

Appeals information produced by the JCQ edited to explain the process at the Associated Sixth Form

Exam Appeals - Your questions answered

- **What can I do if I think my grade is wrong?**
- **How do I appeal?**
- **What will happen if I appeal?**

Earlier this year, the government announced that **students will not take formal GCSE, AS and A level exams this summer** and will instead be awarded grades determined by their teachers' judgements, based on a range of evidence like mock exams, coursework, in class tests and more.

Schools and colleges have taken multiple steps to make sure these grades reflect students' performance. Teachers have received clear guidance and support with grading and making objective decisions to enable grades to be fair.

There is also **a rigorous system to ensure fairness** in place, including checks in schools and colleges, and by awarding organisations. For the Associated Sixth Form this has included internal moderation of assessments, meetings between Heads of Department at both schools to check the grades awarded are a fair holistic judgement based on the evidence used, checks by both Directors of Sixth Form and finally checks by Mr Burt and Mr Mort, Headteachers. The awarding organisations have then checked the evidence that was sent to them.

You have already been made aware of the evidence your teachers used to determine grades so you could have raised any errors or mitigating circumstances relating to particular evidence before grades were submitted.

If you think an error has been made in your grade, an appeals system will be in place as a **safety net for exceptional circumstances**, and to fix any genuine errors that were not identified earlier in the process.

Advice from the JCQ with guidance relating to the process at the Associated Sixth Form

Q: What can I do if I think there has been an error with my grade?

You have been told what evidence is being used to determine your grades and you had the chance to raise any issues before grades were submitted. We have taken account of any mitigating circumstances and access arrangements.

If you think a grade is incorrect when you receive your results, please contact the Sixth Form Office in the first instance and request a centre review (an internal review) so we can check for any errors.

If you still think your grade is incorrect after we have conducted a centre review, you can ask us to appeal to the awarding organisation. You should be aware that on review or appeal, **grades could be lowered, stay the same or raised** and the awarding organisation's decision will be final.

You should consider carefully if appealing is the right course of action for you. An appeal will only be successful if either an error is found or the grade awarded or the selection of evidence used are found to be an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement.

The awarding organisations will not be able to consider appeals that are based solely on differences of opinion. If you want to improve your grade you might want to consider entering for the autumn exam series. Our internal entry deadline for students wishing to enter is Friday 3 September and exams will take place between 4-22 October.

Please be aware that unlike previous years there are no grade boundaries, there might be members of your family that have appealed successfully in 2019 or before because they were only a few marks off a higher grade but this is not the case in 2021. Unlike in previous years you do not have the comfort of knowing your grade is secure because you are a long way over a grade boundary, as there are no grade boundaries. It is also worth noting that unlike in 2020 students have not been ranked in order.

Q: What if I think there has been an error and want to appeal my grade, do I do that with my school/college or awarding organisation?

You should raise any request with the Sixth Form Office. We will conduct a centre review to check if there were any administrative errors when the grade was submitted and to check our procedures have been followed correctly. If you still think your grade has been awarded in error after the result of the centre review, we must, if requested by you, submit an appeal to the awarding organisation on your behalf.

The awarding organisation will carry out an independent review of the process followed and whether the overall grade awarded was a reasonable exercise of academic judgement and the selection of evidence this was based on was also reasonable.

Once the review is complete, the awarding organisation will decide a final grade for you. **If the final grade is lower than the original teacher assessed grade (TAG), it will go down. If the result is higher, it will go up. Once the final grade has been issued after the review, it will be final.**

Q: What might happen to my grade during the centre review and appeals process?

If you request a centre review or an awarding body appeal, there are a range of possible outcomes:

- Your original grade is changed, so your final grade will be different from the original grade (TAG) you received. Your grade can go **up or down.**
- Your original grade is confirmed, so there is no change to your grade.

Once a finding has been made you cannot withdraw your request for a centre review or appeal. **If your grade has been lowered, you will not be able to revert back to the original grade you received on results day.**

Q: When do I need to submit my request?

There are priority and non-priority appeal routes. Priority appeals are only for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice (i.e. the offer they accepted as their first choice) and wish to appeal an A level or other Level 3 qualification result. All other appeals must follow the non-priority route.

You should submit a **request for a priority centre review in the first instance by 13 August 2021 (school internal deadline) or for a non-priority review by 1 September 2021 (school internal deadline)**.

Once you have received the outcome of your centre review, if you wish to request an **awarding organisation appeal** you should do so **as soon as possible** as deadlines for submitting appeals are **Friday 20 August (school internal deadline) for priority appeals and Wednesday 15 September 2021 (school internal deadline) for non-priority appeals**. Your school/college will submit this on your behalf.

Q: Does that mean teachers and school staff are working over summer holidays for appeals?

In most cases subject teachers won't be needed for centre review during the summer holidays, as much of the work needed can be prepared in advance of summer.

In a minority of cases where a previously unforeseen issue or error arises, a teacher may need to be consulted to help to resolve the appeal swiftly. This would only be in the summer for priority appeals – where a student needs the outcome of their appeal to take up their 'firm' higher education offer.

Q: How will this affect my university or college place?

If you have not met the conditions of your firm choice on a higher education course you are eligible for a priority appeal and will need to submit your request for a centre review as soon as possible after results are issued or at the latest by Friday 13 August (our internal deadline). It is important that you submit your request for a centre review before this deadline to enable this process to happen swiftly.

UCAS has encouraged HE providers to move their advisory deadline to 8 September, giving students additional time to meet the academic terms of their offer. **Students who do decide to appeal, should contact their preferred higher education provider to make them aware.**