

Bay House Sixth Form UCAS Predicted Grades Policy

At Bay House we recognise that predicted grades are a key part of the UCAS application process. We've worked with a group of experienced advisers to develop the following guidance to help you when making predictions for your students' applications.

What are predicted grades?

A predicted grade is the grade of qualification an applicant's school or college believes they're likely to achieve in positive circumstances. These predicted grades are then used by universities and colleges, as part of the admissions process, to help them understand an applicant's potential. UCAS advise that, when predicting grades, centres may face a number of challenges, such as:

- ongoing changes to academic, vocational, and technical qualifications – including changes to content, assessment and, in some cases, standards
- myths and anecdotal evidence from peers, parents, and the media
- external and internal pressures influencing predictions
- differences in university and college behaviour – including disparities between entry requirements, offer conditions, and acceptance levels
- the disruption to teaching and learning, and face-to-face contact time during the COVID-19 pandemic

Principles for predicting grades

Predicted grades should be:

- entered for all pending qualifications, unless the assessment method or structure of the qualification makes this inappropriate – failure to do so can lead to complications or, in some cases, the rejection of an application
- in the best interests of applicants – fulfilment and success at college or university is the end goal
- aspirational but achievable – stretching predicted grades can be motivational for students
- determined by professional judgement – your expertise and experience are vital in informing predictions
- data-driven – while each school will have its own process, you should look at past Level 2 and Level 3 performance, and/or internal examinations to inform your predictions
- finalised by the point of submitting an application – universities and colleges are only likely to consider the predicted grades received as part of the UCAS application. While they will make every effort to accommodate genuine errors in data entry, this may not always be possible for highly selective courses

Predicted grades must not be:

- affected by student, parental, guardian, or carer pressure – there are risks associated with inflating and suppressing predicted grades
- influenced by university or college entry requirements or behaviours – predicted grades should be set in isolation of an applicant's university or college choice(s)
- affected by student behaviour or background – predicted grades should be made objectively and disregard external factors. Be careful to reflect on any preconceptions to mitigate against unconscious bias, particularly for protected characteristics (including sex, race, religion/belief, disability, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment)

Associated risks

UCAS acknowledge that schools and colleges sometimes come under pressure to inflate predicted grades, to give applicants a better chance of receiving an offer for a certain course. However, this is not without risk, and could significantly disadvantage them.

- An applicant may receive an offer(s) they are unlikely to meet, leading to disappointment on results day.
- Applicants might gain admission to a course which they cannot succeed in – choosing the right course is a very important decision as they will be investing a lot of time, money, and effort, and it can be difficult to change.
- If a university or college has reason to believe that a predicted grade is grossly inaccurate, they retain the right to withdraw any offers.

Risks of suppressing predicted grades

We are aware that, in some cases, you are encouraged to suppress predicted grades for highly selective courses, due to a belief this will trigger a (relatively) lower offer for an applicant. Again, this is not without risk.

- A student may miss out on receiving an offer from their preferred choice, based on suppressed predicted grades. They would then be required to accept an alternative offer, defer entry, or make use of Clearing.

Guidance to support internal processes

In line with UCAS guidance, Bay House School and Sixth Form has its own processes for predicting grades. To help you get started, here are a few useful points to consider. In general terms we consider the following factors:

- Part of a two-way dialogue – students should be given the opportunity to discuss their predicted grades with the Year Office. It may be that you can demonstrate progress, and we are comfortable in changing their prediction. Equally, you may not be aware of extenuating circumstances that have affected their performance to date. This [contextual information](#) can be included in the reference.
- Coordination across departments – the process requires you to provide a predicted grade for every formal qualification undertaken by the student. Timing – typically, an initial set of predicted grades are issued to students before the summer holidays of Year 12. There is the potential for these to change until the school's internal deadline for completing UCAS applications.
- Alignment with the reference – predicted grades are part of the reference, so the two should be mutually supportive. For example, it would look strange if a very low predicted grade was combined with a very positive reference (without context).

Factors to consider

- In common with most schools, Bay House School and Sixth Form typically maintain various sets of predicted grades that all serve different purposes, and are made at different points in the year. For example, those given to awarding bodies are typically provided later in the year than those provided to UCAS. The most reliable data set is often the Internal Exams at the end of the Lower Sixth year.
- Applicants do not always have to meet the entry requirements with their predicted grades to receive an offer – universities and colleges will assess applications on an individual basis.

- Universities and colleges place differing levels of importance of predicted grades, and make use of them in a variety of ways throughout the application process.
- While many universities and colleges endeavour to consider any errors in predicted grades, reconsideration of an application could be subject to a course still being open, or places still being available.