



# **Student guide to post-16 qualifications results Summer 2020**

A guide for those receiving qualification results in England this summer.

We understand how unsettling the last few months may have been for you, since schools, colleges and other providers were closed to many and exams were cancelled.

We have put in place special arrangements for this summer to make sure that the vast majority of students will receive calculated grades, so they can progress to further study or employment as expected.

The grades you receive this year will carry the same value as any other year, so you can compete on a level playing field with students from previous and future years.

This guide should help you understand how results have been awarded this year and where to find more information.

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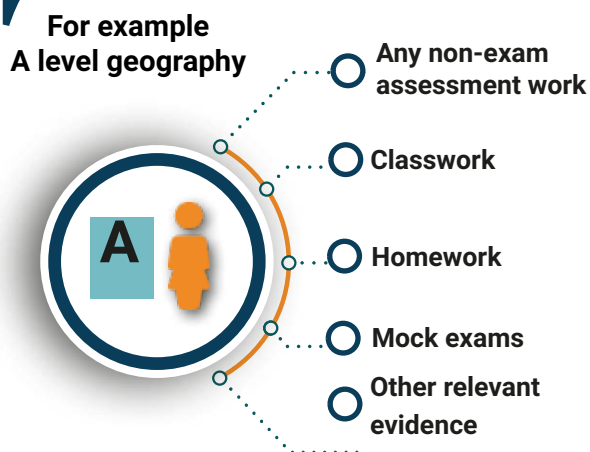
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# HOW GRADING WORKS THIS YEAR FOR GCSE, AS AND A LEVEL

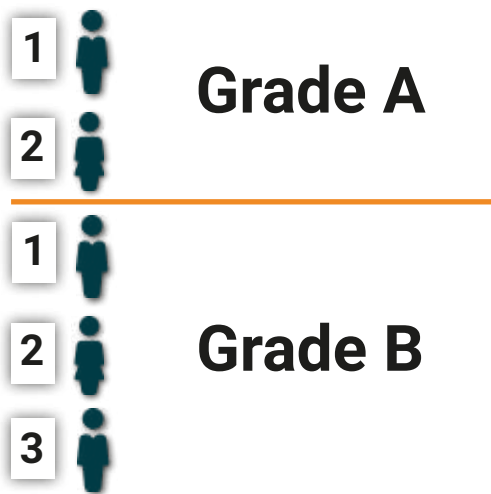
## Step 1 - School or college considers and submits centre assessment grade and rank order information

For each student for each subject

Centre assessment grade based on evidence of performance



Position in rank order of students on that grade



## Step 2 - Exam boards standardise grades using statistical model developed with Ofqual

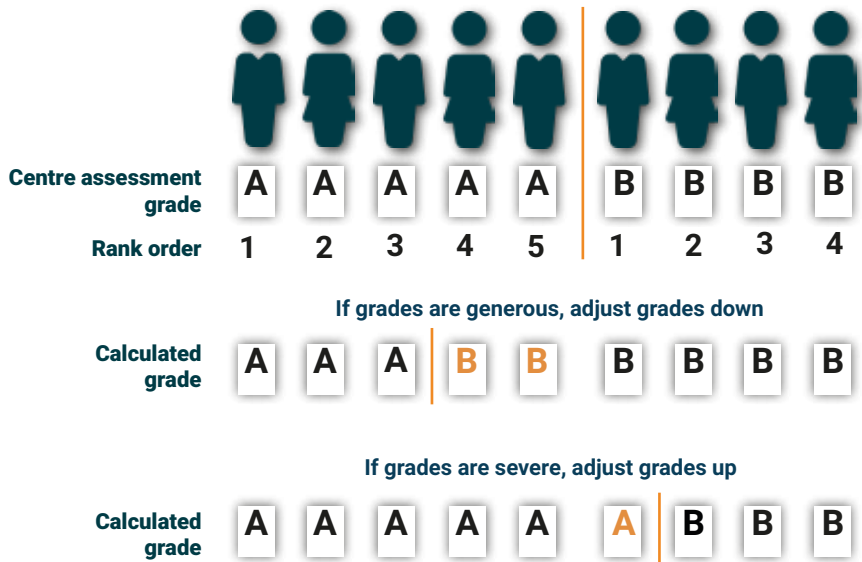


- Your school or college was asked to consider a range of evidence to inform your centre assessment grades. They are not the same as your target grade, predicted grade or mock result.
- Your school or college was asked to provide a rank order of students within each grade in a subject, based on who they felt was most secure in achieving that grade. The rank order is needed for the statistical standardisation process to work in the fairest way possible.
- Your centre assessment grade and place in the rank order was agreed by at least 2 teachers and confirmed by your head teacher or college principal as a true representation of your performance.
- The circumstances meant teachers could not use a nationwide approach as they made their judgements and exam boards could not directly check the judgements. All grades have been standardised to make sure the same standard is applied across different schools and colleges.

