12 August 2020

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

Many of you will have seen the headline that mock exam results can be used instead of the calculated exam results that our students will receive from the exam board this week. The details of this are more complicated and it is not as straightforward as simply using a ‘mock grade’ in place of the grade given by the exam board. Instead, if a student receives a substantially lower grade than the school has evidence for, through mock results, this may be grounds for appealing the grade through a formal appeals process to the exam board.

However, it is important to be aware of the context of how mock exams are set. They are not an exact replication of the external examination programme. As a school we use ‘mock’ exams in a number of ways throughout the school year as part of our ongoing assessment. This includes guiding students through exam questions in class, doing partial exam questions in class or for homework and doing full or partial exams under exam conditions. Furthermore, we use mock exams to help our students progress: for example, by getting them used to the style of the exam or setting them a greater challenge. It is not uncommon for a mock grade, awarded from a test that only examines earlier, and often easier parts of a course, to be higher than the actual grade students achieve at the end of a course.

For this reason, the grade a student has been given as a ‘mock grade’ may not satisfy the criteria needed by the exam boards for appeal – if for example it was a paper that the students had planned answers for in class. In most cases, a mock paper does not examine the whole content of the course and is an amalgamation of previous exam questions. Therefore, a higher mock grade may not be sufficient grounds for appeal. The exam boards will want detailed evidence of this grade and justification as to why it should replace the grade awarded.

A majority of students will receive the grades their teachers have worked out they were most likely to achieve. In some cases, these teacher-assessed grades may have been marked down.

A majority of students should be able to go onto their choice of university. All universities understand the situation this year and are trying to be more flexible. If a student gets into their choice of further study or training, we strongly suggest that they don’t go down the appeals or resit route, but instead focus on the next stage of the education and use the rest of the summer to prepare.

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If a student has not received the grades they need for entry requirements, the following routes are open to them:

- Contact the school to seek further advice.
- Contact the university and ask for further advice.
- If you still cannot get into your choice of university, contact the school about the possibility of appealing the grade – but this should be a last resort. Not all mock exam grades will provide sufficient evidence for an appeal and therefore may not be successful.
- If an appeal is not possible, you may want to consider resitting the exams in the autumn or in summer 2021.

For most students neither an appeals’ process or resits will be desirable, as they will be able to progress onto further study, training or work.

It is not possible for students or parents to appeal grades directly to the exam board. An appeal can only be made by the school. If, after receiving your results, you have not been successful in securing a place at a university of choice and wish for the school to consider an appeal, please email, examresults@hamsteadhall.com explaining which subject grade you would like the school to consider for an appeal. Please be aware that the Exam Boards may charge a fee for an appeal.

At this stage, this is all we are aware of following a very late announcement by the government on Tuesday evening. We hope that our students receive grades that allow them to progress to the next stage and if we can help or advise, please contact the school where we have staff available to offer advice and guidance. It is not possible for students or parents to visit the school at this stage, but if you do need to speak with someone, please call the school and staff can call back to speak directly to the students as required.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Farar
Executive Principal

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Executive Principal