

Update on examination results 2020, and subject access requests (SARs)

Dear Parents/Carers, Pupils and Sixth-Formers,

CAGs plus:

After much dithering, the announcement made at 4.00pm on Monday 17th August by the Chair of Ofqual actually came as no surprise after the other nations of the United Kingdom had already declared that they had 'seen the light'. So, we're now back to having the Centre-Assessed Grades (CAGs) at the heart of the results process for Y11 pupils and Y13 students. However, in the follow-up guidance from Ofqual, it was also announced that candidates will gain further benefit if their Calculated Grade from the moderation algorithm was higher than the CAG, as the higher of the two grades will stand as the new 'final qualification grade'.

Year 13 results:

Our response to Monday's announcement led to a hastily organised production of a new Statement of Results for all Year 13 students and a re-running of our Thursday results day process, and I am pleased that just over two thirds of our Year 13s were able to come back into school to collect their new grades. Those that weren't able to come in should now have received their results in the post. However, the revised statements *do not* contain those grades where the moderation algorithm uplifted the outcome above the recommended CAG. The examining bodies are sending data files back to schools in a slightly haphazard fashion, and are not highlighting where uplifted grades have been awarded. Once we have all the relevant data files, a data checking and filtering exercise will be carried out, and where amendments are required, a replacement results statement will be issued as soon as possible.

I am aware that some students were still needing to finalise negotiations with their chosen universities about their place, especially if the replacement grades enabled them to meet the original conditional offer that may have been withdrawn after the publication of the initial grades on Thursday 13 August. Those original offers are legally binding, and universities should be doing everything within their power to ensure that students are accepted back onto their first choice of course at their chosen institute. Please note that our exams2020@nts.cumbria.sch.uk service continues to operate, should any student require further assistance over the coming days.

I hope that things will now settle down for Year 13 students, and that the stress and anxiety they will have been feeling will start to fade and eventually disappear, especially once new university courses and apprenticeships begin. Ultimately, as a school, we now feel that students have got the fair, reasonable, evidence-based outcomes that the school was tasked with producing several months ago.

Year 11 results:

As published previously, the results day for Y11 pupils will see results sent out via email, telephone or post from 8.00am on Thursday 20 August. The statement of results each pupil will receive will show only one grade per subject, listed as the result. This is because the files received from the examining bodies have already blended the CAGs with any uplifted Calculated Grades. We have carried out a checking and filtering exercise, and can see that from around 2000 pieces of data across the cohort, 45 CAGs were uplifted.

There are some known issues with the results for Year 11, especially for non-GCSE courses. This is because Ofqual announced that each examining body must devise their own method for awarding

results for the vast range of vocational and technical qualifications that exists, and that schools would only be required to submit estimated grades for modules not yet completed and *not* an overall qualification CAG. The details for our non-GCSE courses are as follows:

1. BTEC grades (Engineering, Health and Social Care) are undergoing a further review and all schools have been told not to send out these grades until the necessary checks have been made
2. ASDAN grades are all correct – no action required
3. In terms of OCR Cambridge National (Childcare) results, CAGs have been issued but our understanding is that these are not going to be completed until 25 August

Appeals process:

The missing piece in the jigsaw remains the process for appealing grades. We await clarification, but I am quite certain that mock grades as part of a 'triple lock' idea (hastily announced without much thought at 11.15pm on Tuesday 11 August) will disappear (almost as quickly as the Ofqual technical guidance did on Saturday 15 August after just a few hours of being 'live'!) As soon as the full process is defined, I'll provide a further update. However, in the meantime, I refer you to what Ofqual had already published some time back:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/909645/Student_Guide_Summer_2020_20200814_1157_access.pdf

SARs and CAGs:

Since Thursday 13 August, our gdpr@nts.cumbria.sch.uk email address has been inundated with requests for SAR forms. Originally, it was the case that CAGs should remain confidential so as not to undermine the integrity of the final qualification grade (regardless of how that was to be generated). Ofqual and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) then made it clear that CAGs *would* constitute 'personal data' accessible through the SAR process as outlined in GDPR and data protection policies after the publication of results on August 13th and 20th respectively. However, SAR requests for CAGs made prior to the relevant results day were subject to a 5-month response window, reducing to a 40-day response window if the request was made on, or after, the relevant results day! (This is perhaps why mock grades were seen as the answer for any appeals process...)

After the 4.00pm announcement on Monday, the inbox received a flood of CAG requests. These are all now null and void, as the CAGs have been released as part of the agreed process are the awarding of final qualification grades.

Therefore, please ***do not*** email gdpr@nts.cumbria.sch.uk for any CAG-related SAR requests, (or other school email addresses, as some of you have!) Please only use that email address to alert us to any data breach incidents, or to make general SAR requests as per our GDPR and data protection policies.

Yours sincerely,

Mr N. Parker

Deputy Head - Curriculum