

Principles for KS4 Predicted Grades for Sheffield Progress

During the winter term (around November), all Y11 students are asked to complete applications for Post 16 education through Sheffield Progress. This includes application for entry to High Storrs 6th form, another 11-18 school 6th form e.g. Silverdale, King Edward VII, or entry to college e.g. Sheffield College.

When a student applies for Post 16 education through Sheffield Progress, the school is asked to provide predicted grades in order that schools and colleges are best able to establish the suitability of the student to their chosen course e.g. A-Levels / BTECs.

1. When do students receive their predicted grades?

The grades which are submitted by High Storrs to Sheffield Progress are the Estimated grades published in Y11 Tracker 2 in early December. This tracker also contains the results of Y11 November trial examinations.

2. How are estimated grades used by Sheffield Progress and other schools and colleges?

At the end of Y11, all students need to apply for their next step in education, completed via Sheffield Progress. Y11 students complete their online application, and identify courses at schools / colleges where they wish to apply. Some of these courses have specific entry criteria e.g. to study Biology at A-Level, students must attain at least a Grade 6 in GCSE Biology or Combined Science.

Schools and colleges receive the application (including estimated grades) from students, and then check the estimated grades against the entry requirements for the course. Some estimates can have a major impact on applications e.g. 4/5 in English, or 3/4 in Maths. This is why subject teachers use a range of evidence, as well as their professional expertise to make predictions. Teachers are aware that a low prediction in a particular subject could stop a student being able to study a particular course at 6th form or college.

It is critically important that estimated grades are thoroughly considered and reflect a student's ability and likely outcomes, in order that students receive the correct support in terms of careers guidance from school, and access the correct level of course after Y11.

3. How are predicted grades decided?

It is important that we predict grades that we feel are a true reflection of each student's ability and potential, in order that students may select the Post 16 pathway which is right for them. We adopt an honest and evidence-based approach to this process, whereby attainment and progress in Year 11 are the main indicators of GCSE estimates.

The teacher or teachers of each subject decide the predicted grades for their students, as they know their own students best. ***No single piece of evidence is used in isolation to provide an estimated grade for Sheffield Progress, and the outcome of a November Y11 trial examination will not be used on its own as the end of course estimate.***

Teachers will use a wide range of evidence and may consider some or all of the following factors when making their decision:

- Results of Y11 November trial examinations
- Results of end of Y10 internal examinations
- Results of Year 10 and Y11 assessments
- Attitude to Learning (A2L)
- Performance in homework assignments throughout the course
- Independent work
- Response to feedback
- The student's engagement and effort in the subject
- Professional judgement and experience of making predictions for Sheffield Progress

For example, a student who consistently achieves grade 5 throughout Year 10 and Y11 in assessments and homework assignments in History may be predicted a Grade 5, or indeed a Grade 6 if they have positive Attitude to Learning. It is unlikely, however, that such a student would be predicted a Grade 7 as the evidence would not support such a prediction.

Teachers will not base their predictions on a student's wishes, what the student needs to get into a particular course, or on students' promises that they will 'work harder for the real exams'.

Whilst most subjects taken by Y11 students run over 2/3 years (Maths, Science, MFL, Geography, History), nearly all students take one 1-year GCSE option subject in Y11. These subjects do not have November trial examinations, and therefore teachers use internal tests and assessments, attitude to learning and homework assignments on which to base estimates.

4. Are results from Y10 examinations included with grades to Sheffield Progress?

Published results from GCSEs taken at the end of Y10 will be submitted to Sheffield Progress by the school. It is made clear to Sheffield Progress which grades for each student are banked results from completed courses, and which are estimates for exams to be taken at the end of Y11.

5. Requests for higher estimated grades

It is understandable that students (and parents) may want teachers to predict higher GCSE grades so that the student may be granted a place at a particular school or onto a particular course. However, we have a professional and moral responsibility to ensure that the student has realistic expectations with regards to their abilities, whilst still remaining motivational and aspirational.

There are a number of potential consequences of over-predicting GCSE grades:

- i. If student estimates are unrealistically high, the student may receive the offer of a place based on these grades. If the student does not achieve their estimated grades, they will then find themselves unable to start at a school or college because they have not met the entry requirements for that course.

- ii. The student may also look like they have secured a place on a course for September. However, the student is not then provided with the correct support or guidance in school, and has selected a course which may be the wrong option for them – not every student is suited to A-Levels or to a school 6th form.
- iii. After receiving their results in August, the student must then change their choice of subjects / course on the day of enrolment with little time to consider options because they have not achieved the grades required to access the course. Additionally, they might not have gained to grades required to join that 6th form or college on any course and have to consider completely different options.
- iv. Teachers are asked to go against their professional judgement and honest opinion, which can cause conflict between teachers, students, parents and the school.

4. Extenuating circumstances

If a student feels that a particular predicted grade is not a true reflection of their ability due to exceptional circumstances or due to an error, they should discuss this with their teacher or Head of House / Student Support Assistant in the first instance. They will be asked to outline the reasons why they think the predicted grade is not a fair assessment of what they may achieve. Teachers may set additional assessments to help them decide if increasing the predicted grade is honest and evidence-based.

For example, if a student's Y11 mock exam result was particularly low, or they were absent from the examination with good reason, their teacher may allow them to sit another assessment under exam conditions.

However, a great deal of time and careful consideration is given by teachers when making predictions for submission to Sheffield Progress, and grades will not be changed without clear evidence as to where an error or unrepresentative judgement may have taken place.