



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

A guide to appeals processes Summer 2021 series

For the attention of heads of centre, senior leaders within schools
and colleges and teaching staff

Produced on behalf of:



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First published in June 2021 by Joint Council for Qualifications^{CIC}

Available in pdf format from: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals>

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

Page 49 of the JCQ Guidance on the Determination of Grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs for Summer 2021.

Why will these things help?

They will help ensure that students understand the evidence on which their grade is based and that this evidence represents their ability in the subject.

They will reduce the risk of students receiving incorrect results caused by administrative or procedural errors, and students will be able to progress without delay.

They will reduce the time that you and your staff spend on any centre reviews and appeals following results days.

Four steps you can take to minimise the need for appeals

1 Communicate with students and parents/guardians

Paragraph 3.3 of the guide details the information you can share with students before the end of term that should help to identify any errors or issues before results days.

2 Check your procedures

Appendix F in the guide provides a list of procedures you can check that will reduce the likelihood of centre reviews and appeals and ensure that they can be conducted promptly if requested.

3 Check your documentation

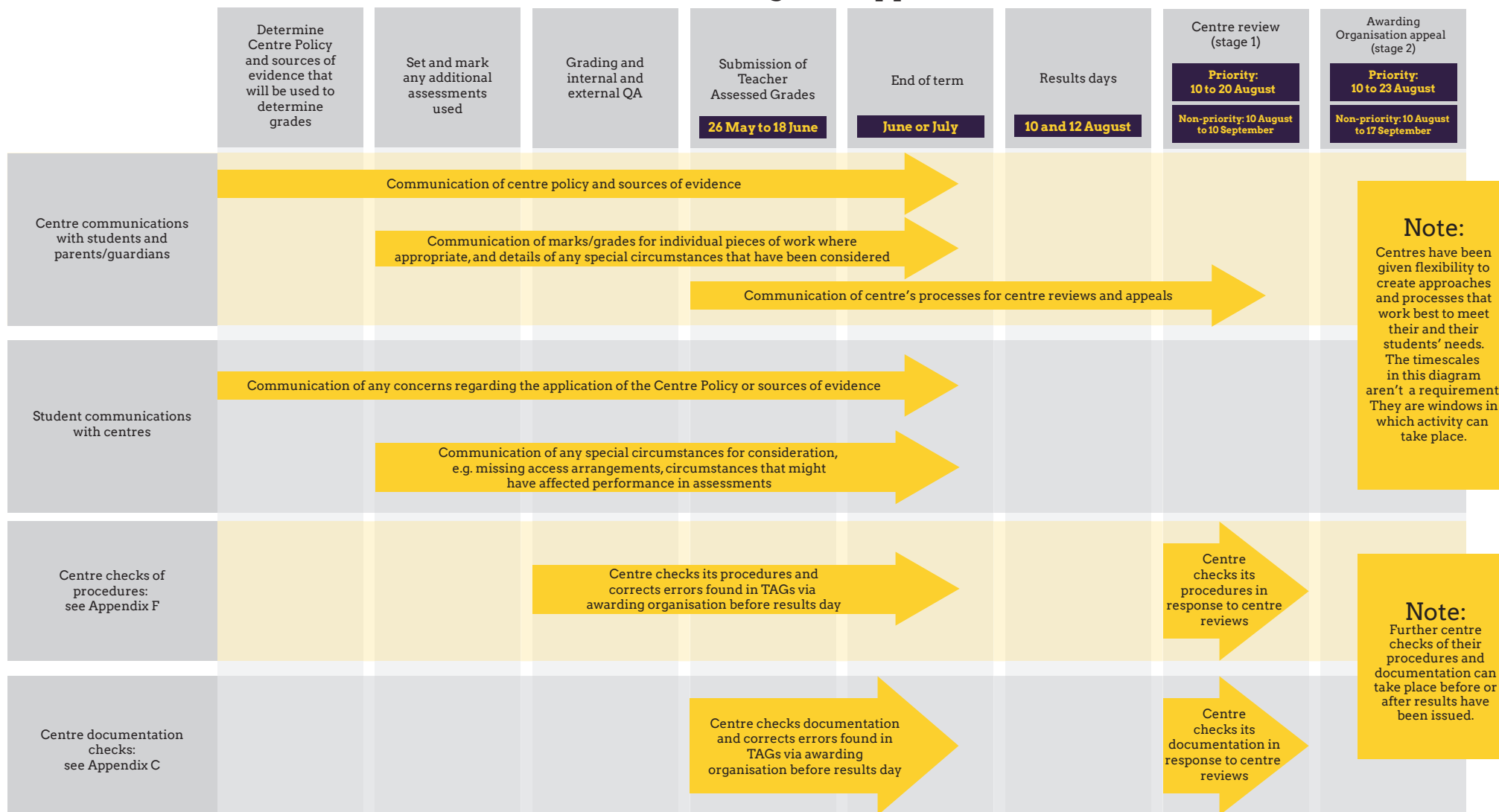
Appendix C in the guide is a checklist of the evidence you will need to submit for an appeal to the awarding organisation. It is a list of documentation you can check to ensure it is complete and easily accessible to staff who will be completing centre reviews and submitting appeals.

4 Correct any errors before results days

Paragraphs 5.1 and 5.28 and section 4 of the guide detail how procedural and administrative reviews can be conducted and how you can correct any errors before results days so students can progress without delay.

The timeline on page 4 of the guide outlines when you can take these four steps.

Timeline for Grading and Appeals 2021



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1. Introduction

The summer 2021 exam series could not take place because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As many students as possible will now receive qualifications based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs)*, which are based on the content they have been taught.

This guidance sets out the exceptional appeals process for results issued in summer 2021 by the JCQ awarding organisations for the following qualifications:

- **Advanced Extension Award in Maths**
- **AQA Applied General qualifications**
- **AQA Entry Level Certificate qualifications**
- **AQA Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 Technical qualifications**
- **Cambridge Nationals**
- **Cambridge Technicals**
- **Extended Project Qualification**
- **FSMQ**
- **GCE AS and A level**
- **GCSE**
- **Level 3 Certificate in Core Maths**
- **OCR Entry Level Certificate qualifications**
- **WJEC Entry Level Certificate**
- **WJEC Level 1/2 Latin**
- **WJEC Level 1/2 Vocational Awards**
- **WJEC Level 2 Certificate in Additional Mathematics**
- **WJEC Level 3 Applied Certificates and Diplomas**

If your qualification is not one of these, please refer to the individual awarding organisation's documentation. Centres in Wales, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Scotland and overseas following WJEC General Qualifications should refer to the appeals guidance published by WJEC. Centres following Eduqas General Qualifications or WJEC General Qualifications in Northern Ireland should refer to this JCQ guidance.

The appeals process for summer 2021 allows students to appeal their grade where they believe there has been an error. They **must** first ask their centre to review whether an administrative or procedural error has been made. The JCQ student guidance for appeals will be found at <https://www.jcq.org.uk/summer-2021-arrangements/> ahead of results day.

For GCSE English Language, GCSE Modern Foreign Languages, GCE A level Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics, the separate endorsements will also be subject to the grounds of appeal as set out below.

If the centre identifies an error with the grade it submitted to the awarding organisation, it must submit a revised grade with rationale for the grade change to the awarding organisation. If the awarding organisation is satisfied with the rationale presented by the centre **and** it considers it is appropriate to correct the result, it will issue a revised grade.

