

# 16-18 Study programme Students: Examination Board News Updates

28<sup>th</sup> April  
2020

## **Consultation on the assessment and grading of vocational, technical and other general qualifications opens**

The majority of students at Wigan & Leigh College are taking qualifications of a technical or vocational nature that prepares them to work in specific industry sectors. You will be looking to complete this year's programmes and progress into University or higher level study at College, others will be seeking an apprenticeship or work. Some of the programmes are in effect a license to work in a particular field and confirm to an employer or future client that you are safe and capable to work at a particular level. None of us would be happy to have a plumber fix our central heating if there was a risk to safety or allow a hairdresser to colour our hair if they had not been tested. It is for this reason that details about how assessment will be handled for these complex and varied qualifications has been slower to be available and why we are keen to ensure that you continue studying online with us during this period of shut down.

Ofqual have now issued a consultation. This is mainly for Colleges and training providers to respond to but it is also open to parents and students. It sets out a framework that every awarding body will use to set their specific guidance. Ofqual advise:

*We are introducing these exceptional arrangements at speed to:*

- *provide a framework for qualifications that, depending on their purpose, sets out how an awarding organisation should calculate results or adapt or delay assessments*
- *allow awarding organisations to provide clarity to schools, colleges and training providers about what evidence they should gather and consider, and what evidence they will submit to the awarding organisations, where required to calculate a grade*
- *allow awarding organisations to make clear which learners should receive a calculated result (and how it will be awarded), or be required to complete an assessment*
- *enable awarding organisations to access, adapt, or build the systems needed to issue results this summer and adapt assessments where this is necessary*

*We are hopeful that, through these arrangements, the majority of learners who planned to take exams and assessments this summer, for progression to either further or higher education or employment, will receive a result calculated by awarding organisations or be able to take an adapted assessment. Where it is not possible to receive a calculated result, or to undertake an adapted assessment, assessment opportunities and results might need to be delayed.*

	<p>Access the full guidance here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/exceptional-arrangements-for-assessment-and-grading-in-2020?fbclid=IwAR3NdwFKSZ8PEkgoyp7O3ijyGG79agMnnYuDmhngqDetZcKpkptP0-FKmHI?utm_source=ealercovidptp6&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=GBWBGS0420APPRE">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/exceptional-arrangements-for-assessment-and-grading-in-2020?fbclid=IwAR3NdwFKSZ8PEkgoyp7O3ijyGG79agMnnYuDmhngqDetZcKpkptP0-FKmHI?utm_source=ealercovidptp6&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=GBWBGS0420APPRE</a></p> <p>There are therefore 3 main options for completing qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a result calculated from work already achieved</li> <li>• a calculated aspect plus additional amended assessments</li> <li>• a delay in achievement because at least one assessment cannot be amended, missed out or achieved outside College</li> </ul> <p>The consultation period ends on 8th May and then we shall have to wait to hear from each awarding body for their specific instructions for each qualification. The good news is that throughout the consultation Ofqual underline the need to enable summer qualification results and minimum additional work for everyone concerned whilst ensuring adequate quality standards.</p> <p>Please continue to work with your tutors knowing that we are working hard behind the scenes to ensure you have the best possible learning experience and achieve the awards you deserve in a timely manner.</p>
21 <sup>st</sup> April 2020	<p><b>Guidance relating to GCSEs, AS and A levels, Extended Project qualifications (EPQ) and Advanced Extension Awards (AEA) in maths.</b></p> <p>The Government have published an updated guidance document prepared by Ofqual that describes the framework that awarding bodies (examination boards) will use to determine the 2020 summer qualification results and answers some of the questions students and parents are likely to ask.</p> <p>Read the full report here:</p> <p><a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/880440/Summer_2020_grades_for_GCSE_AS_A_level_guidance_for_teachers_students_parents_FINAL_UPDATED_21APR2020.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/880440/Summer_2020_grades_for_GCSE_AS_A_level_guidance_for_teachers_students_parents_FINAL_UPDATED_21APR2020.pdf</a></p> <p>This guidance applies only to GCSEs, AS and A levels, Extended Project qualifications (EPQ) and Advanced Extension Awards (AEA) in maths. The report clarifies;</p> <p><i>Many students will be taking other general and vocational or technical qualifications instead of or alongside GCSEs, AS and A levels. While this process does not apply to those qualifications, the same aims apply. We are working urgently to develop the detail of our approach and we will provide further information as soon as possible</i></p> <p>This framework is now being used by the examination boards to produce detailed guidance and it is only at that point that the College can respond and provide the information requested.</p> <p>The guidance indicates that it is not a requirement for students to complete further assessment work for the purpose of examination grading but please note that for many students undertaking GCSEs, AS, A levels or vocational / technical courses and who are expecting to progress on to further study either at the College or University</p>

