



# Ark Burlington Danes Academy

## GCSE, BTEC and A-level Outcomes for Years 11 and 13

Dear Students and Parents,

I sincerely hope you are all keeping safe and healthy during this period of lockdown.

This has been an extremely challenging time for school communities across the country, but none more so than for our Year 11 and Year 13 cohorts. I am so sorry that virus has resulted in the cancellation of your exams – I know how hard you have been working towards them. At BDA we track our students' results meticulously, and I know we were on course for a great set of results for our Year 11 and Year 13 cohorts this year. I am sad that the opportunity to prove yourselves in the exam hall has been taken away from you.

The government has now provided guidance on how students' grades will be calculated this year. The process is as follows:

1. Schools will be asked to submit a **centre assessed grade** for each student in every subject they study.
2. Schools will also be asked to provide a **rank order** for students within each grade for every subject.
3. This data will be submitted to Ofqual.
4. Ofqual and the exam boards will use the centre assessed grades to award the final grades for every student in every subject. They will adjust grades for schools across the country to ensure that the proportion of students achieving each grade in each subject is the same nationally as it was last year.
5. The results will be released to schools and students on the scheduled results days on **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August for Year 13** and **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August for Year 11**. Schools will have no knowledge of students' final grades before the results days.

I fully appreciate that this is a completely new process for all of us, and I would like to assure students and parents that we will be engaging in a rigorous and fair process to ensure that our students get the grades they deserve. Our **four-step internal verification process** has been set out following guidance from Ark, and follows the sequence below:

1. **Year 11 and 13 teachers** will produce a grade for every student in their class. This is the grade that each student is most likely to have achieved if they had sat their exams.
2. Every grade for every child is discussed and checked by the **head of department and a senior member of staff** for fairness and accuracy. Departments will also produce a rank order for all students in their subject.
3. The grades are checked by a **senior leadership team member** overseeing outcomes across the academy
4. The grades are then submitted to the **Ark network** for further checking before submission to the exam boards and Ofqual

I appreciate that parents and students will have several questions about this process and the home learning arrangements for year 11, which I hope the points below will address. You will also find a copy of the government's guidance to schools, students, parents and carers [here](#).

With best wishes to all our families,

**Mr Bhatia and the BDA team**



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## How will Ofqual calculate students' grades?

OFQUAL (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) have said that **students will be awarded a calculated grade this year**. These will be equivalent to the grade a student would have been awarded in each subject in the summer exam series. In calculating these grades OFQUAL and exam boards will:

- Ensure that the proportion of students achieving each grade in each subject is comparable to last year.
- Use centre assessed grades provided by schools as a basis for the calculated grade.
- Look at other indicators such as students' prior attainment, schools' historic performance, etc.

Students who are unhappy with their calculated grade may be able to sit an exam early next academic year. The timing of this is yet to be decided.

## The role of the school

For every GCSE, AS and A level subject, we are required to submit the following information:

- a **centre assessment grade** for each student – the judgement submitted to the exam board by the Head of Centre about the **grade that each student is most likely to have achieved if they had sat their exams**. This professional judgement is derived from evidence held within the centre and which has been reviewed by subject teachers, Heads of Departments, Senior Leadership Team members and the Ark network as part of a **four-step verification process**.
- the **rank order** of students within each grade – for example, for all those students with a grade of 5 in GCSE maths, or a grade B in A level biology, a rank order where 1 is the most secure/highest attaining student, and so on.

## What will the centre assessed grade be based on?

This should be a holistic professional judgement, balancing the different sources of evidence. Teachers and Heads of Departments have a good understanding of their students' performance and how they compare to other students within their subject area this year, and in previous years. Heads of Departments and teachers will consider each student's performance over the course of study and make a realistic judgement of the grade each student would have been most likely to get if they had taken their exam in a subject and completed any non-exam assessment this summer.

In coming to this holistic judgement, teachers and Heads of Departments should assume that it is no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular grade this year, compared to previous years.



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## Will work set after school closed influence the centre-assessed grade?

We have been setting work for our students to do from home since school closed. At the point of school closure, the government had not yet decided on how Year 11 and 13 examinations would be graded, so we felt it best to ensure that our students continued to work from home. I believe that this was the right thing to do – our students need to keep their brains sharp so they are ready for next academic year.

I would like to thank all our students who have been studying intensely at home, and reassure them that **the acquisition of knowledge is never wasted – learning more is always a good thing. Those who have studied well independently will have learned a skill that will serve them throughout KS5 and university.**

In light of the government guidance on this point, **we will not be setting any further work for year 11 to do over the next two weeks.** In that period, we will be looking at the KS5 courses our students have signed up for and **preparing bridging work packs, so Year 11 can make the transition from their GCSE courses to their A level and BTEC options.** Our departments are currently preparing these packs and I anticipate they will be ready to send out within a fortnight. The Sixth Form team will be in contact with all students and parents over the next two weeks.

I would like to make clear that while working at home has demonstrated the work ethic of some of our students, those who have not been able to complete the work will not be disadvantaged when the school calculates centre-assessed grades. Students have varied situations at home – some have internet access, and some do not. Others share access to a device with a number of siblings. **Therefore, no student will be disadvantaged by the non-completion of work set after school closed.**

## Will teachers be able to share the centre-assessed grades with students?

**Ofqual has instructed schools that centre-assessed grades must be kept completely confidential. Teachers will not be permitted to share or discuss centre-assessed grades with students or parents.**

I ask parents to refrain from contacting the school about any particular student's grades to ensure that teachers are able to operate in an environment of professional independence. Please note that it is possible that attempts to contact the school regarding centre assessed grades could be construed as malpractice:

“Students, parents and carers should not seek to influence the judgements made; attempts to do so may be investigated by an exam board and found to constitute malpractice, which may result in sanctions.”

[‘Exceptional arrangements for exam grading and assessment in 2020’, p.6, DFE](#)

The school has taken the following steps to ensure that confidentiality is maintained around the process:

- Teachers will only be able to discuss the grades they are submitting within their department. Teachers will not be able to discuss them with colleagues outside their department area.
- Form tutors will not know the centre assessed grades students have received.
- Teachers have signed a non-disclosure agreement to ensure grades cannot be shared externally, in order to meet the confidentiality requirement as laid out by Ofqual.

**It is important to remember that no one within the school will know the final calculated grades that students will receive until the results days in August.**