

Many thanks to all the parents, students and form tutors who submitted questions regarding how Notre Dame will award Teacher Assessed Grades for Summer 2021.

Please see below (in italics) a general overview that summarises and responds to the majority of the questions that were posed.

After this overview we have collated and answered specific questions.

The assessments after Easter will be very different to exams. They will be shorter. They will be done in class. They will be set and marked by teachers who know you. They will not have to cover everything that you normally have to learn in the course. They give you an extra chance to show the teachers what you know, understand and can do.

Teachers will decide on your grades by looking at the marks for things you have done during the course. They will see how much you know and understand, and what you can do in the assessments after Easter. They will use all of this information together to give you the fairest grade. This is different to normal years because your grade in each subject won't just be based on how you do in one or two exam papers.

Teachers can't tell you what assessments you will have and when you will have them until near the end of term. That is because we need to make sure that you don't have too many assessments all at once. We also need to check that we are following the rules from the exam boards. We don't have those rules yet. As soon as we have checked all of those things, we will be able to tell you what assessments you will have on each day. What Teachers can tell you now are the things that you need to revise and the work you can do that will give you the best chance in the assessments.

Teachers will make sure that the grades are fair in a number of ways. They will follow the rules and use the help we will get from the exam boards to set and mark the assessments. Teachers in our school will check each other's marking to make sure it is fair. Teachers from other schools will check our marking and we will check theirs to make sure it is fair. The exam boards will check that we have followed the rules and will check some of our teachers' marking. This means that there will have been lots of checks to make sure that teachers have used fair information to give you your grade.

Many students have asked about how teachers will consider the different ways that lockdown and Covid has affected different students. Covid and lockdown may mean for some that they don't know as much, or understand as well as they would have done if there hadn't been Covid. For others, their learning might not have been affected at all as they have been able to learn in different ways. Teachers will try to make things as fair as possible, by making sure that the assessments after Easter only cover work that they have been able to teach. They will also look at the marks you have got throughout the course to help them decide on the fairest grade that shows what you know, understand and can do.

How are exams after April going to be weighted? How significant will exams after April be for final grades?

The November and April 'on track for monitoring' is done by taking into account a broad range of evidence that reflects the entirety of work done so far by students. The November (Y10+11)/January(Y13) and April monitoring grades reflect 'what grades pupils who have shown the same level of knowledge understanding and skills up until that point have typically gone on to achieve in their final exams.' There will of course be some subjectivity in the 'on track for monitoring grades,' and it is important to understand that these are also not intended to be predictions of what will happen because the future has not happened yet. We do know however, from previous analysis,

that the 'on track for monitoring grades' that teachers produce are very good indicators of final grades.

The summer assessments will be used to moderate and validate the monitoring trajectories. We believe this is responding to the DfE directive in the fairest way for all students - taking into account as much evidence as possible, while giving students an opportunity to provide evidence that their knowledge, understanding and skills are at a higher level than we have so far assessed it to be.

Why do we have to wait for 3 weeks for assessments. Can we find out sooner what our assessments will be?

Departments are currently in the process of putting the assessment schedules together. Once each department has completed this then the schedules will be looked at as a whole so that there is an overview of all the assessments taking place. This will enable us to ensure that students do not have a considerable number of assessments on the same day. We also will not receive the additional guidance from the exam boards until later in this half term. We cannot finalise our schedule until we have been able to check that they all work together and that the assessment plans meet the exam board guidance.

Prior to the assessment schedules being released, subject teachers are allowed to let the students know what the assessments will be on e.g. specific topics or themes. They can and will provide guidance about revision and preparation activity that, if followed, will put students in the best position to show their best work in the assessments.

How this is any different from normal exams Are we replacing one exam with another?

We are using the summer assessments to objectively and fairly moderate and validate the November and April monitoring trajectories, while at the same time giving students an opportunity to demonstrate a higher level of knowledge, understanding and skill than we have assessed so far. This is different from a GCSE or A Level exam where the entire outcome is dependent on performance in the exam itself.

