

February 2023 Curriculum Update



- Contingency Exams for 2A A-Level students and GCSE students
- Structured revision for 2A students
- Transfer Exams for 1A students
- Avoiding plagiarism in coursework

20th February 2023

Summary of key points

- 2A A-Level and all GCSE students will sit Contingency Exams between Monday 17th and Friday 21st April.
- Registered Pro-Study and Enrichment **for all students** (Transition, 1A and 2A) will be suspended during the week: Monday 17th to Friday 21st April.
- 2A students will be following structured revision programmes within each of their subjects starting week beginning Monday 20th February.
- All 1A students following A-Level courses will sit Transfer Exams between Tuesday 16th and Thursday 25th May.
- Students submitting coursework on all courses are reminded to ensure their work is their own and does not fall foul of plagiarism.
- Students are asked to familiarise themselves with exam conduct guidance.

Dear students and parents,

I hope that you have enjoyed a restful half term break and are now looking forward to six packed weeks of college until the Easter holiday. This half term is always busy as students start their preparations in earnest for the summer exams. I would like to take this opportunity to update you on a few important curriculum matters.

Contingency Exams – for GCSE and 2A A-Level students only

Whilst there is absolutely no suggestion from the Department for Education or Ofqual (the regulators of qualifications in the UK) that public exams will be cancelled this summer, Ofqual have recently asked all schools and colleges to hold contingency exams just in case. We will therefore be holding off-timetable **contingency exams for 2A A-Level students and all GCSE students between Monday 17th and Friday 21st of April.**

The purpose of these contingency exams is to provide robust evidence that allows teachers to determine students grades if a pandemic were to prevent public exams from going ahead. The contingency exams really are a 'belt and braces' approach as there is no indication at all that public exams will be cancelled this summer.

The contingency exams will be set and marked according to exam board mark-schemes by Collyer's staff. As such these are internal exams. Student's will sit their contingency exams in one of our normal exam spaces, with full exam access arrangements in place for students who are eligible. Contingency exams will be approximately 2 hours in length. Student's will to some degree be 'off timetable' during the contingency exam week – please see below for details.

The timing of the contingency exams is actually very fortunate, as they fall within our normal mock exam window. Whilst students will also be sitting practice assessments and mock exams in class, the contingency exams offer students the opportunity to experience exams under full exam conditions in one of our exam spaces. To all intents and purposes the contingency exams will feel like the public exams, and therefore provide great practice for the real thing.

Please carefully read the following points regarding arrangements for the contingency exams:

- Contingency exams **will only be held for 2A A-Level students and GCSE Maths and English students.**
- Students following vocational (Level 2 and Level 3 BTEC, and Diplomas) and technical (T-Level) courses will not sit contingency exams.
- Students can find the times and locations of their contingency exams on the exams tab of their MyProgress pages.
- All 2A A-Level and GCSE lessons will be suspended during the week: Monday 17th to Friday 21st April, **except: A-Level Contemporary Fine Art, A-Level Graphics, A-Level Photography and A-Level Textiles.**
- **Level 2 and Level 3 BTEC / Diploma, and T-Level lessons will proceed as normal.**
- All registered Pro-Study and Enrichment sessions will be suspended during the contingency exam week.
- 2A tutor sessions will be suspended during the contingency exam week.

- Where students are on a mixed programme of A-Levels and Level 3 BTECs, students should attend their BTEC lessons during the contingency exam week unless sitting a contingency exam.

Please see the examples below or speak to your tutor or subject teacher for further guidance.

Example	Subjects	Guidance
Student A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-Level Philosophy • A-Level Drama • A-Level History 	Student A will be off timetable for the whole of the contingency exam week. They will only attend for their contingency exams in their three A-Level subjects. They will not attend registered Pro-Study, Enrichment or Tutorial.
Student B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-Level Physics • A-Level Maths • Level 3 BTEC Business 	Student B will be off-timetable for the majority of their week i.e., they will not attend A-Level Physics or A-Level Maths, but they will attend Level 3 BTEC Business unless they are sitting their Physics or Maths contingency exams during their BTEC Business lesson time. They will not attend registered Pro-Study, Enrichment or Tutorial.
Student C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-Level Geography • A-Level French • A-Level Contemporary Fine Art 	Student C will be off-timetable for the majority of their week i.e., they will not attend A-Level Geography or A-Level French, but they will attend A-Level Contemporary Fine Art unless they are sitting their Geography or French contingency exams during their Contemporary Fine Art lessons. They will not attend registered Pro-Study, Enrichment or Tutorial.

