



## UCAS Grades Policy

<b>Review Body:</b>	Local Governing Body
<b>Leadership Group Responsibility:</b>	Deputy Head Teacher
<b>Type of Policy:</b>	Non-Statutory
<b>Review Period:</b>	2 yearly
<b>Reviewed:</b>	May 2026
<b>Next Review:</b>	May 2028

UCAS grades are derived by staff at Newstead Wood School in support of a student's progression to higher education, as well as progression to a range of other destinations, e.g., apprenticeship, employment, etc.

### **UCAS Guidelines**

Newstead Wood's policy on UCAS grades has been written in the context of the following guidelines issued by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), ['Predicted grades – what you need to know'](#):

"A predicted grade is the grade of qualification an applicant's school or college believes they're likely to achieve in positive circumstances. These grades are then used by universities and colleges, as part of the admissions process, to help them understand an applicant's potential."

Predicted grades should be:

- entered for all pending qualifications, unless the assessment method or structure of the qualification makes this inappropriate (e.g., EPQ)
- in the best interests of applicants – fulfilment and success at college or university is the end goal
- aspirational but achievable – stretching predicted grades are motivational for students, unattainable predicted grades are not
- determined by professional judgement – teacher expertise and experience are vital in informing predictions
- data-driven – while each school will have its own process, teachers should look at past Level 2 and Level 3 performance, and/or internal examinations to inform 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 and suppressing predicted 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).

### **The School’s Policy**

UCAS grades are estimates and the school takes the view that these should be grades that students are capable of achieving under favourable circumstances. The school’s policy is not to issue UCAS grades based on what students would like to achieve or on the basis of their promise to work harder to obtain it. Put simply, a student will not achieve an unrealistic UCAS grade. Neither is the school’s policy to inflate UCAS grades: this would have the impact of leading to a poorer correlation between predictions and outcomes, thus undermining the credibility of the process and would weaken the integrity of our estimates with many universities. In addition, the school’s approach is never to revise down UCAS grades once these have been issued to students.

The school’s approach is based on the principle that we wish students to achieve excellent A Level grades and progress successfully to their chosen university.

In order to exercise fairness, we have devised a methodology which allows us to take account of students’ progress across the year. Students are told at the beginning of the year that each Data Capture point will count towards their UCAS grade. DC1 is weighted at 10%, DC2 at 15% and DC3 is at 75%. The greatest weighting is given to DC3 because these assessments are full sets of mock exams based on real A Level papers; they carry with them high validity due to the way the students take them (all at the same time in exam conditions) and using A Level mark schemes and boundaries to establish marks.

From this standardised score teachers are allowed to ‘uplift’ students by up to half a grade.

In coming to a judgement on whether a student should be uplifted, subject teachers and/or Heads of Department may consider the following:

- Previous examination performance at GCSE
- Attendance record
- Performance under test conditions in school
- Data drawn from homework and assessments over time
- Classroom behaviour and commitment in the subject
- Engagement in extracurricular activities
- Contextual factors which may have caused temporary underperformance.

In summary, the school’s process is holistic, considering a range of factors; evidence-based, pointing to tangible data over a period of time; realistic, representing what this evidence tells us about the student; and draws on staff’s professional judgement.

It is also worth stressing that universities themselves will not simply consider a student’s UCAS grades but a range of additional factors, including their performance at GCSE and their Personal Statement which will include work experience and other supporting activities. They will also consider the school’s reference which will be written by a member of the school’s staff and checked by the Head of Sixth Form.

Additionally, many universities will require additional evidence in their selection process, such as a pre-interview assessment, written work, interview, etc. Universities will often look at the context of the UCAS grades presented; for example, the quality of school provision, whether parents/carers have previously accessed higher education, the area in which the student lives and, where relevant,

personal circumstances and/or challenges faced. The school includes all this information (provided we are made aware of it) in the reference when presenting UCAS grades to universities.

### **Queries**

If a student feels a genuine mistake has been made with a UCAS grade, they should raise this with the Head of Sixth Form for investigation, clearly outlining why they feel there has been a mistake (with due regard for the information above on what is considered when establishing the UCAS grade).

Changes to a UCAS grade will not be considered because a student or parent/carer wishes to have a higher grade in order to apply to a particular university or course, or because of a commitment to work harder going forward.

Any changes to UCAS grades can only be made by the relevant staff. Where a mistake has been made, the change will be communicated to the relevant staff (Head of Sixth Form and Sixth Form Administrator) so that it can be amended on Arbor. Where a student has not got the UCAS grades to apply for their desired course/university, they should discuss their options with either their referee or the Head of Sixth Form. Options may include different courses and/or universities or taking a gap year.

### **Former Students**

Many students choose to either defer their university entry or apply after they have left school. The Head of Sixth Form will work with the student to produce the relevant information needed for the application.

Students should contact the Head of Sixth Form well in advance of the UCAS deadline in order to highlight their intention to apply.

If a student decides to resit qualifications, they will require UCAS grades for their application.

UCAS grades for students applying after they have left school will either be the original UCAS grades issued when the student was at school or one grade higher than what the student has already achieved, whichever is higher.

The school will only issue UCAS grades for qualifications being resat at the school.

Any qualifications sat elsewhere will require the relevant centre to issue the UCAS grade and any relevant comments to be added to the reference. These need to be sent to the Head of Sixth Form by the relevant centre and students should speak to the Head of Sixth Form in advance of such comments and grades being received.