



11 August 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

We have now checked, moderated, quality assured and submitted all of your child's grades to the relevant awarding body. They will now be checked and moderated again by the exam boards over the next few months until results day which is Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August.

Results day will be held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August. Students may arrive to collect their results at any time from 8:30-11:30am. We ask that parents please wait outside school due to the COVID situation and that students adhere to any COVID guidelines in force on the day.

If you would like your child's results posted home to you, please drop a self-addressed envelope in to school reception so that we can accommodate your request.

### **How were my / my child's grades arrived at this year?**

Grades this summer were based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs were submitted to the exam boards by us as a holistic assessment of students' performance in a subject, following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance.

These grades were then approved by the relevant exam board, following external quality assurance checks.

In some cases, the TAGs we submitted may have been reviewed by the exam board, who may have asked us to submit an alternative grade. However, any changes to the grades we submitted were done by professional teachers or reviewers; this year no grades have been changed as a result of an algorithm.

### **What do I do if I'm not happy with my / my child's grade?**

All students have the opportunity to appeal their grade if they meet the eligibility criteria (see below). It is important to note that an appeal may result in a grade being lowered, staying the same, or going up. So if a student puts in an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark.

There is also the option to resit GCSEs 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.



## 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.

## What will be the outcome of an appeal?

At either stage of the appeals process (see 'What are the two stages of an appeal?' below), a student's grade may go up, stay the stay, or **go down**. When placing an appeal the student will have to sign a declaration saying that they accept the fact their grade may go down and they may get a lower grade than their original TAG.

## What's a priority appeal?

JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students, unfortunately. These will be open to A-Level students only.

### **What should I do if I don't get into my first choice of sixth form/college?**

Firstly, don't panic. Speak to us about your options. We will be able to advise you on the best route for you to take.

### **What should I do before appealing?**

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

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

### **What are the two stages of an appeal?**

All appeals, on any of the grounds above, must first go through a **centre review**. At this stage, we will check for any administrative errors, and check that our policies and procedures were followed correctly. Our policy has already been approved by the exam boards, so we are only ensuring that we followed this properly.

The outcome of the centre review will be communicated to students when made.

At the centre review stage, if we find that a grade should go up or down, we will ask the exam board to change it. They will then consider this request.

Following the outcome of a centre review, students may still choose to pursue an **awarding organisation appeal**. They must fill in a form which we will provide and then send on their behalf to the exam boards. Students and parents cannot send appeals directly to the exam board themselves – it must come from us.

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

### **How do I make an appeal?**

Following results days, students should fill in the first section of the JCQ form [here \(or attached\)](#) and send it to [spearson@elatschools.co.uk](mailto:spearson@elatschools.co.uk)

Forms completed on paper may be handed in to school reception for the attention of Ms S Pearson.

### **What are the deadlines for appeals?**

The deadline for submitting a centre review is 3 September; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 10 September. A centre review **must** be completed before an awarding organisation appeal can be submitted.

Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

### **You know my / my child's grades. Why can't you tell us?**

We are forbidden from disclosing the Teacher Assessed Grades to any third party, including students and parents, until results days. Any teacher or member of staff who does this is committing exam malpractice.

Although students may have been given marks or grades on single pieces of evidence, we cannot disclose the final submitted TAG.

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

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me: [\*\*spearson@elatschools.co.uk\*\*](mailto:spearson@elatschools.co.uk)

Yours sincerely,



**Sally Pearson**

Assistant Principal – Assessment

## The Brittons Academy Exceptional Appeals Process for GCSE Results Summer 2021

This guidance sets out the exceptional appeals process for results issued summer 2021 GCSE.

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, The Brittons Academy, 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.

If The Brittons Academy identifies an error with the grade 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 Brittons Academy and considers it is appropriate to correct the result, it will issue a revised grade.

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

The Brittons Academy will retain all evidence and records on which a student's grade is based securely in the exam secure storage, including copies of work. Any marks are retained electronically to ensure data security. **Any evidence produced after 24 March 2021 must be retained by The Brittons Academy.**

We will retain any information about a student's access arrangements or reasonable adjustments. Mitigating circumstances affecting performance in an assessment, which has been considered during the process of determining a student's grade is recorded on an Individual Variation Form.

### **Stage One - Centre Procedural and Administrative Errors Reviews**

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. In cases where a student raises an issue that hasn't been considered in checks conducted in advance of results day, then this new issue will be considered by The Brittons Academy.

