

# FAQs re GCSE Exam Results 2021

## 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 pupils' performance in a subject, following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance.

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 pupils 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 pupil puts in an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark.

There is also the option to resit GCSEs, A levels and some AS levels in the autumn, which may be preferable to some pupils. 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 school have made an **administrative error**: an example of this would be putting the wrong information into a spreadsheet.
- You think school have made a **procedural error**: this means you think we haven't properly followed our own process, as approved by the exam board. An example of this would be where you have 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 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 pupils' 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 pupil's grade may go up, stay the same, or go down. When placing an appeal, the pupil 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 is a priority appeal?

Priority appeals are only open to **A level pupils starting university this autumn, who have missed out on the conditions of their firm or insurance offer**. JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE pupils, unfortunately.

### **What should I do if I don't get into my first choice of college/sixth form?**

First, don't panic. Speak to Liz Lang, Deputy Head, or Cath Brace, Assistant Head, about your options. You can then speak to the sixth form or college that you would like to attend to ask them if they will still consider you for the course. You may still wish to sit the autumn exams to try to improve your grade/s.

If you are going to appeal your grade, you should let the college/sixth form know that you are appealing. However, they are unlikely to hold a place for you pending the outcome of an appeal as there are no 'priority appeals' for GCSEs and so the appeals for GCSE candidates are likely to occur after Key Stage 5 courses commence.

### **What should I do before making an appeal?**

Pupils must read the JCQ Pupil 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, school will check for any administrative errors, and check that our policies and procedures were followed correctly. Our policy (on the school website) 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 pupils 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, pupils may still choose to pursue an **awarding organisation appeal**. The pupil must fill in the form below, which we will then send on their behalf to the exam boards. Pupils 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 pupils when made.

### **How do I make an appeal?**

Following results days, pupils should fill in the first section of the JCQ form [here](#) and send it to Sylvia Williams, Exams Officer ([S.Williams@deerparkschool.net](mailto:S.Williams@deerparkschool.net)).

### **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 3 September 2021; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 10 September 2021.

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

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

Although pupils 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 that commenced in June and continues up to results day, our submitted TAGs may be moved up or down (although this will not be done by an algorithm).