



Q3 Academy Tipton - summer 2021 public examinations appeals process

Please note that to avoid any misunderstandings, potential bias, or conflicts of interest, all staff at this school have been instructed that they must not, under any circumstances, discuss public examination reviews and appeals with students or parents. If you wish to appeal or to enquire about an appeal, you must only contact one of the following people:

- The examinations officer – s.clarke@q3tipton.org.uk
- The Vice Principal (outcomes) – h.rhode@q3tipton.org.uk

We have further instructed all other staff that they must report to the Vice Principal any contacts made by pupils, parents, or other interested parties which relate to actual or potential appeals.

1. Introduction

This document describes how the school is implementing the public examination boards' common appeals process, as published by the Joint Council on Qualifications (JCQ) on 8th June 2021. Anyone considering an appeal is strongly advised to familiarise themselves with that document, which is available on the JCQ website¹. Below, we provide an outline of the grounds on which appeals can be made; a timetable for appeals; and a description of the process that you must follow.

2. How students were assessed

As stated in our centre policy:

- Our primary source of evidence for student grades (in addition to NEAs in relevant subjects) will be the assessments undertaken by students under high control conditions in the period 10th – 28th May.
- We will review student performance in these assessments in the context of “indicative grades” that we have asked teachers to compile, indicating the overall standard of students' work in their courses to date, taking appropriate account of tests, homeworks, and other sources of evidence as appropriate.

3. Checks on our assessment system

Our overall policy was approved by JCQ, we are awaiting details of the external quality assurance checks to be carried out before results days by the AQA examination board on behalf of JCQ. All documentation related to assessments and grades has been carefully checked and considerable care has been taken by all staff involved in grading students to ensure fair and accurate outcomes.

¹ https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/JCQ_Appeals-Guidance_Summer-2021.pdf

The JCQ approved policy for our school is available on our website

4. Points to consider before an appeal

All candidates for public examinations are entitled to make appeals. Before doing so, however, you should bear in mind the following:

- We expect the published examination results for this school (which are subject to approval by the examination boards once they complete their external quality assurance of our processes) to be better overall at GCSE and A-level than in any examination. By a small margin, we expect to have more A*/A grades at A-level and more 9 grades at GCSE than in any previous examination year. There is therefore no overall evidence that pupils have been in any way disadvantaged this year by the non-standard arrangements for teaching and learning since March 2020, or by the non-standard assessment methods used to produce public examination grades in recent months.
- An appeal can lead to grades being lowered, remaining the same, or being increased. If a grade is lowered by an appeal, you cannot withdraw your appeal in order to return to your original grade.
- You cannot ask for any assessment papers to be re-marked this year.
- You cannot appeal simply because your grade is below a target or predicted grade.
- You cannot appeal because you disagree with the school's grading policy since this has already been approved by JCQ.
- Ofqual has stated that "changes to grades will only be made if exam boards find that the grade is not a reasonable exercise of academic judgement, rather than as a result of marginal differences of opinion."² Similarly, JCQ has stated that "the focus of any appeal will be on whether the Teacher Assessed Grade was unreasonable and not that any other grade or mark would have been reasonable."

The chief executive of Ofqual, Simon Lebus, said in a speech on 15th June³ that "I think it is important to emphasise that this is a very high threshold to meet. This year's arrangements are based on teachers' holistic judgement and there will not be scope, as in a usual year, for speculative appeals where a candidate is near a grade boundary because that is not the nature of the grading judgement that is being applied, a point we will be seeking to emphasise in our communications over the next few weeks."

This means that the threshold for successful appeals is much higher than in years in which examinations take place because in such years obtaining one extra mark on an examination paper can result in a grade going up; this will not be the case this year since the grades in this school are being derived holistically from a consideration of assessments and indicative grades. It also means that it will be very hard to argue that, for instance, your A-level grade should rise from high B to low A since any such change is most likely to fall within the "marginal differences of opinion" that is ruled out as a ground for changing grades this year.

² See Ofqual document Decisions on how GCSE, AS and A level grades will be determined in summer 2021, page 14.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/simon-lebus-speech-at-gsa-summer-briefing-2021>- Page 4

- Errors in marking and moderation usually have no effect on final grades. For example, if a student scores 52% in an assessment for which the B grade boundary is 60%, the inclusion of any amount of special consideration (which is limited to 5%) will not affect their grade.
- Public examinations in almost all subjects will be available in November of this year for students who believe that they could achieve a higher grade than the one they are issued with in August.⁴

5. Grounds for an appeal

If a candidate wishes to make an appeal against their published examination grade, they must follow a two-step process:

a) Stage One – centre review.

Any candidate can request a centre review that will check that correct procedures have been followed and that there have not been any administrative errors. This centre review will not deal with matters of academic judgement, which can only be dealt with by examination boards at Stage Two, i.e., you cannot ask the school to review the marking of your assessment papers or the derivation of your indicative grades. Examples of grounds for a Stage One appeal are:

- Checking that your work has not been confused with that of someone else with a similar name and that the marks have been added up correctly on your assessment papers. (These count as administrative errors.)
- Enquiring why you did not receive “special consideration” or were not provided with access arrangements when you believed that you were entitled to them. (These would count as procedural errors.)

b) Stage Two – appeals to the awarding organization.

