



HECKMONDWIKE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Assessment FAQs

The assessments we are conducting at Heckmondwike Grammar School will give students in Y11 & Y13 the opportunity to demonstrate their true ability and potential in all of their subjects so teachers have as much evidence as possible to assign fair and robust grades. We will use the assessment along with other data to issue a Centre Assessed Grade for each student.

Are the assessments a replacement for GCSE/A'levels?

No. Each subject will have one assessment paper as opposed to the usual 2, 3 or even 4. Each assessment will last up to two hours, with the odd exception of some essay based subjects where they need slightly longer.

Why are the assessment synoptic?

Synoptic assessments allow teachers to gather more information about what students have understood across the entire course. The government has asked all the exam boards to produce a paper containing examination questions that will test the whole of the course, i.e. exam boards will release fully synoptic papers for schools to use should they so wish. This means that there is an expectation that schools should use assessments based on all of the work covered within across a course. However, these papers will not be released to schools until the end of March at the earliest so we will need to scrutinise these examinations closely before making a decision to use them or not.

Will the assessments be the only evidence used to decide a CAG?

No. Each subject is different so it depends upon how they have assessed students throughout the course and therefore every subject will weight their evidence differently. The purpose of the one paper assessment for each subject is to give further evidence and data upon which a teacher can base their CAG. Using one piece of information on which to base a CAG will be unfair for students.

What other information will subjects use to decide the CAGs?

This varies across each subject area but may include the following:

- Mock data
- Assessment done in class throughout the course
- Homework assessments
- Classwork assessments

- Coursework/controlled assessments
- NEAs (Non-examined assessment)
- Final assessments

Subject leaders will be using some or all of this information with particular weightings to rank students. Once a ranking has taken place and grades awarded, there will be a checking process where each and every grade for each and every student will be scrutinised, ratified and signed off by the Senior Team.

Why are assessments being held in the hall?

If we are to use a range of information on which to base the CAGs then we need to ensure that what we use is fair. Assessments in the hall is the only fair way to do this. If we were to conduct these assessments in the classroom during lesson time then we have to consider that not all lessons in a particular subject occur at the same time. This means that some students will sit their assessment before others. There is then the very real possibility that students who take the assessment early could divulge the precise nature of the questions, even the answers, to those students sitting the assessments later in the week. This means that the students who sat their exams later may perform better, be ranked higher and be given a higher grade. Hence, all students must sit the assessments at the same time.

Why are the assessments being held under exam conditions?

As discussed above, to ensure fairness and parity, all students must sit the assessments at the same time and therefore this needs to be in the hall. As a consequence, it is better to have the same conditions and environment for all students to full concentrate. Hence the need for examination conditions.

Are other schools completing end of year assessments?

Yes. Of the schools we have been in contact with, they are all completing some kind of final assessment under exam conditions. (We know of one school that are having “full” assessments (i.e. 2/3 papers *per subject*) as soon as they return after lockdown and **then** another full set in June!)

What happens if a student is ill and cannot take the assessments?

If a student is ill and unable to take an assessment at the same time as other students then other evidence will be considered to establish their ranking and grade. This will be based upon the criteria mentioned above. If a student is self-isolating and *can* take the assessment at the same as the other students we will arrange this on an individual basis. We will then consider the validity of this assessment dependent upon the circumstances.

What if a student is anxious that they have a lot to learn for these assessments?

Teachers will give students information about the areas that are more likely to be assessed so students can focus their revision on particular areas.

Will I be given study leave?

At present there is no plan to offer study leave. Students have spent enough time isolated on their own and will therefore benefit from being in school with their peers and having face-to-face contact with their teachers. Students will attend all of their lessons as normal following their usual timetable when they are not in an assessment.

For year 13 students, once they have completed their assessment in a subject, they no longer need to attend that subject's lessons and can instead use this time in the Library, ILA or JCC to do their own private revision.

We plan to have a final celebration for both year 11 and 13 towards the end of the assessments and details will be communicated closer to the time.