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Dear Parents/Carers,

Public Examinations Summer 2020

I am sure you are all aware that schools, academies and other accredited learning providers, have all been required to submit their grade recommendations, for all their students undertaking public examinations in the summer 2020 exams season. There are two parts to the process for awarding students' subject grades – part one, involving academies and schools submitting student grades to exam boards, and part two, the exam boards applying certain quality assurance activities to ensure objectivity and accuracy.

Part One: Academy based grade recommendations

UKAT academies followed Ofqual (the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) requirements and guidance in making these grade recommendations - ensuring that the process for grade calculation was rigorous, fair, objective and thorough.

Grade recommendations were based on secure evidence gleaned from previous exam results, and assessed work that students undertook within the academy in each of their subject areas. Once these grade recommendations had been made a quality assurance team of senior leaders scrutinised, sampled, checked and validated all grades and ranks, supplied by subject teams, against the evidence base.

Part Two: Public Exam Board processes and recommendations

Nationally once grades have been submitted by schools, academies and learning providers, they are then subject to adjustment and amendment by the public examination boards.

Once exam boards receive the recommended student grades from the academy, they will then consider them by:

- looking back at the sort of results each student attained in their primary key stage 2 SATs results (if they are taking GCSEs or BTECs).
You may ask why they do this, as KS2 SATs were taken five years ago. They do this because there is a proven statistical link between KS2 SATs grades and GCSE/BTEC grades.
- looking back at the sort of results each student attained in their GCSE results if they are taking A level or Level 3 BTEC awards.
- looking at the historical performance of each subject at GCSE/A level/BTEC in their current school

Once these steps have been taken the exam board will derive a final grade that will be awarded to the students. **Please note that the academy's grade recommendations form only one-third of the basis for students' final awarded grades from the exam boards.**

Examination results will be available on:

20th August – GCSEs/BTECs

13th August – A levels /BTECS

The internal processes at the UKAT academies for recommending grades have been applied rigorously and fairly and we hope all our students are pleased with their grade outcomes when they collect their results in August – results which we hope will allow them to move on and progress to their next steps – whether that be to post 16 learning or to University, Apprenticeships or the workplace.

Other Information

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) have recently announced that they will offer an Autumn series of examinations sittings for all GCSE and A level subjects. These will be for any students who may be dissatisfied with any of their grades and who may wish to take an exam.

In order to help students, make an informed decision about whether sitting an Autumn exam is right for them, we have prepared a summary of benefits and possible drawbacks on the attached sheet. We have created a dedicated email address below where you can send any questions or queries. These emails will be replied to by the Senior Leadership Quality Assurance Team.

Please note that as exam boards have awarded grades, we will not be able to change any grades as a result of any review or feedback.

examqueriesBA@universityofkentacademiestrust.org.uk

I hope you have found this information helpful. I would like to take this opportunity to again thank you for your support and perseverance during this most challenging time. We have received much positive feedback, kind words and constructive comments that have aided us in adapting and developing our support for our students.

Best wishes



Philip Storey
Executive Principal
UKAT Quality Assurance

Guidance for Considering Taking Autumn Exams

This is a very important decision that should be considered carefully based on student's future plans. Below are some key things for you to consider:

Possible Benefits:

- By sitting an exam in the autumn, students may be able to achieve a higher grade than awarded by the examination board.
- If the current awarded grade blocks a student's pathway into accessing higher qualifications, then resitting could enable students to achieve the requirements for this.
- The exam will test skills and knowledge as scribed and submitted on the day of the exam by the student, and will not take into account any other data, information or input in the way that the 'calculated' grade has for the current awarded grade.
- If an exam is taken and the grade is not as high as the original awarded grade, students are able to keep the higher grade.

Possible Drawbacks:

- The awarded grade has taken into account a wide range of detailed information including mock examinations, classwork and other assessments, meaning it provides a broad and fair reflection of knowledge and skills.
- For many students, the awarded grade may offer a fairer reflection of their overall ability, as a one-off exam can often place too much onus and pressure on a student's performance 'on the day'.
- By the time a student sits an examination in the autumn, they will not have studied that subject for more than six months, meaning their skills and knowledge may have dropped considerably, limiting their performance.
- By preparing for and sitting one or more examinations in the autumn, students may become highly distracted from the study they might have moved on to e.g. studying A levels / BTECs in a sixth form, or studying for a degree at University, or studying additional qualifications in a workplace setting. This could have a negative impact on your progress.
- Students will not be able to access any support or guidance from your subject teachers for any exams that are sat. You will be entering this process on your own and may not perform as well as in past mock exams and assessment without this specialist and focused guidance.
- Students may not have access any longer to materials and resources that they were using previously to study from.
- Although the academy is committed to supporting its students with these examinations, pressures on resources mean that we may not be able to accommodate exams in venues and locations that you may have used previously, which could pose an element of uncertainty and distraction.

Key dates for entry into the Autumn Examinations:

GCE AS and A levels: Monday 5th to Friday 23rd October 2020

GCSE: Monday 2nd to Monday 23rd November 2020

Deadlines for Entry:

GCE AS and A level: Friday 28th August 2020

GCSEs (*except English language and Mathematics*): Friday 11th September 2020

GCSE English language and Mathematics: Friday 25th September 2020