

18 June 2019

Dear students, parents and guardians,

We know that you or some of your family members may have taken our GCE Maths examinations last week and I want to update you on the actions that we have taken to ensure that the integrity and fairness of the examinations has been maintained.

We confirmed that blacked out images of two exam questions from our A level Maths Paper 3 on Statistics and Mechanics appeared on social media before the exam on Friday 14 June had begun. Due to our security protocol, we were quickly able to narrow the source of the leak to a single school. As a result of our further investigations we obtained sufficient information to pass this to the police, who will now investigate this as a criminal matter.

We are currently conducting face to face interviews with the small number of people on closed networks who have alleged that they had access to the full version of the paper from where these images came from. Whilst it is of course impossible to be completely sure who has seen it, we are completing a thorough investigation to identify those involved. We know the vast majority of students want to get results through hard work and fair effort; typically, we are contacted by students when they have been offered materials ahead of the exam and, in this instance, very few students have come to us through this route.

I want to reassure you that we have established processes to ensure fair and accurate results, so no-one will be unfairly disadvantaged. As part of the marking process, we will analyse individual student performance as well as that of groups of students. From this analysis, we will be able to identify whether there are patterns in the results that are unusual for a particular centre or student. For those individuals found to have been involved in malpractice, we will follow the JCQ guidance which can include withholding results for individual students.

In addition, for questions that were made available prior to the exam (question 4, on both paper 31 and 32), we have the option to remove these from the overall assessment, should we find evidence that this is necessary to ensure a level playing field.

Separately, some candidates have also raised concerns about the level of difficulty of Paper 2. Grade boundaries are set on every paper each year in order to allow for any differences in the level of difficulty of an exam paper from one year to the next. As we do for every exam series, we will be analysing the evidence from a review of students' scripts and statistical data to ensure that the grade boundaries are set fairly and reflect the level of demand of this year's papers.



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I know that exam season is a stressful time for students and that the vast majority of students will be concerned about the potential impact that this might have on their grades. I would like to reassure you and them that we will take all of the necessary action to ensure fairness to all students.

Should you have any questions or would like to discuss the matter further in person please do not hesitate to contact me at assessmentfeedback@pearson.com or on 0344 463 2931.

Kind regards

Hayley White
Assessment Director