



The John Warner School • Stanstead Road • Hoddesdon • Hertfordshire • EN11 0QF
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Website: www.johnwarner.herts.sch.uk • Headteacher: Jeremy M. Scott

13th August 2020

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Re. Year 13 Examination Results – 13th August 2020

Today, the school issued examination results to students who were due to complete A Level, AS Level and Level 3 vocational qualifications in 2020. This wonderful year group of talented young people have faced some extraordinary challenges, not least the sudden cancellation of examinations in March and the premature end to their school experience.

It was delightful to welcome our Year 13 students back this morning to issue results which in the majority of cases have allowed students to access the next stage in their university or career of choice. We are thrilled to have confirmed placements on prestigious courses including languages, engineering, sociology and mathematics at high-performing universities such as Loughborough, Bristol, Bath, Warwick and LSE and continue to offer support and guidance to those in need.

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, qualification results have been calculated in a very different way this year as students were unable to sit examinations or complete other assessments.

Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs)

In March 2020, at the start of the lockdown period, it was announced that examinations would not take place in the summer and schools were asked to provide a Centre Assessment Grade (CAG) for each student in each qualification they were due to sit in the 2020 examination period along with a rank order within each subject. The process undertaken at The John Warner School was rigorous and detailed to ensure that grades were fairly and consistently calculated.

Teachers drew on all relevant and available evidence (including mock examinations) to calculate grades. Subject areas and faculties then discussed the distribution of grades and established rank order placements within each subject. Members of the Senior Leadership Team discussed results with Heads of Faculty and made adjustments as necessary. The final results were reviewed by myself and the two Deputy Headteachers before being submitted to the examination boards.

The school was confident that the CAGs reflected the 'most likely' outcome for each student in each qualification as well as the historic performance of subjects at the school. What the CAGs could never take into account are some of the variables that affect examination performance – such as the emotional status of students facing examinations or the unexpectedly difficult/straightforward exam question.

Examination Board standardisation

While the school submitted the CAGs and rankings, each examination board (AQA, Pearson, OCR etc) then went through a standardisation process before awarding the final grades. This meant that some grades awarded were different from the CAGs. The standardisation process, aimed at ensuring there is consistency and fairness in the overall results picture, took into account:

- The expected grade distribution at national level;





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- The results in previous years from each school;
- The prior attainment profile (Year 11 performance) of each student.

Nationally, it would appear that around 40% of A Level results have been downgraded as an outcome of this standardisation process. Our school has received a disproportionately high number of results that have been downgraded. Early analysis would suggest that individual students with lower prior attainment (GCSE results) have been especially affected by this process which does not take into account the significant progress many of them have made during the two years in the sixth form. The overall performance of the school appears to be in-line with results last year, however, we were confident that this year group would continue the upward trend in A Level results that we saw in 2019. Subjects with larger cohorts have tended to be more affected by changes to grades than those with small cohorts.

Appealing results

Where we, or an individual student, feels that results given do not reflect the ability of the student then there are some limited routes for appeal that we will pursue. The Department for Education has announced a 'triple-lock' to ensure that students can choose the result that would be the highest from those awarded this week, the mock examination grade or the result from an autumn 'resit'. We are awaiting details on how the school can appeal based on mock examination performance but believe this route could be applicable to a number of students.

Students in Year 13 have been given guidance on who to contact if they would like a grade to be appealed, if they require further help with university/college placements, if they wish to find out what the CAG was in their subject areas or if they would like to take any examinations during the additional autumn exam series.

A number of issues therefore remain unresolved which is frustrating for staff and students alike. We will continue to work with individual students over the coming days and weeks to ensure we can address as many cases as possible once further guidance has been received from Ofqual.

We wish all of our Year 13 students every success in their future endeavours and thank them for the enduring contributions they have made to our school.

Yours faithfully

Mr Jeremy Scott
Headteacher