The assessments should therefore be lower stakes – they are validating and moderating the monitoring trajectories, while still providing opportunities for you to demonstrate a higher level of knowledge, understanding and skill. We are also providing more shorter assessments rather than fewer longer exams so that each individual assessment is less critical than an individual exam would have been. The assessments will also only assess work that has been covered – the GCSE and A Levels would have assessed the whole course, including those aspects that may not have been covered due to COVID. Unlike normal exams your teachers will be able to give general feedback to the class after each assessment that may help with the remaining assessments.

What happens if I miss an assessment due to illness, isolating or shielding? Can I resit an assessment in this case?

This is one of the most common questions that we have been asked. The summer assessments are not on their own determining your Teacher Assessed Grades. The assessments are being used to validate and moderate the monitoring trajectories. This means that your Teacher Assessed Grades

can be determined even if you have missed one or more assessments in a subject due to illness, isolation or shielding. Because there will be several assessments in each subject there will be multiple opportunities for you to produce assessed work that will support the process of validation and moderation of your monitoring trajectories in producing a final Teacher Assessed Grade. Even if you end up missing one or more assessments for legitimate reasons there will still be several opportunities for you to produce assessed work in each subject. You also need to be assured that teachers will be looking at the collective assessed work in the summer rather than single pieces of assessed work in isolation.

We will of course consider the resitting of missed assessments on a case by case basis, and make decisions based on the practicalities of what is possible and the impact it is likely to have on an individual student. We need to be realistic that in many cases it may not be possible. For example there may not be an alternative suitable unseen assessment, nor time in which to administer, mark and moderate an alternative. Similarly, it may not be possible to administer an alternative missed assessment without causing considerable disruption to preparation for remaining assessments.

Can we appeal the grades you get in April monitoring?

The information provided in the April Monitoring are not the teacher assessed grades. The April monitoring will show what grade a student is on track for in each of their subjects. Therefore, you cannot appeal these grades.

Appeals can only take place after the Teacher Assessed Grade is awarded and students receive this on results day.

OFQUAL has stated "If a student wishes to appeal, centres should undertake an initial process review to check all processes were followed correctly and no errors were made. If the school or college finds an error, they can submit a revised grade to the exam board.

If the student still wants to appeal, they will ask their school or college to submit a formal appeal to the exam board for them. The exam board will check the centre followed its own processes and exam board requirements as well as reviewing the evidence used to form their judgement and providing a view as to whether the grade awarded was a reasonable exercise of academic judgement.

If the exam board finds the grade is not reasonable, they will determine the alternative grade and inform the centre.

In cases of disagreement between the centre and the exam board, or if the student disagrees with the centre or the exam board, the case can be referred to Ofqual's Exams Procedure Review Service (EPRS). The exam board's decision on the grade following appeal will stand unless the EPRS finds that the exam board has made a procedural error.

Appeals are not likely to lead to adjustments in grades where the original grade is a reasonable exercise of academic judgement supported by the evidence. Grades can go up or down as the result of an appeal."

The DfE has stated that the appeals process will be split into two routes. The first will be for students for whom the Teacher Assessed Grade has impacted their next destination e.g. Year 13 students being able to access a University Place. These will be dealt with as a priority. The second route will

be all other appeals. It has been announced that further information will be shared about the appeals process later in the year.

Will we get feedback on the assessments during the assessment period?

Your assessments will be marked and we will be able to give general feedback that may support students with subsequent assessments. Individual feedback won't be possible for two reasons. Firstly, work will be anonymised (use of candidate numbers rather than names) to ensure that all student work is judged entirely on its merit. This means that it will be impossible for feedback to be given to individual students.

Secondly, we will be carrying out an internal review of marking and external moderation of work. Both these processes are there to protect students and to ensure that work is fairly and objectively assessed and that students are no more or less generously marked than students in other classes or other schools. Until these processes have been carried out, the mark or grade for each piece of work is not a final mark or grade.

Will different classes doing assessments on different days mean that some students are advantaged?