Where the centre does not believe that an error has been made but a student believes that an error persists, a student may ask the centre to submit an appeal to the awarding organisation on their behalf. The centre **must** submit the student's appeal if requested and must provide the required full supporting evidence.

Depending on the grounds of the appeal, the awarding organisation will consider:

- whether the grade reflects an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement
- and/or whether the centre followed its procedures properly and consistently in arriving at the student's result or in conducting its review
- and/or whether the awarding organisation made an administrative error.

These procedures are designed to meet the General Qualifications Alternative Awarding framework for summer 2021 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-qualifications-alternative-awarding-framework>

together with the relevant general/standard and qualification level conditions, of the qualification regulators for England, and Wales (Ofqual and Qualifications Wales). Their regulatory documentation underpins the awarding organisations' appeals processes.

This guidance applies solely to the appeal of a result issued in summer 2021. The JCQ document *A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes: Effective from November 2020*, will still apply for the appeal of a finding of malpractice, the sanction applied by an awarding organisation, and access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for a future examination series. Appeals against the outcomes of post-results services and special consideration do not apply for the summer 2021 series.

Any sanctions applied to a student by a centre will be subject to the centre's internal appeals process.

2. Importance of retaining evidence

- 2.1 It is important that, where possible, all evidence and records on which a student's grade is based, including copies of the student's work and any mark records, is retained safely. This will be needed to support the determination of students' grades, the internal and external quality assurance processes and appeals. It is not a requirement that the original version is retained and a scanned copy of handwritten evidence or digital document will be acceptable.

In line with the Ofqual document *Information for heads of centre, heads of department and teachers on the submission of teacher assessed grades: Summer 2021*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/submission-of-teacher-assessed-grades-summer-2021-info-for-teachers>

any evidence produced after 24 March 2021 must be retained by the centre.

- 2.2 Evidence of a student's performance not used to determine grades, could still be required for the appeals process in exceptional cases where the awarding organisation deems the selection of evidence to have been unreasonable. Where such evidence still exists at the time this guidance was published, it should not be destroyed/deleted or returned to the student. If a student appeals because they believe their centre made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in selecting the evidence used, alternative evidence may need to be submitted to an awarding organisation (**see paragraphs 6.24, 6.26 and 6.27** for more information about appeals on the grounds of academic judgement). This alternative evidence could be highlighted by a student when a centre shares information with them regarding the determination of their grade (**see section 3 and paragraph 6.21**).
- 2.3 Centres must retain any information about a student's access arrangements/reasonable adjustments, or mitigating circumstances affecting their performance in an assessment, which has been considered during the process of determining a student's grade even if this was deemed not to be relevant. This must include the reason for the teacher's decision.
- 2.4 Records of student evidence should be kept accessible so that they can be used if a student wishes to appeal their grade. An evidence checklist to assist centres to manage this is available in **Appendix C** and can also be found at: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/summer-2021-arrangements/>

Please refer to section 8 where centres have accepted entries from Private Candidates.

Missing evidence

- 2.5 Where not all evidence or records have been retained, an awarding organisation will consider the available evidence when determining the outcome of the appeal. This may affect the extent to which the awarding organisation can review the centre's decision. Where no evidence has been retained (or has been lost due to an unforeseen situation) the awarding organisation may need to determine the outcome of the appeal solely on the marks/grades on which the grade was determined. The appeal will be based on the available evidence.

What evidence may be required as part of an awarding organisation appeal?

- 2.6 For the list of evidence required for awarding organisation appeals please see **Appendix C**. This suggested checklist which is designed to support centres can also be found at: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/summer-2021-arrangements/>
- 2.7 Submitting this evidence at the time of the appeal will avoid delays in processing the appeal and unnecessary correspondence between the awarding organisation and the centre.
- 2.8 If the appeal is solely on the grounds of an awarding organisation administrative error, the appeal need only demonstrate that the final grade the centre submitted to the awarding organisation was different to the grade issued by the awarding organisation.

3. Sharing information with students

- 3.1 Students will want to understand how their grades will be determined this summer, so they can be assured the process will be fairly and consistently applied.
- 3.2 Students will also want to understand the steps they can take if they believe something has gone wrong in determining a grade and how they can request a centre review and awarding organisation appeal.

Centres are expected to support students through the centre review and awarding organisation appeals process.

Information a centre can share with students

- 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.

Information a centre must share with students prior to the results date

- 3.5 Before results are issued, centres must take all reasonable steps to ensure all students, including Private Candidates, have information about the arrangements in place for conducting centre reviews and submitting appeals to the awarding organisation following a centre review, including providing them with a statement of the arrangements promptly when requested.

Information a centre must not share with students prior to the results date

- 3.6 Centres are required to maintain the confidentiality of students' grades. Students **must not** be told the final Teacher Assessed Grade that has been submitted to the awarding organisation. Grades must only be shared with students on the published results date once the awarding organisation has issued the final grades.
- 3.7 There is an expectation that grades will be based on a range of evidence. However, where the qualification is an Extended Project Qualification or consists of a single portfolio, the candidate **must not** be informed of the grade for that piece of evidence prior to the published results date.
- 3.8 Provision of the Teacher Assessed Grade to any student, or other party, before the agreed date for release of results, will be viewed as malpractice and appropriate action will be taken by the relevant awarding organisation.

4. Centre procedural and administrative errors

- 4.1 Although centres will have undertaken robust internal checks and a quality assurance exercise to ensure the grades they submit to awarding organisations are correct, there is always a small possibility that a procedural or administrative error is identified, outside of the centre review process, before the results are reported. After the submission of grades, a centre may wish to undertake a further quality assurance exercise in order to minimise the number of potential centre reviews based on administrative errors.
- 4.2 If this happens after Teacher Assessed Grades have been submitted, but before the awarding organisation's online portal for the submission of Teacher Assessed Grades has closed, the centre must re-submit the revised Teacher Assessed Grade. This must be accompanied by a new Head of Centre Declaration.
- 4.3 Where a procedural or administrative error is discovered before results day, but after the awarding organisation's online portal for the submission of Teacher Assessed Grades has closed, the centre must contact the relevant awarding organisation with details of the error identified. Where appropriate, if time allows, the awarding organisation will rectify the error before results are reported to students.
- 4.4 In a small number of cases, the error may be identified too close to results day for it to be rectified by the awarding organisation before the student receives their results. In these cases, the centre must make clear to the student when they receive their results that an error has been identified and reported to the awarding organisation to be corrected. The centre must explain to the student what impact this is likely to have on their grade, particularly if the grade will be lower as a result. The awarding organisation will report the revised grade as soon as possible after results day.
- 4.5 Where a centre identifies an error in the post-results period, but not as the result of a student submitting a centre review, centres should follow the advice set out in **paragraphs 5.25 to 5.27** before determining whether or not a revised grade should be submitted to the awarding organisation.
- 4.6 If after results day you have identified an error that has impacted a student who has not submitted an appeal, please refer to the guidance in **Appendix D – Guidance for centres on changing grades following the issue of results**. Students in these circumstances will have a right of appeal against the grade change.
- 4.7 Details of how to inform each awarding organisation of a procedural or administrative error are included at **Appendix A**.

5. Stage One - centre reviews

- 5.1 This is the first stage of the appeals process in summer 2021. This section covers the centre's role in handling requests from students who wish to correct a perceived error once they have received their grades.

