

Educational Settings and Examination Results 2019/20



Overview and Scrutiny

Briefing subject	Learning from Examinations' Sessions 2019/20
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Purpose	To outline the learning from examination and other performance data in BCP education in 2019/20
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1. Background

Last week the government announced the outcome of the latest Ofqual consultation on how examinations will be conducted in Spring and Summer 2021. The link to this is set out [here](#) and further details are in the end note.

Usually at this time of year, a report would be available on both outcomes and progress of students in Years 11 and 13. This year the data we have, does not enable us to do that in the normal way, however it does have some things to teach us about how to prepare and approach the revised situation this year. There is no data available on primary phase at all.

This has now been the situation for 2 assessment seasons.

Last year the government set the expectation that examinations would continue and later asked schools/colleges to issue centre assessed grades (CAGs) based on prior performance of students in Year 11 and 13.

2. BCP Response to the Examinations issues in 2020.

In 2020, schools were asked to provide a CAG (Centre Assessed Grade) in May to which there was no standardisation or process or moderation.

In April 2020, SW Heads of School Improvement and headteachers raised that the proposed process by Ofqual was likely to produce unequal results, disadvantage fast improving schools and produce anomalies in smaller subjects, where a computer would find it difficult to differentiate based on fewer students.

BCP HTs and the college met before both results days to form a collective response, both towards the government and to ensure that Years 11 and 13 were properly supported.

By August other home nations had decided to base results on CAGs as the “least worst” option. When the results were sent to schools/college concerns were raised as to the whether the results met expectations and or were fair

Disadvantaged groups suffered even more disparity in outcomes than their peers and whilst the overall “number” was not much different, at a human and student level, they did not meet the expected outcomes from schools/college.

As students were at risk of losing places at college, university or apprenticeships schools and BCP school support officers took the following action;

- As members of the Southern University Network (SUN) online guidance for pupils in our disadvantaged wards was provided to ensure that they did not miss out on places
- FE and HE in BCP upheld places from existing offers and allowed appeals to take place and all created new places in case appeals were won
- Schools wrote to Ministers, and BCP MPs were amongst the most in favour of reverting to CAGs which happened within a week

3. What can be learned from last year about performance?

BCP officers are enormously grateful for schools and the college sharing data with us from the examination season in Summer 2021. However, given that have now been 2 years without assessment in primary and secondary phase, the pillars of evidenced school and college improvement is not as solid as it was.

A Level Results before the results were amended showed on the surface a 2-3% increase in outcomes at cohort level compared to 2019 (see Table 1). However at students' level (and varied by subject) the student grades were moderated down by up to 2 grades and in some subjects, grades such as U were awarded that had never been awarded to any pupil in a school in BCP ever (see Table 2).

Nearly 37% of students were downgraded by one grade at least on average with almost 3% by 2 grades or more. Over 60% of CAGs were reduced.

Table 1 A Levels

Measure A Level	National 2019	National 2020
% A*-A	25.2	38.1
% A*-C	75.5	87.5
% A*-E	97.5	99.7

Table 2 A Levels

Moderated down by 1 grade	Maximum 59.4%	Mean 36.6%
Moderated down by 2 grades	Maximum 6.9%	Mean 2.8%
Moderated down by 3 grades	Maximum 1.3%	Mean 0.2%
Overall moderated down	Maximum 62.6%	Mean 39.8%

Such was the reaction to this, locally and nationally that the government changed the system by GCSE results day and CAGs were in essence awarded.

Despite the issues above there are things we can deduce from the results last year;

- a) Vocational and applied results at GCSE and A Level continues to be an important and steady part of the system with 11/18 centres having a mixed approach; disadvantaged pupils and boys particularly benefit from these courses and their destination data looks good
- b) At GCSE when grades were revised we could see that the BCP attainment 8 score increased by 5.2 and that BASICS Level 4 and Level 5 have increased from 71.9% to 79.9%
- c) BASICS Level 5 (strong GCSE pass) went up from 52.1% to 60.9%
- d) The proportion of pupils that were entered for the EBacc fell from 45.7% in 2019 to 43.4% in 2020.¹

We have a detailed analysis of 2019-20 based on pre and post Covid data. The areas for improvement remain the same with one addition;

- Reading across all phases
- Boys attainment and inclusion
- Variety of curriculum offer for all but for SEND young people and boys at risk of exclusion
- Working class girls aspirational curriculum
- Writing/handwriting as a result of too much digital learning
- Speaking and listening/language fluency related to reading

4. End note. What will/may happen this year?

The government conducted several reviews last year and the latest one reported last week. Although this is very late in the day, the outcome is closer to meeting the needs of schools and students than that of a year ago.

The main points for A Level and GCSE students are;

- They will have a centre assessed grade (CAG) rather than one produced by an algorithm
- This will be based on what students have been taught and not what they have missed, which could comprise mock results, assessments, coursework, remote and in person learning and from Easter examination based questions supplied by examination boards.
- The headteacher/principal will sign off the grades and they will be sent to awarding bodies for spot checking and review.

¹ It will be interesting to see whether this is a response to the new Ofsted framework which focuses on the right curriculum for the pupils in a school.

- Vocational qualifications will largely be treated the same way and there is provision in place for better reviewing of applied parts of learning than last year
- Private candidates such as elective home educated (EHE) students will need to work with an authorised examination centre such as a school to have evidence reviewed.
- Results will be awarded earlier on the 10th August to give longer for appeals and to help universities to cope with any increased demand for places

5. How can we help schools and the college to help Years 11 and 13?

- Discussion will take place this week on a BCP approach; this proved very successful in transition last year.
- We are seeking agreement on an approach that will mean that pupils/students have a similar quality of experience across all settings and that centres are supported to moderate and gauge work fairly.
- In addition to the excellent work that schools and the college did on transition last year, we would like to see pupils moving to their next phase certain of what they actually need to work on to make sure they are successful whether they get training, a place at university or an apprenticeship.
- To support this further our postponed Careers and Apprenticeship Show will take place on the 20th May and will champion the best local and national pathways for pupils and students in BCP. Their parents will also be able to access this support.