



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: T J Swain, M A

16th January 2017

Dear parent/guardian

Arrangements for formal assessments in Year 12 – Summer 2017

I am sure you are aware of the vast amount of change we have had to deal with in the last few years with regards to curriculum and assessment. I spoke at the Year 12 parents' information evening in September with regards to our plans for the sixth form curriculum and I would like to update you on some matters.

Timing of exams

One of these plans was to introduce an internal exam period for Year 12, to coincide with the limited number of external AS papers still being sat this year (in Maths, DT and Philosophy). This will take place in the fortnight beginning Monday 15th May, running until the half term break (Friday 26th May). During this time, the students will have a mixture of internal and external papers and will be granted study leave for the time where they are not required for an exam. There will also be a small number of short papers in the week beginning 8th May. The vast majority of papers will take place in the sports hall and all will be invigilated in the same way as public exams. We are treating all exams with the same level of seriousness and will expect an appropriate medical note (or relevant document) if a student is absent for any paper.

Setting, marking and security of exam papers

I have been working behind the scenes with heads of department to agree consistency in the approaches to setting the exams. I have encouraged staff to work with the exam boards (including being involved in pilot projects) in order that the papers we set are as realistic as possible. Mark schemes will, equally, be carefully designed and every effort will be made to make these secure. They will not simply be past papers or specimen materials produced by exam boards. All marks will be moderated and grade boundaries set based on exam board guidance and modelling based on previous AS performance at QMGS. I have instructed the examinations office to treat these papers with the same level of integrity as with external exams.

Publication of results and follow up procedures

All public exam results (in Maths, DT and Philosophy) will be published on the A-level results day (Thursday 17th August). We intend to publish the internal exam results on Wednesday 5th July. We will use this opportunity to review the results with students and invite parents in (if necessary) to discuss potential issues. Despite not having a transition policy (as in previous years) it may be necessary to consider options if there is a significant underperformance.

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UCAS predicted grades

It has been decided that we will continue our policy of basing UCAS predicted grades on the outcomes of the exams at the end of Year 12. In the past, this has been related to performance in the public AS papers, but this will remain the same for our internal exams. As described, we are taking measures to make sure that these exams are as close as possible to official procedures. Heads of department will be allowed to adjust the grades upwards by one, based on their professional judgement of performance over Year 12. This may be based upon an informal correspondence in the early autumn term of Year 13 (we usually hold a parents' evening in mid-September of the upper sixth).

Any appeals following this process should be in writing to myself by the deadline of the October half term. I will base my decision in these on a review of Year 12 performance, along with attainment and attitude in the first part of Year 13. I will be able to (if appropriate following these enquires) raise predicted grades by a maximum of two over their performance in the Year 12 exams.

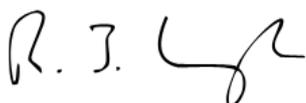
It is vital that we have a consistent and strict approach to setting UCAS grades in order to maintain our excellent reputation amongst higher education institutions and I am confident that this approach achieves this.

Follow up and questions

I appreciate that there may be a series of questions regarding the matter and I will be speaking during the *Futures Evening* for Year 12 on Thursday 2nd February. I will also be available during the Year 12 parents' evening on Thursday 9th March.

Thank you for your continued support

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. J. Langton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Langton
Head of School