Procedural and administrative checks may take place before or after results have been issued when they are prompted by a centre's own quality assurance processes. For example, a centre may conduct quality assurance checks should a student query the information shared in **paragraph 3.3** and retain these records for use after results have been issued. The evidence for the review described in **paragraphs 5.18 and 5.19** must be available at any point from when grades are submitted. 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.

In cases where a student raises an issue that hasn't been considered in checks that were conducted in advance of results day, then this new issue will need to be considered for the centre review to be completed.

Who can request a review and when?

- 5.2 Any student, including a Private Candidate, may submit a request for a centre review on the grounds that the centre has:
- failed to follow its procedures properly or consistently in arriving at that result or
 - made an administrative error in relation to the result.
- 5.3 Requests for appeals on the grounds of academic judgement (unreasonableness) will only be considered by awarding organisations (at Stage Two) and not by centres. In these cases, an initial centre review must still be completed to ensure that the centre has not made any procedural or administrative errors. The centre should not review its academic judgements during the centre review stage.
- 5.4 To decide whether to request a review, students will need access to certain information before results day, or on results day, if it has not already been made available to them. This must include:
- a. the centre policy
 - b. the sources of evidence used to determine the student's grade, along with the marks/grades associated with them
 - c. details of any variations in evidence used based on disruption to what that 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.
- 5.5 A centre review must be completed and an outcome reported to the student before an appeal can be submitted to the awarding organisation (**see section 9 for key dates**). Any appeals submitted where this has not happened, will be rejected by the awarding organisation and a new application will need to be submitted once the centre review has been completed.

- 5.6 All requests for a centre review, including those from Private Candidates, must be made directly to the centre which submitted the grade(s). It is recommended that requests for centre reviews are made by the candidate to the centre by:
- **16 August 2021** (priority appeals - for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice, i.e. the offer they accepted as their first choice, and wish to appeal an A level or other Level 3 qualification result)
 - **3 September 2021** (in all other cases).

This will enable centres to meet the deadlines to submit appeals to awarding organisations.

- 5.7 Centre reviews which are not submitted by these dates may lead to appeals not being completed in time for those with a higher education place dependent on the outcome of the appeal.
- 5.8 For reviews where a higher education place is dependent on the outcome of an appeal, students must include their UCAS personal ID. The student should also notify their preferred higher education provider that a review has been requested at the earliest possible opportunity so they can decide how to handle their offer.
- 5.9 Given the short timescales for requesting centre reviews, and for submitting subsequent awarding organisations appeals, centres must have:
- a. a clearly documented process and appropriate resources in place to handle reviews and appeal requests from results days
 - b. clearly communicated the process to students in advance of results days
 - c. ready access to the materials needed by the student to assess and decide whether to request a review (**see paragraph 5.4**).
- 5.10 Centres must accept and process/investigate any request for a review from a student. Failure to do so could constitute malpractice and awarding organisations are required to follow up on such cases.

Administering review requests

- 5.11 To assist centres and students to promptly request and handle reviews, a template request and consent form is included in **Appendix B**. The awarding organisations strongly encourage centres to use this form to ensure the correct information is captured. However, if a centre wishes to develop its own form, it must ensure the following information is included:
- a. the student's name and the qualification which is the subject of the review
 - b. for priority appeals, the UCAS personal ID
 - c. the grade being challenged
 - d. the reason for the review, this does not need to be explained in detail but should allow the student to outline in their view:
 - i. how the centre failed to follow its procedures properly and consistently and why that failure was important to determining the grade; and/or
 - ii. the administrative error the centre made and what difference it made to the determination of the grade.

- e. a clear statement that grades may be raised, stay the same or be lowered as the result of a review, with space for the student to sign to confirm they have read this and consent to the possible outcomes
 - f. space for the centre to record the outcome of its review, with a reason for the outcome.
- 5.12 The centre must keep a record of all review applications received, and the outcomes of those reviews. How this is organised is up to the centre, but it should be easy to access the information from a centre review, should an appeal subsequently be submitted to the awarding organisation.
- 5.13 A student may submit a request for a review but subsequently decide they wish to withdraw it. They should be allowed to do so as long as no finding has been made. A centre review application cannot be withdrawn once a finding has been made.

Determining a review outcome

- 5.14 An example of a centre administrative error is the transposing of grades for students with similar names. Such factual errors should be easy to identify and determine.
- 5.15 The appropriateness of the centre's procedure will already have been checked by the awarding organisation as part of its external quality assurance process. The focus of a review on procedural grounds will therefore be **whether the centre followed its procedure properly and consistently in arriving at the grade being challenged.**
- 5.16 Centres may find it helpful to refer to the evidence listed in the evidence checklist for appeals to awarding organisations when completing a centre review (see **Appendix C** or visit <https://www.jcq.org.uk/summer-2021-arrangements/>)
- 5.17 The types of procedural failure a student may raise and a centre will need to check may include:
- a. the existence and consideration of mitigating circumstances at the time of an assessment
 - b. the provision of agreed access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for an assessment
 - c. the process for determining and quality assuring grades (for example internal standardisation, authentication of student work).
- 5.18 Procedural and administrative checks may take place before or after results have been issued whether they are prompted by a student or a centre's own quality assurance processes. Centres will need access to all the following records and will need to consider:
- a. the reason presented by the student for the review, where this has been specified and any evidence provided by the student about issues that were not known about at the time the grade was determined
 - b. the centre's approved policy and whether it was followed properly and consistently
 - c. the evidence which was used to determine the student's grade

- d. any relevant assessment records detailing for the student any amendments to the range of evidence used for the cohort and, where applicable, steps taken to address any known mitigating circumstances/special consideration or approved access arrangements/reasonable adjustments
- e. a record that the grades had been signed off by at least two teachers in the subject, one of whom was the head of department/subject lead or Head of Centre where there was only one teacher in the department/subject
- f. the record, where it exists, of any relevant pre-results communications between the centre and student (for example, where a student has raised mitigating circumstances earlier in the process)
- g. relevant centre administration records.

5.19 In cases where the centre considers that there has been a procedural failure or administrative error, the centre needs to decide whether this affected the grade submitted to the awarding organisation.

5.20 The resulting outcome may be that the grade is raised, stays the same or is lowered, depending on the impact of the error or failure.

Examples

- a. Prior to the release of results, a student requested a review as they did not believe that the marks/grades attributed to their selection of evidence were accurately recorded. The centre reviewed the student's evidence and confirmed that the correct marks/grades were included when determining the student's grade. Therefore, no change was required to the student's grade.
- b. The student has requested a review as they believe that the school did not take account of the fact that their approved access arrangements/reasonable adjustments were not in place for some of the assessments used in the selection of evidence. The centre finds that the student's concerns were correct, having checked that the student was entitled to access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and finding no record that these were in place for two of the three assessments used in the student's evidence. There was therefore a **failure in procedure**. The centre reviews the grade for the student considering this finding, to determine whether their final judgement would have changed as a result. The centre considers that the lack of access arrangements/reasonable adjustments would have had an impact on the student's performance in those assessments and would have meant they would likely have achieved a higher grade on both. They therefore advise that, in their professional opinion and in line with the approach set out in the centre policy, the grade should be a B rather than a C.
- c. A student has requested a centre review believing that the school has transposed some of their marks that make up the range of evidence. The centre finds that the student's concerns are correct: there was an **administrative error**. The centre reviews the grade for the student considering this finding, to determine whether their final judgement would have changed as a result.