**Statistical standardisation**

What results might the school or college be most likely to achieve given the following:

- previous national results in the subject
- the prior attainment of its students this year compared to previous years
- the school or college results in recent years



# AWARDING VOCATIONAL & TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS

## How does it work?

As vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) come in a range of shapes and sizes, and fulfil a range of purposes, they are not all being treated in the same way. You might know them better as Applied Generals, Tech Levels, BTECs, Cambridge Nationals, Diplomas, Technical Certificates or Technical Awards.

In all cases, exam boards and awarding organisations have made sure that the qualifications have been assessed in the most fair and consistent way and they will be recognised by educational establishments and employers. See our [online explainer tool](#) for more information.

## Calculated results

The majority of students will receive a calculated grade for most qualifications. However, unlike GCSEs, AS and A levels, there is no overall statistical standardisation model. Awarding organisations are delivering results and carrying out quality assurance in line with Ofqual's rules. The next page explains how calculated results are decided.

## Adapted assessments

Calculated results aren't appropriate for all qualifications, for example, because there are practical skills that need to be tested or because there isn't enough evidence available for a calculated result to be valid and reliable. Where that's the case, the awarding organisation may have provided adapted assessments. For example, you might have been asked to take assessments online instead of in the classroom or demonstrate a procedure on a mannequin instead of a person. This will allow you to receive a result in the normal way.

## Delay

There are some qualifications where the only option was to delay the assessment. This might be because there was no way to carry out an adapted assessment safely or authentically.

If your assessment has been delayed, you may not get a result for that qualification this summer. Your school or college will tell you when you can next sit the assessment.

# HOW RESULTS ARE CALCULATED FOR VTQS

Unlike GCSE, AS and A levels, there is no overarching statistical standardisation model, but Ofqual requires that all AOs follow the same broad process to calculate grades. Awarding organisations are delivering the results and carrying out quality assurance in line with Ofqual's [Extraordinary regulatory framework for VTQ](#), which has been designed to allow the awarding organisations flexibility to determine the most suitable approach for their qualifications.

Different approaches will be taken depending on the evidence available, and the nature and structure of a qualification.

This means that the way your result has been calculated for one qualification, may be different to the way it has been calculated for another. Whatever the exact approach that is taken to issuing a calculated result, awarding organisations need to:

- gather evidence such as previously banked assessment results, centre assessment grades, school or college results from recent years
- quality-assure the evidence that is to be relied upon
- ensure that the outcomes are not out of line with expectations

Ofqual has worked with awarding organisations to support them through the process of applying this to their qualifications.

- 1 Evidence: centre assessment grade, awarding organisation calculated grade or both.
- 2 Quality assurance by the awarding organisation.
- 3 Overall check on outcomes to ensure they are not out of line with expectations.



**Minimum evidential threshold:** there must be at least one trusted source of evidence and a sufficiently robust method of quality assurance.

# WHAT TO EXPECT ON RESULTS DAY

## Collecting your results

- Check with your school or college to find out how it will give you your results.
- Schools and colleges are not allowed to give results out until after 8am on results day.

## Results Days

AS & A levels and equivalent level 3 qualifications	13 August
GCSEs and equivalent level 1, level 2 and level 1/2 qualifications	20 August

Your school or college receives your results and will pass these onto you. Even though grades have been awarded differently this year, they will look exactly the same as any other year on the results slips and your certificates.

Your result will be your final calculated grade - this may not be the same as the centre assessment grade submitted by your school or college because it will have been standardised.

Schools and colleges are not allowed to tell you your centre assessment grade before results days. Once you have received your results, you should speak to your school or college for more information if you want to know your centre assessment grade. Remember though, that the calculated grade on your results slip is the grade that counts.

