**2021 Examination Results & Appeals**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**How were the 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 each student’s performance in a subject, following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance.

It is important to note that this year, the TAGs were determined as a result of clear evidence of an actual level of performance in each subject, as opposed to the grades awarded in the summer 2020, which were ‘Predicted Grades’ (grades which the school believed students were likely to achieve in positive circumstances).

These grades were then approved by the relevant exam board, following external quality assurance checks. This year no grades have been changed as a result of an algorithm.

**What do I do if I am not happy with a 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 then receive the new lower grade and not the original grade.

There is also the option to re-sit GCSEs, and A 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.

**What are the grounds for appeal?**

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

* You think the school has made an **administrative error**: an example of this would be that you feel the school has entered an incorrect grade into the spreadsheet submitted to the government.
* You think the school has made a **procedural error:**an example of this would be that you were informed that you would have access to a laptop for a given assessment, but this did not then happen.
* You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**: an example of this would be that you feel your assessment papers have not been marked accurately by the school.
* You think the **academic judgement on the grade you were given** **was unreasonable**:

an example of this would be that you feel the grade awarded does not reflect the scores you have achieved on your assessment papers.

**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 stay, 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 grade.

**What is a priority appeal?**

Priority appeals will be handled more quickly than other appeals, where possible before UCAS’ advisory deadline of 8th 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**.

If you decided not to confirm a firm conditional offer and to go through clearing instead, JCQ cannot offer you a priority appeal.

Please note that JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students.

When making a priority appeal, students will have to include their UCAS number so it can be confirmed that it is a genuine priority appeal.

**What should I do if I do not get into my first choice of university?**

First, do not panic. Contact the school using the web-link in the letter issued with your results, to request a call from a member of staff, who can speak to you about your options. You may wish to go through clearing or sit the autumn exams or summer exams next year to try to improve your grade(s).

If you are going to appeal your grade(s), you must let your university know you are appealing. They will then let you know whether they will hold a place for you pending the outcome of an appeal (note that universities are not obliged to hold a place for you; this is at their discretion).

**What should I do before I appeal?**

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before appealing, which will be available on the JCQ website, and we will also put a copy on our website.

We may not be able to offer as much advice and guidance on the likely success of an appeal this summer as we would do in normal years. That is because 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 once completed.

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 relevant JCQ form, which we will then send on their behalf to the relevant exam board. 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 made.

**How do I make an appeal?**

Following results days, students should fill in the first section of the JCQ form [here](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/JCQ_Appeals-Guidance_Summer-2021_Appendix-B.pdf) and send it to our Exams Officer, Mrs D Prior (email: [**DPrior372@stj.kent.sch.uk**](mailto:DPrior372@stj.kent.sch.uk)).

**What are the deadlines for priority appeals?**

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

We will complete priority centre reviews as soon as we can so if students wish to progress this to an awarding organisation appeal, they must send the completed form to us by **midday on 20th August** for priority appeals.

**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 **midday on 3rd September**; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is **midday on 10th September**. Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

**You know the grades. Why can’t you tell us? What if you know we have not met our university conditional offer?**

We are forbidden from disclosing the Teacher Assessed Grades to any third party, including students and parents, until the official results days. Any teacher or member of staff who does this is committing exam malpractice.

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. Where we do know this information, we must not let students know their submitted TAGs, even if they have not met the conditions of their offer.