

Summer Grading 2021 – information for parents and students

Dear Parents,

Now that our Teacher Assessed Grades have been submitted to the boards for all students sitting GCSE, AS and A levels, I wanted to write to you to explain the next stage of the process.

Results will be available for collection by students on the following days:

A level 8.30am – 12 noon **August 10th**

AS levels 10am – 12 noon **August 10th**

GCSE 8.30am - 12 noon **August 12th**

A reminder that we can only issue results to the students themselves unless we have their written permission to release them to parents.

The following information outlines the arrangements in the event that you believe that the grades you have been awarded are incorrect in some way. Please read this carefully, retain it for reference and if you have any queries please contact us.

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, 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.

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 same, 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?

Priority appeals will be handled more quickly than other appeals, where possible before UCAS's advisory deadline of 8th September.

Priority appeals are only open to A level students starting university this autumn, who have missed out on the conditions of their firm or insurance offer.

If you decided not to confirm a firm conditional offer and to go through clearing instead, JCQ cannot offer you a priority appeal.

JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students, unfortunately.

When making a priority appeal, students will have to include their UCAS number so it can be confirmed that it is a genuine priority appeal.

What should I do if I don't get into my first choice of university?

First, don't panic. Speak to us about your options. You may wish to go through clearing, or sit the autumn exams or summer exams next year to try to improve your grade.

If you are going to appeal your grade, you must let your university know you are appealing. They will then let you know whether they will hold a place for you pending the outcome of an appeal (note that universities are not obliged to hold a place for you; this is at their discretion).

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 days.

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.

Our centre policy is available at

<http://bsg.bournemouth.sch.uk/files/policies/Assessment%202021%20BSG%20centre%20policy.pdf>

All documents required for appeals are to be found in the Teaching and Learning pages of our website.

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**. 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 [Form A: Application for a Centre Review \(Stage 1\)](#) and send it to office@bsg.bournemouth.sch.uk with the header **centre review**. Note that senior members of staff will be available in school on – and in the days after – results day to offer advice and guidance.

What are the deadlines for priority appeals?

In order to allow us time to process a review, you should complete Form A: Application for a Centre Review (Stage 1) and return it by 4pm on Friday 13th August for priority appeals.

Following the outcome of the centre review, if students wish to progress to an awarding organisation appeal, they must complete [Form B: Appeal to Awarding Organisation \(Stage 2\)](#) and return this by 4pm on Friday 20th August.

At both stages of the appeals process, there may be the need for specialist, expert knowledge (e.g. subject teachers, SEND knowledge). This may not be possible in August. In such cases, we may have to wait until the start of term, but priority appeals will still be treated as a priority.

What are the deadlines for non-priority appeals?

Non-priority appeals are any A levels, GCSEs or vocational qualifications, where a firm or insurance university place is not pending.

In order to allow us time to process a review, you should complete Form A: Application for a Centre Review (Stage 1) and return it by 4pm on Friday 3rd September.

Following the outcome of the centre review, if students wish to progress to an awarding organisation appeal, they must complete Form B: Appeal to Awarding Organisation (Stage 2) and return this by 4pm on Wednesday 15th September.

Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

How quickly will awarding bodies respond to appeals?

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 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.

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. The regulators will provide further details about the EPRS processes for summer 2021 before results days this summer.

You know my / my child's grades. Why can't you tell us? What if you know we haven't met our university conditional offer?

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

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

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

We only know what a student's conditional offer is if they have chosen to share that information with us. It has not formed part of our objective grading of students. Where we do know this information, we must not let students know their submitted TAGs, even if they haven't met the conditions of their offer.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alastair Green". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.