



John McDonnell MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

28 May 2020

Dear Mr McDonnell,

**PQ 45952: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, what guidance his Department has issued to (a) schools and (b) colleges on assessing the grades of students that are due to resit A-level examinations.**

The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP has asked Ofqual to respond to you directly regarding your recent parliamentary question. A copy of this response will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

On 3 April, we published our Guidance for GCSEs, AS and A level awarding: summer 2020.<sup>1</sup> This information is relevant to all students and exam centres in England using GCSE, AS and A levels, Extended Project Qualifications (EPQ) and Advanced Extension Awards (AEA) in maths regulated by Ofqual and offered by AQA, OCR, Pearson, WJEC Eduqas, ASDAN and City & Guilds.

As exams will not take place this summer, students' grades will instead be based on evidence of their likely performance in the exams had they gone ahead. Schools and colleges (centres) will submit to exam boards, for each student and for each subject for which they were entered, judgements on the grade the student would most likely have received had the exams taken place (a centre assessment grade), and the rank order of each student at each grade in each subject in that centre. Where a student has been studying at a school or college for the re-sit, then the school or college will include them in the grades that they submit to the exam board in line with the guidance as mentioned above.

Some students who are entered to resit A Level exams are private candidates (students who centres have not taught themselves, because they have been home-educated, following distance-learning programmes or studying independently). Where centres have accepted entries from

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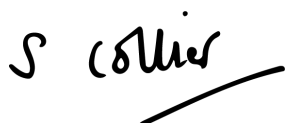
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2020>

private candidates, those students can be included in the centre's submission to the exam board. However, a private candidate can only be included in this way where the Head of Centre is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement. Exam boards have published further guidance to support Heads of Centre making judgements about private candidates, and we have published an update<sup>2</sup> to our own information.

The exam boards' guidance sets out alternative sources of evidence a school or college might consider where it does not have sufficient evidence about a student's attainment to submit a centre assessment grade and rank order information. It also allows for some private candidates to transfer to another centre, ahead of the grading process this summer, if the centre where they had registered decides it cannot submit a centre assessment grade. In this case, some other centres, such as those with experience of working with distance learners, may be able to work with some more of those private candidates who need a grade this summer in order to progress. So that the grading process is fair, the guidance highlights that the Head of Centre must have the same level of confidence in the grade and rank order position as for all other students.

I do hope this information is useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S Collier". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

**Sally Collier**  
Chief Regulator

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2020>