



August 2016

Parents of Year 14

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As your son/daughter is awaiting A2 results on 18 August, I thought it might be useful to provide you with an overview of the support the school can offer once the examination results have been published. This support includes the following:

- 1 Enquiries about results to the examination board.
- 2 Careers Department/University application advice.

1 Enquiries about Results

By this stage many of our students have a very clear understanding of the Subject Level Uniform Mark Grade Boundaries and can use these to make informed choices about whether to seek a remark of a paper or not. However, I thought it would be useful to explain this process to parents as I appreciate some may have a more in-depth understanding than others.

For each examination session, e.g. Summer 2015, Summer 2016 CCEA (the majority of our A2 examinations are with CCEA) publishes its "CCEA GCE Subject Level Uniform Mark Grade Boundaries". The school will tweet and post on Facebook the Summer 2016 grid on results day. The school currently offers OCR Physics, AQA Chemistry and AQA Travel and Tourism (taught at Friends'), Edexcel Politics and AQA Design and Technology; all other subjects are CCEA. OCR refers to these as "Unit Level Raw Mark and UMS Grade Boundaries"; AQA refers to these as "Scaled Mark Unit Grade Boundaries".

A2 subjects are either 6 module subjects (i.e. 3 modules at AS and 3 at A2) or 4 module subjects (2 modules at AS and 2 at A2). For example, A2 Geography is a 4 module subject whilst A2 Mathematics is a 6 unit subject.

In the case of a 4 unit subject, the maximum uniform marks are 400; in the case of a 6 unit subject, the maximum uniform marks are 600.

Information about the calculation of A* is available on <http://cdn.wallacehigh.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/how-is-a-Awarded.pdf>.

The Uniform Mark Grade Boundaries are based on raw marks achieved by a student in each paper which are converted to become uniform marks. A raw mark is subject to the application of a mathematical formula which allows for a rank order of candidates to be drawn up. It is really the Uniform Mark, in the case of each paper, which is of interest to the

candidate and parent, rather than the raw mark. It is the uniform mark which is the determinant of the overall grade awarded at A Level.

On careful scrutiny of these uniform marks, if a candidate is very close to the next grade, it is quite common for a remark to be requested. A remark must be requested through the school, it cannot be requested directly through the examination board. Mr Kidd is the member of staff responsible for the administration of this process. In addition to remarks, photocopies of scripts (i.e. the actual paper a candidate completed and how it has been marked and annotated) can be requested. There is a fee for both these services, the cost of which is borne by parents. The Uniform Mark should be scrutinised at the level of an individual module of a subject and decisions, about which if any paper to have remarked, made accordingly.

There is a prioritised system of remarks for A2 candidates to try to ensure that the examination board has all remarks completed by the UCAS deadline. So, if a remark results in a grade increase, this information is available to UCAS before its deadline. So, in the case of A2 remarks, it is important to make remark decisions expediently. The deadlines and services available for CCEA examinations can be accessed on the following link http://ccea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/exams_officers/June_2016_Summary_Document.pdf Mr Kidd can provide information about the other examination boards.

If your son/daughter and you are unsure whether to get a paper remarked or not, you can request a photocopy of the script and then discuss this with the Head of Department to see if a remark looks advisable. If for any reason the Head of Department is unavailable, a member of the Leadership Team will be available to give advice. The CCEA deadlines are available on the link above. As a general rule any enquiry about results service should be requested from Mr Kidd on results day or the following day. An appointment can be made with him by speaking to Mrs Todd or Mrs Whiteside in the Front Office.

2 Careers Department/University Application Advice

Once A Level grades have been published students fall into broadly 4 categories:

- (a) University offer met and no further support required.
- (b) University offer met and exceeded, may wish to apply for a different undergraduate degree.
- (c) University offer not met and looking for clearing to similar courses in a range of universities.

Mr Beaton, Head of Careers, and Mrs Palmer, Assistant Head of Careers, will support students in categories (b) and (c). This support normally takes the form of advice about the alternative undergraduate courses. Importantly, students need to be willing to spend time researching; the Careers Library is open and computers made available. It is helpful if parents are available on results day to support and be with their son/daughter in school to make a university application change. It can be a busy morning and students may need to

wait to see the Careers staff but things usually settle down quite quickly after an initial long queue. The 'cap' on university places in England was lifted in 2015 and this saw an increase in places offered by 3% as colleges and universities increased their intake. Consequently, if a young person has not met the offer for a course in Northern Ireland, it is worthwhile considering close scrutiny of places which are available in the same or a similar degree in England. Foundation degrees and Higher Level Apprenticeships are also a route worth pursuing locally and students should contact the FE Colleges locally to see if places are available on results morning. The following link provides an explanation of these two alternative routes to university study www.anic.ac.uk/higher-level-apprenticeships.aspx

I wish every U6 student every success on 18 August. It has been a pleasure to be their Principal for the last seven years.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs D O'Hare
Principal