

Dear parents / carers, Y11, Y12 Level 2 and Y13 Learners

As many of you will know, Gavin Williamson last week, made a statement about education and in particular about public exam grades. The essence of his approach seems to be a re-run from Summer 2020 of centre assessed grades i.e. grades decided by schools. The BBC reported him as saying "we're going to put our trust in teachers rather than algorithms". There are however some distinct differences this time around. Firstly, in March 2020 we entered this process with a considerable amount of assessment data e.g. from internal exams in Summer 2019 and mock exams from January/February 2020; we don't have this data this time around. Secondly, in March 2020 much was made of an algorithm which would overrule teacher judgements, and even though the algorithm was in the end abandoned, its existence will have had an influence on judgements made across the country; now there is no algorithm from the start and it is unclear what moderation process will be applied. The BBC reports that "the Ofqual exam watchdog will now have to devise how this will work" without giving any hint of how or when they will do this. A consultation is due to take place within the next few weeks.

So - we are left with plenty of questions: in particular, by what date we need to submit grades, what sort of moderation there may be and what sort of evidence might be expected.

We will be discussing these issues in the coming days, but I think it is going to be very likely that we will be running assessments for all learners who would have faced public exams and that these assessments could potentially take place from any time now up to the normal Summer exam weeks in June. As a first step, we are currently planning that learners who would have had "mocks" in January or February for public exams (i.e. Year 11, 12 Level 2 and Year 13) will instead have "assessments" in the second half of this term. As we currently have no guidance from Ofqual to work with, at this stage we have to say that it is certainly possible that these "assessments" may be used in the eventual "centre assessed grade" process and so should certainly be taken seriously. We are however mindful of pressure on learners and will be seeking to ensure that unreasonable demands are not made and that suitable guidance on content is given by teachers in advance. I understand that all learners and parents want and need to have more definite information than this, but the Government have simply not told us anything of the parameters we are supposed to work with.

For the moment it is important that learners in all year groups continue to study seriously. We have been pleased with the commitment shown by learners and the support of parents/carers to remote learning so far this term. We all need to continue to work together.

As soon as the Government have provided us with the guidance on how the CAG's and contingency arrangements if they need to be taken remotely, we will of course share this with you at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, I would like to request that you do not contact individual staff regarding arrangements but instead, send any questions directly to exams@ldeutc.co.uk.

Keep safe



Geoffrey Fowler
Principal & CEO