

29th June 2021

Dear Parents/carers,

We hope you and your family are well.

We successfully submitted all Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) to the different exam boards by the 18th June deadline and last week submitted samples of student work when we were asked to do so. The subject samples will now be looked at to ensure that we have followed our Centre Assessment Policy in determining teacher assessed grades for our students.

JCQ have also recently released guidance around how to appeal a TAG decision this year. Part of the guidance stipulates that this information is shared with parents and students before GCSE results day. We have put this document together which will hopefully provide you with any questions you have relating to appeals. We will also send further information out nearer the time of the GCSE results – **which is Thursday 12th August this year**. Please read the following information about the appeals process carefully.

How were my child's grades arrived at this year?

Grades this summer are based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs were submitted to the exam boards by us as a holistic assessment of students' performance in a subject, following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance.



These grades are now being approved by the relevant exam boards, following external quality assurance checks.

In some cases, the TAGs we submit may be reviewed by the exam board. However, any changes to the grades we submit will be done by professional reviewers; this year no grades will be changed because of an algorithm.



What do I do if I'm not happy with my / my child's grade?

All students can 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 lowered, staying the same, or going up. So, if a student puts in an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark.**



There is also the option to re-sit 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 normal year.



Transforming Lives

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What are the grounds for appeal?

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

- You think we have made an **administrative error**: an example of this would be putting the wrong information into a spreadsheet.
- You think we have made a **procedural error**: this means we haven't properly followed our own process, as approved by the exam board. An example of this would be where you've been told you should have received approved access arrangements for assessments but this wasn't given in a certain subject.
- You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**: you think the evidence used to grade you was not reasonable.
- You think the **academic judgement on the grade you were given was unreasonable**.

What does 'unreasonable' mean?

'Unreasonable' is a technical term in this context and means that no educational professional acting reasonably could have selected the same evidence or come up with the same grade.

This means that just because other forms of evidence may have been equally valid to use, the selection of evidence is not unreasonable. Because of the flexibility of the approach this year, every school and college will have used different forms of evidence.

It also means that the independent reviewers 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.

What will be the outcome of an appeal?

At either stage of the appeals process (see 'What are the two stages of an appeal?' below), a student's grade may go up, stay the same, or go down. When placing an appeal, the student will have to sign a declaration saying that they accept the fact their grade may go down and they may get a lower grade than their original TAG.

What's a priority appeal?

Priority appeals will be handled more quickly than other appeals, where possible before UCAS's advisory deadline of 8 September.

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Priory 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.** JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students, unfortunately.

What should I do before appealing?

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before appealing, which will be available on the JCQ website by results days.

We 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.

What are the two stages of an appeal?

All appeals, on any of the grounds above, must first go through a **centre review**. At this stage, we 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 a specific 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 us.

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

How do I make an appeal?

Following results days, students should fill in the first section of the JCQ form (we will send this to you nearer GCSE results day) and send it to James Gough.

What are the deadlines for non-priority appeals?

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

The deadline for submitting a centre review is the 3rd September; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 10th September.

Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

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You know my child's grades. Why can't you tell us?

We are forbidden 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 exam 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).

Please do get in contact with James Gough if you have any queries about the appeals process. We will be writing to you next week to outline the arrangements for the GCSE results day on Thursday 12th August.

Yours sincerely,

Christina Bailey
Acting Principal

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