

MAESTEG SCHOOL

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Headteacher / Pennaeth: H. Jones B.A. (Hons) N.P.Q.H.

25th January 2021

Dear Learner,

You undoubtedly have many worries, concerns and questions about the recent announcement that summer exams are cancelled and how this will affect you. Frustratingly, we don't have all the answers at the moment, but we have downloaded the 'FAQ' section from the Qualifications Wales website and added a few of our own. What we do know is that you need to work harder now to produce evidence of the grade you are working at. You must talk to your form tutors or subject teachers if you need further help, support and guidance. Working from home without your teacher to help you stay on task is not easy and requires resilience, grit and determination. Please let us help you if you are struggling to get the work done at home.

Below are some answers to questions that you may find useful. If there are questions that you have that have not been answered here, don't be afraid to email your teachers to see if they can help.

In the meantime, be organised; be motivated; be your best! We are here for you.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Who will award my grade?

Your final grade in each subject will be determined by your school or college, who will tell WJEC the grade. WJEC will issue your GCSE, AS or A level certificate, which will show your grade as in other years.

How will my grades be decided?

Your grades will be determined by your school or college based on a range of assessment information. This could include assessments you have completed during the course, including coursework. Your school or college will decide if they want to use adapted assessment materials provided by WJEC to help determine your grade.

What will the WJEC assessment materials be like? (WJEC has produced some additional assessment materials to support teachers in covering the key course concepts which will help when awarding grades)

WJEC has already adapted the assessment requirements for summer 2021 to reflect the impact of the pandemic on teaching and learning. WJEC will reflect these changes in a range of adapted assessment materials to give schools and colleges as much choice as possible. Schools and colleges will be able to use these as they see fit without rules being imposed by WJEC.

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What happens if I think I've been awarded an incorrect grade?

If you want to challenge your grade, you will be able to appeal to your school or college. If you are not satisfied with the outcome and want to challenge the process used by your school or college to determine your grade, then you will be able to appeal to WJEC.

What's WJEC's role in this process?

WJEC will provide support to schools and colleges by setting out the rules for assessment in an overall assessment framework and then quality assuring the plans developed by schools and colleges. They will also run checks to make sure that schools and colleges have implemented their plans appropriately. WJEC will also provide a range of assessment materials, that schools and colleges can choose to use.

What's Qualifications Wales' role in the process?

Qualifications Wales will amend the rules to allow WJEC to award grades in summer 2021. We are changing the rules as we believe this is the best way to award grades in the circumstances. We will work collaboratively with WJEC and others to implement this approach.

Will universities and Further Education colleges accept my grades?

Grades for GCSE and A level will be awarded in similar ways across the UK and there is no reason to believe that the way forward in Wales will disadvantage learners' progress to higher and further education. Further Education college representatives have been consulted as assessment arrangements have been developed. We will continue to work with universities and UCAS to inform them about the assessment arrangements.

When will more information be available?

Detailed procedures and a timeline will be developed over the next few weeks and published as soon as possible. We know that everybody wants clarity and will provide information as soon we can

What will happen if I'm a Year 10 learner?

If you have completed the course and were going to be entered for the whole GCSE course this year, then you can be awarded a grade determined by your school. **(Year 10 will have completed GCSE English Literature and GCSE Math's at the end of year 10)**. However, it will not be possible to take just some units of a GCSE this year, and we will need to consider what the assessments arrangements will be for those subjects next year.

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Will my AS grade contribute to my A level in summer 2022?

We've considered whether there is any fair way of allowing AS results from this summer to contribute towards A levels in summer 2022, but unfortunately there isn't. Learners in Year 12 will be awarded an AS grade that teachers and lecturers will determine and will provide for progression into the A level course of study, and support UCAS applications. A levels are usually awarded by putting marks achieved in all units together (including AS units). There isn't a fair way to use grades from the summer 2021 AS units.

What happens if I am studying for a vocational qualification?

We are working with the awarding bodies offering Wales-only vocational qualifications on the way forward. We will continue to work with England and Northern Ireland to decide on the arrangements for qualifications offered across the UK. Ofqual are currently [consulting](#) on proposals.

I'm studying an Essential Skills Wales qualification. Has my qualification been adapted?

The four Essential Skills Wales awarding bodies (Agored Cymru, City & Guilds, Pearson and WJEC) have put in place arrangements for learners taking these qualifications during 2020-21. These arrangements help to reduce the impact of disruption to assessment caused by Covid-19 and supersede the arrangements announced on 20 April 2020.

On 14 December 2020, we announced that these arrangements will be available until 31 August 2021.

Full details about the adaptations for Essential Skills Wales qualifications for 2020-21 can be found [here](#).

Where can we find more information?

Recognising the ongoing disruption, we will continue to engage with centres and publish information as it becomes available, sharing information on our social media channels and website

How can I be sure I received consideration for extra time/ needing a reader/ EAL?

All teachers are aware of those pupils who have been identified as requiring additional arrangements or extra time and this will have been built into the tasks that they have been set. Special consideration will also be given when teachers are assessing these tasks.

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My teacher was absent from school due to COVID, has this been considered?

You will be disadvantaged as a result of a teacher's absence or if you spent a long time in isolation yourself. Full details for this 'special consideration' will be provided by the WJEC but you will not be penalised and this will be taken into consideration when awarding your grade

I have not been able to access lessons due to lack of equipment.

We have worked hard to identify anyone who has not had access to the wifi or a digital device. If you still cannot access lessons you must share this with your form teacher immediately so that we can help you.

How can you be sure that the grades I receive compare fairly to pupils from other schools.

The school has rigorous assessment plans and moderation processes to ensure that you will achieve the grade you deserve. Although we cannot compare your grades to those awarded in other schools, we are guided by the same mark schemes, assessment processes and checks as every other school in Wales.

When does all work have to be in by?

The WJEC has not yet sent out the timeline which will tell us when we have to collect your work. Be guided by your teachers so that they have time to mark and give feedback on each task/assessment so that you can continue to make improvements before they award the final grade.

Please do not hesitate to send in questions to your form teachers or Head of Year so that we can do our best to answer them.

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