If your results aren't what you were expecting, you should talk to your school or college about your options. You can also find more information on the appeals arrangements on page 11 and the autumn exam series on page 13 .

For more information on results days for other technical qualifications, contact your school or college.

## Things to remember

- Always speak to someone if you are feeling anxious about your results. See page 17 to find out where to get more support.
- If your results aren't what you were expecting, speak to your school or college.





# WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE UNHAPPY WITH YOUR RESULTS

You should first speak to your school or college. It's important that you understand on what basis you can and can't appeal your results when deciding your next steps. Only your school or college can submit an appeal on your behalf.

I think there might have been a mistake when my school or college submitted my centre assessment grade

You can ask your school or college to check whether it made an error when submitting your centre assessment grade or your position in the rank order. If your school or college does think it made a mistake, it can submit an appeal to the exam board, but it must be supported by clear evidence that an error had been made.

I think the exam board might have made a mistake when calculating my grade

Your school or college can appeal to an exam board on your behalf if it believes the exam board used the wrong data when calculating grades or incorrectly communicated the grades calculated. You should discuss this with your school or college.

I don't agree with the centre assessment grade that I was given by my teacher

Your school or college submitted the grades it believes you were most likely to achieve if exams had gone ahead. We know many students wanted to be able to challenge their centre assessment grades if they were unhappy with them, but we judged this could not be done consistently and fairly. Any appeal would have to be done by someone better placed than your teachers to judge your likely grade if exams had taken place – as exams were cancelled, we don't think there is such a person. And because of the role of the rank order in grading this year, an appeal would affect other students: if one student successfully appealed against their position in the rank order, it could mean that other students' grades were lowered. You can't appeal your grade because you don't agree with the centre assessment grade or rank order position submitted by your school or college.



If you'd like an opportunity to improve your grade, you can choose to sit exams in the autumn series instead. If you have concerns about bias, discrimination or something else that suggests that your school or college did not behave with care or integrity when determining your centre assessment grade or rank order information, see page 11.

I don't agree with the statistical standardisation model, and now I think my result is wrong

Standardisation is important to make sure grades across different schools and colleges are of a consistent standard and so your school or college can't appeal your grade on your behalf because it does not agree with the standardisation model. If you'd like an opportunity to improve your grade, you can choose to sit exams in the autumn series instead. See page 13 for more information.

What if my school or college won't submit an appeal on my behalf?

If your school or college won't submit an appeal to the exam board on your behalf, it must have a process in place for you to appeal against its decision.

You should first raise this with your school or college. If you wish to complain, you should speak to the exam board for further guidance.

