

Questions & Answers from Zoom meeting 16 March 2021

When in May will exams take place?

4/5/2021 – 21/05/2021 (assessments, not exams)

When will assessment content for each subject be announced to students to allow them to plan revision?

From Monday (22 March) students can be told what may come up in their assessments.

What percentage of the overall grade will be from the May exams?

It will vary from subject to subject. For some subjects a proportion of the work may already have been completed and assessed.

Do students continue to go to 6th form after the May assessments?

We are awaiting National Guidance.

Will there be another opportunity after the May assessments to gain more evidence?

There may be some opportunity after May assessments for more evidence to be gathered in some subjects, for example some practical subjects may have final pieces of evidence gathering if there is additional time after the May assessments as teachers must undertake moderation. It won't be for long after the May assessments as teachers must undertake moderation.

When will results be available, and can they be emailed?

Yes, they can be emailed out. Please email exams@fullbrook.surrey.sch.uk to make arrangements.

Will the basket of evidence include work from year 12 as well as year 13?

It could include items from year 12. In the outcome of the consultation document, that all parents/students have access to, it mentions how to balance different sources of evidence. More recent evidence is more likely to be representative of a student's performance. It will be dependent on

the subject as some are NEA (Non Examined Assessment) or coursework in year 12 which may have contributed to the overall course and content that needs to be covered. It is, however, reasonable to say that at the end of a course is where one would be best placed to show the most knowledge and depth of learning in that subject in a form of assessment. Students will be told what is included in the basket of evidence for each subject before the Easter holidays, 1/4/21.

What are the statements of entry?

Confirmation of which exams you are taking. Tutors have issued these to students week beginning 15/3/21. Students need to check it is correct, sign and return to the tutor.

Why exams? Some local colleges have announced there will be no formal assessments.

They are assessments not exams. The assessments do not cover the full content of the course because some students have not completed the whole course so will not be taking traditional formal exams. Students will be taking assessments in topic areas that need to be assessed according to the overall content which has been studied. Local schools are doing the same as we are. We wanted to allow students time back at college to settle in and work with their teachers to add any content that was felt necessary before they sat assessments. Because of the time available and taking the assessments in May in a set period of time, we felt it was the sensible option to schedule what was going to happen. Some colleges are having continuous / weekly assessments from now until the end of May.

How long is an assessment and how does this compare to what would have been an exam?

It will vary from subject to subject. We are still awaiting information from Exam Boards.

However, subjects that do not have any coursework content (Non Examined Assessment) will have longer/more assessments in the May assessment window than those that do.

Will the students be given their assessment marks?

Students will be given information regarding their basket of evidence (which piece of evidence will be used). For some historical pieces of work being included in the basket of evidence, students will know what their marks were already. We will provide further information on this once we have received the information from the exam boards.

As originally suggested by government, will students be allowed to take revision materials into the exams?

Following the outcome of the Ofqual consultation, there will be no revision materials allowed in the assessments.

I seek clarity on the range that will be covered in the May papers - I am concerned that all the reasons for not sitting formal exams in June have just been brought forward a month.

The decisions about what content is to be covered in the May assessments for each subject have yet to be made. This is dependent on the subject content reviews and the decisions that departments take based on this, about what will be included in the basket of evidence.

Are the contents of the basket of evidence negotiable?

No, subject leaders will decide what is in the basket of evidence.

Is it mandatory for a student to sit the assessment?

If you were able to sit the assessment but didn't, you wouldn't receive any marks which would disadvantage you in your overall grades. Therefore, yes, it is vital for students to sit the assessments in May.

Most of the year 13 work has been disrupted so it seems to disadvantage the students to focus mostly on year 13 work in the assessed materials.

Ofqual state that the final grade is to be based on a basket of evidence which enables students to demonstrate their achievement in the subject. Each subject will decide their basket of evidence taking into account what they know about student learning over the course.

When awarding grades, will the loss of face-to-face teaching be taken into account throughout both year 12 and 13?

It is being taken into account by the whole system which is why it is being proposed so that nationally as it is the same for all students across the country. Teachers who know what content has been covered, what they've been assessed on and what they are going on to be assessed on are choosing the basket of evidence. It is the same basket for each student but the items of evidence in the basket are being selected with all of these things in mind.