	<p>that it is important that they complete the programme of learning in preparation for their next steps.</p>
<p>3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020</p>	<p><b>Important information for students taking GCSEs, AS and A levels, Extended Project Qualifications and Additional Extension Awards in maths.</b></p> <p>As advised Ofqual have been working hard to provide a method of awarding grades without examinations this summer. This is significant to Wigan &amp; Leigh College students as many of you are re-taking your maths and English GCSE, some of you have moved on to additional awards in Maths to support studies in engineering for example and of course our Professional Honours students are taking AS and A Level subjects.</p> <p>We therefore wish to share with you the information we have received concerning the calculation of grades in the absence of examinations this summer. Ofqual has prepared a statement for students that include:</p> <p><i>Your school or college will be asked to send exam boards two pieces of information for each of your subjects, based on what they know about your work and achievements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>the grade they believe you were most likely to get if teaching, learning and exams had happened as planned</i></li> <li>• <i>within each subject, the order of students at your school or college, by performance, for each grade.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Your school or college will consider a range of things like your classwork and homework; your results in assignments and any mock exams; any non-exam assessment or coursework you might have done; and your general progress during your course. This information will allow us, with exam boards, to standardise grades across schools and colleges, to make sure that, as far as possible, results are fair and that students are not advantaged or disadvantaged because their schools or colleges are more generous or harsh than others when making those judgements. That means the final grade you get could be different from the one your school or college sends to the exam board.</i></p> <p>The briefing goes on to advise that whilst new work you might currently be completing will not be used to your disadvantage it is always worthwhile to continue with your studies to aid progression next year</p> <p>Grades submitted by the college will not be made available to you as the briefing confirms;</p> <p><i>Please don't ask your teachers, or anyone else at your school or college, to tell you the grades they will be sending to the exam boards or where they have placed you in the order of students; they will not be allowed to share this with you.</i></p> <p>The briefing finishes by reassuring you that grading will be timely; <i>...results won't be delayed after the dates they were expected in August, and ideally they will be issued a little earlier, so you can have the certainty you need.</i></p> <p>Exam boards are expected to offer additional exams in the autumn term but there are currently no details available concerning this option.</p> <p>Wigan &amp; Leigh College will be co-operating fully with the awarding bodies to implement these requirements and ensuring that you receive a valid set of results this summer</p>
<p>3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020</p>	<p><b>University Offers</b></p> <p>The Office for Students (OfS), that is the regulatory body for Higher Education, wrote to Colleges providing some reassurances to students and directives to Universities about the admissions for 2020 and the matter of unconditional offers.</p> <p><i>The Universities Minister has today announced an extension to the moratorium on</i></p>