5.21 It is possible for a procedural failure or an administrative error to be identified but for this not to have had any impact on the grade awarded. In this case the outcome of the review would be that the grade stays the same.

Examples

- a. The centre finds that the marks of one piece of evidence have been transposed to another piece of evidence, but the differences are small and the weighting of each piece of evidence is similar so the overall impact of correcting the errors is that the grade already reported was accurate and therefore stays the same.
- b. The centre finds that the grade for the student was not checked and confirmed by a second staff member but, after completing this step it is found that the grade reported remains accurate. The grade in this case was found to be aligned with the evidence of student performance from which it was determined, so did not require amendment.

- 5.22 It is also possible for a procedural failure or an administrative error to be identified at the review which, when rectified, leads to a lowering of the grade. Taking the procedural failure example in 5.20 (b) above, a failure in the grade checking and confirmation process, when resolved as a result of the centre review, could find that the grade should in fact have been lowered as a result of that process as the centre found the grade to be too generous in relation to the evidence of student performance from which the grade was determined.
- 5.23 As with the administrative error example above in 5.21 (a), a mistransposed lower mark could impact a piece of work that is weighted more heavily than the other piece of evidence. When resolved as a result of the centre review, it could be that the grade should have been lower.
- 5.24 In such cases, the student who has submitted the review will already have consented to their grade being lowered as a possible outcome and the centre should therefore submit a request to lower the grade to the relevant awarding organisation.
- 5.25 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.
- 5.26 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.

5.27 Centres should refer to **Appendix D - Guidance to centres on correcting incorrect results** in cases where students have not submitted a review or appeal.

Reporting an outcome – pre-results

5.28 If a centre review takes place before results are issued, and an error is identified, the error may be corrected before results are issued. Centres may confirm to the student that the review has been completed, that an error has been identified and that the appropriate steps have been taken to rectify the error. However, centres must not share information about any new grade that has been submitted for the student until the date for the publication of results.

Reporting an outcome – post-results

5.29 Once the centre has considered the review and determined if a grade change is necessary due to a procedural failure or administrative error, it must report the outcome either to the student who submitted the review (if the grade has not changed) or to the awarding organisation to request a change to the grade.

5.30 If the centre's review finds a failure and concludes that a grade change is needed, before reporting the outcome to the student, the centre must submit an error correction request to the relevant awarding organisation as soon as possible. Details of how to do this for each awarding organisation are included at **Appendix A**.

5.31 The error correction request to the awarding organisation must include the outcome of the review, the reason for the decision made and must be signed off by the head of centre or a designated member of the senior leadership team. Awarding organisation staff will then consider the outcome and reasons and make the final decision about changing the grade.

5.32 Amended grades will be reported to the centre, to be shared with the student along with the centre's review decision. In cases where the awarding organisation disagrees with the centre's decision to amend a grade as the result of a review and considers it inappropriate to do so, or considers a different grade to be appropriate, the awarding organisation will clearly communicate its reasons to the centre.

5.33 The decision the centre provides to the student can be set out using the template included at **Appendix B** or in a separate outcome letter. It must set out:

- a. whether or not the review found a procedural failure or administrative error
- b. if it did, what that error was
- c. the reason for the finding
- d. whether there was a grade change and, if so, what the new grade is (if reporting an outcome pre-results, this information must not be provided)
- e. a reason for the grade change, or lack of change (including any additional explanation from the awarding organisation where its decision was different to the centre's); and
- f. information on the next steps if a student wishes to submit an appeal to the awarding organisation.

- 5.34 A record of the outcome of all reviews must be kept by the centre.
- 5.35 Whether or not a procedural or administrative failure was found, and whether or not the grade changed as a result, all students have the right to submit an appeal to the awarding organisation as the next stage in the process.
- 5.36 Any appeal to the awarding organisation must be submitted on the student's behalf by the centre that carried out the relevant review, with the consent of the student. A refusal to submit an appeal for the student could be considered malpractice and investigated by the awarding organisation as such.

6. Stage Two – appeals to the awarding organisation

This is the second stage of the appeals process in summer 2021. This section covers the centre's role in submitting student appeal requests to awarding organisations, including the supporting information needed, what the awarding organisation will do and how outcomes will be reported.

Who can request an appeal and when?

- 6.1 Any student, including a Private Candidate, who considers that there has been a procedural error, an administrative error or that their grade reflects an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement (either because of the way that the grade has been determined and/or the selection of the evidence), may submit a request for an awarding organisation appeal **after they have received the outcome of their centre review and after the publication of results.**
- 6.2 An appeal can only be made against a result issued. Any student who believes that the centre's 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, must raise such concerns through the centre's complaints process. Any continuing concerns following completion of the centre's complaints process may subsequently be raised through the awarding organisation's complaints process.
- 6.3 All requests for an appeal must be made directly to the centre which submitted the grade and must be received by the awarding organisation by:
- **23 August 2021** for priority appeals (for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice, i.e. the offer they accepted as their first choice, and wish to appeal an A level or other Level 3 qualification result), or by
 - **17 September 2021** for non-priority appeals.
- 6.4 All requests for appeals, from internal or Private Candidates, must be made to the centre which determined and submitted the grade and the centre must submit the appeal request to the awarding organisation.
- 6.5 Appeals which are not submitted by the dates in **paragraph 6.3** may lead to appeals not being completed in time for those students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice (i.e. the offer they accepted as their first choice) and wish to appeal an A level or other Level 3 qualification result.
- 6.6 Awarding organisations will not accept appeals directly from students or parents. Appeals submitted by students or parents directly to an awarding organisation will not be processed and will need to be re-submitted via the centre. This may risk appeals not being completed in time for those students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice (i.e. the offer they accepted as their first choice) and wish to appeal an A level or other Level 3 qualification result.
- 6.7 Any student who requests a priority appeal must include their UCAS personal ID with the appeal application for it to be processed as such. They should also notify their higher education provider that they have requested an appeal at the earliest possible opportunity so they can decide how to handle their offer.

- 6.8 Given the importance of students being able to access the appeals process, and the short timescales for submitting and completing awarding organisation appeals, centres must:
- have a clearly documented process and appropriate resource in place to handle reviews and appeal requests from results days
 - have clearly communicated the process to students in advance of results days
 - have ready access to the materials needed to submit the appeal to minimise the likelihood of the awarding organisation needing to request further information
 - have a named contact available for any awarding organisation queries who will know about the appeals submitted and be able to assist promptly.
- 6.9 Centres must accept and submit a request for an appeal from a student. A failure to do so could constitute malpractice and awarding organisations are required to follow up on such cases. The appeal submission should include the outcome of the initial centre review showing the centre's own findings when considering the student's concerns.
- 6.10 Appeals cannot be made to an awarding organisation until the centre review has been completed. Any submitted where this is not the case will be rejected by the awarding organisation and a new application will need to be submitted after the centre review has concluded.

