

UCAS Predicted Grades Policy – Samuel Whitbread Academy Sixth Form

When a student applies to University through UCAS, the school is asked to give predicted grades in order that Universities are best able to establish the suitability of the student to their chosen courses. Below sets out the UCAS predicted grade policy at Samuel Whitbread Academy.

1. When do students get their predicted grades?

Teachers will release predicted grades mid-September 2022. This ensures that all students, including early-entry applicants (Oxbridge, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary) have sufficient time to choose their courses appropriately. Students and families will have an indication of a student's progress through the reports shared throughout Year 12.

2. How are predicted grades decided?

It is essential that we predict grades that we feel are a true reflection of each student's ability and potential based on assessment evidence. We adopt an honest and evidence-based approach to this process, whereby attainment and progress in Year 12 is the main indicator of future performance but Autumn term year 13 graded can be considered.

The teacher or teachers of each subject decide the UCAS predicted grades for their students, as they know their own students best. They may consider some or all of the following factors when making their decision:

- Results of Year 12 assessments and/or Internal Progression Exams
- Grades awarded in progress reports
- General attitude to learning and commitment (as evidenced by contributions made in class, meeting deadlines, attendance and punctuality)
- Performance in homework assignments
- The student's drive and passion for the subject (as evidenced by wider reading, involvement in extra-curricular activities around the subject etc)
- Professional judgement and experience of making UCAS predictions

For example, a student who consistently achieves 'C' grades throughout Year 12 in assessments and homework assignments in a particular subject may be awarded a UCAS predicted grade of a 'C', or indeed a 'B' if they have an excellent work ethic and attitude to learning. It is less likely, however, that such a student would be predicted an 'A' grade, as the evidence would not necessarily 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 next year'. While this affirmation is certainly admirable, it is the case that Year 13 students work must harder than they did in Year 12, simply to maintain their grades, due to the increased difficulty of final year content.

3. Over-inflated predictions

It is understandable that students and parents may want teachers to over-predict A- Level grades, in order that the student may access a particular University course.

However, we have a professional and moral responsibility to ensure that the student has realistic expectations with regards to their likely grades, whilst still remaining motivational and aspirational.

The potential consequences of over-predicting A-Level grades can be outlined as follows:

- Students find themselves without a University place when they receive their results, as they achieved what teachers originally predicted, but not the higher grades that were requested. The student must go through the competitive Clearing process, often finally choosing a course that has lower entry requirements than what they actually achieved.
- Future Samuel Whitbread Academy students are affected, as the school's reputation for accurate predictions is diminished. University admission tutors build up a knowledge of the accuracy of a particular school's predictions. Therefore, if the school becomes known for over-predicting, then future applications are put at a disadvantage, as their predicted grades will be brought into question.
- Teachers are asked to go against their professional judgement and honest opinion, which is not moral, nor is it fair to other students who are given an accurate prediction that may be lower than they would like.

4. Appeals

If a student feels that a particular predicted grade is not a true reflection of their ability or what they are likely to achieve at the end of Year 13, then they may ask for the grade to be increased by providing a letter of appeal to the Assistant Head of Sixth Form and the Associate Principal – Head of Sixth Form. This should outline the reasons why they think the predicted grade is not a fair assessment of what they may achieve, as well as a summary of the evidence that supports their view that a higher prediction is warranted. The Assistant Head of Sixth Form and the Associate Principal will then consult the subject teacher or teachers, following which a final decision will be made as to whether or not the grade should be increased. Please note that the final decision will rest with the Sixth Form Team.