



Portadown College

Principal: Gillian R Gibb, BA(Hons), PGCE, MSc, PQH(NI)

24 March 2020

Dear Year 14 Parent/Carer

A Level Examinations and University Admission

Following the recent Ministerial announcement confirming the cancellation of all external examinations this summer, I write to inform you of current guidance to schools and colleges in respect of grades for the Summer Series 2020.

As previously communicated with parents/carers, the Minister of Education, Mr Peter Weir MLA, has advised schools (correspondence dated 19 March) that the Department of Education's priority is to ensure students receive fair and equitable results that reflect their hard work and enable judgements to be made about progression to study or employment or other avenues. The Minister states that CCEA will therefore continue to work with other awarding organisations to develop a robust process for awarding grades.

In his letter to schools, Mr Weir wrote: "the plan is to use a combination of prior achievements, internal teacher-assessed tracking information, predicted grades and analysis and modelling of existing data trends to provide the necessary assurance about the robustness, accuracy and fairness of the grades being awarded."

Currently, we await clarity as to:

- the precise nature of "internal teacher-assessed tracking information" to be used;
- the process for students appealing their grades if they do not believe the right process has been followed;
- the option for students to sit examinations at a later date if they are dissatisfied with the grade awarded in the Summer 2020 Series.

Within the current context and pending definitive clarification from the Department of Education and awarding organisations, the College advises Year 14 students to ensure they have, to the best of their ability, completed A Level courses using remote learning provision as appropriate. We would impress upon students also that the content of their A Level courses may provide a foundation stone for any further or higher education course for which they have applied.

We are also mindful that students are naturally concerned about progression to university this year. In this regard, the GOV.UK Education, Training and Skills website states:

"University representatives have confirmed that they expect universities to be flexible and do all they can to support students and ensure they can progress to higher education." For more information, please follow the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/further-details-on-exams-and-grades-announced>

Additionally, please see below the latest information on unconditional offers and the May deadline from UCAS:

<https://view.emailucas.com/?qs=33004891e129ad88fa33f90e506aa8035a441e16c2cd4b93ea3ed70d9256e05970008f06c0cee462b4aecd551ebe622f6cc44a5b5053a9c5ff972a88e197092d4c654088f5966a774cbb34cfc9f9be4df>

I will provide more information in respect of the above issues as it is made available to schools.

Thank you for your invaluable support and co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Gillian R Gibb
Principal