



ABINGDON

A LEVEL PREDICTED GRADES POLICY

1. How Predicted Grades are formed

At Abingdon, Heads of Department are responsible for submitting predicted grades to the University Applications Office for use on a number of Higher Education (HE) application forms, most notably the UCAS form. Predicted Grades are submitted early in the Michaelmas Term of a boy's Upper Sixth Year, according to deadlines set by the University Applications Office (early September for Oxbridge and Medicine, Veterinary and Dentistry applications, late September/early October for all other applications).

When drawing up their Predicted Grades, Heads of Department will rely heavily on the Guidance Grades that will have been issued towards the end of the Summer Term of a boy's Lower Sixth. This grade will have been based on a number of data points, chiefly the November Test and the Summer Exam, but will also take in other performance indicators during the year, for example:

- end of topic tests
- teacher comments on a boy's performance in and approach to their subjects, including homeworks, class contribution and routine tests
- departmental experience in tracking L6th performance through to A Level outcomes

Guidance Grades may be a single grade (e.g. "A") or may be split across two contiguous grades (e.g. "A/B", but not "A/C").

Predicted Grades may not be split and when turning Guidance Grades into Predicted Grades, Heads of Department will usually err on the optimistic side with split grades so that, for example, a Guidance Grade of "A/B" given at the end of the Lower Sixth would usually translate into an "A" Predicted Grade unless there were contrary indicators in the intervening time. By forming Guidance Grades in this way, boys can be fairly confident about their likely Predicted Grades by the end of their Lower Sixth.

Boys who wish to improve on their likely Predicted Grade once they have been issued with the Guidance Grade in the Summer of their Lower Sixth will usually be given the opportunity to prove their case via such things as completing some summer holiday work and taking a test in the September of their Upper Sixth. Boys making post-October 15th applications will also have the opportunity to prove themselves over the first 3-4 weeks of term before Heads of Department officially submit their predictions for them. Heads of Department may additionally have data from the Summer to consider, in the form of actual AS results for those subjects that have not yet been reformed and continue to sit one or more of the legacy AS units (e.g. Government & Politics).

What Heads of Department do **not** take into account when forming either Guidance or Predicted Grades is what a boy thinks he needs to get into his university/course of choice; nor do they pay much attention to a boy's promise that he will 'work much harder in his Upper Sixth' than he did in the Lower Sixth. Thus, Abingdon's Guidance and Predicted Grades are an honest assessment of a boy's most likely achievement at A level, based on as much evidence as we can gather as well as substantial teacher experience. As such, we are confident in the grades we submit and will only consider altering a grade if a strong and convincing *prima facie* case can be made for us to consider a change, based on a potential error in the process that will have been undertaken as described above.

Boys should also keep aware that a Predicted Grade in a subject is only one of a series of indicators that universities look at when making offers and it thus needs to be kept in perspective. Universities can and do make offers at levels above prediction when they can see a strong case being made in other areas of the UCAS form (e.g. personal statement and school reference). Also, boys should always be mindful of the importance of applying for suitable courses at suitable institutions. Securing an offer to get on a course on the basis of unrealistic grade predictions is unlikely to lead to ultimate success.

2. How boys are informed of their predicted grades

Once the grades have been submitted by the Heads of Department, Tutors are asked to discuss them with their tutees in light of the universities discussions that will have been ongoing since the Lower Sixth. Boys will be directly emailed their predictions, with a copy going to tutors to signal the next step in the process has begun.

3. Right of appeal

A boy has the right to appeal his Predicted Grade and there will be a set time of **five days** when appeals can be made after the predictions have been emailed, starting with the first full day following the issuing of grades and ending at 5.20pm on the fifth day thereafter. Appeals should be submitted in the first place by a direct appeal to the relevant Head of Department. However, appeals will not be considered if their only substantive basis is simply a boy's *desire* for a higher prediction. In order to have a chance of success, an appeal would have to outline how the process used to form the prediction (as outlined above) should reasonably have produced a higher prediction.

Heads of Departments will consider each case on its merits and respond directly to the boy with some detail as to why the grade is to be changed or to remain the same. If an appeal fails and the boy remains dissatisfied with the outcome and its explanation, then a final appeal may be made to the Deputy Head (Academic) for arbitration. Such an appeal needs to be made within **three days** of the first appeal decision being communicated, starting with the first full day following the delivery of the decision and ending at 5.20pm on the third day thereafter. The DHA will reconsider the case as soon as is practicable and make a final decision.

4. Further considerations

In exceptional circumstances, it may be the case that a boy's progress in the Upper Sixth (judged over half a term or more) is so rapid and impressive that the predicted grade issued does appear to be too low. This would be likely to be seen only some time after a UCAS (or other HE) form has been submitted and is very rare. In these circumstances, a further appeal to the Head of Department is allowable, so long as clear evidence can be offered (e.g. a sustained series of assessment / test marks). Should a predicted grade change be warranted, then the Head of Department will communicate this to the University Applications Office, who will communicate the change directly to a boy's chosen HE options.

A table to show the process leading up to the formation and publication of Predicted Grades

L6th: November	November Tests; follow up by Sixth Form team & DHA for those who look to be struggling.
L6th: January	Retests for those deemed by HoDs to have fallen below an acceptable standard (on the day before term begins)
L6th: Lent Term	Most subjects will collect a formal data point in this term (e.g. end of topic test) according to their own timings.
L6th: Summer Term	Internal Exams after half term; some will continue to sit actual AS units in some unformed subjects. Guidance Grades formed and issued. Boys offered opportunity to take away holiday work in light of their Guidance Grade to improve on their likely Predicted Grade.
L6th: August	Any legacy AS unit results published
U6th: September/October	Boys tested on any summer work they did and/or hand in work completed. Predicted Grades for pre-October 15th candidates formed and issued very close to the beginning of term. Appeals window open. Predicted Grades for post-October 15th candidates formed and issued in late September/early October. Appeals window open
U6th post-September/October	In very exceptional circumstances, boys who show significant improvement after the submission of their UCAS form (or equivalent) will be able to ask the School to contact their chosen HE options to communicate an improvement in prediction.

Deputy Head (Academic) & Master i/c Universities Applications
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