Structured revision – all 2A students (A-Level, vocational and technical)

Starting on Monday 20th February, all 2A students sitting public exams in the summer will begin **structured revision** in each of their subjects. The work set for structured revision will be in addition to normal homework and coursework preparation. With only 12 weeks before the summer public exams begin, now is the ideal time to start revision in earnest. By structuring students' revision, teachers are setting the pace and expectation of what makes for effective revision. Your teachers will provide you with a week-by-week schedule of exactly what you should be revising and how you should practice in preparation for your summer exams. You may well of course develop your own revision schedule that sits alongside your structured revision schedule. I do ask that parents help support their student in keeping to the structured revision schedule – it will pay dividends by exam and results time.

Transfer Exams – 1A students following A-Level courses

All students currently in their first year, 1A, of A-Levels will sit Transfer exams in these subjects between Tuesday 16th and Thursday 25th May. As 1A students will go on study leave from 4:15PM on Monday 15th May, all Transfer Exams will be off-timetable. Students will complete these Transfer Exams under full exam conditions with exam access arrangements in place for those students who are eligible.

If a student fails a Transfer Exam they will offered a resit on the 5th or 6th of July, where a pass must be secured for progression to their second year.

Whilst only a pass is required to proceed to the second year of their courses, students are strongly encouraged to prepare for their Transfer Exams fully. The results students achieve in their Transfer Exams / Transfer resits make a substantial contribution to their UCAS predicted grades.

Why are vocational and technical students not having Transfer or Contingency exams?

1A and 2A students following vocational (BTEC and Diploma) or technical (T-Level courses) may wonder why they will not be having Transfer Exams or Contingency Exams. The reason is that vocational and technical qualifications have a large coursework component alongside exams that take place during their courses rather than at the end of their courses as A-Levels and GCSEs do. There is therefore far more opportunity for robust evidence gathering during the course of a vocational or technical qualification that indicates a student's performance. The Department for Education and Ofqual therefore have only demanded contingency exams for A-Level and GCSE qualifications.

Coursework and plagiarism

Many students across all year groups and qualifications will be submitting coursework over the coming weeks. In the vast majority of cases students complete original coursework of exceptional quality. The skills learned and perseverance demonstrated in preparing large pieces of coursework will serve students for life.

Clear guidance on what constitutes plagiarism will have been given to students by their teachers. Students should be aware of the following:

- All coursework is run through sophisticated anti-plagiarism software.
- Teachers must be confident that the work a student submits is their own.

There are a multitude of methods that students may use to wilfully plagiarise e.g. a Google search for similar coursework, copying a class mate or siblings coursework, failure to reference correctly, and more recently text writing applications such as ChatGPT. However, please be reminded of the two points above: all coursework will be run through anti-plagiarism software, and additionally teachers must be confident that any work submitted is the student's own work. Do bear in mind that teachers are very adept at spotting writing styles.

In most cases where plagiarism is suspected, Collyer's staff have to report this to the relevant exam board. The penalties for plagiarism are then severe. At minimum a student caught plagiarising can expect to score zero for the plagiarised coursework and not be allowed to resubmit. For example: a student found having plagiarised a piece of coursework worth 20% of their course will receive zero for this work – the student will then only be able to access 80% of the marks of the qualification. It is not uncommon however for an exam board to remove a student entirely from a qualification when plagiarism has occurred.

Exam conduct

For all exams students should be aware of the guidance regarding permitted conduct in exams available on their exams tab of MyProgress. Can I draw particular attention to use of electronic equipment in exams. With the exception of permitted calculators and reading pens, students must not have any prohibited electrical equipment on their person during an exam. Students found with prohibited electrical equipment including mobile phones and smart watches will receive zero marks for that exam even if the device is turned off.

I wish all student the very best over the course of the next half term as they work hard towards their summer assessments.

Kind regards,

Rob Hussey

Vice Principal: Curriculum

Key dates

Event	Year Group	Dates / details
Structured Revision	2A and GCSE – all courses that have summer public exams	Starts on Monday 20 th February through to the start of the summer exams
Contingency Exams	2A A-Level students and all GCSE English and Maths students	From Monday 17 th April to Friday 21 st April
Registered Pro-Study and Enrichment - suspended	All students: Transition, 1A and 2A	All registered Pro-Study and Enrichment will be suspended from Monday 17 th April to Friday 21 st April
Tutorial	2A and GCSE students	Tutorial sessions will be suspended for 2A and GCSE student only from Monday 17 th April to Friday 21 st April
Transition Study Leave	Transition students	From Friday 26 th May at 4:15PM to Friday 16 th June. Students complete work experience from Monday 19 th to Friday 23 rd June, before returning to college on Monday 26 th June.
1A Study Leave	1A	From Monday 15 th May at 4:15PM to Friday 9 th June. Students return to full timetable on Monday 12 th June.
2A Study Leave	2A	From Friday 19 th May at 4:15PM.
Transfer Exams	1A	From Tuesday 16 th May to Thursday 25 th May