



31 March 2021

Dear Year 12, 13 and 14 Parent/Guardian

**Re: Alternative Awarding Process 2021**

I trust this letter finds you and your family safe and well.

As you are aware from my letters prior to Easter on the 9 and 25 March, there will be an assessment window for pupils in Years 12 – 14, Monday 26 April to Friday 7 May (inclusive). The purpose of these internal assessments is to complete the portfolio of evidence for each subject, in accordance with the Department of Education's requirement for schools to generate Centre Determined Grades for students following the cancellation of public examinations due to the ongoing pandemic.

Please note, we are in the process of developing our Centre Determined Grading Policy for 2021 on the basis of information provided by the examination bodies and the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). When the School has received the final guidance, we will be in a position to finalise the policy and circulate to all students, parents and guardians.

**Internal Assessments Summer Term 2021**

My colleagues informed your son/daughter, prior to Easter, of the topics/rubric that will be assessed in these internal assessments. The intention, as you are aware, is to enable pupils to demonstrate what they can do.

You will note these internal assessments, given that they are not external examinations, have been reduced in length and content to reflect the exceptional circumstances of the ongoing public health situation and its impact on the learning experiences of our students.

Please be assured that my colleagues will share with your son/daughter the sources of evidence that will be used to determine their Centre Determined Grade and the scores that your son/daughter has achieved in these sources of evidence throughout the year. As in a normal year, pupils have the right to appeal a mark awarded in coursework/controlled assessment – please use the school policy which is available on the school website - <http://www.banbridgeacademy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Appeals-against-Internal-Assessments-of-Work-Banbridge-Academy-1.pdf>

**Access Arrangements and Special Consideration**

(i) Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements are already in place for your son/daughter and will continue throughout the period of internal assessment. If you have a new access arrangement e.g. an injury, please contact the School immediately by writing or sending an email to [info@banbridgeacademy.banbridge.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@banbridgeacademy.banbridge.ni.sch.uk).

(ii) Special Consideration

Banbridge Academy follows the advice given by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) in relation to special consideration <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/A-guide-to-the-spec-con-process-202021-Website-version.pdf>

As defined by JCQ, 'special consideration' is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect a temporary illness, temporary injury or other imposition **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/her normal level of attainment in an assessment. These include:

- temporary illness or accident/injury **at the time of assessment**;
- bereavement **at the time of the assessment** (where whole groups are affected, normally only those most closely involved will be eligible);
- domestic crisis arising **at the time of the assessment**;
- **serious** disturbance during an assessment;
- extreme distress on the day of the assessment (**not simply assessment related stress**).

Candidates will **NOT** be eligible for special consideration if preparation for or performance in the assessment is affected by:

- lost teaching and learning due to COVID-19 (see below\*)
- long term illness or other difficulties during the course affecting revision time, **unless the illness or circumstances manifest themselves at the time of the assessment**;
- bereavement occurring more than six months before the assessment, **unless an anniversary has been reached at the time of the assessment or there are ongoing implications** such as an inquest or court case;
- domestic inconvenience, such as moving house, taking holidays at the time of the assessment;
- minor disturbance in the assessment room caused by another candidate, such as momentary bad behaviour or a mobile phone ringing;
- permanent disability unless illness affects the candidate **at the time of the assessment** or where the disability exacerbates what would otherwise be a minor issue.

\* Special consideration is never applied due to lost teaching and learning time. Lost teaching and learning due to COVID-19 is being addressed this summer via the assessment methods and the flexibility afforded to the Centre in the content that will be assessed.

If a candidate is affected by any of the criteria listed in the JCQ definitions on 'special consideration' during the upcoming assessment periods (or if they have been affected during a previous assessment which may contribute to the range of evidence being considered in the Centre Determined Grades process), they must:

- **Complete the special consideration application form which is available at the following link: <https://forms.gle/c9D6rhw1wWt3MyySA>. This link is also available on the school website under Policies/Documents-Public Examinations Guidance. The form should be submitted as soon as possible and prior to 3.30pm on Friday 16 April 2021.**
- Please note that completion of the form does not guarantee that an allowance will be granted.
- Any information that you record on the form will be treated with utmost sensitivity, with relevant staff informed on a need-to-know basis only.
- Parents/Guardians should outline in detail, the nature of the issue and how it has affected their son/daughter.
- If the issue is related to illness/injury, it is helpful to submit medical evidence such as a Doctor's letter (on headed paper) outlining how, **on the day of the assessment**, the candidate may be potentially disadvantaged. This evidence can be submitted to the school office, for the attention of the Examinations Officer, Mr Hanlon, in a sealed envelope labelled with the pupil name and Form Class. Or alternatively, it can be sent in electronic format to

[specialconsideration@banbridgeacademy.org.uk](mailto:specialconsideration@banbridgeacademy.org.uk), with pupil name and Form Class clearly stated in the email.

- JCQ regulations state that “*Candidates will **not** be eligible for special consideration if preparation for or performance in the examination is affected by long term illness or other difficulties during the course affecting revision time, unless the illness or circumstances manifest themselves **at the time of the assessment***”.
- In respect of illness/injury/event that arises during the assessments conducted in April – May 2021, applications must be forwarded within five days of the particular assessment via the special consideration application form which is available at the following link:  
<https://forms.gle/c9D6rhwlwWt3MyySA>
- In respect of assessments earlier in the academic year which may be considered within the range of evidence being considered within the Centre Determined Grades process, the school may already be aware of issues which would be considered eligible for special consideration. **However, for the avoidance of doubt, applications for special consideration should be forwarded as outlined above prior to 3.30pm on Friday 16 April 2021.**
- In line with JCQ regulations “*Awarding bodies will not enter into discussion with candidates or their parents as to how much special consideration should be applied*”. (The maximum allowance given will be 5% of the total raw marks available in a component and the most common category of allowance is 2% of the total raw marks in a component).

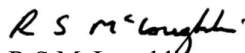
(iii) Assessment Resources

Students will be given the option of taking any assessment resource(s), that the centre has not planned to assess as part of the portfolio of evidence. This opportunity is being provided to give students, wishing to avail of this provision, an experience of assessment in other parts of subject specification(s). Choosing to complete optional assessments mean that students will have to allocate time to revising a larger range of topics and therefore this may impact upon preparations for the assessments planned by the centre. Should students choose to take the optional assessment resources for a particular subject and underperform in any aspect therein, performance information from these optional assessments does not have to be accounted for in the generation of the Centre Determined Grade.

**The deadline for students to nominate to take optional assessment resources, in addition to the assessments identified by the School, is 3:30pm on Friday 16 April 2021.** At this stage, I would seek to reassure your son/daughter and yourself that we continue to adopt a student-centred approach to the completion of each student’s portfolio of evidence for their subjects. As outlined previously, we have been providing an opportunity for all pupils to reacclimatise back into life in the Academy and reconnect with their teachers and peers, prior to assessments taking place, that will count towards their portfolio of evidence. If you wish your son/daughter to take these additional optional assessment resources, please confirm in writing to the Examinations Officer, via the School office prior to 3.30pm on Friday 16 April 2021.

Thank you for your continued and unstinting support during these unprecedented times. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Yours sincerely

  
R S McLoughlin  
Principal