



The London Oratory School

1863

Results 2020

Oratory pupils harvest impressive A-level vintage despite
desperately tainted context.

A message from the Headmaster

Congratulations to all those pupils who received their A-level grades today! Despite a severely tainted context, The London Oratory pupils still managed to do us all proud and turn in an impressive vintage. In the face of 47% of grades being mechanically suppressed by an Orwellian statistical algorithm, and the overlooking of a very high 3-year rolling average at School level, 69% pupils still managed to secure A*-B grades and 39% secured A*-A grades. Pass rates remain at 99.99% recurring. These figures are still up on last year: who knows how high they may have been had pupils been able to sit the examinations, or indeed, had an impersonal process not been applied to the levels at which the School had professionally and ethically assessed them to be.

Amidst the swirling and intensifying national controversy, it is worth emphasising what was learnt and strengthened along the two year A-level journey, even if today's staging post may, for many, be inscrutable. With all courses fully delivered by the time national lockdown was sprung upon us, pupils must rest assured that they have acquitted themselves with real credit on demanding, hard currency courses. You will have learnt the habits of sustained and disciplined study and will have engaged fully with demanding concepts and material, in addition to stimulating a lifelong love for the quest for truth in all its multi-varied forms. Take this away from your two years of A-level study, and you will be storing up solid fuel and precious treasure for every stage of your life, regardless as to what the next step may hold for you. Neither perverse system nor bizarre combination of decisions can undermine or rob you of such a solid foundation. You will also have had a brutal initiation into the personal impact of real-world politics – a setting that only your ethical character can overcome, and then only in the long-term.

Yet the crux of the issue is the fairness of the system: did each pupil get what they deserved, on grounds that were fair? Suffice it to say, representations at my level will continue to see that justice is done in all cases and that the wildly irrelevant attainments of previous years' cohorts (including those in schools other than this) and the technocratic tidiness of distribution graphs do not unduly influence your individual achievement. If delighted, we celebrate with you; if disappointed, you have our full and active support and sympathy - but be sure to keep that long-range perspective and to keep your focus.

Well done to all, regardless and our especial thanks in particular to our teachers for the meticulous and highly principled manner in which they have engaged with such an unenviable and invidious task. Be sure to stay in touch and be sure to seize with both hands whatever opportunity lies in store for you next, stronger as a result of your time at the Oratory and as a result of the challenges of this undesirable experience.

I very much hope to see as many of you as possible at the sixth form event, scheduled for Wednesday 2 September!

The Headmaster

A-level Appeals Update: Monday 17 August

Monday 17 August 8am

Dear Pupils, Staff and Parents,

As you will be aware, the current A-level results scenario is in a somewhat unclear state. I understand that this is a hugely frustrating time for you and that many of you are both bewildered and angry. Rest assured, governors, Senior Staff and the school community share those emotions and are actively working for redress.

I thought it might help if I give a status update as of Monday 17 August 8am – of course, these matters are subject to rapid and 180 degree external changes at no notice. Below, I have copied a useful information sheet produced by Richard Adams at *The Observer*, available on their website on the evening of Sunday 16 August.

Also, given the high volume of queries we are receiving, please see that they are directed as per below:

- If you wish to appeal against your Final Calculated Grade (the grade on your results slip), then you must notify Miss Coles-Lockwood (dataofficer@los.ac), in correspondence marked “Grade Appeal - FAO The Headmaster”. Note the Internal Appeals Procedure link on the website for additional information. Please do not send emails directly to me, or my PA in the first instance, but prefer the Examinations Officer, Miss Coles Lockwood – it will find its way to me in good time and in the most efficient and controlled fashion.
- If you wish to be considered for a review of your Centre Assessed Grade, then you must notify Miss Devereux and Dr Howells via email, in the first instance. We will pick these up once we know more about the process.
- In a number of cases we are reviewing our options in relation to subject specific whole course appeals, should the above forms of redress not yield fairer outcomes; this will be subject to additional clarity on specified grounds for appeal and the bar of evidence required to support an appeal.