After you have received the school’s response to your Stage One appeal, you may choose to make a Stage Two appeal. You cannot make a Stage Two appeal unless you have first had a Stage One review. Again, you can make this appeal on two kinds of ground:

- You can appeal against the school’s decisions in your Stage One appeal. For instance, you may continue to believe that you should have been given special consideration even though the school has explained why, in its view, you did not meet the criteria for this.
- You can appeal because you believe that in determining your grade the school engaged in “an unreasonable exercise of academic judgment” either in its selection of evidence or in its use of that evidence. This means not simply that you disagree with the grade given to you, but that you have evidence to support the claim that “no teacher acting reasonably ... could have reached the same judgment”. To succeed in such an appeal, therefore, you need to do more than show that another teacher could have given you a higher grade: you also need to show that no reasonable teacher could have given you the grade you actually received from the school.

⁴ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofqual-confirms-autumn-assessment-arrangements-for-details.-Page-5>

6. Deadline for appeals

At both stages of the process you will need to submit your appeal to your school or college and give them your written consent to conduct the appeal or submit it to the exam board on your behalf. It's important to remember that **your grade can go down, up or stay the same** through either stage of the process.

If you have a place at university that is dependent on your appeal, you should tell the university you are hoping to go to so they can decide how to handle your offer. You should also tell your school or college so they can ask the exam board to prioritise your appeal. The timelines for priority and non-priority appeals will be as follows:

10 August to 7 September: priority appeals window

10 August to 16 August: student requests centre review

10 August to 20 August: centre conducts centre review

11 August to 23 August: centre submits appeal to exam board

10 August to end October: majority of non-priority appeals take place **10 August to 3 September:** student requests centre review

10 August to 10 September: centre conducts centre review

11 August to 17 September: centre submits appeal to exam board

Finally, if you believe the exam board has made a procedural error in handling your appeal, you can apply to Ofqual's.

To proceed in an appeal you must fill the stage one form below.

Stage one – centre review

A. Student request

This section is to be completed by the student. A request for a centre review must be submitted to the centre, not the awarding organisation. A centre review must be conducted before an appeal to the awarding organisation. This is so the awarding organisation is certain that your grade is as the centre intended.

Centre Name		Centre Number	
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Student Name		Candidate Number	
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Qualification title e.g. AQA GCSE English Language			
Teacher Assessed Grade issued			
Is this a priority appeal? <small>A priority appeal is only for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice and wish to appeal an A level or other Level 3 qualification result.</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If Yes provide your UCAS personal ID e.g. 123-456-7890	

Grounds for centre review			
<small>Please tick one or both of the options if they apply to your request. If you don't think either apply, your centre will still conduct a review for administrative and procedural errors so the awarding organisation can be certain that your grade is as the centre intended</small>			

<small>Administrative Error by the centre e.g. the wrong grade/mark was recorded against an item of evidence</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<small>Procedural Error by the centre e.g. a reasonable adjustment/access arrangement was not provided for an eligible student</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Supporting evidence
<small>Please provide a short explanation of what you believe went wrong and how you think this has impacted your grade. There is a 5,000 character limit.</small>

Acknowledgement
<p>I confirm that I am requesting a centre review for the qualification named above and that I have read and understood the information provided in the 'Important information for students' section above. In submitting this review, I am aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcome of the review may result in my grade remaining the same, being lowered or raised The next stage (Stage Two, the appeal to awarding organisation) may only be requested once the centre review (Stage One) has been requested and concluded.

Student Name	Student signature	Date

Stage two – appeal to awarding organisation

This section is to be completed by the student. An awarding organisation appeal must be submitted to the centre and the centre will then submit it to the awarding organisation

Grounds for appeal	
Please tick the grounds upon which you wish to appeal	
1. Administrative error by the awarding organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Procedural issue at the centre	
a. Procedural Error	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Issues with access arrangements/ reasonable adjustments and/or mitigating circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Unreasonable exercise of academic judgement	
a. Selection of evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Determination of Teacher Assessed Grade	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evidence to support an appeal
Please provide a short explanation of what you believe went wrong and how you think this has impacted your grade where that relates to your chosen ground for appeal. In some cases you must provide a clear reason but it doesn't have to be lengthy.
1. Administrative error by the awarding organisation
You must provide a clear explanation. There is a 5,000 character limit.
2 (a) Procedural Error
This is when the centre made a procedural error that has not been corrected at Stage One or the centre did not conduct its review properly and consistently. If you can, please add a further explanation below or alternatively refer to the information that you have already provided above. There is a 5,000 character limit.

2 (b) Issues with access arrangements/ reasonable adjustments and/or mitigating circumstances

You **must** provide a clear explanation of what you believe went wrong and how you think this has impacted on your grade. There is a 5,000 character limit.

3 (a) Selection of evidence

You **must** provide a clear explanation of what you believe went wrong and how you think this has impacted on your grade. There is a 5,000 character limit.

3 (b) Determination of the Teacher Assessed Grade

You can provide a short explanation of the reason for your appeal if you want to. There is a 5,000 character limit.

Acknowledgement

I confirm that I am requesting an appeal for the qualification named above and that I have read and understood the information provided in the 'Important information for students' section above.

I am aware that:

The outcome of the appeal may result in my grade remaining the same, being lowered or raised. I understand that there is no further opportunity to appeal to the awarding organisation and that the next stage would be to contact the regulator. The awarding organisation will include the next appropriate steps, where applicable, in their appeal outcome letter which you will receive from your school/college.

Student name

Student signature

Date