

16 November 2021

Mock Examinations and Examinations Summer 2022 – Updated Contingency Arrangements

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

We wrote to you in October to let you know about provisional contingency arrangements in the unlikely event that external examinations do not go ahead as a result of disruption caused by coronavirus.

Last week Ofqual, the examinations regulator, produced updated guidance for schools and colleges. We would like to update you about some changes that we are making to our contingency arrangements in view of the updated guidance.

Please take a moment to read this letter so that you are aware of the updated arrangements in place at New College Doncaster.

As previously indicated, a number of adjustments have already been announced for A level and GCSE examinations next summer. For example, A level Visual Arts courses will be assessed only on the basis of student portfolios. Changes have been made to practical requirements for A level Science courses. For A level and GCSE courses, examination boards will publish advance information in February 2022 about the focus of content of the exams in the summer.

A level courses

The primary purpose of mock examinations is to help students prepare effectively for external A level examinations in the summer. However, if A level examinations do not go ahead in summer 2022 we intend to determine *teacher assessed grades* (TAGs) by considering student performance in **mock examinations in November 2021**, and **mock examinations in March 2022**. The updated Ofqual guidance means that the Cedar assessments in January and May will no longer be used to determine *teacher assessed grades* for students that have completed the mock examinations. This means that it is extremely important that students work hard in preparation for mock examinations in both the autumn and spring terms. There will be no formula, but we will place greater emphasis on the March 2022 mock exams than the November 2021 mock exams since they are closer to the point when students would be sitting external examinations, and we will be able to assess wide-ranging topics with breadth of challenge. As external examinations are not going ahead this year for A level Fine Art, Photography, Textiles and Graphics, students in those four A level courses will be assessed entirely on the basis of their completed portfolios.

GCSE courses

If GCSE examinations do not go ahead in summer 2022 we intend to determine *teacher assessed grades* in a very similar way to A level courses. There will be no formula, but we will place greater emphasis on the March 2022 mock exams, but will also take into account the published result from the November 2021 external examination (for students that sat this exam). In view of the recently updated Ofqual guidance, we will no longer be taking into consideration January and May Cedar assessments for students that have completed the November external exam and the March mocks.

Further Information for both A level and GCSE

In order that students do not have an unfair advantage or disadvantage when *teacher assessed grades* are determined, we will only fully consider mock exams completed under staff supervision on the designated date and time, and significantly reduced emphasis will be placed on a mock exam if a student completes it at a later date than planned (for example because of illness).

It is therefore vitally important that students attend their mock exams on the planned dates and that students work hard to achieve the best possible results in them. The November mock exams will take place between Wednesday 24 November and Tuesday 30 November.

In advance of each mock exam, teachers will share with students a list of topic areas or skills that will be assessed. The two mock exams will seek to assess as much course content as possible. Students will not be provided with specific information or advance notice of the questions. In line with Ofqual guidance, students will not have an opportunity to resit mock examinations. If teachers ask students to recomplete any or all of the mock exam at a later date, this is to support learning and to address areas of weakness and this will not change the grade recorded for the mock exam.

Ofqual guidance this year requires the college to retain the examinations scripts students complete for the mock examinations. However, students will be strongly encouraged to keep a digital or physical copy of their script in their files, alongside their assessment wrapper, to help support their future learning and revision.

As always, any students that have approved access arrangements (such as extra time) will continue to be provided with them for these mock exams. If there are very significant extenuating circumstances at the time of any of the mock exams it is very important that students make their Progress Tutors aware at the time. We will not be able to take these circumstances into consideration otherwise. Only in situations where these circumstances are significant and in line with the *Joint Council for Qualifications* guidance on special consideration will we be able to place reduced emphasis on any affected results when determining *teacher assessed grades*.

The full updated guidance from Ofqual about contingency arrangements can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-contingency-arrangements-for-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-summer-2022/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-other-exam-centres-on-contingency-arrangements-for-students-entering-gcses-as-and-a-levels-the-advanced-extension>

Yours sincerely,



Brendon Fletcher
Principal