How to appeal

- 6.11 A centre must submit an appeal to the awarding organisation if the student considers that:
- the centre did not follow its procedure properly or consistently in arriving at the result, or during the centre review
 - the awarding organisation made an administrative error in relation to the result¹
 - the centre made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/or the determination of that grade from the evidence.
- 6.12 Where centres are delayed in providing all the necessary information to awarding organisations, there could be a delay in processing the appeal which may make it impossible to meet higher education provider deadlines for priority appeals.
- 6.13 It is essential that there is a named contact at the centre with whom the awarding organisation can liaise, should further information be needed before the appeal can be progressed. This will help to minimise any delays to the process.
- 6.14 Each awarding organisation will have a system for submission of appeals. Details of how to submit appeals are included in **Appendix A**. The information the awarding organisation will require when a student appeal is submitted includes:
- what they consider the centre failed to do, why that was a failure to follow the centre's procedures, and why that failure was important to the determination of the Teacher Assessed Grade
 - in what way they consider the awarding organisation made an administrative error, and what difference it made to the determination of the Teacher Assessed Grade

¹ If the candidate is dissatisfied with the outcome of the centre review into an alleged administrative error by the centre, the candidate should appeal on the basis that the centre has failed to follow the review procedure properly or consistently.

- c. in what way they consider there was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement:
 - i. in the selection of evidence used to determine the Teacher Assessed Grade
 - ii. in the determination of a Teacher Assessed Grade from the selected evidence.

Please note that the requirements for each ground of appeal are different and not all grounds require any additional rationale:

- appeals made on the grounds of a general procedural check or on the grounds that there has been an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the determination of the grade from the evidence **do not** require submission of an explanation
 - appeals made on the grounds of a procedural check in relation to mitigating circumstances or access arrangements/reasonable requirements **do** require submission of an explanation
 - appeals made on the grounds of an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade **do** require an explanation of the student's concerns
 - appeals made on the grounds of an administrative error **do** require an explanation of the perceived error.
- d. a clear statement that grades may be raised, stay the same or be lowered as the result of an appeal, with space to confirm that the student understands this and consents to those outcomes
 - e. relevant accompanying evidence, (centres may find it appropriate to upload the evidence checklist included in **Appendix C**, alongside their evidence, if they think it would be helpful to the awarding organisation)
 - f. a named contact at the centre who can handle any awarding organisation queries.

6.15 Once the centre has submitted the appeal to the awarding organisation, it should confirm to the student that it has done so.

6.16 When an application for an appeal is received, the awarding organisation will decide whether it will be accepted for evaluation or not.

6.17 The decision whether to accept the application for an appeal is based on:

- a. whether the grounds of appeal are within the remit of the appeals process (where a rationale is required)
- b. whether a centre review has been completed
- c. the timing of the application in relation to the published deadlines for submitting appeals
- d. whether the student has confirmed that they consent to their grade being raised, lowered or staying the same.

6.18 If an application for an appeal is not accepted, the reason(s) for this will be given.

6.19 A student may submit a request for an appeal but subsequently decide they wish to withdraw it. Awarding organisations will accept requests for appeals to be withdrawn as long as no finding has been made. An application for an awarding organisation appeal cannot be withdrawn once a finding has been made.

What happens during the awarding organisation appeal?

6.20 The Ofqual document *Guidance for the General Qualifications Alternative Awarding Framework* sets out that an appeal is '*not an investigation by the awarding organisation but an evaluation of the Learner's result in light of the grounds of appeal*'. This document may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-qualifications-alternative-awarding-framework>

6.21 When considering an appeal, the awarding organisation will consider the factors raised by the appeal and attach such weight to them as it considers appropriate. For example, the Ofqual Guidance explains at paragraph 8 that '*whether a Learner raised any objection to the inclusion or exclusion of particular evidence before the determination of the TAG is a factor which an awarding organisation may take into account, but it should not be determinative. Similarly, a failure by a Centre, prior to the determination of the TAG, to disclose to the Learner what evidence they would rely on might or might not be a relevant factor*'.

6.22 The guidance explains that a procedural appeal requires the awarding organisation to '*consider whether there is sufficiently persuasive evidence that the Centre deviated from its own procedures in the way(s) identified by the Learner in the grounds of appeal. The determination of such an appeal does not require a comprehensive or step-by-step evaluation of the merits of the procedure set by the Centre. The appropriateness of the Centre's procedure will have been checked by the awarding organisation as part of its external quality assurance. The question on appeal is whether the Centre followed that procedure properly and consistently in arriving at the Learner's TAG*'.

6.23 As procedures are evaluated at the centre review stage, it is expected that most procedural errors and centre administrative errors will have already been rectified by the centre before an appeal is submitted.

6.24 Where an appeal is made on the grounds of an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement (either in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/or the determination of that grade from the evidence), the awarding organisation will take into account Ofqual's guidance which sets out that the starting point is the Teacher Assessed Grade itself and not any alternative grade put forward as part of the appeal. Therefore, 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.

6.25 As the Teacher Assessed Grade is holistic in nature, the awarding organisation's independent reviewer will take a similarly holistic approach to their decision-making. The purpose of the independent review is not to review the marking of individual assessments.

6.26 The independent reviewer will consider whether the original Teacher Assessed Grade decision was reasonable. The independent reviewer will not consider whether they would have given an alternative grade or whether an alternative grade could also reasonably have been given.

The independent reviewer will consider whether the original Teacher Assessed Grade decision was reasonable on its own terms, not if any alternative proposition for the Teacher Assessed Grade or evidence put forward by the student, would be a more appropriate exercise of academic judgement. There may be a difference of opinion as to the assessed grade without there being an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement. The reviewer will only conclude that there has been an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement if the Teacher Assessed Grade was clearly wrong – i.e. there was no basis upon which the grade could properly have been given.

6.27 Where the appeal concerns the selection of evidence, the academic decision will be considered in the context of the centre's procedure. Where this sets a starting point that the same evidence will be used for all students in a cohort, the relevant question will usually be whether an academic decision to depart from, or not to depart from, the starting point in respect of the particular student was unreasonable.

6.28 Depending on the grounds submitted by the student (procedural/administrative, unreasonableness of academic judgement or both), the awarding organisation may assign the appeal for evaluation either to a member of their staff and/or to an independent reviewer.

6.29 An independent reviewer will be a subject expert appointed by the awarding organisation and trained to evaluate appeals. The independent reviewer will have no personal interest in the decision being appealed and will evaluate any appeal made on the grounds that there was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement by the centre.

6.30 Where the student submits an appeal on more than one ground (e.g. the awarding organisation is asked to review both procedures and the exercise of academic judgement), the appeal process is likely to take longer. This could be an important consideration for students who urgently need the outcome of their appeal.

6.31 For appeals on multiple grounds, it is possible that one ground (e.g. a procedural error) could identify an error that impacts the reported Teacher Assessed Grade. The result of this could then be overridden by a second ground of appeal (e.g. the unreasonableness of the Teacher Assessed Grade). An appeal outcome will therefore only be reported when all submitted grounds have been evaluated. It is also possible that the awarding organisation could identify that the grade awarded was not correct on grounds other than the grounds upon which the appeal was submitted. Where this is the case, the awarding organisation will take the appropriate action to correct the grade.

Reporting the outcome

6.32 As a result of the appeal, the case will either be rejected (disallowed) or upheld (allowed) in whole or in part. The fact that an appeal has been upheld (allowed) will not necessarily result in a grade change for the student.

6.33 Where the awarding organisation:

- identifies a procedural error or
- finds alternative evidence should have been included in the range of evidence

and that this may have impacted the Teacher Assessed Grade, they will report these findings to the centre and direct them to review the Teacher Assessed Grade.

The centre must then inform the awarding organisation if it believes there should be a change to the grade. An awarding organisation may impose a change to the grade.

