

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

Re: JCQ Guidance on the Appeals Process for the Awarding of Grades in Summer 2021

JCQ have released further guidance to schools regarding how the appeals process will work for students being awarded grades this year. Please take time to read this letter carefully before Results Day.

A Level Results Day: 10th August 2021 – 08:30 – 10:00

GCSE Results Day: 12th August 2021 – 09:00 and 09:30

JCQ guidance recommends that schools share the evidence used for awarding grades, as well as the Centre Policy and other important documentation with students, parents and carers. As you will be aware, our evidence base, centre policy, special considerations policy and initial appeals information has been available on the school website since March.

The JCQ guidance on appeals makes clear that all Year 11 and Year 13 students have the right to appeal a grade if they believe there has been an administrative error, a procedural error or the awarding of a grade demonstrates an unreasonable exercise of professional judgement. Students are able to appeal on the basis of one or more of these criteria. The information on our website makes clear what Oakwood Park Grammar School has done to reduce the need for appeals, however it is revisited in the second section of this letter.

The appeals process has three stages, although not every appeal will go through all three stages. These stages are: a centre review completed by the school, an appeal to the awarding body and finally, the Exam Procedures Review Service. The table below should support your understanding of how each stage will work.

Stage	Details	By when
Stage 1 - Centre Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- All students have the right to appeal a grade if there is a perceived error- Students must complete a student request and consent form – this must clearly outline the reasons for the request- This must be emailed to Exams@opgs.org, or it will not be processed.- The school will conduct a review to determine if there has been an administrative error (which could include an incorrect inputting of data) or a procedural error (which could include a permitted written request for special consideration not being applied).- The school will determine whether there was an error. If yes, they will notify the awarding body and the student immediately.	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)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The outcome of a centre review could include the result going down, staying the same or going up. - If the grade is to remain the same, the school does not need to notify the awarding body. 	3 September 2021 (in all other cases).
Stage 2 – Appeal to the Awarding Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stage 2 appeals can be made if the student continues to believe that there has been an administrative or procedural error or if a student wants to appeal a grade on the basis of an unreasonable exercise of professional judgement - For a Stage 2 appeal, the initial stage, the Centre Review must be completed first - Oakwood Park Grammar School is duty bound to make the appeal to the awarding body on behalf of the student - The student must complete a request and consent form, clearly outlining the reason for the appeal to the awarding body - It must be sent to Exams@opgs.org. - The request is then considered by the awarding body/independently reviewed. The independent review will not include the remarking of students work - The awarding body will determine if the appeal has been allowed or disallowed - The outcome could result in the grade going down, remaining the same or going up - Either the school, or the awarding body will decide the grade, depending on the nature of the appeal 	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) 17 September 2021 for non-priority appeals.
Stage 3 – Exam Procedures Review Service	<p>Students who remain concerned that their awarded grade is an error must appeal to the Exam Procedures Review Service.</p> <p>No details of this stage of the appeal process have been released yet.</p>	

The JCQ guidance makes clear that there is no set time for the turnaround of appeals to the awarding body and highlights that it could take up to 42 days. We ask that all students, parents and carers to be mindful of this and understand that appeals to the awarding body are beyond the school's control.

The second section of this letter contains frequently asked questions, which we hope will support students, parents and carers at this time.

If you do have any questions left unanswered by this correspondence, please contact Mrs S Craig, Deputy Head Teacher, SCraig@opgs.org.

Yours sincerely

Mr K W Moody

Head Teacher

Section B – Frequently Asked Questions

Can I appeal a grade I have been awarded? Can I appeal more than one grade?

All students in Year 11 and Year 13 are entitled to appeal a grade if they believe there has been an error. To do this, students must complete a request and consent form. This will be available on the school website as an interactive PDF. Students are entitled to appeal more than one grade. A separate form must be completed for each appeal.

What are the grounds for appeal?

There are five main grounds for appeal, as dictated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). They are:

- You think we have made an **administrative error**: an example of this would be putting the wrong information into a spreadsheet.
- You think we have made a **procedural error**: this means we haven't properly followed our own process, as approved by the exam board. An example of this would be where you've been told you should have received extra time for assessments but this wasn't given in a certain subject.
- You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**: you think the evidence used to grade you was not reasonable.
- You think the **academic judgement on the grade you were given was unreasonable**.

What does 'unreasonable' mean?

'Unreasonable' is a technical term in this context and means that no educational professional acting reasonably could have selected the same evidence or come up with the same grade.

