

***The following is taken from an Ofqual (examinations regulator) publication dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021.***

***It provides a very reassuring overview of how Ofqual intend to work with examination boards when grading students this summer***

## **Adaptations for 2022**

Arrangements have been put in place for summer 2022 to support students and make exams fairer for them. The government has introduced a choice of topics or content in some GCSE exams and exam boards will give advance information about the focus of the content of exams, designed to provide guidance for revision for students ahead of summer exams, and study aids will be allowed in some exams.

## **How we will provide a grading safety net**

As we return to summer exams, in 2022 exam boards will set the grade boundaries based on a profile that reflects a midpoint between 2021 and pre-pandemic grading. This will provide a safety net for students, to reflect the disruption this cohort have experienced already in their course and recognising the fact that, because of the pandemic, most A level students won't have taken public exams before.

Our aim is to return to a pre-pandemic grade profile. But we don't think it would be fair on 2022's students to do it all in one go, given the disruption they have experienced. We will aim, therefore, to return in broadly 2 steps. As in any other year, exam boards will use data as a starting point, to align their standards in a subject. That will be based on an average of 2019 and 2021 results for each subject. But the grade boundaries for each specification will be set by the senior examiners, after they have reviewed the work produced by students.

Results overall will be higher than in 2019, and not as high as in 2020. The exact position may vary by subject and by grade. At this stage we can't be precise because schools and colleges haven't made entries yet – shifts in entry patterns can mean results look different, for example as more or fewer able students than in previous years enter for each subject – and of course senior examiners haven't reviewed any work because students haven't yet taken their exams. As in any year when students take exams, there is no pre-determined 'quota' of grades. This approach allows us to begin to re-establish pre-pandemic relationships between subjects.

Essentially, it's about being as fair as we can be to students. Students' learning has been disrupted due to the pandemic through no fault of their own, and our approach, will take account of that.

Our transitional, midpoint approach in 2022 will create a grade distribution that is generous compared to 2019 but as fair as possible to students. Grades will be based on how students have performed in exams: they will be meaningful and can be trusted by universities, colleges and employers.