Appeals made on the grounds of procedural error will be evaluated by a staff member or an independent reviewer appointed by the awarding organisation.

6.34 Following final quality assurance checks, where it considers it appropriate to do so, the awarding organisation will make the grade amendment and report the outcome of the appeal, with reasons for its decision, to the centre.

6.35 Where an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement is identified by the awarding organisation, the independent reviewer will determine the alternative grade. The awarding organisation will then report the revised grade and outcome of the appeal, with reasons, to the centre.

6.36 The centre must share the outcome of the awarding organisation appeal, and where appropriate the next stage of the process, with the student promptly.

7. Exam Procedures Review Service

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.

8. Appeals for Private Candidates

The appeals process applies to Private Candidates in the same way as for all other students. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that all candidates, including Private Candidates, can access the appeals process.

NB Private Candidates may include re-sitting students or students who have evidence from other established educational providers.

Prior to results day

8.1 Where a centre has accepted entries from Private Candidates it must ensure that it has followed the JCQ guidance on assessing Private Candidates.

In particular:

- a. Where a centre has accepted evidence from a third party, it must ensure that the third party has provided copies of the evidence used which the centre must retain in case it is required during the appeals process
- b. If the third party has also determined the student's Teacher Assessed Grade, the centre must also ensure that the third party has provided all the necessary supporting documentation, such as a completed candidate assessment record
- c. The centre must also ensure that the third party has provided the necessary assurances set out in the JCQ guidance, including confirming their willingness to cooperate with the appeals process
- d. The centre must follow their normal internal quality assurance processes as far as possible for Private Candidate grades, although some aspects of the quality assurance process (for example, a review of centre historical data) will not be applicable.

Sharing information with Private Candidates

8.2 If, following the issue of results, a Private Candidate requests information about their grade, the centre must provide the same information as for all other students. Where some of this information is held by a third party, the centre must liaise with them to ensure that this information can be provided. Please see **section 3** for details of the information centres will need to share.

Conducting a centre review for Private Candidates

8.3 If a Private Candidate requests a centre review, it is the responsibility of the centre that entered them to conduct the review and to liaise with third parties who have been involved in assessing the candidate where necessary. The centre must ensure that the correct process has been followed and that no errors have been made that have affected the grade. Before conducting a centre review, the centre must ensure that the student is aware that their grade may be raised, stay the same or be lowered as a result of the review. Please see **section 5** for more information on the centre review process.

Awarding organisation appeals

8.4 If, following a centre review, a Private Candidate requests an awarding organisation appeal, the centre must submit this to the awarding organisation on their behalf as for any other student. Before submitting an appeal, the centre must ensure that the student is aware that their grade may be raised, stay the same or be lowered as a result of the awarding organisation appeal. When submitting the appeal, the centre must ensure that any additional supporting documentation provided by third parties involved in the appeals process is included. Please see **section 6** for more information on the awarding organisation's appeal process.

9. Key dates - post publication of results

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

** A priority appeal is only for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice (i.e. the offer they accepted as their first choice) and wish to appeal an A level or other Level 3 qualification result.*

Key dates for non-priority appeals

From result day to 3 September 2021	Window for students to request a centre review
From result day to 10 September 2021	Centres conduct centre reviews
From result day to 17 September 2021	Centres submit appeals to awarding organisations

Publication of GCE AS and A-level results – 10 August 2021

Publication of GCSE results – 12 August 2021

10. Timescales

- 10.1 Awarding organisations will aim to complete appeals as soon as possible and particular efforts will be made for those appeals that have been identified as priority appeals for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice (i.e. the offer they accepted as their first choice) and wish to appeal an A level or other Level 3 qualification result.

The awarding organisations will aim to complete Stage Two of the appeals process (the awarding organisation appeals stage) within 42 calendar days of the receipt of the application.

Due to the nature of appeals this year, awarding organisations may require additional input from centres, and it may not always be possible to meet this target.

- 10.2 The timescales for Stage One of the appeals process (the centre review) are suggested timescales to enable centres to submit appeals to the awarding organisation within the deadlines set out in **section 9**. Centres may set their own deadlines for centre reviews.

Priority appeals that aren't submitted to the awarding organisation by 23 August 2021 will still be treated as a priority and awarding organisations will endeavour to process them as promptly as possible. There is, however, a risk they may not be completed in time for those with a higher education place dependent on the outcome of the appeal.

Appendix A - Awarding organisations contact details

Any queries on the appeals process should be directed to the relevant awarding organisation's Customer Services Team.

AQA

Centres should apply for a centre review grade change or an appeal using <https://aqasummer21.powerappsportals.com/>

City & Guilds

Information on how to appeal is available here <https://www.cityandguilds.com/covid-19/appeals-and-results>

Queries should be directed to policy@cityandguilds.com

OCR

Centres should apply for a centre review grade change or an appeal using OCR Interchange - <https://interchange.ocr.org.uk/>

Pearson

Centres should apply to appeal and correct errors after results have been issued using Edexcel Online - <https://edexcelonline.pearson.com/>

Centres can correct a teacher assessed grade before 18 July 2021 using the teacher assessed grade portal at Edexcel Online - <https://edexcelonline.pearson.com/>

Centres can correct a teacher assessed grade after 18 July 2021 and prior to results being issued, by contacting resultsresolution@pearson.com

WJEC

Centres should apply to appeal using WJEC's secure system - <https://portal-appeals.wjec.co.uk>

Appendix B - Optional template student request and consent form

An interactive version of this form is provided separately should you wish to use it: [Optional Student Request Form for Centre Reviews and Appeals to Awarding Organisations](#).

Appendix B - Optional Student Request Form for Centre Reviews and Appeals to Awarding Organisations



Important information for students

What may happen to your grade during the centre review and appeals process?

If you request a centre review or an awarding organisation appeal there are three possible outcomes:

- Your original grade is **lowered**, so your final grade will be lower than the original grade you received.
- Your original grade is **confirmed**, so there is no change to your grade.
- Your original grade is **raised**, so your final grade will be higher than the original grade you received.

Once a finding has been made you cannot withdraw your request for a centre review or appeal. If your grade has been lowered you will not be able to revert back to the original grade you received on results day.

What will be checked during a centre review?

You can ask the centre to check whether it made a **procedural error**, an **administrative error**, or both. A procedural error means a failure to follow the process set out in the centre policy. An administrative error means an error in recording your grade or submitting your grade to the awarding organisation.

You must request a centre review before you can request an awarding organisation appeal. This is so the awarding organisation is certain that your grade is as the centre intended.

What will be checked during an awarding organisation appeal?

You can ask the awarding organisation to check whether the centre made a **procedural** or **administrative error** - or whether the awarding organisation itself made an **administrative error**. You can also ask the awarding organisation to check whether the **academic judgement** of the centre was unreasonable, either in the selection of evidence or the determination of your grade.

When do I need to submit my request?

You should submit a request for a centre review by **16 August 2021 for a priority appeal**, or by **3 September 2021 for non-priority appeals**.

Once you have received the outcome of your centre review, if you wish to request an awarding organisation appeal you should do so as soon as possible. Your school or college will submit this on your behalf. Requests for a priority appeal should be submitted by **23 August 2021** and requests for non-priority appeals should be submitted by **17 September 2021**. Priority appeals that aren't submitted to the awarding organisation by 23 August 2021 will still be treated as a priority but they may not be completed in time for those with a higher education place dependent on the outcome of the appeal.

