

Covid-19 : Information for Admissions Teams – UCAS 2021 Cycle

Backwell School went into lockdown as of Friday 20 March 2020 and from then on students were set and submitted work remotely via our virtual learning platform. Initially for Year 12, this took the form of at least one substantial piece of work a week per subject, following the curriculum. As of Monday 27 April 2020, remote teaching was adapted to include the use of weekly audio PowerPoint presentations to deliver the curriculum.

From Monday 15 June 2020, Backwell students had regular “live” lessons via Microsoft Teams. This took the form of a minimum of two lessons per subject per week, increasing to three to four 50-minute lessons over the final weeks of term 6.

Other than spending at least one afternoon on the school site to focus on their Future Plans, the vast majority of Backwell Sixth Form students continued to learn remotely until the end of the academic year, as “live” lessons were judged to be successful. Any student who was reported as underachieving or struggling with remote learning was brought in for at least one day a week for supervised study and to ensure that they had some “face to face” subject specialist time.

Furthermore, Music students who did not have access to the appropriate technology for composing at home, were able to make use of the school music studio once a week until the end of term.

Assessments, Examinations and UCAS predicted grades

In the week commencing Monday 27 April 2020, Year 12 students completed remote trial exams. These papers were a minimum of 1 hour and 30 minutes in length, testing student knowledge of the course. With the support of parents, the expectation was for these to be completed under exam conditions. These were the only formal “mock” exams completed last academic year. Every student in Year 12 was given a forecast grade at the end of Year 12, based on evidence from all of their work across Year 12, including the trial exams completed during remote learning. This formed the basis of their UCAS predicted grades. During term 1 of the new academic year, students have been given the opportunity to complete further assessments and/or to provide evidence that they are working above this grade.

Those students who were due to complete AS level examinations, were awarded a Centre Assessed Grade (CAG), calculated in line with the national and school guidance. The following was the process at Backwell School:

- Class teachers were asked to consider what was the most likely final grade for each student in their class. They based their forecast on all their knowledge of the students over the period of the course, including, but not solely based on, performance in trial exams. They also ranked the students within each grade.
- Heads of department then moderated the scores given to them by class teachers to ensure a consistent and fair approach within each subject. They ensured that CAGs reflected all relevant information about a student, including whether they would have had exam access arrangements and whether their prior performance had been affected by illness or other significant disruption.
- The Senior Leadership Team of the school then undertook a further moderation to ensure that the overall CAGs passed on to the exam boards were the fairest and most robust reflection of students’ likely performance had exams taken place.
- Finally, the Trustees of the LSP met with Mr Nunes and other senior leaders of the school to verify and approve the methods used in forming the CAGs.