

# SPALDING ACADEMY

## Information for Parents / Students on the Exams Process – Summer 2020

Re: The process SLATrust following when submitting student's grades and ranking for Spalding Academy

To reassure parents / carers in advance of the examination results being published this summer, we thought it would be good to share the process that the school has followed in deciding on the grades submitted and applying the rank order of students.

There have been some questions from parents and carers over individual examination results for students and therefore can we take this time to remind all parents / carers and students of the following:

- **Please note that the school cannot engage in any discussion over the summer 2020 exam grades, other than issuing this information.**

Regarding the process for Spalding Academy, the centre assessment grades submitted to exam boards had to reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely grade a student would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessments required for the subject.

### GCSE

For GCSE subjects, exam boards required us to submit the following information:

- **A centre assessment grade for each student:**

The judgement submitted to the exam board by the Head of Centre about the grade that each student is most likely to have achieved if they had sat their exams. To obtain this grade the teachers and Heads of Departments considered all the information they had about the student's work including class work, teacher forecasts over time; mock results and the attitude the student was showing in their work and preparation for the exams. Additionally, the performance of this year's cohort of students was compared to previous year's cohort, taking into consideration ability bands and also the accuracy of the departments predictions in previous years compared to actual results.

- **The rank order of students within each grade band:**

For example, for all those students with a Grade 5 in GCSE Maths, a rank order was applied, with 1 bring the most secure/highest attaining student within each band and so on. The rank order was applied to the whole year group, within grade bands, and not just one class.

### BTEC / VOCATION QUALIFICATONS:

For BTEC and other vocational subjects, i.e. PE CNAT, exam boards required us to submit the following information:

- **A centre assessment grade for each student:**

We were asked to provide unit grades for internally assessed completed units.

In addition to this, we provided the most likely grade that learners would have achieved for these vocational qualifications, i.e. for internally assessed units that were due to be completed between 20 March and 31 July had students remained in school and an overall qualification rank order of learners.

We were not asked to provide grades for externally assessed units, these will be based on a range of available data and the rank order provided by the centre. This includes any anticipated / expected re-sit grades where entries have been made. Students will then be awarded a final qualification grade in August, along with their GCSE grades.

- **The rank order of students within each grade band:**

We were asked to provide a rank order for each qualification.

This included all students registered for a qualification regardless of year group, i.e. Year 10 and 11.

From all these sources of information the exam board will produce an overall qualification grade for the vocational qualifications. All information produced by the school was provided through the Lead Internal Subject Verifier working collectively with subject teachers. This was then quality assured by the school Quality Nominee.

## **KNOWING OUR STUDENTS:**

For all qualifications at Spalding Academy, both the grades applied and the rank order for students were a holistic professional judgement, balancing the different sources of evidence.

Our teachers and Heads of Department/Subject Leads have a very good understanding of each individual students' performance and how they compare to other students within the department/subject for this year, and in previous years.

In coming to this holistic judgement we assumed that it is no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular grade this year, compared to previous years.

Where students have an agreed reasonable adjustment. i.e. extra time; a reader or scribe, or have another agreed access arrangement, the judgement took into account the likely achievement with the reasonable adjustment/access arrangement in place.

Once all Subject Departments had produced their grades and rank order the information was review by the examinations officer and the Executive Deputy Headteacher for Teaching & Learning, Mr James Hind.

The final review and approval was by the Head of Centre – Executive Headteacher Mrs Lucy Conley.

When reviewing the information, we needed to make sure that all departments had applied the criteria consistently. It was most important that the overall results fitted the trends and expectations for the 2020 season.

When the predicted grades and rank order came in from all departments we carried out the following process:

- An admin check, to ensure that the ranking was correct (i.e. no repeat numbers or missing numbers)
- The results were uploaded into our data software and analysed in the following ways:
  - The Progress score was checked.
  - The grades at each level were checked (i.e. grade 7+, grade 6+, grade 5+ at GCSE ) to ensure that it was not just the overall progress and attainment that reflected the ability but that it was correct at each ability level.
  - The grades and progress was checked against results in subjects last year, taking into account any differences in cohort. It was necessary to check that the strengths of the school were reflected in the forecasts.

- As part of the process the rank order of grading in a subject was never changed - i.e. an individual student was never moved from the rank order position that the department had submitted.

### Statistical Standardisation by Examinations Boards:

Exam boards, using a model developed with Ofqual, have used a statistical model to standardise grades across centres in each subject. This model will combine a range of evidence including:

- expected grade distributions at national level
- results in previous years at individual centre level
- the prior attainment profile of students at centre level

The guidance given to schools relating to this states:

*“This statistical standardisation process will not change the rank order of students in a subject within our centre. Nor will it assume that the distribution of grades in each subject and/or each centre should be the same. If, when compared to the evidence above, your judgements in a subject are more generous than would be expected, then the final grades for some or all of your students will be adjusted down. On the other hand, if it appears that your judgements in a subject are more severe, then the final grades for some or all of your students will be adjusted up. We will do this to align the judgements across centres, so that, as far as possible, your students are not unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged this summer.*

*This means that the centre assessment grades we submitted and the final grade that students receive could be different. It also means that adjustments to centre assessment grades might be different in different subjects.”*

### SUMMARY:

The process of forecasting grades and determining rank order has been a difficult one, and a responsibility that we have taken extremely seriously.

Heads of Department and teachers have worked extremely hard to ensure that the ability and hard work of our students is accurately reflected in the grades that they will receive this summer.

In a normal year there are always one or two surprises – a student that does better than predicted as the questions on an exam fell right for them, or a student who for whatever reason did not have a good day and underperformed in a subject. It is impossible for us to have reflected either of these in the predictions that were supplied to exam boards. It is also true that in any exam year there are students who are delighted and those who are disappointed.

This will be just as true this year and we recognise that for those students who are disappointed the feeling will be somewhat different this year, as inevitably they will think that maybe they would have done better.

All of the school Leaders will be on hand to support all of our students whatever the outcomes in the summer to help and guide them onto the next stage of their career.