	<p><i>unconditional offers for undergraduate study in the 2020-21 academic year. This extension will continue until 20 April 2020.</i></p> <p><i>... The guidance is clear that the grades awarded to students will have equal status to those awarded in other years and should be treated in this way by universities and colleges. The date for A-level results will be announced shortly.</i></p> <p>The letter went to say,</p> <p><i>This means that the admissions process for 2020-21 will run in a similar way to previous years. There is therefore no reason for providers to make unconditional offers or to make changes to existing offers for those applicants awaiting their level-3 qualifications and for whom admissions decisions are normally predicated on these qualifications.</i></p> <p>This is reassuring to students who might otherwise feel under some degree of pressure to accept an unconditional offer rather than wait until they formally have to decide. We hope that Wigan &amp; Leigh students planning to go on to University study this autumn feel reassured by this information</p>
<p>30<sup>th</sup> March 2020</p>	<p><b>Update from City &amp; Guilds regarding the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak and their Technical Qualifications</b></p> <p>A significant number of College Vocational students are taking City &amp; Guild technical qualifications affecting most levels of study. This awarding body has released an update for Colleges and students extracts of which are quoted below:</p> <p>City &amp; Guilds can confirm that the Summer exam series for our Technical Qualifications has now been cancelled in line with government guidance. ....</p> <p>...To ensure learners that were planning to take exams, synoptic assignments and centre assessed components are able to progress, we are working with Ofqual and other key stakeholders on a proposal for an approach using estimation of assessment grades combined with quality assurance validation. These will then be used by City &amp; Guilds to calculate an overall qualification grade for each learner which reflects their performance as fairly as possible. We aim to ensure that the distribution of grades follows a similar pattern to that in previous years.</p> <p>The approach will apply to all our Technical Awards, Technical Certificates and Tech Levels across both one-year and two-year programmes of study. We are working with Ofqual and other Awarding Organisations who offer similarly structured and assessed Technical Qualifications to develop consistency in our approach.</p> <p>The College is waiting to receive more detailed guidance but in the meantime draws students' attention to additional points from City &amp; Guild:</p> <p>..Centres should of course, where reasonable, continue to support learners through online teaching and formative assessment...</p> <p>..There will also be an option to take assessments in the Autumn, we will be consulting with centres and other key stakeholders regarding actual timings for these assessments.</p> <p>Together with City &amp; Guilds we shall seek to keep you informed of the emerging situation and in the meantime please continue to engage with your studies so that</p>

	<p>you are well placed to continue successfully within College or employment post this period.</p>
<p>24<sup>th</sup> March 2020</p>	<p><b>Message from the Student Loan Company</b></p> <p><b>The following notification has been received from the Student Loan Company:</b></p> <p><i>We have been working hard to continue providing our core student finance services for those applying for academic year 2020/21, for current students expecting summer term payments, for customers in repayment and for the universities and colleges we work closely with.</i></p> <p><i>Following the most recent Government guidance on COVID-19 we are having to change the way we deliver our services. To enable us to do this as quickly as possible, we are now closing our customer contact centres temporarily for new and existing students, and for any customer in repayment.</i></p> <p><i>The closure of our customer contact centres, which includes our Partners Support Desk, will not impact summer term maintenance payments to students or tuition fee payments to education providers. These payments will be made as normal. New and existing students can continue to apply for student finance as normal and we will continue to process any applications that have been received as quickly as we can.</i></p> <p><i>We are working to restore service at our contact centres as soon as we can and we will provide further information on this over the coming days.</i></p> <p><i>We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause but trust you will understand the importance of the measures we have taken given the current circumstances</i></p> <p>The important aspect of this notification for students leaving College and intending to go to University is that applications for loans are continuing as normal which is an on line process</p>
<p>23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020</p>	<p><b>BTEC Qualifications Level 3</b></p> <p>The College has received further updates from BTEC about your level 3 BTEC qualifications. Below is a summarising quote from the BTEC communication; <i>The government announcement means all timetabled BTEC assessments in May and June are cancelled. For our Level 3 BTEC vocational qualifications, we feel confident we can award grades for students finishing this academic year by working closely with teachers to collate completed student grades, taking into account student progress on assignments and coursework to date and by sampling and verifying student work.</i></p> <p>Your teachers will still need to send samples of work to BTEC to standardise the quality of marking and ensure the system remains fair and of high standard. Some work that you are still completing will be required so that you can meet the minimum volume of work completed to be awarded your qualification so do please keep working as directed. Continuing to complete assignments is also required if you are progressing to year 2 or University as you will need the knowledge and understanding planned for this year to be successful in the future.</p>

