

Dear Cambridge learners and families of Cambridge learners,

We hope you and your families are safe and well at this very difficult time. We know that schools are facing challenging circumstances and we continue to provide as much clarity as we can, as quickly as we can. Some matters are complex, and we have to make sure our approach works for all Cambridge schools worldwide, in a variety of different national contexts. Our priority is to make sure our actions protect students' safety, and to help them obtain the fairest outcome possible.

Our latest update for schools on 7 April 2020 provided more guidance on how we will award grades to students following our decision not to run our exams in the June 2020 series.

We will be asking schools to collaborate with us as we make evidence-based decisions about grades for students in each subject. We are asking schools to follow a four-step process:

- **Step 1.** School determines students' predicted grades for each syllabus
- **Step 2.** School determines each student's place within a rank order of all candidates within each grade for each syllabus
- **Step 3.** Head of school confirms the predicted grades and rank orders, and school sends them to Cambridge International
- **Step 4.** Cambridge International combines school data with a standardisation process and awards final grades for each student.

We trust our schools to use their professional judgement to predict the likely performance of their students at the end of the course.

We have drafted answers to questions that we are receiving regularly from learners and their families. You can find these below.

We appreciate your continued patience and support. Our thoughts and best wishes are with you all.

Yours faithfully,



Christine Ozden

Chief Executive, Cambridge Assessment International Education

### **Which qualifications will be included in this approach?**

We will follow this process to award grades for students who have been entered for Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge O Level, Cambridge International AS & A Level, Cambridge IPQ or Cambridge Pre-U syllabuses in the June 2020 series.

### **How will schools predict grades?**

We are asking schools to use their professional experience to make a fair and objective judgement of the grade they believe students would have achieved had they sat their exams this year.

It is important that schools take into account the fullest range of evidence available to them when they predict students' grades - including non-exam assessment; the results of any assignments or mock exams; and any other records of student performance over the course of study. We are also asking schools to provide a rank order of students within each grade. This is because the standardisation process will need more information than the grade alone.

We have provided clear guidance to schools on the grading and rank ordering process to help staff in different schools take a common approach to assessing their students.

### **When and how will predicted grades be submitted to Cambridge International?**

We are working to adapt our IT systems to collect grades and rank orders in a way that is as simple as possible for schools. We will provide detailed instructions about how and when to submit the data as soon as possible. The deadline will not be earlier than 29 May 2020 and schools will have a window of at least two weeks in which to submit the data. In the meantime, we are advising schools on the next steps they need to take to give them the maximum possible time to prepare.

### **Should my child's school be setting new work to inform the grade they submit?**

Schools are not required to set additional mock exams or homework tasks for the purposes of determining a predicted grade, although schools may find it necessary to do so. We trust schools to decide how best to gather evidence of students' performance.

### **Will predicted grades supplied by schools be accurate?**

School-based assessment already has an important role in Cambridge International qualifications. In an unprecedented situation such as this, schools are best placed to judge the likely performance of their students if courses had been completed as normal.

### **What if I am unhappy with the decisions my child's school has made?**

Please speak to your child's school if you are unhappy with any decisions they have made. Schools know their students best, so any concerns about such decisions must be raised as part of discussions between students, parents and the school itself.

In addition to this, Cambridge International does not communicate directly with students about the administration of exams. Each school should communicate with students directly on such matters.

We advise you to raise any concerns with your school.

**Will students see the predicted grades their school or college submits?** No. We are instructing schools not to share predicted grades or rank orders with students or families before

final results are issued. This is to protect the integrity of the teachers' judgements, and to avoid teachers, heads of department or heads of school feeling under pressure to submit a grade that is not supported by the evidence.

**When will results be released?**

We have no plans to delay release of results beyond the scheduled publication date in August.

**Will grades issued in 2020 carry the same weight as grades issued in previous or future years?**

Yes. The grades awarded to students will have equal status to the grades awarded in other years and should be treated in this way by universities and employers. On statements of results and certificates, grades will be reported in the same way as in previous years.

**Will students be able to progress to the next stage of education or employment with these grades?**

Yes, this approach will enable students to move onto the next stage of their education or employment as planned.

**Can students appeal these grades?**

We will make sure every school has the right to appeal the grades that students are awarded, as part of providing a fair and equitable system. We are still working on an appeals process for the June 2020 series, and will publish full details later.

For now, we can tell you that there will be an appeals process, and it is likely to be confined to situations in which schools have reason to believe we have made an error in our standardisation process.

**How will this affect private candidates?**

We know that private candidates are anxious to know how these arrangements apply to them. Where centres have accepted entries from private candidates, those students should be included where the head of centre is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement. Heads of centre will be responsible for vouching for the authenticity of the evidence gathered about every candidate.

Unfortunately, we recognise that centres may not be able to find enough evidence for some of their private candidates. It may not be possible therefore to give grades to all private candidates, some of whom may instead need to take exams in the November 2020 exam series to get their grades.