

Northern Ireland Coronavirus crisis



What you need to know:

Advice and guidance on exam cancellation –
GCSE, AS, A level and International Baccalaureate (IB)

Twelve points on exam cancellation for GCSE, AS, A levels and IB

- 1** Exams have been cancelled as per the Minister's statement of 19 March. Mr Weir commented that pupils would still receive "fair, equitable results that reflect their hard work" and that CCEA, with the other awarding organisations, will develop a "robust process for awarding grades".
- 2** Students will still receive grades this summer and certificates that allow them to progress to the next stage of their education/career. Currently the aim is that these grades will be awarded in late July
- 3** The NEU has been in touch with the relevant personnel in DE and CCEA and awaits more detailed advice. The approach to arriving at these grades will differ between the regions of the UK and between qualification type.
- 4** For GCSEs, AS and A levels, teachers will be asked to submit their judgements about the grades that they believe each student would have received if exams had gone ahead. The NEU read this as a teacher-led judgement call having considered all the evidence, rather than a one-size-fits-all formulaic approach. In coursework-heavy subjects, even when approaching completion, pupils are often at different stages. A valid judgement could be that some who weren't finished could still have produced a better outcome than those who had completed or 'called-time' on it.
- 5** Teachers may be asked to take into account a range of evidence to help them come to a decision on the grades and will not be asked to simply report the result of mock exams. Teachers can use mock results alongside things such as classwork they have seen their students complete, coursework, controlled assessment and practical pieces to come to their judgements. Guidance, when issued, requires to be subject-specific where required.
- 6** Teachers should not be expected to set or mark new work in order to help them come to these decisions. The decisions can be made based upon that which has already been started or completed to this point. Exam boards and regulators will be providing clear guidance to teachers as to what they are asking them to submit and how they are asking them to come to their grade judgements.
- 7** Education professionals know their classes best and so the NEU are calling for regulators and exam boards to make it clear that it is up to those professionals in the school or college how they use the evidence available to them in order to come to holistic decisions as opposed to formulaic ones.
- 8** The final grade received by students will be calculated by the exam board. They will consider the judgements teachers submit along with other evidence, similar to that which is used for setting grade boundaries every summer, to produce the final calculated grade students receive. In turn, this will all be overseen and checked by the regulator.

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- 9** The NEU are working with qualifications regulators and awarding organisations to help make sure the guidance they produce for teachers is as useful as it can be and that the process is as fair for students as possible.
- 10** Students may also have the chance to sit exams at the earliest reasonable opportunity once schools and colleges re-open, and/or in summer 2021. However, the NEU see Autumn exams, in effect, as an appeal mechanism. This, of course, is highly dependant on the timing of emerging out of the Covid-19 crisis.
- 11** There are no plans to shift or bring forward the start of the Autumn term to facilitate exams.
- 12** There will be many more questions that haven't been answered yet and the NEU is working with all awarding organisations and regulators to ensure as much information can be passed on as quickly and clearly as possible.

Further information and links

Below are some links to the websites of various awarding organisations, the regulator in England, Ofqual, and the DfE which may contain useful information on these issues:

- » [Ministerial announcement that exams will not proceed in Northern Ireland](#)
- » [CCEA statement](#)
- » [CCEA Coronavirus update](#)
- » [AQA Coronavirus update](#)
- » [OCR Coronavirus update](#)
- » [Eduqas Coronavirus update](#)
- » [International Baccalaureate update](#)
- » [Pearson Coronavirus update](#)
- » [WJEC Coronavirus update](#)
- » [Ofqual update following announcement on exams and grades](#)