



July 2021

Dear Parent / Guardian

Appeals 2021

We are writing to you today to outline the exams appeals process for 2021. As you might expect, like everything else this year, the appeals process for 2021 is different to usual. Fortunately, the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has provided schools with a clear and comprehensive set of rules and guidelines for us to follow. This letter will provide you with an overview of these guidelines and the appeals process for 2021 and direct you to further information and resources should you need them.

It is perhaps important to note at this point that it may feel to some that the centre assessed grades process places students and parents in a different relationship to the school than usual. We want to make it clear to you from the outset that that our number one priority is to act as an advocate for your child. We have worked tirelessly over the last few months to ensure that that the grades awarded this summer accurately and fairly reflect the assessment evidence we have had available to us. This process has included extensive quality assurance and checking. However, if an error has been made, we welcome the opportunity to correct it. As such we would invite you to raise any appeals where you have evidence that such an error has occurred.

Key Dates:

12th August: Year 11 Results day

Priority Appeals

12th – 16th August: Window for students who are eligible for priority appeals to request a centre review.

12th – 20th: Centres conduct Stage 1 priority appeals.

12th – 23rd: Centres submit Stage 2 priority appeals to awarding organisations.

Non-Priority Appeals

Results day – 3rd September: Window for students to request a centre review.

Results day – 10th September: Centres conduct Stage 1 appeals.

Results day – 17th September: Centres submit Stage 2 appeals to awarding organisations.

Key Documents

[JCQ Student and Parent guide](#)

[JCQ Appeals Application Form](#)



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

As we have explained in our previous communications ([Link](#)) grades this summer have been based on a range of assessments completed by your child over the course of their studies. These grades reflect a holistic assessment of students' performance in a subject, following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation, and quality assurance.

On the 18th June, along with other schools in England, the academy submitted students' grades to the exam boards. On the 24th June all schools were then asked, as part of the exam boards' quality assurance process, to submit a sample of the evidence and candidate materials that were used to determine the centre assessed grades.

Over the next few weeks students' grades will be approved by the relevant exam boards. We understand that in some cases the exam board could ask us to submit an alternative grade. However, any changes to the grades we submit will be done by professional teachers or reviewers; this year no grades will 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. 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. We expect the design, content and assessment of these papers to 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 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 (see our centre policy), 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 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 grade.

What is a priority appeal?

Priority appeals will be handled more quickly than other appeals. This year the JCQ has identified that priority appeals should only be open to **A level students starting university this autumn, who have missed out on the conditions of their firm or insurance offer**. The JCQ advise that, where possible, this process should be completed before the UCAS advisory deadline of 8 September.

We recognise that students in year 11 who have not met the conditions for their offer for sixth form or college will also wish to begin the appeals process promptly. Therefore, we will prioritise the first 'centre review' stage of the appeals process for year 11 students in this position. Unfortunately, we have no control over the second stage of the appeals process and the JCQ is not offering priority appeals for GCSE students at the second stage.

What should students do before submitting an appeal?

Please speak to us. We are here to support both students and parents. Students are of an age to make their own appeals but should they want assistance from parents this is perfectly acceptable as long as we have any required consent from the student to share personal data. If you have any questions about your grade and the evidence it was based upon please contact the office and request to speak to your college leader.

You will be able to request a copy of the assessment grades (where applicable) that your grade was based on and any further details of how exam access arrangements and extenuating circumstances were taken into account if these applied to you.

We hope to not be dealing with too many appeals in the summer. However, in order to manage any priority appeals quickly and effectively we ask that if you are happy with your grades that you do not request a copy of your wider assessment data.

If, following this conversation, you are still concerned about your grades then you must read the [JCQ Student and Parent guide](#) before appealing.



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 parents & students when 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 the second stage of the appeals process, an **awarding organisation appeal**. They complete the second section of [this form](#), which we will then send on their behalf to the exam boards. Students 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 students make an appeal?

Following results days, students should fill in the first section of the JCQ form [here](#), sign and send either:

email the scanned & signed form to gcserevents@samworth.tgacademy.org.uk

OR

Bring / Post it to the school office

Withdrawing appeals

If you submit a request for a review but then subsequently decide to withdraw it, you will be allowed to do so as long as no finding has been made. An appeal application cannot be withdrawn once a finding has been made.

What are the deadlines for priority appeals?

The suggested deadline for requesting a priority appeal is 16 August (students cannot appeal before results day on 12 August).

We will attempt to complete the priority centre review by 20 August*. If students wish to progress this to an awarding organisation appeal, they must send the completed form to us by 23 August for priority appeals.

*At both stages of the appeals process, there may be the need for specialist, expert knowledge (e.g., subject teachers, SEND knowledge). This may not be possible in August. In such cases, we may have to wait until the start of term, but priority appeals will still be treated as a priority.



What are the deadlines for non-priority appeals?

The deadline for submitting a centre review is 3 September; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 17th September.

Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

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

We are forbidden from disclosing the Centre 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 grade.

During the external quality assurance process taking place in June or July, our submitted grades may be moved up or down (although this will always be done through human agency, not by an algorithm).

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 are not permitted to let students know their submitted grades, even if they haven't met the conditions of their offer.

Further Information

The JCQ website is the best source of further information if you wish to access it. We recommend that you begin by reading the [JCQ Student and Parent guide](#). However, the [full guidance published by JCQ](#) is also available.

We are also happy for you to contact us through the school office email.

Yours sincerely,

Mr T Wraith

College Leader