in October and GCSE in November.

At the moment, if your child would like to enter the autumn exam series can I suggest that you email me with the details. The school entry deadline dates are as follows:

GCE Wednesday 2 September 2020

GCSE Tuesday 15 September 2020

Should there be any further changes, I will of course let you know.

I hope this has helped to explain in more detail the process Cedars used to determine our students' grades this year.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs C Houghton
Exams Manager

Headteacher: Mr S Palmer