Due to the constraints of the school timetable, the same subject may be blocked at different times of the day. To ensure that no students are unfairly advantaged, where we cannot ensure that assessments are shared between groups, there will be different sets of assessments produced for different groups.

Is it possible to have study leave? If not, will lesson time be given over to revision in other subjects later in the day?

No new content will be covered in lessons, and students have already missed face to face contact with their teachers, hence, lessons during the assessment weeks will be focussed around revision of prior knowledge and preparation for the upcoming assessments. It is important that students continue to attend lessons and be supported by their subject teachers and peers. Therefore, there will be no study leave.

Whenever possible, departments will try to schedule the assessments in a morning session. However, this may not always be possible. If there is an assessment in the afternoon then you should attend the am sessions as normal. Lessons will not be given over to other subjects to revise. Just to remind you that the summer assessments are not on their own determining your Teacher Assessed Grades. The assessments are being used to validate and moderate the monitoring trajectories. Because there will be several assessments in each subject there will be multiple opportunities for you to produce assessed work that will support the process of validation and moderation of your monitoring trajectories in producing a final Teacher Assessed Grade. You also need to be assured that teachers will be looking at the collective assessed work in the summer rather than single pieces of assessed work in isolation.

Who will decide on the content of the assessment? Will the school decide or the exam boards?

The assessments will be chosen by each department to ensure that students are assessed on those areas of the curriculum that have been covered – students will not be assessed on material that hasn't been covered due to COVID disruption.

All assessments used will either be past examination questions or tasks, or assessment material produced by the exam boards to support Teacher Assessed Grades this year.

All assessments will be marked using official exam board mark schemes or descriptors.

What evidence will be used to decide the April trackers? Can extra work be undertaken to be used as evidence, or are we limited to what is set by teachers?

The April monitoring on track for grades are providing a trajectory that the student is on currently on.

However, the April monitoring is not determining the final Teacher Assessed Grade of a student – the assessments that students undertake during the summer term will moderate and validate the April and November (Y10+11)/January(Y13) monitoring trajectories and give students an opportunity to demonstrate that they have a higher level of knowledge, skill and understanding than we had previously assessed their trajectory to be.

The 'extra work' is in fact the summer assessments. If the assessed work in the summer term is generally of the same level as the April monitoring then they validate the trajectory provided in April. If the summer assessments show us that a student is in fact generally working at a higher level, then this will moderate what is submitted as a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG)

Our progress tracking monitoring grades have historically been very accurate. However they are not predictions of what would have happened. For the purposes of the generation of the Teacher Assessed Grades it is important that we are assured of the conditions under which work is completed. Therefore, it is for this reason that the only 'extra work' we will take into consideration is the assessments that are completed in school during the summer term.

Will assessments be weighted towards topics covered during lockdown or what has been covered in school?

The summer assessments will only be on material that has been covered.

Given the length of the lockdown period it is impossible to avoid assessing students on material that was taught during the lockdown period. We want students to have an opportunity to demonstrate a higher level of knowledge, understanding and skill. If we restrict assessments to the period when school has been open as normal we would be preventing students from demonstrating these higher levels of knowledge, understanding and skill. This is particularly true of the most recent period of lockdown which has taken place towards the end of the course.

Is school offering additional revision sessions?

The school will not be offering additional revision sessions. Revision will be taking place during normal timetabled lessons therefore students should continue to attend school when they are able to safely, and if they are not able to attend they should continue to access the work from home.

For students with access arrangements, when and how will arrangements be confirmed with students?

Access arrangements are provided to students to ensure that they are on a level playing field to all other students. Access arrangements are in place to remove a barrier and reflect the normal way of working in the classroom.

Once students have been assessed for access arrangements, if access arrangements are given then Mrs White will speak to students directly to explain the access arrangement and what that means for the student. This also gives the student an opportunity to ask any questions that they may have.

Access arrangements are then shared with parents and teachers. This information will come from the SEND department.

During the assessments we will ensure that students receive all access arrangements that they are entitled to.

