



Pearson

Policy Watch

Your guide to what's happening in the world of education



The week in a nutshell

As might be expected at this time of year, exams have dominated the week – with influence of COVID-19 only intensifying the focus. The first grades using centre assessment in the UK were published, the Scottish Highers. The SQA's moderation process and its impact on students from different socio-economic groups has been at the centre of debate. Next week it's the turn of A levels and Vocational Qualifications across the rest of the UK, and whatever the results expect front page news again. In a busy week for Ofqual, it has published its appeals process for this summer's results and laid out plans for exams in 2021. Outside of assessment, we've seen welcome support announced for apprentices impacted by the pandemic and the important issue of racial diversity in FE leadership raised with the Secretary of State.

Top stories

Ofqual has [published](#) the appeals procedure for A and AS Levels and GCSEs for this summer's results.

- The procedure sets out how students can appeal their results if they believe there was an administrative error. Schools and colleges can appeal to the exam board should an error calculating grades be made.
- Schools will be able to appeal if they were expecting results this year to “show a very different pattern of grades to results in previous years”.

Ofqual has [published changes to GCSEs, AS and A levels for 2021](#), following consultation.

- The regulator has confirmed the changes it requires exam boards to make to exams and assessments next year. This includes changes to 15 A level subjects, and 25 GCSEs.
- The length and format of papers will not be changed (unless to accommodate new requirements) and a decision on when exams will take place has still to be made.
- Ofqual is also [consulting on changes to Vocational Qualifications for 2021](#).

The [results of Scottish Highers](#) were published, the first in the UK based on centre assessment

- Following moderation, around a quarter of the grades submitted by centres were revised. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has said any "genuine individual injustices" will be "rectified" through the appeals process.
- Responses from: [NASWT & Education Institute of Scotland](#)

The Institute for Apprenticeships has [announced](#) changes to the way that apprentices are assessed with Ofqual and the Office for Students delivering the External Quality Assurance (EQA).

- In a move to simplify, IFATE will retain oversight of the system with employers working together with Ofqual and the OfS to quality assure apprenticeships. These measures will be in place from October.

Pearson news

Mental health teaching partnership announced Pearson is partnering with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust to develop the Tavistock and Portman Digital Academy. This opens Trust teaching to a global audience and anyone with an interest in learning about mental health can register their interest now, with courses bookable from mid-August. [Click here](#)

Pearson tweet of the week



Other news

Parliament

- The Government responds to the Education Select Committee's first report on the impact of COVID-19
- Kate Green writes to Gavin Williamson seeking assurances over exam results

Regulators & funding bodies

- Ofqual - Appeal arrangements for AS, A levels and GCSEs
- Ofqual – Student guide to exam appeals

Schools

- The Children's Commissioner for England believes schools should be the last places to be locked down should any local or national lockdown take place
- Education Policy Institute: Policy analysis of school funding 2021-22
- Funding allocated for 580 building projects at academies, sixth forms & voluntary aided schools in England

Further Education

- Government launches Redundancy Support Service for Apprentices (RASSA) – online & phone support
- Institute for Apprenticeships - Next steps announced for a simplified EQA system
- Black Further Education Leadership Group open letter highlights drop in BAME leaders in English FE colleges – AoC response & ETF response

Higher Education

- Policy Exchange report: Academic Freedom in the UK

Scotland

- UCAS: increase in the number of Scottish students accepted into universities
- Scottish Affairs Committee to investigate future of Scotland's universities

Consultation watch

New consultations

- Ofqual: Consultation on the assessment and awarding of Vocational, Technical and other General Qualifications in 2020 to 2021. [Closes 14 August](#)

Consultation outcomes

- Ofqual - Consultation Outcome: Proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2021 (Open 1-16 July 2020)

What's happening in Parliament next week

- *House of Commons in recess until 1 September*
- *House of Lords in recess until 2 September*