

18th August 2020:

We understand this has been a distressing time for students, who were awarded exam results last week for exams they never took. The pandemic has created circumstances no one could have ever imagined or wished for. We want to now take steps to remove as much stress and uncertainty for young people as possible - and to free up heads and teachers to work towards the important task of getting all schools open in two weeks.

After reflection, we have decided that the best way to do this is to award grades on the basis of what teachers submitted. The switch to centre assessment grades will apply to both AS and A levels and to the GCSE results which students will receive later this week.

There was no easy solution to the problem of awarding exam results when no exams have taken place. Ofqual was asked by the Secretary of State to develop a system for awarding calculated grades, which maintained standards and ensured that grades were awarded broadly in line with previous years. Our goal has always been to protect the trust that the public rightly has in educational qualifications.

But we recognise that while the approach we adopted attempted to achieve these goals we also appreciate that it has also caused real anguish and damaged public confidence. Expecting schools to submit appeals where grades were incorrect placed a burden on teachers when they need to be preparing for the new term and has created uncertainty and anxiety for students. For all of that, we are extremely sorry.

We have therefore decided that students be awarded their centre assessment for this summer - that is, the grade their school or college estimated was the grade they would most likely have achieved in their exam - or the moderated grade, whichever is higher.

The path forward we now plan to implement will provide urgent clarity. We are already working with the Department for Education, universities and everyone else affected by this issue.