In sum, we await additional clarity from the DfE, Ofqual and other professional bodies.

In the meantime, I will keep you updated once we have a more comprehensive and accurate picture on what is going to happen next to resolve this national educational issue.

All the very best,

The Headmaster

A-levels: why has Ofqual suspended its criteria to appeal grades?

DfE did not consult exam regulator on guidance and students must now wait until Ofqual issues revised policy.

Ofqual, the exam regulator for England, has suspended its criteria for students hoping to challenge their A-level grades on the [basis of their mock exam results](#).

What has happened to the promised exam appeal process?

Last Tuesday, [Gavin Williamson announced](#) that pupils in England could use grades from their mock exam to appeal if they were “unhappy” with the results allocated by Ofqual for both A-levels and GCSEs. The details were left up to the exam regulator to decide by Monday – but the Department for Education appeared not to have consulted Ofqual on the new grounds for appeal.

What happened this weekend?

On Saturday afternoon Ofqual published the promised guidance, with crucial details added. Ofqual’s wording appeared to allow a wide range of mock exams and “non-exam assessments” as evidence, with one headteacher calling it “a complete free-for-all”. But the regulator also said successful appeals would mean the [Ofqual](#) result would be replaced by either the teacher-assessed grade or the mock-exam grade – whichever was lower – contradicting Williamson’s earlier pledge that pupils would receive their mock grades after appeal.

But by 11pm on Saturday night, Ofqual had removed the guidance from its website and put up a statement: “This policy is being reviewed by the Ofqual board and further information will be published in due course.” So far it has made no further comment.

Did the government know about Ofqual’s Saturday night fever?

Almost certainly not. The Department for Education issued statements on Saturday evening endorsing Ofqual’s appeal process. And the schools minister, Nick Gibb, issued [a letter to headteachers and principals](#) at 8.30pm, stating that grounds for appeal included “where a student has a valid mock result which is higher than the grade they have been awarded and wishes to have their mock result stand instead. Ofqual has issued criteria on what constitutes a valid mock result”. He then posted a link to the now removed web page.

What should I do if I want to appeal against my grades?

Wait. Until new guidance or decisions are announced, there is no way of knowing how the appeals will work. But in the meantime those applying for university or college places should tell admissions officers if they have mock exam results higher than the grade they received from Ofqual.

How would Ofqual's appeals have worked?

Pupils would have three bits of information: their Ofqual-moderated grade, their mock exam result, and their teacher-assessed grade. Under the deleted guidance, appeals would only succeed if the mock grade was higher than the Ofqual grade, and if the teacher-assessed grade was also higher than the Ofqual grade. So that meant only grades among the 39% of teacher assessments marked down by Ofqual could be appealed, also contradicting Williamson's initial "triple lock" promise of either an Ofqual grade, a mock grade or an autumn exam.

What does this mean for GCSEs?

They will be published on Thursday, by which time the government is under considerable pressure to have an appeal process in place. However, the government may have to take more dramatic action given the controversy, as well as its strained relationship with Ofqual. Ken Baker, a Tory peer and the former education secretary under Margaret Thatcher, has called for GCSE results to be delayed to allow an overhaul. Others, such as the head teachers' unions, now lean towards dumping Ofqual's grades and instead using teacher assessments, as in Scotland.

What about pupils who don't have mock exam results?

That remains unclear. Ofqual's process had "non-examination assessments" as one option, but that may be more heavily restricted when the new process is published, if it ever is.

Are other forms of appeal still allowed?

Only Williamson's last-minute offer of the use of mock exam grades is uncertain – other forms of appeal are still available. But the other appeals are mainly school-based, for entire courses with a high bar of evidence required, or where an administrative error has been made. Individual students can appeal on the grounds of "malpractice" if they feel they are the victim of discrimination or bias by their school, but not by Ofqual.



Ofqual Guidance - For Pupils

[Click here to download](#)

Enquiries about CAG results

[Click here to download FAQs](#)

Internal Appeals Procedure

[Click here to download](#)

JCQ Candidate Consent

[Click here to download the consent form](#)

Enquiries About Results Exams

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