I think I could have done better if I had sat my exams

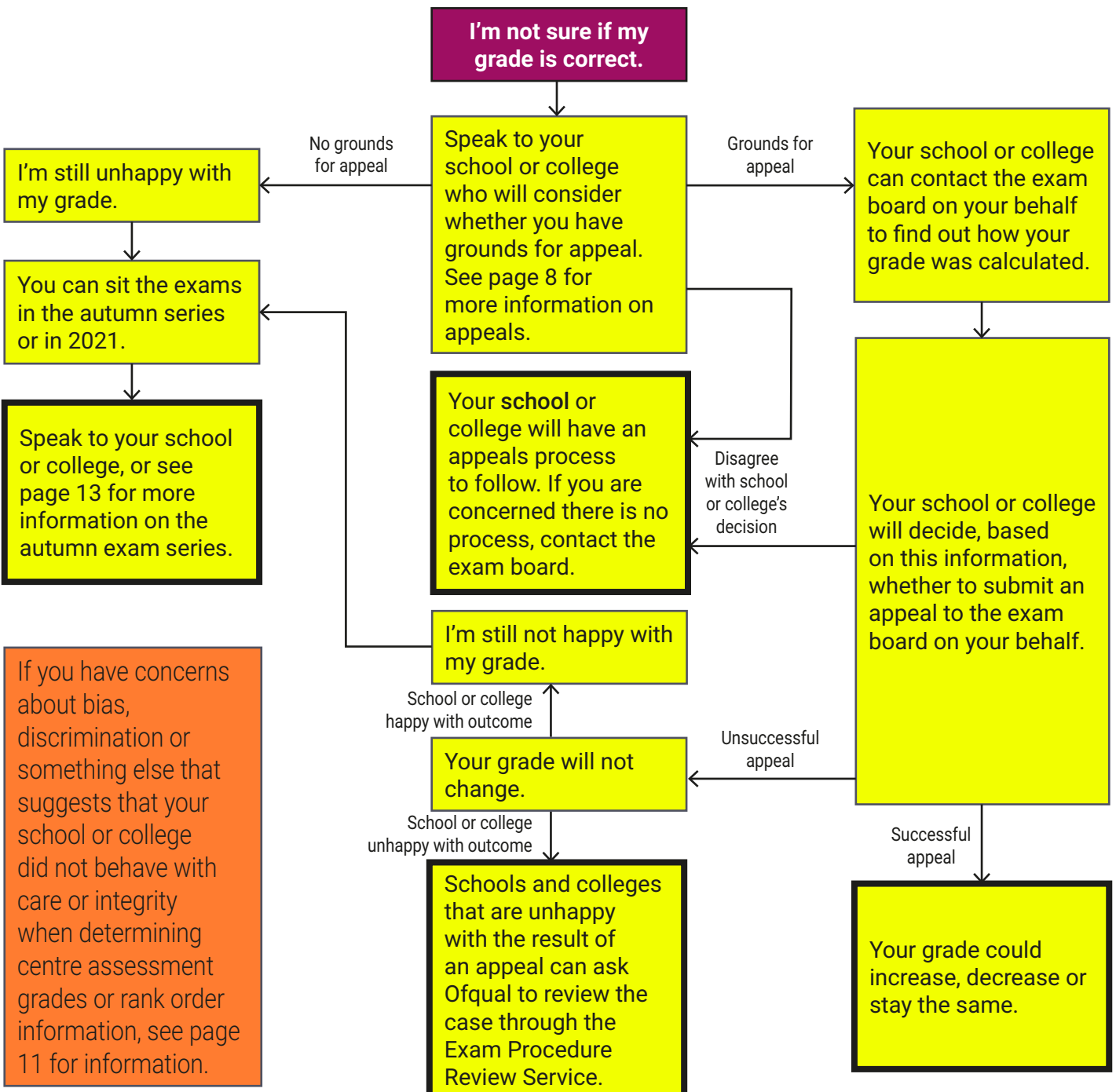
You can't appeal your grade because you think you would have done better in your exams. If you would prefer to take exams you can do so in the autumn series. See page 13 for more information.

I'm entitled to reasonable adjustments due to my disability, and I don't think this was taken into account when determining my centre assessment grade

If you have concerns that any reasonable adjustments weren't taken into account when determining your centre assessment grade or rank order information, you should raise these concerns directly with your school or college. If you have evidence of serious malpractice on the part of your school or college, it may be appropriate to bring those concerns directly to the exam board instead. See page 11 for more information.

I think my result, or someone else's, has been affected by wrongdoing such as discrimination or bias

If you have concerns about bias, discrimination or any other factor that suggests that your school or college did not behave with care or integrity when determining your centre assessment grade or rank order information you should first raise these concerns with your school or college. Your school or college must have a procedure in place to deal with such complaints. If you have evidence of serious malpractice on the part of your school or college, it may be appropriate to bring those concerns directly to the exam board initially instead. Where there is evidence, we require exam boards to investigate allegations as potential malpractice or maladministration. See page 11 for more information.



If you have concerns about bias, discrimination or something else that suggests that your school or college did not behave with care or integrity when determining centre assessment grades or rank order information, see page 11 for information.

# THE APPEALS PROCESS FOR GCSE, AS AND A LEVEL

- Firstly, you must make sure that you're clear on what basis you can appeal your result; you can only appeal if you think there has been an error in the process. You can't appeal just because you do not agree with the grade you received.
- You should speak to your school or college if you think there may have been an error and you might have reason to appeal. Only schools and colleges can submit an appeal. This also applies to private candidates - you must ask the centre that submitted your centre assessment grade to appeal on your behalf.
- Remember that if you appeal your grade, it can go up, down or stay the same. If someone else in your cohort appeals their grade and the exam board finds an issue that affects other students' results, your grade is protected and will not go down if the appeal was not made on your behalf.
- If your school or college is unhappy with the outcome of the process, it can [appeal this decision through Ofqual's Examination Procedures Review Service](#).
- If you have concerns about bias, discrimination or something else that suggests that your school or college did not behave with care or integrity when determining centre assessment grade or rank order information, you should first raise these concerns with your school or college. Your school or college must have a procedure to deal with complaints. If you are concerned that you have evidence of serious malpractice by the school or college, it may be appropriate to bring those concerns directly to the exam board.
- We require exam boards to consider this as potential malpractice or maladministration. They must investigate cases where there is evidence to suggest that the centre assessment grades or rank order information submitted may not have been determined appropriately. Remember that you would need to have evidence for this to be investigated by the exam board.
- Where the investigation finds that the centre assessment grade or rank order information was determined inappropriately and that this has led to an incorrect final result, the exam board must consider the action needed, including correcting that result if appropriate.
- Such allegations would be very serious. The national results do not indicate bias on the part of teachers. This does not mean that there are not individual cases of bias, but we expect them to be rare.