As they are assessments why is there a need for them to be sat in formal exam conditions? Will there be a possibility of the assessments being open book style?

No, they can't have revision materials in the assessments. This has been directed by Ofqual.

Does Fullbrook as a school have to tell the exam boards what pieces of evidence they are using, or are these pieces of evidence always individual to each student?

Yes, we have to tell the exam boards what evidence is being used for each subject in the basket of evidence and it cannot be different for each individual student.

What are the plans if myself or a family member tests positive and we have to self isolate ?

Each subject will have a shadow paper which will allow students who missed the first paper to sit another one. We also await guidance from Exam Boards as to what special considerations will need to be made in these circumstances.

Given the short amount of time between telling students the content that could come up in the assessments and the assessments themselves, will content be limited sensibly so students don't have too much to revise?

The use of the basket of evidence aims to ensure that content in the May assessments can be reduced. The analysis of the course content and what is in the basket of evidence means that some parts of the content of the course have already been covered and assessed so will not need to form

part of the May assessment. They will be given an indication of what could be covered in the May assessment from week beginning 22/3/21.

Please can you recap the plans for additional revision sessions within school during the Easter holidays? Will there be extra drop in sessions too after Easter?

All the content review sessions will take place in the first week of the Easter holidays allowing students and staff a full week off. Timetable to follow shortly.

Will there be another information evening once you know more from the exam boards?

Yes, there will be. Keep an eye out for the weekly newsletter and emails.

How are you going to support the students with their mental wellbeing during this time, considering the year they've already had?

The circumstances are unusual this year. Once we can communicate all the information to students, they will understand the May assessments only form one part of an evidence basket. Students who are finding the process challenging, the existing sources of support are available to them. We are all in this together to ensure the students are as successful as possible. Students can reach out to teachers, tutors and the F6 Leadership Team if they feel they need additional support.

Whilst all the students have been taught the content not all have learnt and understood it fully, How can any of this material be used in the assessments? Many of the students have really struggled with motivation and their mental health. Will all of this be taken into consideration?

This is why Ofqual have said we need to do a basket of evidence that covers several different aspects of the content. Teachers are aware of what they have taught over the lockdown periods and are taking everything into consideration when making up the baskets of evidence for their subjects. These decisions take time and we don't know everything yet. We only want the best for every young person in Fullbrook 6.

Would it be an idea for your team here tonight to speak to the year 13 students as they really need your support right now and you may get a better understanding of their concerns?

Mr Clouston and his team will be speaking to the students and listening to them – also using the Student Leadership Team as well. We will be offering a range of forums so that students feel they have access to information and can raise queries.

If a student receives an A for example in these May assessments, however their previous work had been at a C or below for example, will the higher grade be overruled or accepted?

This would depend on what else is included in the basket of evidence. No ONE piece of the basket of evidence will determine the overall grade. In a similar vein to the above question, if it were reversed, and the May Assessment score was lower than the rest of the basket of evidence, it wouldn't necessarily take precedent over the other sources of evidence.

What would happen if a student had missed a piece of work which was included in the basket?

If there were appropriate and valid reasons that a student missed a piece of work which was to be included in the evidence basket, they would not be penalised for this. Subject Teacher / Head of Faculty / Head of Centre would use the evidence that had been completed to determine the overall grade.

What considerations will be taken for students that have had 4 teachers for one subject over the A level course?

There are a huge number of factors and variables that are encountered during a 2-year course. All decisions made, be it from deciding what evidence will be included in the basket, what (if any) topics within a course will not be included in May Assessments, and determining the overall grade, will always be carefully considered.

If my child has had a new teacher in a certain subject who doesn't know their capabilities as well as past teachers how will that be managed?

All decisions regarding the overall grade submitted to the exam boards will be taken by a range of teachers, including moderation and checking processes.

How can you use previous work as evidence that we originally didn't know would go towards our final grade? This doesn't necessarily give a fair reflection of our best abilities in those subjects.

All students are in the same position across the country. The basket of evidence used will come from different sources. The May Assessments will give an opportunity to showcase what you can achieve. Not including work from across the course would lead to a higher proportion of evidence being used from the return to school in March, including a much bigger reliance on the May Assessments, which may not suit all.

Please give us the time to make the right decisions. We are as open as we can be. Any ideas that could help we are grateful for your input.