What is a priority appeal?

A priority appeal is only for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice (i.e. the offer they accepted as their first choice) and wish to appeal an A level or other Level 3 qualification result. You should inform your intended higher education provider that you have requested a centre review or appeal.

What is your UCAS personal ID and why is it needed?

Your UCAS personal ID is the 10 digit code included in all correspondence from UCAS. This is needed to confirm that a student's place is dependent on the outcome of the appeal.

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

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.

Administrative Error by the centre <small>e.g. the wrong grade/mark was recorded against an item of evidence</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Procedural Error by the centre <small>e.g. a reasonable adjustment / access arrangement was not provided for an eligible student</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Supporting evidence

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.

Acknowledgement

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:

- 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

B. Centre review outcome

This section should be completed by the centre and shared with the student as a record of the outcome of the centre review.

Centre Review Outcome					
Please tick the outcome of the review and then record the original grade and the revised grade if applicable.					
Upheld	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not upheld	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partially upheld	<input type="checkbox"/>
Original Teacher Assessed Grade			Revised Teacher Assessed Grade if applicable		

Information considered by the centre
Please provide a short explanation of the evidence that you have reviewed. There is a 5,000 character limit.

Rationale for the outcome of the centre review
Outline the centre's findings from the centre review e.g. procedural or administrative error and if relevant, details of the error. There is a 5,000 character limit.

Authorisation and dates of next stages			
Please complete the boxes as appropriate. Boxes 1 and 2 must be completed in every case. Boxes 3 and 4 need only be completed when requesting a grade change.			
1. Date that the decision and rationale was issued to student		2. Date student informed of how to proceed to stage 2 (appeal to awarding organisation)	
3. Confirmation that a senior leader has authorised any grade change		4. Date that grade change is submitted to awarding organisation	

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

Appendix C - Optional evidence checklist

An interactive version of this form is provided separately, which includes an explanation of what the form is and how to use it if you wish to do so: [Optional Evidence Checklist for Student Appeals](#).

Optional Evidence Checklist for Student Appeals



This is a checklist of the evidence that schools and colleges will be required to submit to the Awarding Organisation in the event of a student appeal to the Awarding Organisation on either procedural or academic judgement grounds. Centres may also find this evidence useful when conducting centre reviews.

We recommend that subject teachers and Heads of Department are asked to review the checklist once teacher assessed grades have been submitted to ensure that all documentation is complete, accurate and easily accessible to staff who will be completing centre reviews and submitting appeals. It may be helpful to note the name and location of relevant documentation so that it can be easily retrieved if needed during the centre review and appeals processes.

We also recommend that you submit the completed checklist along with all required evidence, when submitting an appeal to the Awarding Organisation. This may reduce the need for the Awarding Organisation to contact centre staff with queries about the evidence submitted.

Qualification Level:

Subject:

	The cohort assessment record (or equivalent centre documentation) including the following:	If this is not contained in the assessment record, please identify the appropriate document that has the information. This will need to be submitted to the Awarding Organisation in the event of an appeal.	Explanatory notes
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	The roles of the two members of staff who checked and confirmed the grades for this subject.		
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	The evidence selected for the cohort and an explanation of how the evidence has been used to support the determination of grades.		<i>The explanation should be sufficient to enable the Awarding Organisation to understand the approach to the determination of grades at a cohort level. It should specify, for example, if greater weight has been given to one or more assessments and how coverage of the assessment objectives has been achieved.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Details of individual variations in the evidence selected for students within the cohort and a rationale for each variation.		<i>This should detail all cases where the selection of evidence for an individual student varies from that selected for the cohort, including variations required as a result of access arrangements, mitigating circumstances, disruption to teaching and learning, concerns about authenticity or because the student is a private candidate.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Confirmation of any mitigating circumstances which have been taken into account for individual students, and an explanation of the way in which they have been taken into account.		

(Cont.)

(Cont.)

<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Confirmation of any access arrangements or reasonable adjustments agreed for individual students, and an explanation of the way in which any failure to provide agreed access arrangements or reasonable adjustments has been taken into account.		
	Additional documentation	<i>Please indicate what documentation is available and its location.</i>	<i>When submitting an appeal to the awarding organisation, you need only upload this documentation for the student who has requested the appeal.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> 6	Any available additional records relating to the evidence selection for private candidates included in the cohort.		<i>For example, any supporting documentation provided by a third party involved in the grading decision.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> 7	Any available correspondence or records of discussions with students or parents about concerns related to the grading process.		<i>Teachers are not expected to document all conversations about student or parental concerns, but records that are available should be submitted to the Awarding Organisation in the event of an appeal.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> 8	A copy of information shared with the student about the evidence selected, and marks or grades awarded for each item of evidence.		
<input type="checkbox"/> 9	Details of any procedural or administrative errors which have come to light since the original submission of teacher assessed grades, and confirmation of action taken to address these.		
	Student performance evidence	<i>Please indicate what documentation is available and its location.</i>	<i>When submitting an appeal to the awarding organisation, you need only upload this documentation for the student who has requested the appeal.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> 10	All available student evidence which has been used in determining the grade.		
	Centre review documentation	<i>Please indicate what documentation is available and its location.</i>	<i>When submitting an appeal to the awarding organisation, you need only upload this documentation for the student who has requested the appeal.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> 11	A copy of the student's request for a centre review and a copy of the centre's response.		<i>If any procedural or administrative errors were identified by the centre, the response to the student should make it clear what action has been taken as a result.</i>

ENDS

Appendix D - Guidance for centres on changing grades following the issue of results

You may discover, following the issue of results, that an error has occurred which has resulted in a student receiving a higher or lower grade than they should have received. This error could impact a student who has requested a centre review and/or other students who have not requested reviews.

Awarding organisations will consider requests from centres to correct errors on the basis of the explanation you provide setting out why you believe the grade should be changed. You must only request that a grade be changed if the original grade was incorrect as a result of an administrative or procedural error on the part of the centre.

Correcting grades for students who have requested a centre review

Students who request a centre review will have been made aware that their grade could be confirmed, raised or lowered as a result of the review and will have given their consent for the review to take place. Therefore, if you discover that the grade awarded to the student who has requested the review is incorrect, you should generally request that the grade be corrected. You should submit a centre error correction request to the awarding organisation and the awarding organisation will make the final decision as to whether the grade should be changed, after reviewing the explanation that you have provided. Your explanation should include information about any adverse effect that a decision to lower a grade would have on the student, for example if they have been accepted in a further or higher education establishment based on the higher grade.

Correcting grades for students who have not requested a review

Where you discover that the error has led to other students receiving grades that are incorrect, you should consider whether it is appropriate to correct the grades for these students too. In most cases, it will be appropriate to correct the grade in order to ensure that all students receive final grades which accurately reflect their performance. 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, if you find that a student who has not requested a centre review has received a grade which is too high, you should also consider the adverse impact that lowering the grade may have on the student concerned before deciding whether to request that the grade be lowered. In some cases you may feel that the benefit of correcting the incorrect result is outweighed by the adverse impact on the student.

This may be the case where the error is a relatively minor one (for example where the student was considered to be performing at the borderline between two grades) and the adverse impact on the student of correcting the result would be severe (for example where the student has already relied on the original grade to make decisions about their progression).

