



**BIDDULPH
HIGH
SCHOOL**

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Headteacher: **Mrs E C Robinson BA (Hons)**

7th January 2022

FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE PERSON WITH PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND STUDENTS

UPDATE REGARDING EXAMINATIONS AND TAGS

Firstly, I would like to thank all our students for the hard work and effort they are putting into their studies at this time. The current guidance from the Department of Education regarding examinations for 2022 can be found in an Open Letter to students from Ofqual:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-letters-arrangements-for-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2022/letter-to-students>

TAG GRADES FOR A LEVEL SUBJECTS

The Department for Education are still asking for a TAG (Teacher Assessed Grade) **if examinations cannot proceed as planned**. We are to hold **3 assessments** for examination classes in the Autumn, Spring, and Summer terms and these must be run like formal examinations with any dispensations, under examination conditions and using A-Level examination questions/papers. Students can be given marks, feedback, and grades but NOT their TAG as this is cumulative over the year. For any A-Level subject where there is coursework, this will still be used to inform the final grade.

A TAG will be a 'holistic grade' based on the evidence collected over three assessment points and our knowledge of a student. This is NOT an average mark and each assessment does not carry any weighting. We would expect to see a generally weaker performance in the October assessments as students adapt to the requirements of their course and begin to understand the work and revision needed to do well.

Due to the lateness of the guidance, and the fact that assessments had already been undertaken (end of October 2021), we reviewed the way in which these were conducted. Some subjects requested a second assessment to ensure that guidelines were appropriately followed and, as a result, we are confident that the school did everything it could to run these according to the guidance set out above. If we are asked for TAG grades in the summer, this assessment grade will only form part of the evidence if needed.

Students will have two further opportunities to complete an assessment; mocks at the end of February and the other in May (if examinations are cancelled). We would expect the majority of students to improve on their performance in the assessment 1 window, but it is important that you understand that the holistic grade could be lower as well as higher than that achieved in any one assessment point.

FOR A-LEVEL SUBJECTS

There are adaptations to:

- A-Level Art which will be portfolio only with no external examination;
- Centres will be allowed to assess the Common Practical Assessment Criteria (CPAC) across the minimum number of practical activities required to enable students to demonstrate their competence in A-Level Biology, Chemistry and Physics;
- There will be a release of topics for many subjects by 7th February 2022.



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FOR VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS (BTEC & RSL)

For BTEC Nationals (QCF and RQF) streamlining is available so that the number of internally assessed units, that need to be assessed in full, is reduced. RSL Level 3 Dance remains unchanged.

At the moment we have been instructed to prepare for formal external examinations. The first of these take place in January for certain Level 3 Vocational Qualifications. There still appears to be a commitment to formal examinations this year. If students are unable to take their examination in January, they will be expected to sit it in the summer. However, if we hear of any updates or changes, we will inform you immediately.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Yours sincerely



Mrs E Robinson
Headteacher

OFQUAL STATES THE FOLLOWING

The government is clear that students entering GCSEs, AS or A-Levels in 2022 should expect to take exams in the Summer. In recognition of the fact that students' education has been disrupted by the pandemic, they [will be given extra help to prepare for their exams as follows](#):

- *Students taking AS and A-Levels will be given advance information about the focus of the content of the exams to help them focus their revision.*

Ofqual has decided that for the exams due to be taken in Summer 2022, grade boundaries will be set so that more students than was the case before the pandemic receive higher grades, providing a safety net for students in this transitional year.

Where a GCSE, AS or A-Level includes non-exam assessment (NEA), such as a Dance or Music performance, teachers should support their students, wherever possible, to complete that assessment in line with the guidelines and the timescales set by exam boards. If exams go ahead as we expect, the NEA will be marked and moderated as usual and combined with students' exam marks to generate their grades. If exams are cancelled, teachers will be expected to take a student's NEA into account when determining a TAG. For Art and Design qualifications, for which there are no exams, students should complete their non-exam assessments in line with the guidelines provided by exam boards.

*Students taking GCSEs, AS and A levels and the Advanced Extension Award should be assessed under exam-like conditions **wherever possible**. For example, students:*

- *should not know the questions in the assessment beforehand*
- *should work independently and without assistance (other than as required for a reasonable adjustment)*
- *should not have access to books or revision notes and the assessment should be timed and supervised.*

This will both help to ensure that the work is authentic and prepare students for exams in the summer. These controls may be provided within a classroom rather than exam hall setting.