Any student may submit a request for a centre review on the grounds that The Brittons Academy has:

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

Requests for appeals on the grounds of academic judgement (unreasonableness) will only be considered by awarding organisations, at Stage Two, and not by the centre. In these cases, an initial centre review **must** be completed first to ensure that no procedural or administrative error has been made. The Brittons Academy should not review its academic judgements during this review stage.

To decide whether to request a review, students need to look at the The Brittons Academy's documents that explain the process followed. This must include:

- The Brittons Academy Exams policy for 2021

- Sources of evidence used to determine the student's grade, along with the marks/grades associated with them
- Details of variations in evidence used based on disruption to what student was taught
- Details of any special circumstances that have been considered in determining their grade, e.g. access arrangements/reasonable adjustments/mitigating circumstances.

A centre review must be completed and an outcome reported to the student before a Stage Two appeal can be submitted to the awarding organisation. Any appeals submitted to an awarding organisation where this has not happened, will be rejected by the awarding organisation and a new application will need to be submitted once the Stage One review has been completed.

Requests for a centre review must be made directly to The Brittons Academy which submitted the grade(s) by **3 September 2021**. 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.

If after results day an error is identified that has impacted a student who has not submitted an appeal we will follow guidance in **Appendix D of the JCQ Appeals Guidance available here: [JCQ\\_Appeals-Guidance\\_Summer-2021.pdf](#)**. Students in these circumstances have a right of appeal against the grade change.

The Brittons Academy uses the details of how to inform each awarding organisation of a procedural or administrative error which are in **Appendix A from the above guidance**.

**Appendix B of the above guidance – available below** is used to ensure prompt review of Stage One requests; the consent form **must** be completed by the student before a Stage One review can take place.

The Brittons Academy will keep a record of all review applications received and the outcomes of these reviews. 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.

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.

In cases where there has been a procedural failure or administrative error, The Brittons Academy will decide whether this affected the grade submitted to the awarding organisation. 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.

Once we have considered the review and determined if a grade change is necessary due to a procedural failure or administrative error we will 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.

The decision made will be fed back to the student using the JCQ form.

### **Stage Two – appeals to the awarding organisation**

Any student 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**. An appeal can only be made against a result issued. All requests for an appeal must be made directly to The Brittons Academy which submitted the grade and must be received by the awarding organisation by **10 September 2021** for non-priority appeals.

The Brittons Academy will accept and submit a request for an appeal from a student using **Appendix C from the JCQ Guidance**. The appeal submission should include the outcome of the initial centre review showing The Brittons Academy's own findings when considering the student's concerns.

Appeals cannot be made to an awarding organisation until The Brittons Academy's 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 Brittons Academy review has concluded.

The named contact at The Brittons Academy for awarding organisations to liaise with is about Stage Two appeals is Sally Pearson

The information the awarding organisation will require when a student appeal is submitted includes:

- what they consider The Brittons Academy failed to do, why that was a failure to follow school 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

If the candidate is dissatisfied with the outcome of The Brittons Academy review into an alleged administrative error by The Brittons Academy, the candidate should appeal on the basis that The Brittons Academy has failed to follow the review procedure properly or consistently. Once we have submitted the appeal to the awarding organisation we will confirm this to the student. When an application for an appeal is received, the awarding organisation will decide whether it will be accepted for evaluation or not.

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

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

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

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.

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 student'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>

Where an appeal is made on the grounds of an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement the awarding organisation will use 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. 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.

Where the appeal concerns the selection of evidence, the academic decision will be considered in the context of The Brittons Academy'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.

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.

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.

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

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 Brittons Academy and direct them to review the Teacher Assessed Grade. The Brittons Academy 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.

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 Brittons Academy.

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 Brittons Academy. It is for The Brittons Academy to share the outcome of the awarding organisation appeal, and where appropriate the next stage of the process, with the student promptly.

### **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.

### **Key dates for non-priority appeals**

GCSE results	12 August 2021
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



## 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 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.

## 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.

<b>Centre Name</b>		<b>Centre Number</b>	
<b>Student Name</b>		<b>Candidate Number</b>	
Qualification title e.g. AQA GCSE English Language			
Teacher Assessed Grade issued			
Is this a priority appeal?  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.	Choose an item.	If Yes provide your UCAS personal ID  e.g. 123-456-7890	
<b>Grounds for centre review</b> 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  e.g. the wrong grade/mark was recorded against an item of evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Procedural Error by the centre  e.g. a reasonable adjustment / access arrangement was not provided for an eligible student	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Supporting evidence</b> 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.						
<b>Acknowledgement</b> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The outcome of the review may result in my grade remaining the <b>same</b>, being <b>lowered</b> or <b>raised</b></li> <li>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.</li> </ul>						
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