

TGAW Appeals Policy and Process 2021

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Key Dates

10th August: Year 13 Results day

12 August: Year 11 Results day

Priority Appeals

10th – 16th August: Window for students eligible for priority appeals to request a centre review.

10th – 20th: Centres conduct priority appeals.

10th – 23rd: Centres submit 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 priority appeals

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

Overview

The school as a Centre under the examination grading process for summer 2021 is required to have a clearly documented process for reviewing awarded grades and for submitting any appeals. This policy document sets out our intention to run a fair and transparent process through the process that we have adopted. This document is not intended to provide an overview of the [JCQ guidance for appeals](#). Rather it outlines the steps that we will take as an academy in order to implement that guidance. Where matters arise in the appeals process that are not covered in this document it is the JCQ guidance that we will return to.

Before: Reducing the risk of appeals & preparing for results days

Before the end of term, time will be spent trying to reduce the risk of appeals. The JCQ have highlighted five key areas for centres to attend to:

For the attention of Heads of Centre and Senior Leaders

Students' grades have been determined by schools and colleges this year as teachers are best placed to do this. The appeals process is a critical safety net in the event that anything goes wrong to ensure that each learner has an individual right to appeal their grades via a transparent process of review.

What will ensure students get the right grades and minimise the queries they have with them?

Making sure students understand how their grades are determined will reduce the risk of surprises on results day. Amongst other things this involves:

- ✓ Effective provision of access arrangements / reasonable adjustments for all eligible students
- ✓ Effective arrangements for students that may have been disadvantaged during an assessment that contributes to their grade either by taking the circumstances into account in determining grades or by using alternative evidence that was unaffected by the adverse circumstances.
- ✓ Effective communication with students and parents/guardians so that they understand your centre's approach to determining their grades, including the items of evidence used and the grades/marks associated with them so students can raise any potential errors or mitigating circumstances.
- ✓ Accurate record keeping
- ✓ Effective checking of information on the centre's assessment records

Communication with Students and Parents

Students are deemed to be of an age where they can carry out their own appeals process. However, where they wish to delegate this role to their parents, they can do this as long as they provide confirmation that they consent to their parents communicating directly with the school.

Pre -Examination Access Arrangements (EAA) / Exceptional Circumstances

Students will be contacted by email to confirm whether EAA or exceptional circumstances have been applied to their grading. However, where the committee decision was that the request didn't meet the high threshold set by the standards from JCQ an Initial phone call may be made to students first before the email is sent.

Initial Phone calls

Students should be informed of the reasons that no adjustment has been made and that their grades will be therefore determined on the same evidence as everyone else.

Committee members have discussed the request and have agreed reasons and have interrogated the standards together.

During the phone call

- The rationale for the decision will be given and the student given the opportunity to make comments.

After the phone call

- The fact that the call has been made will be recorded and a confirmatory email will be sent. Admin will record on the spreadsheet the call has been completed and the letter sent- Where the outcome of the call is that a procedural or administrative error has occurred the awarding organization will be informed. Where the outcome is that there is no change to the decision and the student is unhappy about the decision they may appeal under the appeals process when the results are published.

Sharing Grades & Data

The JCQ advise that:

- 3.3 As detailed in the *JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs for Summer 2021*, the need for centre reviews and awarding organisation appeals should be reduced if a centre shares the following information with students:
- a. the sources of evidence that will be used to determine their grade along with (and where deemed appropriate by the centre) any grades/marks associated with them. This transparency will allow students to identify any errors or highlight circumstances relating to pieces of evidence and should reduce the number of instances where students request a centre review or awarding organisation appeal once results have been issued
 - b. the centre policy and any supporting documentation
 - c. details of any variations in evidence used based on disruption to what a student was taught
 - d. details of any special circumstances that have been considered in determining their grade, e.g. access arrangements/reasonable adjustments or mitigating circumstances such as illness.
- 3.4 We recommend centres share this information with students before results day. However, if a centre has not been able to share this information before results day, it must be prepared to do so on or after results day if a student requests it. Centres may find it useful to refer to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) [guidance](#) on students' access to information about their exam results, exam scripts and exam mark exemptions.

We have published:

- Year 11 – March Assessment
- Year 13 – March Assessment

Further details of sources of evidence can be made available upon request – please speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Collating Evidence for Appeals

Evidence used in the grading process

All evidence and records on which a student's grade is based will be retained in accordance with JCQ guidance.

All evidence will be retained for at least 3 years and until the students involved are 21 years old.

Evidence for appeals

In the event that a student wishes to make an appeal an evidence pack will be created for each student which will be shared with the student.

Grades & Data for Results Day

The JCQ have stated that centres must be prepared to share data with students on or following the results day. We wish to avoid lengthy SARs and FOI requests and will therefore be ready to share this information with students quickly if required.

We will use the subject additional assessment lists shared with students in March to collate a spreadsheet with all the additional grades on.

Preparation for Priority Appeals & 6th Form Entry

Priority Appeals: The only appeals that must be actioned with the exam boards over the summer break are the “priority appeals”. This is a very narrow category and only includes post 16 students who have not achieved the grades needed to access their first-choice higher education place. Any centre reviews requested relating to these must be processed by 20th August.

6th Form & College Entry: We know that we will have some students who do not meet 6th form / college entry may also wish to appeal. Although the JCQ guidance suggests that these non-priority appeals can be completed during the Autumn term this will likely be a distressing time for these students and we will therefore aim to respond more quickly to appeals that impact on 6th form / College entry that are submitted during a short window after the results day. See below for further detail.

