

11th January 2021

Re: Assessment 2021 Updates

Dear Student and Parent/Carers,

As we come towards the end of the first week of new lockdown arrangements, I am writing to update you as best we can. There has been uncertainty arising from Government announcements about learning from home and assessment processes in 2021 and I hope that this letter goes some way towards answering some of the questions that I'm sure you will now have.

The Secretary of State for Education has already confirmed that GCSE, AS and A level exams will not go ahead this summer and he is consulting further with Ofqual on the alternatives for assessment and grading. He has indicated his intention to place trust in teachers and to account for their professional views about assessment and grading, as well as his intention to provide guidance and support to ensure grades are awarded fairly and consistently. A decision on unit exams and other forms of assessment for BTEC and Cambridge Technical courses is also expected to follow alongside the decisions for GCSE, AS and A levels. We will of course share further details about both things with you as soon as we are able and Ofqual have confirmed that although colleges have not had to provide for the sitting of external exams, all students are strongly urged to continue to engage as fully as possible in their continuing courses.

The initial Government announcements on learning from home suggest that this will continue at least until February half term, though there is a degree of uncertainty over exactly when onsite learning will be allowed to resume. We will be working hard to enable that as soon as practicably possible and will be responding to guidance on this as appropriate. This uncertainty means that the College has taken the decision to postpone the Level 3 Year 2 mock exams which were scheduled for the first week after the February half term break. We will make the decision on when to hold these and in what form as soon as possible and want to allow students the time to plan for these with as much certainty as possible. However, our planning at this time is on the basis that mock examinations will still take place before courses conclude, though we will follow any guidance carefully on the extent to which it is appropriate for these to partly influence final grading processes.

It is very important that all students engage in learning and keep up with their studies over the lockdown period. At very least this will help with a smooth return to on-site learning, as well as making sure that you have as good a coverage of course content as possible, which is important for any future assessment in the course and progression on to further study or employment after leaving WQE.

Support available to you

We recognise that the level of uncertainty created by these national announcements is bound to be unsettling. I want to reassure you that our staff are committed to communicating updates as soon as

we are able to and to acting in the best interests of students expecting to be assessed and who are planning progression this year. I know that Universities are aware and understanding of this situation and some will already have written to their applicants.

It remains our main priority to support the wellbeing of our all of our students and ensure that support is in place where this is needed. If you have any concerns about your own, or someone else's wellbeing during lockdown, please remember that there is support available through your teachers, your PPM and the welfare and skills team (who continue to be available to you on site too) our safeguarding and wellbeing team are available to you and can be contacted on site or by calling our safeguarding support line on 08000614222. More information is also available on WQE online.

The success of onsite learning in the Autumn term, blended with online elements means that students of WQE are well placed for the future, despite the uncertainties that remain. Your teachers and our supporting staff continue to plan support for you to learn effectively from home and we have extensive support available to those who need this. Please engage as fully as you can in all that is on offer to you as this will enable you to be best placed once there is greater clarity from Ofqual and the relevant awarding bodies for us to share about assessment.

Above all take care, support your friends and classmates where you can and remember that there is personal help and support for available to you if you feel it is needed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Wilson', written in a cursive style.

Paul Wilson
PRINCIPAL