

UCAS PREDICTED GRADES

Background

Students need predicted grades for their sixth form subjects (apart from EPQs – Extended Project Qualifications) so they know which university and other courses they are eligible to apply for. This means they need to know their predicted grades some months ahead of the UCAS application deadline.

Some courses specify ‘tariff points’ whilst others refer to specific grades. In either case, students need a reasonably good understanding of their likely outcomes so they can plan accordingly. Universities are obliged to consider applications from any students whose grades meet, or exceed, the entry requirements for their courses and which are received before the deadline. These predicted grades are used as part of the admissions process, to help them understand an applicant’s potential.

Predicting must strike a fine balance between student aspiration and current reality. Grades should reflect *“the grade of qualification an applicant’s school or college believes they’re likely to achieve in positive circumstances”* (UCAS June 2023).

Process

Once students have completed their Year 12 mock examinations, subject teachers will prepare predicted grades for all students studying their subjects. In doing so, teachers will consider:

- Performance in mock examinations
- Performance in interim assessments during the year
- Typical progress between mock examinations in Year 12
- Historical evidence of likely outcomes in previous students with similar attainment levels
- Any significant, specific barriers to learning for a student

Changing grades

Prediction is not a perfect science. There could be reasons why a student will achieve a higher grade than the prediction set by a teacher. The school will only consider inflating a predicted grade if:

- There have been significant barriers to learning for an individual student during Year 12 and these barriers have been removed.
And /Or
- The student has demonstrated a tangible and sustained improvement in their progress since their mock examinations. A student may be invited to take an additional examination to demonstrate such an improvement.
- A grade prediction will not be inflated simply because the student wants it to be changed. If a student aspires to study a course that has a higher-grade requirement, then their current prediction, they need to demonstrate a tangible and sustained improvement, as above.

Occasionally, teachers may have reason to suppress a grade; this will normally be if a student’s attendance and / or attitude to learning have worsened since mock examinations.

Please note Once a teacher inputs a grade, it will then remain locked. If a teacher has good reason to later change a grade before the final deadline, they must inform the UCAS coordinator as many aspects of a student's application and subsequent options can be impacted as a result.

Risks of inflating predicted grades

Sometimes teachers may come under pressure to inflate predicted grades, to give applicants a better chance of receiving an offer for a certain course. However, this is not without risk, and could significantly disadvantage them.

- An applicant may receive an offer they are unlikely to meet, leading to disappointment on results day.
- Applicants might gain admission to a course which they cannot succeed in; choosing the right course is a very important decision as they will be investing a lot of time, money and effort, and it can be difficult to change.
- If a university or college has reason to believe that a predicted grade is grossly inaccurate, they retain the right to withdraw any offers.

Risks of suppressing predicted grades

In some cases, teachers are encouraged to suppress predicted grades for highly selective courses, due to a belief this will trigger a (relatively) lower offer for an applicant. Again, this is not without risk.

A student may miss out on receiving an offer from their preferred choice, based on suppressed predicted grades. They would then be required to accept an alternative offer, defer entry, or make use of Clearing.

Willink Predicted Grades Timeline

Mock examinations	Late June
Predicted Grades published for students making 'early entry' applications only (Medicine, Veterinary, Dentistry and Oxbridge)	End of Year 12
Deadline for grade changes for 'early entry' students	End of the second full week of Term 1 Y13
Predicted grades published to all other students	End Sept
Deadline for grade changes for all other students	End Oct

**For all enquiries contact our UCAS Co-ordinator, Mrs Matcham in the Sixth Form Office:
01189 838 428 email: jmatcham@willink.w-berks.sch.uk**

UCAS Guidance for schools and colleges

Principles for predicting grades

Predicted grades **should** be:

- **entered for all pending qualifications, unless the assessment method or structure of the qualification makes this inappropriate** – failure to do so can lead to complications or, in some cases, the rejection of an application
- **in the best interests of applicants** – fulfilment and success at college or university is the end goal
- **aspirational but achievable** – stretching predicted grades can be motivational for students
- **determined by professional judgement** – teachers' expertise and experience are vital in informing predictions
- **data-driven** – while each school will have its own process, they should look at past Level 2 and Level 3 performance, and/or internal examinations to inform their predictions
- **finalised by the point of submitting an application** – universities and colleges are only likely to consider the predicted grades received as part of the UCAS application. While they will make every effort to accommodate genuine errors in data entry, this may not always be possible for highly selective courses

Predicted grades **should not** be:

- **affected by student, parental, guardian, or carer pressure** – there are risks associated with inflating or suppressing grades
- **influenced by university or college entry requirements or behaviours** – predicted grades should be set in isolation of an applicant's university or college choice(s)
- **affected by student behaviour or background** – predicted grades should be made objectively and disregard external factors. Be careful to reflect on any preconceptions to mitigate against unconscious bias, particularly for protected characteristics (including sex, race, religion/belief, disability, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment)