

## Information on the Appeals Process for Summer Results 2021

### How have grades been determined this year?

Grades this summer are based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs have been submitted to the exam boards by the school as a holistic assessment of students' performance in a subject, following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance. This process is detailed in our Centre Policy, which is available on our website.

These grades will then be approved by the relevant exam board, following external quality assurance checks. In some cases, the TAGs we submitted may be reviewed by the exam board, who may ask us to submit an alternative grade.

### Who can appeal?

All students will have the opportunity to appeal their grade if they meet the eligibility criteria (see below). It is important to note that an appeal may result in a grade being increased, staying the same, or being lowered. If a student puts in an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive this lower result and this will be communicated to universities and/or retained as the student's final grade.

There is also the option to resit GCSEs, A levels and some AS levels in the autumn, which may be preferable to some students. The design, content and assessment of these papers will be the same as in a standard examination year.

### What are the grounds for appeal?

There are four main grounds for appeal, as dictated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). They are:

- It is thought that the school has made an **administrative error**: an example of this would be putting incorrect information into a spreadsheet, e.g. transposing the marks for two similar candidates.
- It is thought that the school has made a **procedural error**: this means we have not properly followed our own process, as approved by the exam board. An example of this would be where exam access arrangements for qualifying students have not been used correctly.
- It is thought that the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**: i.e. the evidence used to grade was not reasonable.
- It is thought that the **academic judgement made to decide the grade was unreasonable**.

'Unreasonable' (as defined in the JCQ Guidance) in this context means that an unreasonable judgement is one that no educational professional acting reasonably could have made when selecting evidence or deciding on a teacher assessed grade.

This means that the selection of evidence by the teacher awarding the grade will **not be considered unreasonable** just because a student considers it may have been equally valid to use other forms of evidence. Many schools and colleges will have used different forms of evidence because of the flexibility of the approach this year allowed by the JCQ guidance. The exam boards will have approved these approaches when they reviewed each centre's policy on Teacher Assessed Grades.

It also means that the independent reviewers at the exam boards will **not** remark or grade students' evidence. Instead, they will look to see whether any teacher acting reasonably could have arrived at the same grade.

## **The 2 stage process of an appeal**

Before raising an appeal, students must read the JCQ Student and Parent Guide, which will be available on the JCQ website by results days.

The school may not be able to offer as much advice and guidance on the likely success of an appeal this summer as we would in normal years, as we have already moderated and quality assured all the grades ourselves.

All appeals, on any of the grounds above, must first go through a **centre review**. At this stage, and once the student has completed the required declaration, the school will check for any administrative errors, and check that our policies and procedures were followed correctly. Our policy has already been approved by the exam boards, so we are only ensuring that we followed this properly.

The outcome of the centre review will be communicated to students when made.

At the centre review stage, if we find that a grade should go up or down, we will ask the exam board to change it. They will then consider this request.

Following the outcome of a centre review, students may still choose to pursue an **awarding organisation appeal**. They must fill in the necessary form, which we will then send on their behalf to the exam boards. Students and parents cannot send appeals directly to the exam board themselves – it must come from the school.

The outcome of the awarding organisation appeal will be communicated to students when decided.

At either stage of the appeals process a student's grade may increase, stay the same, or decrease. When placing an appeal, the student will sign a declaration saying that they accept that the outcome of the appeal, which may mean that they are awarded a lower grade than their original Teacher Assessed Grade.

## **Priority appeals and deadlines**

Priority appeals will be handled more quickly than other appeals, where possible before the UCAS advisory deadline of 8 September. Priority appeals are only open to **A level students starting university this autumn, who have missed out on the conditions of their firm or insurance offer**. Students who have decided not to confirm a firm conditional offer and to go through clearing instead, cannot be offered a priority appeal as per the JCQ guidance.

On results days, staff will be available to talk about next steps including appeals, resits and the UCAS clearing system. Students must tell the firm choice university if they are appealing their results. They will then confirm whether they will hold a place pending the outcome of an appeal (note that universities are not obliged to hold a place; this is at their discretion).

Unfortunately, JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students.

The suggested deadline for requesting a priority appeal is 16 August (students cannot appeal before results day on 10 August).

We will attempt to complete the centre review for a priority appeal by 20 August\*. If students wish to progress this to an awarding organisation appeal, they must send the completed form to us by 23 August for priority appeals.

\*At both stages of the appeals process, there may be the need for specialist, expert knowledge (e.g. from subject teachers or the Individual Needs department). This may not be possible at all times August. In such cases, there may be a delay while we contact the relevant staff, but priority appeals will still be treated as a priority.

### **Non-priority appeals and deadlines**

Non-priority appeals are any A levels or GCSEs where a firm or insurance university place is not pending.

The deadline for submitting a centre review is 3 September; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 17th September. Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

### **Early disclosure of Teacher Assessed Grades**

The school is prohibited from disclosing the Teacher Assessed Grades to any third party, including students and parents, until results days. Any teacher or member of staff who does this is committing examination malpractice.

Although students may have been given marks or grades on single pieces of evidence, we cannot disclose the final submitted TAG.

During the external quality assurance process taking place in June or July, our submitted TAGs may be moved up or down (although this will always be done through human agency, not by an algorithm).

We only know what a student's conditional offer is if they have chosen to share that information with us. It has not formed part of our objective grading of students.

We hope that this information has been useful and there will be staff available on results day to help with any queries.