



# UCAS Estimated Grades: Policy Statement

## 1. Introduction

When a student applies to university through UCAS, Blackpool Sixth is asked to give an estimated grade for each subject. This is so universities are able to establish the suitability of a student for their chosen course. The below sets out the UCAS estimated grade policy at Blackpool Sixth.

## 2. The college's approach

The college adopts an **optimistic, aspirational** but **realistic** approach to deciding on UCAS estimated grades.

*The UCAS estimated grade is the grade teachers believe a student could **potentially** achieve by the end of their course, in the **most positive circumstances**. This provides universities with a **realistic** understanding of a student's academic ability and potential.*

We aim to provide UCAS estimated grades that give students the best chance of getting offers for their chosen subjects because we know that this motivates students to improve. However, we ensure that our UCAS grades are realistic and not excessively optimistic. Students with unrealistic UCAS grades may find themselves without a university place on results day as they were unable to achieve the entry requirements needed as part of their offer.

## 3. How are estimated grades decided?

Teachers adopt a rigorous, evidence-based approach whereby progress through a student's lower sixth year is the main indicator for the prediction. Teachers will make a professional judgement considering the following factors when making their decision:

- Results of lower sixth key assessment/assignments, mock exams, coursework and other non-examined assessments.
- Progress grades awarded as part of the college's progress review system.
- Performance in class activities and in directed study (homework) tasks.
- Attitude and commitment to learning.
- Known extenuating circumstances (e.g significant illness or adverse personal circumstances).
- Teacher expertise and experience of how a student's performance progresses throughout the course.

Estimated grades do **assume a degree of improvement** in the upper sixth year. As a result of this, and the **optimistic, aspirational approach** that is taken, it is not unusual for estimated grades to be higher than a student's actual performance at that time.

UCAS estimated grades are **not** based on:

- a student's wishes.
- the entry requirements of a student's chosen courses - UCAS estimated grades are set in isolation of the rest of a student's application.
- a promise from the student of significant improvement; while commitment to significant improvement is admirable, for A-levels, students in the upper sixth are expected to work harder just to maintain their grades. This is due to the increased difficulty in content in the second year of the course. Furthermore, a certain degree of improvement will have already been factored into the UCAS estimated grade due to the optimistic and aspirational approach that we take.

#### 4. When will UCAS estimated grades be made available?

Estimated grades will be made by teachers of lower sixth classes towards the end of the summer term and will be available to students and their parents/carers by early in the upper sixth year. This ensures that all students, including early-entry applicants (e.g Oxbridge, medicine) have sufficient time to consider their estimated grades when choosing appropriate courses to apply for.

#### 5. Can a student request a review of their UCAS estimated grade?

A student can only request a review of a UCAS estimated grade for the following reasons:

- The student has valid evidence that the estimated grade is not a true reflection of their progress.
- There is valid evidence that extenuating circumstances, such as significant illness or adverse personal circumstances have not been taken into account.
- There is valid evidence of bias and/or discrimination.

The fact that a student 'needs' a certain grade for a particular course or university is not a reason for requesting a review. Any requests for review must be accompanied with appropriate evidence.

The process for requesting a review is outlined below:

1. The student completes an 'estimated grade review form' available from their pastoral mentor. Appropriate evidence must be provided, such as a letter from a doctor or other professional giving details of any extenuating circumstances that have not previously been taken into account.
2. The completed form and accompanying evidence is submitted to the student's pastoral mentor who will pass the form and evidence to the relevant member of the college leadership team.
3. A member of the college's leadership team will then review the information and evidence, consult with teacher(s), as relevant, and make a decision as to whether:
  - a. the initial judgement was correct and therefore there will be no change to the estimated grade.
  - b. the estimated grade will be increased.
4. All requests for review will be responded to within 10 college days of receipt of the completed 'estimated grade review form'.
5. If a student is unhappy with the decision, they may wish to raise a complaint through the college's "Compliments, concerns and complaints policy", available on the college website <https://www.blackpoolsixth.ac.uk/information/policies/>