

Ref: DSM/TKE/Parent/TAGA/10

July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer/Student,

RE: Information relating to appealing the teacher assessed grade(s)

Please find below important information relating to awarded grades for the academic year 2020/21.

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

Grades this summer were 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.

Further, students were made aware of the evidence upon which teachers relied, and opportunities were provided so they could raise any concerns, address any issues, and/or submit any other information which might impact on the evidence or the grade before it was submitted.

These grades were then approved by the relevant exam board, following external quality assurance checks.

In some cases, the TAGs we submitted may have been reviewed by the exam board, who may have asked us to submit an alternative grade. However, any changes to the grades we submitted were done by professional teachers or reviewers; this year no grades have been changed as a result of an algorithm.

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

All students 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 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 resit GCSEs, 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.

What are the grounds for appeal?

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

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 extra time 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 due to 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 are only open to A level students starting university this autumn, who have missed out on the conditions of their firm or insurance offer.

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 day.

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 (stage one), 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 via email 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.

If you wish to request a centre review, there will be a link on your academy website - this link will take you to a form. A centre review will be triggered once this form has been submitted. If you do not have access to a computer and wish to appeal a grade, please speak to the academy principal on the day that you collect your grades (12th August KS4).

Following the outcome of a centre review, students may still choose to pursue an awarding organisation appeal (stage two).

Details of how to submit a stage 2 appeal will be shared in the outcome letter of the centre review. The academy will send the stage 2 appeal request 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 complete the Stage 1 appeal form which can be found on their academy website. If they do not have access to a computer they must tell the Principal on the TAG collection day.

What are the deadlines for non-priority appeals?

Non-priority appeals are any GCSEs or vocational qualifications.

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

You know my/my child's grades. Why can't you tell us? What if you know we haven't met our university conditional offer?

We are forbidden from disclosing the Teacher Assessed Grades to any third party, including students and parents, until the 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/July, our submitted TAGs may be moved up or down (although this will always be done through human agency, not by an algorithm).

The link below provides additional information for students and includes some frequently asked questions.

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/06/09/exam-appeals-what-can-i-do-if-i-think-my-grade-is-wrong-how-do-i-appeal-what-will-happen-if-i-appeal-your-questions-answered/>

We appreciate that this might appear to be a complex process but hope that furnishing you with as much information as possible will enable you to fully consider any next steps you consider appropriate.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Darren Smith', written in a cursive style.

Darren Smith
Principal