



23rd April 2021

Dear students, parents and carers,

GCSE Additional Assessments May 2021

Further to my letter on the 3rd March 2021, I am writing to outline the logistics and thinking behind the additional assessments that students will be sitting in May.

Students today have been given their timetables for the additional assessment window, which will run from 4th – 28th May. As previously outlined, these assessments are being used by us to build the portfolio of evidence required by the exam boards to justify the grades that we will be entering for each student. The type and number of assessments, which are based on adapted model materials from exam boards to suit what we have taught our students, are being used by us for two key reasons:

1. To allow us to assess students on aspects on the course which we have taught, but have not yet had the opportunity to assess due to the impact of the last year on the school assessment calendar
2. To allow students the opportunity to demonstrate improvement in their knowledge of content or in the skills required for their subject from when they were previously assessed on them (in many cases these assessments were early in Y11 or some in Year 10 and we think it is fair to give students the chance to show that they have improved since then, to validate a better grade than they achieved previously).

You will see on the timetable that subjects have allocated slots for these assessments in each subject. They are not exams and are not intended to be such, with all being completed in the classroom and far shorter in length than a normal exam. Most assessments range between 40 minutes to 1hr, with the view being it is a more spread out, less intense and therefore more manageable process for our students. We have thought carefully about how this timetable has been built, to make sure we are fulfilling our responsibility to gather evidence that covers what has been taught on the course, as well as trying to be fair to students to give them enough opportunity to demonstrate what they can do, whilst at all times being aware of the desire not to overload our students. We feel we have struck a good balance, which is fair to students and gives them the best opportunity to show what they can do.

In terms of the logistics of the additional assessments, I would like to draw your attention towards a couple of aspects:

- As with any normal assessment window, such as TAs, students will attend their full timetable as usual. In lessons where they do not have assessments, we will operate our standard practice of supervised study, where teachers will be available to students for questions to be asked, whilst not delivering formal teaching. This has worked extremely well in the past, allowing students time to revise and prepare in a controlled, quiet and well-equipped environment, with their teaching staff easily available as needed.
- You will note that there are no assessments timetabled on 12th and 13th May – whilst the date is subject to change, we are aware that a number of our students will be celebrating Eid in this window and therefore felt it important to create space in the assessment window for our students to do this.



- Due to this, all students on the 12th and 13th May will be asked to study remotely from home, to allow for them to celebrate Eid as appropriate for their family and community, or, if not the case, to take the opportunity of a space in the window to continue their revision and preparations from home.
- For students who have Access Arrangements, or agreed SEA, these will still be provided for these assessments – Mr Downes, the Examinations Officer, will be in contact with you to let you know of where these will be, but you will follow the same structure for the timetable as all other students
- The timetable mentions it, but I ask students to please make sure they have checked for any assessments they may have that are not in their normal room.

As previously mentioned in my letter on 3rd March 2021, these assessments will form a significant part of the evidence we will be using for our students in making a judgment on their grades. Whilst we are able to and will, where appropriate, use work completed previously that hits certain conditions, such as being in the style of exam board questions and completed by the whole cohort in a way that staff can authenticate the student has done it, our view is that, in line with the exam board guidance, the more recent the work is produced, the more likely it is to be representative of the standard students are working at. This is especially the case given that we were forced to cancel our mock exams at the beginning of 2021 due to the national move to remote learning. Our full approach to how the grades will be decided by us is outlined in our Centre Policy, which is a comprehensive document that I hope to be able to share with you soon, as soon as our approach is approved by the exam board regulator, the JCQ. Once this happens, I will write further to explain how assessments and other evidence will fit together to allow us to make a judgment on the grade that each student should be given.

I must emphasise here how important **it is for students to attend all these assessments**. We need them to provide the full range of evidence to give students a grade and without them, it will be very difficult for us to give students the grade they have worked for. As such, **missing these assessments could have a serious impact on the grades students receive** and it is therefore more important than ever that students attend and follow the normal processes for making us aware if they cannot through exceptional circumstance or severe illness, wherein we will run through the processes for getting them to produce the needed evidence of performance.

As you will see, the window for the additional assessments finishes on 28th May 2021. We will be in contact over the next few weeks as to the plan for students' KS4 education from the 7th June onwards, but it is important to note that all students will need to be available from 7th June to 18th June to provide or complete any evidence required by their teachers to finalise their grade.



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Whilst these assessments are just that, an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they know and can do to build evidence for their grade, I do still wish all students the best of luck. It has been a difficult couple of years with much uncertainty, but I hope that these assessments will provide students with a sense of something worked to and something earned. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact Ms Staph, Mr Conant or the Examinations Team at exams@sydneyrussellschool.com

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Janis Davies'.

Janis Davies

Principal