<p>23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020</p>	<p><b>License to practice courses</b>  These are courses with work experience or work placements that are mandatory and when successfully completed allow you to work in a particular job role as a Licensed Practitioner. This for example includes all students taking Cache Technical Level 3 Diploma in Childcare.  To date the College has been advised that awarding bodies are investigating alternative remote methods of assuring accurate assessment and certification in relation to these courses. They will look to prioritise assessment activities for learners completing their courses (requiring certification) but as yet we have no specific details  There are other programmes with mandatory work placements, such as Health &amp; Social Care are we awaiting further information for these too.</p>
<p>23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020</p>	<p><b>All University Applicants</b>  A joint message from UCAS, the Office for Students and Universities UK has been published. the statement below from Michelle Donelan, Minister of State for Universities summaries the points made:</p> <p><i>“We want to assure students that grades will be equally as valid as those in previous years, and their hard work will be rewarded and fairly recognised.</i></p> <p><i>“I am pleased Universities UK has confirmed institutions will be flexible and do all they can to support students to progress to higher education.</i></p> <p><i>“There is no reason for the usual admissions cycle to be disrupted. Universities should not begin making their offers unconditional, and applicants should not feel pressured to accept such offers as they will be awarded a formal calculated grade.”</i></p> <p>Wigan &amp; Leigh College continues to remain in close communication with awarding bodies and anticipates receiving further information within the next week</p>
<p>20<sup>th</sup> March 2020</p>	<p><b>Vocational Courses</b>  The Department for Education has published, together with the Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP, a further announcement concerning the decision to cancel all examinations and face to face assessments associated with qualifications.</p> <p><i>....There is a very wide range of different vocational and technical qualifications as well as other academic qualifications for which students were expecting to sit exams this summer. These are offered by a large number of awarding organisations, and have differing assessment approaches – in many cases students will already have completed modules or non-exam assessment which could provide evidence to award a grade. We are encouraging these organisations to show the maximum possible flexibility and pragmatism to ensure students are not disadvantaged. Ofqual is working urgently with the sector to explore options and we will work with them to provide more details shortly.</i></p> <p>The full document can be found here:  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced</a></p> <p>Wigan &amp; Leigh College is in constant communication with each awarding body involved in every qualification that our students are taking and will work to ensure</p>

	<p>that we have the very best possible outcomes for our students. We shall communicate further and about specific qualifications as information becomes available</p>
<p>20<sup>th</sup> March 2020</p>	<p><b>A Level Professional Honours Programme:</b> The Department for Education has published, together with the Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP, a further announcement concerning the decision to cancel all summer GCSE and A level examinations.</p> <p><i>...This means ensuring GCSE, A and AS level students are awarded a grade which fairly reflects the work that they have put in. There will also be an option to sit an exam early in the next academic year for students who wish to. Ofqual will develop and set out a process that will provide a calculated grade to each student which reflects their performance as fairly as possible, and will work with the exam boards to ensure this is consistently applied for all students. The exam boards will be asking teachers, who know their students well, to submit their judgement about the grade that they believe the student would have received if exams had gone ahead. ....If they do not believe the correct process has been followed in their case they will be able to appeal on that basis. In addition, if they do not feel their calculated grade reflects their performance, they will have the opportunity to sit an exam at the earliest reasonable opportunity, once schools are open again. Students will also have the option to sit their exams in summer 2021.</i></p> <p>The full document can be found here: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced</a></p> <p>Wigan &amp; Leigh College is in constant communication with each awarding body involved in these qualifications and will work to ensure that we have timely outcomes for our students. We shall communicate further as more information becomes available</p>