Can we take into account special consideration for students for whom lockdown would have particularly challenging?

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the candidate's control at the time of the assessment, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an examination.

As there are no examinations taking place this summer then schools cannot apply for special consideration like in previous years. However, OFQUAL has stated that they will announce in April how special consideration may be applied for in the summer series. They have stated that they expect this to be similar to previous years. We will make parents and students aware of any updates that we receive.

We do fully appreciate that lockdown may have posed different challenges to different students. We can't go back and change this, but we can ensure that the assessments will only cover content that has been covered by the teacher, and that all students have opportunities through the assessed work to demonstrate that their knowledge, understanding and skills are of a higher level than we have previously assessed.

GCSE Only - How is it fair to use mocks from before Christmas as evidence?

As we have previously shared with both parents and students in November, the purpose of the GCSE assessments that took place before Christmas was to give our students the opportunity to sit their assessments in our venues with external invigilators following JCQ examination requirements. The

intention of this was to relieve any potential anxiety around this if the main summer 2021 exam period was to take place.

These assessments also gave students the opportunity in the run up to the GCSE exams to further develop revision strategies for an exam, to be given the opportunity to show what they can do in an assessment and to give themselves and their teachers the opportunity to reflect on their assessment results and put specific intervention in place to support students further if need be.

How are we taking into account the different individual learning experiences of different students between March 2020 and November 2020 when producing April 'on track for grades'?

The November (Y10+11)/January(Y13) and April monitoring 'on track for grades' are factual statements. *Students in the past who have been producing work of the same quality and demonstrating the same levels of knowledge, understanding and skill have typically gone on to achieve these sorts of grades.* Therefore it wouldn't make any sense to adapt these to account for different learning experiences. Sadly, different students will have had different learning experiences over lockdown – we know of families and students who have had really very significant disruption and challenge over the past year. We can't go back and change this, but we can ensure that the assessments will only cover content that has been covered by the teacher, and that all students have opportunities through the assessed work to demonstrate that their knowledge, understanding and skills are of a higher level than we have previously assessed.

How will the assessments be run in lessons?

The majority of students will complete their assessments in their normal lessons. Students with access arrangements, where the access arrangement cannot be adhered to in the classroom, will be taken to other venues to complete the assessments.

Assessments in class will be under strict exam conditions.

If you have an April monitoring on 7-8, is it possible to end up with a TAG of a 5?

This is extremely unlikely. An April monitoring grade of a 7-8 means that with 6 weeks of school to go the teacher believes that the student is producing work of a similar quality to students who have gone on to achieve grades 7 or 8. This is their trajectory, and is based on the entirety of work produced for the teacher up until that point (i.e. over the entire course minus the last few weeks). If the student continues working hard this is the most likely outcome and the assessed work will most likely validate the April monitoring. Of course, GCSE and A Level exams have never been taken in April and we know that each year there are students for whom things fall into place relatively late in the day. The assessed work produced in the summer term allows us to credit this where this happens. Similarly, the internal review of marking and external moderation will enable us to identify any instances where our assessment of the Teacher Assessed Grade for a student is working might be too low.

Similarly, we might conclude that a student had come off their trajectory if they had produced very little or consistently lower quality assessed work during the assessment period. We also cannot rule out either our internal review of marking or the external moderation suggesting that we were grading a particular student too generously. The point of these processes is to ensure that students

at Notre Dame are no more or less generously graded than students anywhere else and we would not be engaging with these processes if we were not also prepared to respond accordingly.

We do though have confidence in our monitoring systems – previous analysis has shown that it has been extremely accurate at projecting grades for students. Therefore for the particular example asked about in this question, a TAG of 5 would be extremely unlikely.

Does each assessment piece get a grade?

Each piece of assessed work will receive a grade. This won't be shared with students as it won't be finalised until after completion of the internal review of marking and the external moderation process.

Teachers will look at the entirety of the assessed work alongside the November and April monitoring trajectories when producing Teacher Assessed Grades.