Deadline for  
appeal  
17 September 2020



# APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS FOR VTQS

As vocational and technical qualifications come in a range of shapes and sizes, and fulfil a range of purposes, they are not all being treated in the same way and the grounds for appeal may vary. You should speak to your school or college if you think you might have reason to appeal.

Schools and colleges can submit an appeal on your behalf, and in some cases awarding organisations are accepting appeals directly from learners. Private candidates can appeal directly.



Remember that if you appeal your grade, it can go up, down or stay the same.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the appeals process, you can [make a complaint to Ofqual](#).

If you have concerns about bias, discrimination or something else that suggests that your school or college did not behave with care or integrity when determining a centre assessment grade or providing evidence to the awarding organisation, you should normally raise these concerns with your school or college. In some cases it may be appropriate to bring those concerns directly to the awarding organisation instead.

Check your qualification's awarding organisation website for further details on appeals.

## Will I get another opportunity to take my assessment?

For many VTQs there are already a number of assessment opportunities throughout the year. Some awarding organisations are providing additional assessment opportunities for some qualifications. Talk to your school or college to see if this applies to your qualification.

## I haven't been assigned a grade – what do I do?

Some learners might not have received a result and were expecting to, in which case you should first speak to your school or college.

Awarding organisations must allow reasonable time for learners and centres to decide whether to request an appeal.

Awarding organisations may charge a fee for providing some information.

Awarding organisations are required to publish their appeals process on their website.

# AUTUMN EXAM SERIES FOR GCSE, AS AND A LEVEL

The autumn exam series is an opportunity for students who either were unable to receive a calculated grade in the summer, or who want to try to improve their grade, to sit their exams. You should speak to your school or college if you want to enter for the autumn exam series.

Do I have to sit exams in all of my subjects?

No. You can choose to take as many subjects in the autumn as you want to. But if you want to take a particular subject, you will need to take all the exam papers in that subject.

Which grade will stand if I sit the exams?

If you choose to take exams in the autumn or next summer and achieve a different grade from the grade you received this summer, you will be able to use the higher of the 2 grades to show to universities, colleges and employers in future.

Will the number or format of the exam papers be different?

No. You will have the same number of exams in each subject and they will be in the same format as the summer 2020 exams would have been. However, there will not be any non-exam assessment, except in art & design.

Will the non-exam assessment I have done count towards my grade?

No. The autumn results will be based on your exam performance alone, there will be no non-exam assessment and results from previous non-exam assessment will not carry over. In art & design, grades will be based on your performance in a new task, set and marked by the exam board and taken under the normal supervised conditions.

Who will enter me for the exams?

The Department for Education has confirmed that the school or college that entered you for exams in the summer is responsible for entering you in the autumn. This includes private candidates (where they made summer exam

entries by 20 March). But if this is not convenient (for example, if you've moved to another part of the country), your school or college can agree other arrangements on your behalf.

The exception to this is if you are moving school or college in the autumn and will be continuing to study English or maths because you achieved a grade 3 or below. In that case you should speak to your new school or college who will arrange entries for you.

Can I enter the autumn series if I wasn't entered this summer?

No. Only students who had entered for the summer exams and students who the exam board believes had intended to enter for those exams can enter in the autumn series. Students who would normally be entitled to take GCSEs in English language and maths in November (usually resitting students) will also be able to take exams in those subjects.

If I take exams in the autumn will I still be able to start my college or university course?

You should speak to the relevant institution directly as they make their own admission decisions. In many cases, students who sit these examinations will be looking at starting their college or university studies in the following autumn - 2021. An exception to this is where a course has a January or February start date and, in this case, you may be able to start right away. The best advice is to contact the university or college for specific information.

