

11th September 2020

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

Changes to GCSE Assessment for Year 11

I hope your child has had a good first week back at the College. The staff at Chulmleigh have been so pleased to see pupils return – taller, older and hopefully a bit wiser too. I am sure that you will have kept abreast of the announcements from the Department for Education regarding GCSEs over the last few months. I am writing to you today to inform you of changes which relate to the qualifications that your child is due to complete at the end of Year 11.

Ofqual, which is the government body that oversees qualifications, ran a consultation over the summer relating to how the qualifications will be altered to reflect the lost teaching time over lockdown. As you would expect, as a college we have monitored and planned to ensure we give your child every advantage when they complete their courses with us. At present, we are still awaiting some detail from examination boards in some subjects, but we do want to ensure you are fully briefed on changes to GCSEs. We have therefore prepared a summary within this letter which I hope you will find useful. We will send you further updates as we receive them.

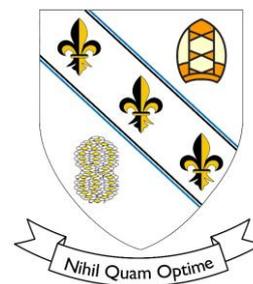
English Language

In English Language the only change is that the Spoken Language Endorsement will **not** have to be videoed this year. The assessments will go ahead, as timetabled, this half term.

English Literature

In English Literature, AQA informed schools on Thursday 10th September of the following: 'Ofqual has decided that GCSE English Literature exams next summer will have reduced subject content. This means that, in summer 2021, pupils entering for our GCSE English Literature (8702) exams will only have to answer questions on three out of four content areas. **The compulsory topics for all pupils will be Shakespeare and Poetry (both anthology and unseen).** Pupils will then answer a question on one of the remaining two content areas, choosing between 19th Century novel or Modern text.' We have opted for the latter (Option B) and the English Literature final exams will now take the following format:

Paper 1 (1 hour 45)	Paper 2 (1 hour 45)
Section A – compulsory core Shakespeare 30 marks + 4 marks (AO4)	Section A – compulsory core Poetry anthology 30 marks + 4 marks (AO4)
Section B Modern text 30 marks	Section B – compulsory core Unseen poetry 32 marks



Total marks = 64	Total marks = 66
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Please note that AQA have assured us that: 'There are no planned changes to the style and format of our GCSE English Literature questions and assessment criteria. This means pupils will be asked to complete the same task types and display the same skills as usual.'

Mathematics

No changes.

Sciences (Combined or Single)

All pupils are completing the AQA pathways on trilogy (combined) or single sciences. The content and exam structure remains the same. There has been a change for this year only regarding the required practicals. Pupils now have to be able to have watched the required practical (this can be either as a teacher demonstration or as a video) rather than completing it themselves.

French

Written paper: for Foundation pupils, in Question 2 there will be a choice between two questions (currently no choice).

There will be an additional five minutes added to the Foundation written paper to ensure pupils have sufficient time to read the options and make decisions. The topic titles will be written in English instead of French.

Spoken exam: the speaking assessment is an endorsement reported on a 3-point scale (pass, merit and distinction) against common assessment criteria. The speaking will be assessed by teachers during the course of study.

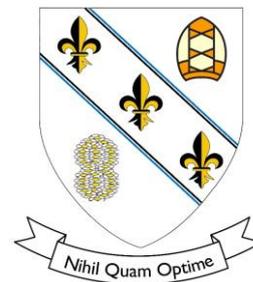
Geography

At present, the proposal is to remove the questions on paper 3 that relate to the fieldwork that pupils have carried out themselves. We will therefore no longer be undertaking the coastal fieldwork which we had planned for this term. Pupils will still be asked questions relating to fieldwork in general. Paper 1 and paper 2 will be sat as normal.

