



A Level Economics and Maths - update on exams

For the attention of the Head of Centre

Dear Colleague,

I am writing further to my **letter** of 27 June 2017 and would like to provide you with an update on the investigations into allegations of leaked examination papers in Economics and Mathematics A levels.

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the students receiving their results today. I'd also like to recognise the teachers who work tirelessly every day to help young people progress to the next stage of their education or into employment. Our job is to ensure that students receive fair outcomes for their hard work and performance in their examinations. I am aware that some students would like to understand how we can be confident of the fairness of grades in subjects where there were allegations of leaks, so I would like to explain how we have ensured this is the case in both Economics and Mathematics A level.

In the case of the Economics A level, we were alerted to the fact that a comment had been posted on social media immediately before the start of the exam making broad references to topics included in the examination but without any specific detail. Following our investigation and interviews with the candidates involved, as well as monitoring student answers during the marking period, we remain confident that no advantage was gained by any student. We have concluded our investigation and the student involved has been disqualified from taking qualifications this year.

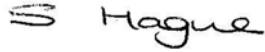
The circumstances surrounding Maths A level were more complex and remain subject to an ongoing police investigation. We remain confident that the breach was localised amongst a small group of centres and candidates. We know that some students who contacted us were concerned that the process of setting of grade boundaries for the majority might be affected by the small number of candidates who had accessed the paper before it was sat. I can confirm that the review of statistical and qualitative evidence that contributed to the setting of grade boundaries excluded those candidates from the small number of affected centres. Every student can therefore be confident that the grade boundaries were set fairly and that they can have confidence in their results.

In order to ascertain whether any individual students had gained access to the question papers, we have undertaken a thorough investigation. This has included interviewing individual students, statistical analysis of the performance of individual students across the units that contribute to the A level qualification and professional reviews of evidence from student responses. We take allegations and evidence of malpractice extremely seriously. It is critical to public confidence in the system and fairness to all learners that where students have been found to have accessed the examination papers in advance, we take the appropriate action. We have withheld the results for a small number of students where we have completed our investigations and we will be following the JCQ malpractice sanctions with those involved. Where others may be included in the ongoing police investigation, we reserve the right to take action should any further

individuals be subsequently found to have accessed the question in advance.

Exams are an important part of our education system and a professional and fair system is underpinned by a strong partnership between exam boards and the teachers we work with every day. Should you have any further questions or have any students that remain concerned about their results, please contact me at assessmentfeedback@pearson.com.

Yours faithfully



Sharon Hague
Responsible Officer for Edexcel Qualifications



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