



Good morning,

We received a lot of correspondence from the WJEC, our Welsh Exam board, and from the body that oversees them, Qualifications Wales, on Friday 27th March. I know many of you will have seen or read about this already. Please find attached a letter to schools. There is a lot of detail in the letter, so I thought it would make sense to clearly outline what the implication is for each group of learners:

Learners in Year 10

Pupils in year 10 were due to sit exams this summer in a variety of subjects. Most of these were Unit exams which were part of the GCSE but not the entire GCSE. They would usually be carried over and weighed up with the remaining units sat in Year 11 to get the whole GCSE. Subjects such as History and Science fall into this category. None of these units will be sat this year, and grades for these units will **not** be awarded by teacher assessment. For these units there are 2 options:

1. Pupils do not sit these units at all, and instead sit exams at the end of Year 11 only for the units that would have originally been sat in Year 11. An overall grade for the entire GCSE will be worked out by looking just at these units.
2. Pupils sit all of the Year 10 and 11 units at the end of Year 11 and get an overall GCSE grade. If pupils take option 2, then the exam board will still work out what the pupil would have got if they choose option 1, and award them the better of the two marks.

At the moment neither pupils or the school need to plan or consider which of the two options we will take, however it does reinforce the importance on the work being set for Year 10 pupils, which is aimed to ensure they are ready to start their Year 11 studies.

In addition to the Unit exams, pupils were due to sit the final GCSE English Literature exam and complete the qualification this summer. We have made the decision to withdraw all learners from this exam and sit the final GCSE English Literature Unit exam in summer 2021. This is based on several factors:

- The exam pupils have sat is considered to be the hardest exam as it contains the unseen poetry element and as a result, even though teacher assessment must take into account other factors, the result that pupils obtained for this exam rarely reflects their potential by the end of the course;
- The final GCSE Literature exam tests the same skills that the pupils were asked to apply to Of Mice and Men. By the time they reach this exam, pupils will be in a better position and would achieve grades higher than we would currently be able to offer via Teacher Assessment;
- The English Department spent the start of this year rewriting their approach to GCSE so that Language and Literature were taught simultaneously. This was due to be started next year, so the staff are ready to approach the course in this way already.

This of course means that it is important that pupils in Year 10 continue to read and study the texts that their English Teachers are directing them towards, so they are ready to use them next year.

Learners in Year 11

The exam board has informed us that there will be more details sent to schools regarding the way that the Teacher Assessment will be organised. I will be sure to keep you updated.

Similarly, I will update you all on details of non-GCSE courses such as BTEC, Skills Challenge and SWEET, as soon as I have them.

Year 12 Learners

Year 12 learners due to sit AS Levels this summer will not be entered for those and will not sit exams. Several things will happen with AS Levels:

- Pupils will be awarded AS Levels by Teacher Assessment in recognition of the fact that an AS Level is a standalone qualification. We are unsure at the moment of what the method of recording that Teacher Assessment will be.
- The AS levels that are awarded by Teacher Assessment however will **not** contribute to the overall A2 award due to be completed next summer. Instead, there will be two options:
 1. At the end of next year, pupils will not sit AS Level units, but will only sit A2 units. An overall grade will be worked out from these units.
 2. Pupils can sit all of their AS and A2 units at the end of next year and be awarded an overall grade for all units. If pupils do this then the exam board will work out what they would have been awarded if they had chosen option 1 as well, then award them the best mark.

Again, this is not a decision that needs to be made now, but needs to be considered with a range of factors such as overall exam load etc., but it does mean that the work being set by Year 12 teachers becomes an important factor in ensuring that pupils are in the best position they can be to start Year 13 as soon as we return.

Year 13 Learners

We are due to receive details this week of how to begin the Teacher Assessment process. I will be sure to keep you updated.

Year 13 Learners who are resitting AS levels

There are a number of learners who were due to resit AS Levels with the aim of either improving the standalone AS qualification, or improving the overall A2 qualification. None of this work or progress will be wasted:

- All pupils entered for AS levels will be awarded Teacher Assessed grades, this means that Year 13 pupils resitting AS levels should also have the opportunity to have a Teacher Assessed AS Level awarded this year which reflects their progress.
- It follows though that these Teacher Assessed AS levels will not be able to contribute to the overall A2 grade. However, the A2 grade awarded by Teacher Assessment should reflect the progress that learners have made in studying for that AS resit, and account for their improved understanding and attainment.

As always, thank you to all parents for your support and patience.

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