History

Following consultation with History teachers during the summer, Ofqual instructed the exam boards to reduce the content of GCSE History for assessment in the summer of 2020/21 and to allow teachers a degree of flexibility in the content that would be assessed. In August Edexcel, our exam board, confirmed that:

- Paper 3 content would be compulsory for all pupils. We study Weimar and Nazi Germany and the teaching of this unit was well advanced when lockdown occurred.
- One unit could be dropped from either Paper 1 or Paper 2. As we had taught the entirety of Paper 1 content and exam skills for Paper 1 (Medicine through Time) in College during Year 10, we will prepare pupils to sit this unit for their GCSE exam. As a result, we can confirm that pupils will study one further unit in Year 11 for GCSE History – the Cold War. This unit is timely, topical and is well supported by the subject expertise of our teaching staff.



Religious Studies

No changes.

Art/Textiles GCSE

Assessment will be based on pupils' portfolios only, with exam boards permitted to carry out moderation of photographic or digital portfolios. This will give pupils more time to build a comprehensive portfolio, which covers all of the Assessment Criteria, as their evidence for the qualification.

Animal Care (BTEC)

No changes.

Business Studies

No changes.

Computer Science

Computer Science pupils will be allowed to undertake their programming project in unsupervised time.

Drama

The Live Performance requirement can now be satisfied through streamed or recorded performances. We are expecting changes to the NEA requirements. This may affect the length of the Component 1 Devised Piece and may reduce the amount of Script-based Performances required for Component 2. I have been told by the Subject Advisor that Exam boards "will provide clarification in mid-September".

Design Technology

The NEA (coursework) component remains at 50% and retains the elements of design portfolio leading to a prototype solution. Allowances are to be made for the manufacture of the prototype in line with limitations on practical work. The marking criteria will reflect the changes. Exam component remains at 50%, covering the whole GCSE syllabus.

Food and Nutrition

NEA 1 – removed.

NEA 2 – modified. Pupils still have the same allocation of time but will now make up to three initial dishes rather than four. For the final menu, they will prepare, cook and present two dishes within three hours instead of the previous three dishes within three hours.

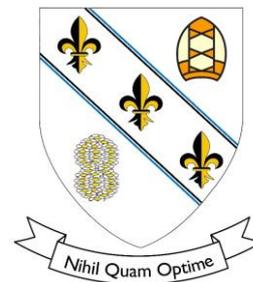
There are still some parts which they have not been confirmed and we have spoken to AQA who are still waiting for a final confirmation from Ofqual. These relate to the weighting of marks for the Controlled Assessment and any changes within the exam content.

Music

Performance Assessment: The original specification required submission of a recording and printed music for a separate single Solo piece and single Ensemble piece, the combined total lasting a minimum of four minutes. This has changed to the following:

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*"perform one or more pieces of music with a combined duration of at least **1.5 MINUTES** if all solo performance or **2 MINUTES** if including any ensemble. (No requirement to perform as part of an ensemble)."*

Composition Assessment: The original specification required submission of a recording and score of two separate compositions with a combined total playing time of three minutes. One piece was to be to a set brief from the exam board, the other to be a free composition. This has changed to the following: *"compose one or more pieces of music with a combined duration of at least **2 MINUTES**. Either in response to an exam board set brief and/or freely composed, with no requirement to do both. NB: The pupil does not have to perform their own composition(s). The recording(s) may be computer generated"*.

Physical Education (GCSE)

Exam boards will be permitted to reduce requirement to two activities and allow both to be individual. Exam boards can also undertake remote moderation using videoed evidence for all activities. Exam boards will be permitted to explore relaxation of the requirements for provision of evidence – for example, type and quality of videoed evidence and the evidence of participation in competitive sport.

Physical Education Cambridge First National

No changes.

Should you have any questions about the changes to your child's courses, please contact me directly.

I will close by sharing that, as a staff, we feel very confident regarding the changes and welcome them. The teaching staff at the College has been exemplary in ensuring our pupils achieve some of the very best GCSE results in the South West over many years. Our courses are well established and the staff have anticipated changes and structured Year 10 so that your child is in the best possible position to achieve good results. If your child works hard, they will do well with us this summer.

Yours faithfully

Mr N Payne
Deputy Executive Headteacher