

I know that the last few months have been uniquely challenging for all of you, and the uncertainty of the last week will have added additional anxiety. We have been listening carefully to the concerns expressed about the ways calculated grades had been standardised, and I hope that the announcement that teachers' centre assessment grades will now be awarded has provided some relief and reassurance.

Following on from the Secretary of State's announcement on 17 August, you will shortly be issued with your teachers' centre assessment grades for any A and AS level results you received last week. If any one of your original calculated grades was higher than the centre assessment grade, your calculated grade will stand. These will now be your final grades, unless there is evidence of a processing error having been made: you will not be able to appeal on the basis of a valid mock grade, as the system put in place for appeals against calculated grades no longer applies. Your teachers' centre assessment grades will have been put together by your school or college, taking into account all the available evidence about your likely performance had exams gone ahead, including any mock results you have. For vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs), the situation is different as not all VTQs were subject to an algorithm like A levels and because the centre assessment grade was not used in the same way. Some VTQs are being reviewed and reissued in line with the principles used for A levels. As set out on 19 August by Pearson, the body that provides BTECs, the results for BTECs will also be reviewed and reissued as soon as possible.

I am aware those of you still seeking a place at university will have questions about the availability of places and what you should do next. The Government and higher education sector have together committed to ensuring all students who achieved the required grades will be offered a place at their first-choice university. Yesterday's daily meeting of the Government's Higher Education Taskforce agreed to honour all offers across all courses to students who meet their conditions this coming year wherever possible, or if maximum capacity is reached to offer a suitable alternative course that you are happy with or a deferred place at the same university.

In the limited circumstances where courses have been filled, and where there is no possibility of further students being offered places, universities have agreed that they will offer a suitable alternative course that you would be happy with or a deferred place for 2021 starts. If you do not wish to defer you can retain the offer that you currently have or enter Clearing. **The first thing you should do is speak to your preferred university to see what options are available before taking any actions.** Universities will have your grades no later than Friday. If there are places available UCAS will be able to help you release yourself from any existing offer to take the new offer at your preferred university. **Universities will be receiving a number of calls at the moment, so please keep trying or email if you do not get through immediately.** Our primary goal is to ensure that the vast majority of students who want to go to university this year can do so and over 75% students have already been placed in their primary or insurance offer – with over 67% in their first offer.

If you have applied for student finance but want to change your course, university or college, you should update your details on your online account at [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance). If you have not already applied for student finance, it is important that you complete your finance application as soon as possible as it can take six weeks to process an application. Student Finance England will make an initial assessment, so you have some funding as close to the start of your course as possible.

This year many more students have been successful in meeting the required grades to study medicine and dentistry, and the Government has removed the caps on student numbers in place on both of these subjects. We know it is especially important to ensure a supply of medical students during a global pandemic. The government normally provides grant funding for providers offering these courses, as well as other subjects which are expensive to deliver. We will be offering additional funding to providers to help meet these costs.

Finally, I know that many of you will also be choosing to either pursue technical and vocational qualifications, or to enter into a job or apprenticeship. I wish all of you the very best luck at this exciting point in your life, whatever direction you choose to take.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michelle Donelan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

**Michelle Donelan MP**  
**Minister of State for Universities**