You should also consider whether the student's own actions, including malpractice, have contributed to the awarding of an incorrect grade. Where the student has been found to have committed malpractice, you should always correct the grade and report the malpractice to the awarding organisation.

If having reviewed these factors you consider that the grade should be lowered, you should submit a centre error correction request to the awarding organisation. The awarding organisation will review the case before making the final decision as to whether the grade should be changed. You should therefore ensure that the explanation you provide to the awarding organisation along with your request includes as much detail as possible about the adverse impact that a decision to lower the grade would have on the student and any other relevant factors that you have identified during your consideration.

NB For information about correcting errors after the submission of Teacher Assessed Grades and before the issuing of results please see **section 4**.

Appendix E - Academic judgements in appeals

Reviewing academic judgements at the appeals stage

Independent reviewers at the appeals stage will be asked to review whether there has been an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the selection of evidence on which the student's Teacher Assessed Grade has been based and/or the determination of the Teacher Assessed Grade on the basis of the selected evidence.

The independent reviewer will consider the judgement exercised by the teacher in applying the centre policy to the individual student who has submitted the appeal. They will not consider the reasonableness of the centre policy itself, which will be reviewed as part of the awarding organisation quality assurance process. The independent reviewer will expect to see that the teacher has had due regard to the guidance issued for the summer 2021 series by Ofqual and JCQ, and the subject specific grading support materials provided by awarding organisations.

Reasonable in this context allows for normal variation in academic judgement between two professionals with appropriate subject knowledge and understanding of the Ofqual and JCQ requirements. The teacher's exercise of judgement will not be considered unreasonable simply because an alternative exercise of judgement would have resulted in a more or less favourable result for the individual student. The teacher's judgement will be considered unreasonable only if it is such that no teacher acting reasonably could have reached the same judgement.

Reviewing the selection of evidence

The independent reviewer will first review the centre policy, to gain an understanding of the centre's overall approach, and then consider the explanations provided by the teacher on the assessment record (or equivalent centre documentation) for the selection of evidence at a cohort level and any variation in the evidence selected for individual students. They will also consider the student's grounds of appeal, in order to understand why they believe the selection of evidence was unreasonable in their case.

The independent reviewer will consider whether the teacher's academic judgement has been exercised in a way which is contrary to the guidance issued by Ofqual and JCQ to such an extent that no teacher acting reasonably, and being mindful of that guidance, could have reached the same judgement. The following example is intended to illustrate this approach.

The Ofqual guidance states that teachers should assess students on as broad a range of specification content as they can. A selection of evidence will not be unreasonable simply because it does not cover every area of content that has been taught, since students are not assessed on every area of content in a normal exam year. Nor will a selection of evidence be unreasonable because it does not cover all assessment objectives for the specification, if this has been necessary because of disruption to teaching and learning. However, a selection of evidence which completely excluded one or more assessment objectives may be unreasonable if no appropriate justification has been provided.

Reviewing the Teacher Assessed Grade

The independent reviewer will review the section on determining grades in the centre policy, to gain an understanding of the centre's overall approach, and the assessment record for the subject (or equivalent centre documentation), to gain an understanding of any mitigating circumstances or other relevant factors relating to the individual student. The reviewer will also review all available items of performance evidence on which the Teacher Assessed Grade has been based, and the student's grounds of appeal.

The independent reviewer will consider whether the Teacher Assessed Grade awarded to the student is contrary to the grading descriptors and exemplification issued by the awarding organisation for the specification in question to such an extent that no teacher acting reasonably, and being mindful of that guidance, could have reached the same judgement. A grade will only be considered unreasonable if the reviewer considers that the student's performance evidence is clearly and unequivocally indicative of a higher or lower grade.

Appendix F – Optional checklist for ensuring students get the right grades and for minimising the queries they have about them

The following identifies where issues may occur that lead to requests for centre reviews and appeals to awarding organisations. Here are a few checks that centres can conduct to reduce the likelihood of centre reviews and appeals and to ensure that they can be conducted promptly if requested. This list is based on the [JCQ Guidance on the Determination of Grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs for Summer 2021](#). An interactive version of it is provided separately should you wish to use it: [Optional checklist of procedures](#).

Assessment evidence

- The Centre Policy has been shared with students and parents/guardians so they understand the centre's approach to assessment.
- Eligible students have been given their access arrangements when completing assessments. The arrangements are noted and recorded on the centre's assessment record.
- Students have been informed how they should report incidents/events which may have adversely affected them at the time of taking the assessment (special consideration). The centre has kept a record and the information will be recorded on the centre's assessment record.
- The centre has considered JCQ's guidance on private candidates and suitable sources of evidence and methods of authentication have been used.
- Teachers have been able to authenticate students' work.
- Students have been informed of the assessments used as evidence in determining their grades.
- Students' work has been retained in accordance with the [JCQ Retention of Evidence – Summer 2021](#) notice and Ofqual's [Information for heads of centre, heads of department and teachers on the submission of teacher assessed grades](#).
- Students' work and associated records are readily available if requested by an awarding organisation.

Marking and grading decisions

- The centre has followed the grading guidance provided by JCQ and made use of the grade descriptors and exemplification evidence.
- If access arrangements and reasonable adjustments could not be provided at the time of an assessment, the lack of them has been taken into consideration in determining the grade or alternative evidence has been used. Specialist teachers and other professionals have been consulted where appropriate and decisions have been documented in the centre's assessment record.

- If applicable, special consideration has been considered in determining a mark/grade for an assessment or the assessment has not been included when determining the grade and an alternative assessment used, if possible.
- Conflicts of interest have been identified and appropriately managed as required.
- Grades have been determined based on a holistic judgement of the evidence and due regard has been taken of Ofqual's [Information for centres about making objective judgements](#).
- There is a clear and succinct rationale for the teacher assessed grades based on the evidence used to determine the grades.
- For tiered GCSEs, the grade reflects the tier of entry.

Internal quality assurance

- Internal quality assurance has been conducted in accordance with the Centre Policy.
- Historical centre performance data at qualification level has been used appropriately as a high-level check once grades had been assigned to students in line with the JCQ guidance.
- The internal quality assurance decisions are documented, stored securely and can be retrieved.
- Each grade for a subject has been signed off by at least two teachers in a subject including the head of department or subject lead. If there is only one teacher, the Head of Centre is the second signatory.
- The Head of department has completed all checks to enable them to complete the Head of Centre Declaration.
- The Head of Centre Declaration has been submitted.

Accurate record keeping

- All relevant information is recorded on the centre's assessment record for each subject as outlined in the JCQ guidance.

Submitting grades

- Grades have been checked to ensure that there are no administrative errors. Particular attention has been given to checking students with the same or very similar names.



Centre reviews and appeals

- ✓ Students have information about the centre's arrangements for conducting centre reviews and submitting appeals to the awarding organisation following a centre review.
- ✓ Student work and associated records have been stored so that they can be accessed by staff promptly if a centre review is requested and can be sent to the awarding organisation if an appeal to the awarding organisation is requested.
- ✓ Centre staff are available to provide guidance to students and conduct the centre review (stage 1 of the process).
- ✓ Centre staff are available to submit appeals to awarding organisations including all relevant evidence (stage 2 of the process).
- ✓ Centre staff are available to respond to awarding organisation queries on appeals, such as providing further information.



Joint Council for
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Contact: info@jcq.org.uk

DATE PUBLISHED: 08/06/2021

VERSION DATE: 08/06/2021