



Dear Parent/Carer

As part of our Head Start parent induction evening at the beginning of the autumn term 2015, we highlighted to you that the A Level system of examinations is currently going through a 3 year process of change. This reform is driven by the Government and aims to better equip students for university and employment. The changes are part of a national initiative to ensure the value of A Levels as part of the future education system in this country.

What are the changes?

- AS qualifications (the first year of an A Level) will become standalone and not count towards A2 (the second year of an A Level).
- AS and A Levels will be assessed at the end of the course.
- Greater emphasis will be placed on exams as the most effective form of assessment.
- Some A Level subjects may disappear to prevent duplication.

The course content of A Level subjects is being changed in waves; the process started in September 2015 and will continue for the next 2 years, with all A Level reform being complete for first teaching by September 2017.

The subjects studied at Ossett Sixth Form College, which have already reformed (September 2015), are: **Art and Design, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, English (Language and Literature), History, Physics, Psychology and Sociology**. All remaining subjects not listed above, but offered as part of the curriculum at Ossett Sixth Form, have yet to be reformed and therefore still operate under the old system of an AS qualification which contributes to an overall A Level qualification at the end of Year 13.

What does this mean for students currently in Year 12 at Ossett Sixth Form College?

Students who started their A Level studies at Ossett in September 2015 and are currently in Year 12 will fall into 1 of 3 categories:

1. All their subject choices will have reformed (see list above).
2. Some of their A Level subject choices will have reformed, but some will still be on the old system.
3. None of their A Level subject choices will have been reformed and all of their subjects will still be running under the old system.

At this point in the academic year we would like to reiterate to parents and students that, regardless of which of the above categories a student fits into, **all current Year 12 students will be external assessed via an AS examination in all* of their subjects in summer 2016**. Students who are entered for an AS examination in a subject which has already reformed (September 2015) will receive a grade which will give an indication of their progress in Year 12, will count as a standalone AS qualification in that subject, **but will not count towards their overall A Level at the end of Year 13**.

- *With the one exception of A Level Art which will only be assessed at the end of Year 13. There will be no AS entry in A Level Art summer 2016 for current Year 12 Art students.*

Why are we keeping exams for our students currently studying in Year 12?

As stated above, the process of reform is taking place over 3 years and involves a significant degree of change to the A Level assessment procedure. As a Sixth Form we are very conscious of managing this change in a manner that will best support our students and will ensure that they achieve the best possible outcomes. We know that our students make

significant progress from GCSE and this is often reflected in their AS grades. In this first year of reform we feel that if a student does not have AS grades, universities will initially have to use GCSE results as the most recent indicator of academic ability as they also have to adapt their systems in light of reform (as students will not yet have received their final A Level grades when applying for university). We think this that could disadvantage our students and therefore, in this first wave of reform, we want to retain the AS exams as an up-to-date grade which makes suitability for university clear. As we move through into 2016/17, our resolution on AS entry will be reviewed given that universities will adapt their systems and application procedures. We will therefore be able to move to a full linear system where students are only tested at the end of Year 13, thereby freeing up valuable curriculum time in Year 12 for additional teaching rather than this time being given up to AS examinations.

At this critical point in the academic calendar can we also signpost the arrival of the report/results from the recent round of mock examinations. You will receive this report in advance of the Year 12 Parents Evening which takes place on Tuesday 23rd February (time). We will ensure that a text message is sent home to parents on the day that students receive their reports to confirm distribution.

As ever can we thank you for your support. Should you have any further questions please do visit the website. Alternatively, you can also contact College for further advice and guidance.