Will students be able to wear own clothes for the assessment week?

Students will continue to wear school uniform throughout the assessment window.

Will teachers continue to set homework as well as revision?

The only homework that will be set for students will be directed revision for the assessments.

Is KS2 data influencing the teacher assessed grades?

No, the KS2 data has no bearing on the teacher assessed grade at all.

Teachers have provided November (Y10+11)/January(Y13) and April monitoring trajectories based on the entirety of work produced so far, and the assessment period is being used to validate and moderate these monitoring trajectories.

What happens if teachers have not been teaching a class for long?

All work will be anonymised prior to marking. All assessments will be marked using official exam board mark schemes and guidance. There will an internal review of marking within each subject area that will ensure teachers are applying mark schemes correctly. There will also be external moderation to ensure that students at Notre Dame are not being marked any more or less generously than students at other schools.

What will happen in Y10 midsize lessons after the assessments finish?

After May half term students, for the majority of their lessons, will be supported by their teachers to consider what their next steps are post 16. This will include completing of Sheffield Progress.

Sheffield Progress is a website that is used for post 16 application applications in Sheffield and the surrounding areas

Will students be directed to bring their own equipment for exams?

Form tutors and subject teachers will direct students about what equipment will be needed for the assessments.

Are any of the exam board provided assessment materials likely to be used and if so will they be given particular weighting either by school or by exam boards during quality assurance/moderation activities?

We are attempting to strike a balance between waiting for and using some of the exam board provided assessment materials, and letting students know as much about the assessments as soon as we can.

The exam boards have committed to produce assessment materials before the end of March. Clearly if we wait until this point before starting to plan and organise our assessments then teachers cannot use the remaining weeks of the Easter term as effectively as we would like to support students in preparing for the assessments, and we would not be able to provide any sort of detailed information about the assessments to students until after Easter.

All of the assessments will however be produced using materials from the exam boards, be it unseen papers, specimen materials, past paper questions or the materials that are yet to be published by the exam boards. This is so that we are assured of robust, fair and objective mark schemes for our assessments.

Will departments coordinate assessments to avoid completely overloading students?

Yes, this is one of the reasons why we are not publishing the assessment schedule for students until just before Easter. We need to first allow each department to plan their assessment schedule, and then to check that the individual assessment schedules for each department do not create particular pinch points where students may be overloaded. All of this takes time, planning and organisation, and we are working through this as fast as we can while continuing to ensure that the day to day operation of the school is not adversely affected.

Will English be moderated by different teachers to ensure the marks are accurate because it is subjective?

All work will be anonymised prior to marking. All assessments will be marked using official exam board mark schemes and guidance. There will an internal review of marking within each subject area that will ensure teachers are applying mark schemes correctly. There will also be external moderation to ensure that students at Notre Dame are not being marked any more or less generously than students at other schools.

Are there any circumstances under which you will be unable to produce a Teacher Assessed Grade or limited in your ability to produce a Teacher Assessed Grade for a student?

If students were to not engage in the assessment process after Easter then we would not be able to moderate or validate our monitoring progress trajectories objectively and fairly. In this case we would be limited in the evidence that we would be able to use to generate a Teacher Assessed Grade and this may limit the Teacher Assessed Grade that it is possible to provide. Specifically, there would be no fair and objective evidence that the student had remained on the trajectory previously reported.

In a very small number of cases where students have produced a very limited amount of work during lockdown it may not be possible to produce an April monitoring grade. In these cases it is even more important that there is good engagement with the summer assessments. In this small number of cases, without good engagement with the summer assessment process we may be unable to produce a Teacher Assessed Grade.

Will I be able to resit any subjects?

Yes, OFQUAL has announced that there will be a full Autumn exam series. All students will be able to resit any subjects at Notre Dame if they would like to take exams in any subjects.

The Autumn exam series is open to any student who entered or who had intended to enter exams this summer. Alevel exams will take place in October and GCSE exams in November/early December. Grades being determined by a student's exam performance only and students will be able to use the better of the summer or autumn grade.