

5th July 2021

Dear student

As promised, I am writing to you regarding this summer's GCSE grades and the appeals process recently announced by JCQ. Although JCQ are likely to produce an official guide for parents and students in the build up to GCSE results day, I believe it would be helpful to provide you with as much information as we are able and at the earliest opportunity. This letter sets out how the appeals process will work and answers some of the key questions you might have.

How were my grades arrived at this year?

Results this summer are based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs have been submitted to the exam boards by schools as a holistic assessment of students' performance in each subject. This followed a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance.

These grades are in the process of being approved by exam boards who plan to carry out their own quality assurance checks.

In some cases, the TAGs we submitted may be reviewed by exam boards. At every stage of calculating grades, professional judgements have been made and checked by qualified teachers. No grades will be changed this year as a result of an algorithm.

What do I do if I am not happy with my grades?

All students have the opportunity to appeal their grade if they meet the eligibility criteria (see below). However, please note that an appeal may result in a grade being lowered, staying the same, or going up. If a student submits an appeal and a grade is lowered as a result, the lower grade will be final.

Another option available to students is to re-sit GCSEs in the autumn which may be preferable to some. 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 specified by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). They are:

- You think we have made an **administrative error**: an example of this would be entering incorrect data into a spreadsheet
- You think we have made a **procedural error**: this means we have not 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 was not 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. It refers to the fact that although 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 regrade students' evidence. Instead, they will look to see whether any teacher acting reasonably could have arrived at the same grade.

What could 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 submitting an appeal, the student will be required to sign a declaration confirming that they accept the fact that their grade may go down and they may receive a grade lower than their original TAG.

What should I do before deciding whether to submit an appeal?

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before appealing, which will be available on the JCQ website.

We may not be able to offer much advice and guidance on the likely success of an appeal as we have already moderated and quality assured all of the grades ourselves.

What are the two stages of an appeal and how do I submit it?

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 JCQ so we are only ensuring that we followed this properly.

If you are certain you wish to submit an appeal, you should fill in Section A **only** on page 2 of the JCQ form (download [here](#)) and email the whole document to examsoffice@kha-tkat.org

You must also sign and date the form before submission.

The outcome of the centre review will be communicated to students. We will complete Section B of the appeal form and email it to you.

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**. You must now fill in 'stage two' of the appeal form on pages 4 and 5. Once we have received this, we will send it on to the relevant exam board(s) on your behalf. Students and parents cannot send appeals directly to the exam board themselves - it must be sent by the school.

The outcome of the awarding organisation appeal will be communicated to students when made.

What are the deadlines for appeals?

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

Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

Can I find out what my grades are before GCSE results day?

We are forbidden from disclosing the Teacher 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 TAG.

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

If you require any further information about the issues discussed in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards

Mr A Maher

Andy Maher

Deputy Headteacher