I am disabled and need reasonable adjustments to sit my exam in the autumn - how do I request these?

The normal range of reasonable adjustments should be available for disabled students who take choose to take exams in the autumn. The school or college that enters you for the exams will be able to advise you.

### Exam dates

AS & A levels	<b>5 October to 23 October</b>
GCSEs	<b>2 November to 23 November</b>

### Deadlines for entry

AS & A levels	<b>4 September</b>
GCSEs except English language & maths	<b>18 September</b>
GCSEs in English language & maths	<b>4 October</b>



# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How will you standardise my GCSE , AS or A level grade?

Your school or college has sent the exam boards a centre assessment grade for you in each of your subjects, and a rank order of you and your classmates in order of your expected performance. Exam boards will standardise this information using your centre's previous results and your year group's performance in GCSEs (for A levels) or Key Stage 2 assessments (for GCSEs). They will adjust grades where needed to bring consistency to different centre judgements across all schools and colleges and to make sure your results have equal currency with previous years.

Will standardisation mean that my final grade will be lower than my centre assessment grade?

Not necessarily. If grading judgements in a school or college appear too high or too low, exam boards will adjust some or all of the grades upwards or downwards accordingly, using the rank order. Grades will only be adjusted where needed to bring them closer to what the evidence shows students would have been most likely to achieve if exams had gone ahead. It is important to remember that the centre assessment grade submitted by your school or college is just one part of the process of calculating your final grade.

Grades are being standardised to make sure your grade is valued by universities and employers and to be fair to students in previous and future years. There's [more information about how grades are being standardised](#) on our website.

I want to know my centre assessment grade - can my school or college tell me?

Remember that your final grade is the grade that counts. Your school or college is not allowed to tell you your centre assessment grade before results day. After results day, you can ask your school or college for more information if you want to.

I'm really anxious about my results, what can I do?

It's normal to feel anxious, and we understand it might be particularly worrying with the exceptional arrangements this year. If you feel anxious, it's important to talk to someone. You can find more information on where to find additional support on page 17.



Will our grades mean anything if we haven't done exams?

The arrangements we've put in place this year will make sure that your results will have the same currency as in any other year so you can compete on a level playing field for opportunities with students from previous and future years.

If I'm unhappy with my grades what can I do?

You should speak to your school or college about your options - see page 8 for more information. You can also choose to sit exams for one or more of your qualifications in the autumn series if you want the opportunity to improve your grade. You will be able to use the highest grade.

I'm doing a vocational qualification (for example, BTEC, Cambridge National) - what arrangements apply to my qualification?

Depending on the qualification you're taking, many of the same points apply – but see pages 5, 6 & 12 for further detail. In particular, VTQs taken alongside or instead of GCSEs, AS and A levels are using very similar arrangements, although in many cases any units you had already taken will also be factored into your final result.

I didn't try my best in my mocks, will this impact on my grade?

Your centre assessment grade is not just your mock result. Your teacher has been asked to use a range of evidence that they will have seen from across your time studying for your qualifications, not just your mocks, when producing your centre assessment grades.

I don't think my teacher likes me - will this affect my grade?

All teachers want the best for their students. Your teachers are professionals who have been asked to use a range of evidence to produce your centre assessment grade. They have worked with other teachers to produce the centre assessment grade and the head of centre must confirm that all grades have been determined appropriately – so the judgement has been made by your school or college, not an individual teacher. We've also given guidance to schools and colleges on how to make objective judgements.

Got a question we haven't answered?

Find out where to get more support on page 17

# WHERE TO FIND MORE SUPPORT


## More information on the awarding process

You can find more resources and information about this year's awarding process on our website

 [gov.uk/guidance/your-results-what-next](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/your-results-what-next)

## Results, appeals, complaints and next steps


**The Exam Results Helpline** can provide information on appeals, complaints, or what your next steps may be once you've received your results:

 0800 100 900

 [nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk)

Lines open from 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week. Calls are free from landlines and most mobiles.

## Ofqual

 0300 303 3344


 [gov.uk/ofqual](https://www.gov.uk/ofqual)

Lines open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, calls charged at your standard network rate.

## Higher education

For **higher education** questions, such as application and admissions, you may need to contact the relevant institution directly.