Quality Assurance Processes

The JCQ has stated that in the event of a student requesting a centre procedural check:

“If a centre has completed checks in advance, it does not need to repeat the checks after results day as long as the issue raised by the student has been addressed by the checks carried out previously and the records are available and provided to the awarding organisation in the event of an appeal to the awarding organisation.”

Where this quality assurance has already been completed signed copies of the departmental checklists, pastoral checks and signed grade submissions will be kept centrally.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints about Centre Assessed Grades as part of the 2021 Summer exam series will not be dealt with under the Trust’s Complaints Policy other than complaints that relate to

1. *any decision to withdraw an entry due to insufficient evidence on which to determine a Teacher Assessed Grade, or not to make an entry in the first place,*
2. *any failure or delay in offering or following the exams appeal process*

Alternatively, following the conclusion of the awarding organisation's appeal process, a student who remains concerned their grade was incorrect may be able to apply for a procedural review to the Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) from the relevant regulator. There are EPRS processes for Ofqual (England) and Qualification Wales. The regulators will provide further details about the EPRS processes for summer 2021 before results days this summer.

Staffing & Communication

Where an appeal is upheld staff may need to be contacted so that they can review the grade awarded. The School will have a system in place to facilitate this.

Centre Policy

The academy will publish the Centre Policy and the Appeals Policy on the website.

The Appeals Process

We will keep a central log of the details of any appeals we receive and the progress of that appeal.

Priority Centre Reviews

Key Dates for priority appeals*

10 August to 16 August 2021	Window for students to request a centre review
10 August to 20 August 2021	Centres conduct centre reviews
10 August to 23 August 2021	Centres submit appeals to awarding organisations

In addition to the students identified by the JCQ for priority appeals we will also endeavour to stick to the same priority appeals timeline for any Yr11 students who can provide evidence that next steps to 6th form or college are adversely affected by the grades they have received. An offer letter from the provider will be sufficient as evidence of this.

Non-Priority Centre Reviews

Appeals raised by students who are able to progress to first choice of university college / 6th form will be processed after the priority appeals have been completed. The deadline for completing these will be the 10th Sept

Step 1: Informal Conversations

Students & parents with concerns about results will initially be directed to speak to a senior member of staff. This conversation should be based closely around the student / parent guidance created by the JCQ and shared by the academy. Staff will be instructed to offer students (where appropriate) their data for the subject in question that the student's grades are based on (even if the student doesn't request it) and details of any EAA or extenuating circumstances that have been considered.

Students will be offered:

- A report containing all evidence used to determine the grade for the subject in question.
- A copy of the 'The student Assessment Record' with any EAA/ Exceptional Circumstances indicated for that subject.

Where this initial discussion does not resolve the issue parents and students will be directed to complete the first section of the [JCQ appeals request](#) and send the signed and completed form to school. Either by email (scanned) to office@worcs.tgacademy.org.uk or by hand to reception or by post.

We will not accept any paperwork that has not been signed by the student.

Step 2: Stage One – Centre Reviews

We will attempt to complete all priority centre reviews within 4 working days of receiving them. This is in order to meet the priority appeals timeline.

We will use the [JCQ appeals request](#) form to track and record all appeals.

Centre reviews can be raised on the grounds that the academy has:

- Failed to follow its procedures properly or consistently in arriving at that result or
- Made an administrative error in relation to the result.

In the first instance all centre reviews will be checked to ascertain whether the quality assurance checks already completed by the academy cover the concerns raised. Where this is the case this will be recorded on the form along with the outcome of the centre review.

Where academy quality assurance processes already completed have not covered the grounds of the appeal then a list of the further checks required will be recorded.

Before returning the paperwork to the student they will be contacted by phone to be made aware of the outcome.

Step 3: Stage Two Appeals

Where a student raises a stage two complaint the admin team will compile a pack of evidence.

That evidence pack should contain:

- Student JCQ appeal paperwork
- A complete copy of the Part 'JCQ_Appeals-Guidance_Summer-2021_Appendix-C'
- A copy of the 'Subject Assessment Record': All other student names will be removed from this document before it is uploaded
- A fully completed copy of the 'Student Assessment Record'

The evidence pack and associated paperwork will be checked before it is submitted to the exam board.

All evidence will be retained for each appeal.

Upheld Appeals

In the event of an appeal being upheld we will take the following steps:

- TGAW will review the board decision to ascertain if (particularly in the case of procedural errors) there are other students that may have been affected.
- Where other students have been affected, we will review the situation on it's individual merits in accordance with the JCQ advice:

The review may highlight other students who have been impacted by the same issue. In some cases, those students may also be found to have a lower grade than they should and the centre should rectify this. In other cases, there may be a student or students whose reported grade is too high. For

example, one student's marks could have been transposed with another student's, leading to one student having a grade higher than it should be but the student with the higher grade is unlikely to have submitted a centre review.

These students will not have consented to having their grades lowered unless they have separately submitted requests for reviews. In these cases, the centre must carefully consider the impact of lowering the students' grades before requesting the awarding organisation to do so. In most instances, it will be appropriate to lower the grade, as not to do so could have an adverse impact on public confidence. Allowing incorrect grades to stand could also have an adverse impact on employers or educational institutions who rely on the grade in future as well as on the student, if for example they progress on to a course they were not equipped for. However, there could also be an adverse impact on the individual student by correcting the grade at this point.

- Where the board directs the school to review as a result of:
 - identifying a procedural error OR
 - finding alternative evidence should have been included in the range of evidence

we will, in the first instance, ask the curriculum leader and subject teacher to evaluate the grade again. we will consider the outcome of their deliberations on each cases individual merit.

- We will share the outcome of the awarding organisation appeal, and where appropriate the next stage of the process, with the student promptly.