

Dear Students,

Whilst we share your disappointment and frustration at how the awarding of Post 16 qualifications has been undertaken this year, we feel strongly that this should not be allowed to detract from your achievements and successes. On behalf of your teachers, we congratulate you all on the accomplishments you have achieved during your time at Gillingham School, both within your studies and wider pursuits. We continue to be enormously proud of you as ambassadors of our school community.

OfQUAL Statement on A Level Grades

As I am sure you are by now aware, on Monday 17th August, OfQUAL made the following statement, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-from-roger-taylor-chair-ofqual> which, in effect, decided that students be awarded their centre assessed grade - that is, the grade the school estimated was the grade you would most likely have achieved in your exam - or the exam board's awarded grade, whichever is higher.

Continuing Advice and Support

Whilst we welcome OfQUAL's decision, as we felt that the algorithm used had unfairly disadvantaged students in some subjects, we appreciate that this announcement may now have placed some of you in a difficult position in relation to University offers and so forth.

UCAS have emailed you today to provide an update and advise you on your next steps. Please remember that no one's grade will go down, and **if you already have a University place, this will not change – it's still yours if you want it.**

UCAS have asked us to stress that:

1. Offers **will not automatically change** in Track.
2. When the revised grades are issued, students **will not automatically be confirmed at their original firm choice.**
3. **Students will need to contact their preferred university or college (including their original firm) who will be able to advise what to do next.**

Please don't forget that your teachers are able to offer support and advice, or you can email Mrs Berry (UCAS Coordinator) on sjberry@gillingham-dorset.co.uk with any specific questions.

Likewise, if you have decided to postpone your application until the following academic year, we will be able to assist you with your UCAS, or other, applications.

BTEC Grades

All recent Government announcements about exam grades have excluded BTECS and other vocational qualifications. We remain dissatisfied at how these have been awarded for our post 16 students, and are in the processes of appealing these grades. Whilst we anticipate that the awarded grades will revert to the school's Centre Assessed Grades, we cannot yet confirm this. We will notify students when we receive further clarification. You will appreciate that this has been a rapidly changing situation.

Autumn Exam Series

Should you wish to sit an exam in the Autumn season please collect an entry form from Mrs Addis, Exams Officer, examenquiries@gillingham-dorset.co.uk and return it along with your entry payment. As the entry fee is different for each exam board, Mrs Addis will be able to provide further details. **All payments must be made in advance please.** There will be a

charge for the exam fee, unless otherwise agreed with the school. This is because we have already paid the examination fees for this academic year and, with no additional funding, would not be able to meet this cost twice. The deadline for entries to this additional exam season is 27th August.

These examinations will run from 5th October to 23rd October.

If you no longer wish to sit an exam in the Autumn Series please let Mrs Addis know before 27th August.

Whatever your chosen pathway, we wish you every success for the future.

Paul Nicholson
Headteacher