**UCAS** can also provide information on university applications:

 0371 468 0 468





 [ucas.com](https://www.ucas.com)

Lines open Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 6pm, calls charged at your standard network rate.

## Mental Health Support

Make sure you speak to somebody if you are feeling anxious or struggling with your mental health. This might be a parent, carer or someone else you trust.

You can also contact

- Young Minds  Text YM to 85258  [youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- Childline  0800 11 11  [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)
- Your GP: call and ask for an emergency appointment.
- NHS 111: they can assist in providing the [mental health support](#) you may need.

# FURTHER SUPPORT: SUMMARY

You can find contact details and information about where to get additional support on page 17. However, if you're not sure which is the correct organisation to contact, the information below should help you to identify where to start.

I want to know whether I can appeal

You should speak to your school or college first. Only schools or colleges can submit an appeal.

For vocational and technical qualifications, you should discuss this with your school or college as different exam boards may have different arrangements in place.

My results aren't what I wanted and I don't know what to do next

You should speak to your school or college who will be able to give you advice on your options. You can also [contact the Exam Results Helpline](#). If you feel that you are struggling with your mental health, you should speak to your parent, carer or someone you trust.

My school or college won't submit an appeal, and it won't let me appeal its decision

Firstly, you must ensure that you have checked on what grounds a school or college is able to appeal - see page 8. You can then contact the relevant exam board if the school or college refuses to allow you to appeal its decision. Remember, this does not mean that the exam board will allow you to appeal directly.

## I want more information on the appeals procedure

You can [contact the Exam Results Helpline](#). You can also [contact public enquiries at Ofqual](#).

For vocational and technical qualifications, you may wish to contact the relevant awarding organisation to find more information on their specific appeals process.

## I want to enter for exams in the autumn

For GCSEs, AS and A levels you should speak to the school or college where you were due to sit exams in the summer, who can give you more information and arrange entries for you. This also applies if you are a private candidate. The exception to this is if you are moving school or college in the autumn and will be continuing to study English or maths because you achieved a grade 3 or below. In that case you should speak to your new school or college who will arrange entries for you.

For vocational qualifications, speak to your school or college, or check the relevant exam board's website for more information on any assessment windows.

## I want to find out my centre assessment grade

Remember that your final grade is the grade that counts. Your school or college is not allowed to tell you your centre assessment grade before results day. You should speak to your school or college for more information if you want to know your centre assessment grade once you have received your results.

## I have questions about my university application

You should initially contact your school or college for support. You may also choose to [contact UCAS](#) for more information and guidance, or for specific queries you may choose to contact the institution directly.

## I have questions about my further education application

You should contact the school, college or training provider that you have applied to if you wish to discuss your application.

I want to complain about an exam board

You should firstly contact the exam board who will have a complaints procedure in place. Once you have completed the exam board's procedure, if you feel your complaint has not been resolved you may then choose to [contact Ofqual](#).

I think that there has been wrongdoing when developing my centre assessment grade

You should discuss this with your school or college. If you're concerned you have evidence of serious wrongdoing, such as malpractice or maladministration, you may wish to contact the relevant exam board directly instead.

I want to know more about how the statistical standardisation model works for GCSE, AS and A level

You can find [a range of resources on Ofqual's website](#) to find out more about how the standardisation model works.

I want to know when I'll get my certificate

You should first contact your school or college if you want more information about your certificates.

There is an error in my details on my results slip

Contact your school or college to make them aware. You should do this as quickly as possible. It can then contact the relevant exam board on your behalf.

Still not sure?

If you're still unsure who to contact, you should either discuss your concerns with your school or college, or contact the Exam Results Helpline who will be able to point you in the right direction. You can find their details on page 17.


## Exam results helpline

 0800 100 900

 [nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk)

Lines open from 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week. Calls are free from landlines and most mobiles.


## Ofqual

 0300 303 3344

 [gov.uk/ofqual](https://gov.uk/ofqual)


Lines open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, calls charged at your standard network rate.

## AQA

 0800 197 7162


 [www.aqa.org.uk](https://www.aqa.org.uk)

## OCR

 01223 553 998

 [www.ocr.org.uk](https://www.ocr.org.uk)

## Pearson

 0345 618 0440

 [www.pearson.com](https://www.pearson.com)

## WJEC Eduqas

 029 2105 5443

 [www.eduqas.co.uk](https://www.eduqas.co.uk)

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