This means that just because other forms of evidence may have been equally valid to use, the selection of evidence is not unreasonable. Because of the flexibility of the approach this year, every school and college will have used different forms of evidence.

It also means that the independent reviewers will **not** remark or grade students' evidence. Instead, they will look to see whether any teacher acting reasonably could have arrived at the same grade.

How can I get access to my evidence base?

We have made the evidence base available on the school website for both GCSE and A Level, so all students should be aware of what teachers will be using to award grades.

On results day, we will also provide the individual results for the NEA, Key Assessment and Exam Board/Department assessments. Students should use this information to determine whether they have grounds for an appeal.

How long do I have to appeal?

Key dates for Priority Appeals

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.

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

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

What did the school do to reduce the need for appeals?

Oakwood Park Grammar School mitigated the need for appeals by producing an effective Centre Policy which was adhered to by all centre staff involved in the determination of teacher assessed grades. There has also been a high standard of internal quality assurance both in determining teacher assessed grades based only on student evidence and ensuring that there are no administrative or procedural errors. The school ensured the effective provision of access arrangements for all eligible students. We have maintained communication with students and parents/carers so that the centre's approach to determining grades is clear. The school made effective use of examination board materials relating to standardisation to ensure accuracy and consistency in awarding grades.

Can students get advice about whether they should appeal from the school?

Staff at Oakwood Park Grammar School will be unable to give advice to students regarding whether the school would support an appeal. We have worked hard to ensure fairness and consistency in our approach and have completed a high level of quality assurance around the accuracy of the grades. Therefore, we are absolutely of the belief that the grades submitted to the awarding bodies are accurate. If a student wishes to appeal a grade, this must be determined without the consultation of OPGS staff.

I have not received my first choice offer from University/College. I want to appeal a grade. What do I do?

Students who have been denied access to their first choice university/college and want to appeal a grade are considered priority appeals. These appeals will be processed first by the school and the awarding bodies, so it is crucial this decision is made quickly. Students must complete the request and consent form, and it is vital that the Student UCAS ID is included on the form. Failure to include this will slow down the appeal. These students must also advise the first-choice university that they are appealing a grade, which if increased would allow them to meet the entry requirements.

What if I decide I want to appeal when I have opened my results? Can I do this whilst I am on site?

No. Requests for appeals must be completed electronically and submitted to the Examinations Manager, Mrs Wright, Exams@opgs.org. All students will be notified of the receipt of their request via email and the outcome of the appeal.

Where will I be able to get the appeal request and consent form?

An interactive PDF, which allows you to type into the form will be available on our school website on the Awarding Grades 2021 section.

Can my grade go down?

Yes. If it is determined that there has been an administrative or procedural error which would result in the grade being lowered, the lower grade would stand. If a stage 2 appeal to the awarding body, and the independent reviewer determines through the process that the awarded grade should be lowered, the lower grade would stand.

Can I withdraw my appeal?

If you determine that you would like to make a stage 1 or stage 2 appeal, but then change your mind, the appeal request can be withdrawn as long as no decision on the grade has been made. You cannot withdraw an appeal request once the outcome of an appeal has been determined.

I want my appeal done quickly. Can I appeal straight to the awarding body?

No. The JCQ Guidance makes clear that no appeals can be made directly to the awarding body, and that failure to follow the school's outlined approach could result in no consideration of the appeal.

At Oakwood Park Grammar School, appeals can be requested through the completion of the request and consent form, whilst on site and collecting results, or via email. These request and consent forms and any supporting evidence must be sent to Exams@opgs.org, the school Examinations Manager.

I want my appeal done quickly. Can I call the school to request an appeal?

No. As above, if requesting an appeal, these must be emailed directly to Exams@opgs.org, the school Examinations Manager. The request and consent form along with any supporting evidence must accompany the request.

Who do I contact to check on the progress of my appeal?

Our Examinations Manager, Mrs Wright will track and record the status of appeals. If you have concerns regarding the time your appeal is taking, please contact her in the first instance. However, please be advised there is no suggested time frame for appeals within the JCQ guidance. We will work to ensure that centre reviews are completed within a reasonable time frame, however JCQ guidance does suggest it could take up to 42 days to complete a process of appeal. We respectfully request that students, parents and carers understand that Oakwood Park Grammar School has no influence over Stage 2 appeals.

Can I sit an exam in a subject?

There is also the option to resit GCSEs, A levels and some AS levels in the autumn, which may be preferable to some students. The design, content and assessment of these papers will be the same as in a normal year.