

Student Update: 19th January 2021

National Lockdown

England is still in a national lockdown. This means that you must stay at home and should only leave your home in exceptional circumstances.

Remember, you are not allowed to socialise with people from outside your household.

If you have any questions about the rules, you can ask your teachers or find more information here: [National Lockdown Rules](#).

Exams Update: Your views on what should happen in 2021

This week's bulletin has one focus: exams and assessment in 2021. You may remember that last week it was announced that GCSEs, A-levels and some vocational exams would not take place as planned. Now, there is an opportunity for you to share your views on what should happen instead.

OFQUAL, the group that is in charge of exams in England, has launched a consultation. They would like to hear from teachers, students and parents about their plans for qualifications in 2021.


You can find the consultation here: [Consultation on GCSEs and A levels](#). There is also a consultation about vocational qualifications: [Consultation on Vocational Qualifications](#).

If you would like to share your views, have until 11.45 pm on Friday 29 January to reply to the consultation.

Before you complete the consultation, you should read the booklet that explains what the questions are and why they are being asked. This will help you give an informed answer.

The consultation has different sections. Here is a summary of what they ask:

- Overview: this tells you an outline of OFQUAL's ideas and asks you whether you have read the information about the proposals.
- Privacy notice: this section checks you understand how your answers and personal information will be used. You have the option to provide your name but do not have to.
- What the grades will mean: this section asks you if the grades you receive should reflect the standard you are working at.
- When teachers should assess: this section asks you about the timeline that will be used to award the grades. It also asks about how many months of work teachers should look when deciding your grade.

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- The use of exam board papers: this section asks you whether exam boards should provide papers that can be used by teachers to help decide your grade. It asks about what these papers could include and what other evidence might also be used to decide your grade.
 - The assessment period: this section asks about when the exam board papers should be used and if there should be a specific period of time for assessments.
 - Conditions for assessment: this section asks if assessments should be taken at school or another venue, which might include your home.
 - Supporting teachers: this sections asks you if the exam boards should help teachers by giving guidance and information about assessments.
 - Quality assurance: these two sections ask about the steps schools and exam boards should take to check they have awarded grades consistently.
 - Appeals: these questions ask you about appealing a grade, which is where you might ask your school or exam board to look at the evidence to see if the grade you were given is correct. This includes questions about when results days should be.
 - Private candidates: these questions focus on students who take their exams as a private candidate, usually because they are educated at home.
 - Exams around the world: these questions ask pupils in other countries should be allowed to sit exams set by your exam boards.
 - Equalities: this section asks you whether the proposals would have a positive or negative effect on particular groups of students because of their protected characteristics. Protected characteristics include race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, marital status and being pregnant or on maternity leave.

It might help you to know that if you want to contribute to the consultation, you do not need to answer all of the questions.

Whether or not you choose to complete to the consultation, remember that the work you are doing now could contribute to your final grade. Keep trying your best and let your teachers know if there is anything that is getting in the way of your work.

Remember, there are people that can help you if you are feeling worried, anxious or unhappy about things. You can speak to your school for help or one of the following helplines:

- [Young Minds](#)
- [Kooth](#)
- [Every Mind Matters NHS](#)
- [CHUMS](#)