



THE JOHN FISHER SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr P E McCullagh BSc (Hons), PGCE, MA, NPQH

Peaks Hill
Purley
Surrey
CR8 3YP

21st July 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I thought it would be helpful to share with you some important information regarding Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG's) before your son receives his results in August and in particular the appeals process. I would like to also take this opportunity to remind you that Sixth Form students will receive their results from 8.30am on Tuesday 10th August and the GCSE results will be issued from 8.30am on Thursday 12th August. Sixth Form enrolment will also take place on this day.

Only the candidate can collect results in person. If any results are not collected by 1.00pm on the day, the statement of results (not certificates) will be posted home. Please contact your Key Stage Administrator if you are unable to collect your results on the day.

I hope you will find these questions and responses helpful:

How were my son's grades arrived at this year?

Grades this summer are based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs were submitted to the exam boards based primarily on a student's performance in a Controlled Conditions Test (CCT's) following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance. For Yr 13 students, evidence from the November 2020 PPE assessments was also used, when this provided a more reflective example of performance.

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

In some cases, the TAG's 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. Coursework was used as part of the evidence process in some subjects at A-level for example, in Art, Geography, DT, Media, History and English Lit/Lang. In BTEC qualifications, grades were based on attainment across the duration of the course to include coursework and external assessment.

What do I do if I am not happy with my son'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 and A-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 a Centre 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 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?

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.

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 my son does not get into his first choice of university?

First, don't panic. Students should speak to the Sixth Form team about their options. They may wish to go through clearing, or sit the autumn exams or summer exams next year to try to improve their grade.

If a student is going to appeal a grade, they must let their university know that they 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 on the results days.

The school is unlikely to be able to offer as much advice and guidance on the likely success of an appeal as we would in previous years, as we have already moderated and quality assured all the grades ourselves.

What are the 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 then send on their behalf to the exam boards. Students and parents/carers cannot send appeals directly to the exam board themselves – it must come from the school.

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

How do I make a priority appeal?

Following results days, students should fill in the form below and email it to examsofficer@johnfisherschool.org.

What are the deadlines for priority appeals?

*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.

The deadline for submitting a centre review is 12.00pm on Friday 3rd September and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 12.00pm on Friday 10 September.

What do I do if my son has not met the entrance criteria for Sixth Form or for specific courses in Sixth Form?

Internal students are invited to enrol into Sixth Form, on Thursday 12th June, in person. Students who have not met the specific criteria for certain subjects will be invited to have a conversation with a senior member of staff who can provide advice and support in selecting courses that may be more appropriate. Entrance criteria for subjects are published in our prospectus and students can only enrol onto subjects they have met all of the entrance criteria for. Providing a student has met the minimum entrance criteria for one of our courses (4 GCSEs at grade 4 or higher including one of English or Maths at grade 4) then they are able to enrol on a course.

If a student is seeking to appeal a subject result at GCSE which affects their subject choice, they may enrol in alternative courses but cannot enrol into a subject they have not met the criteria of.

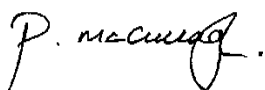
You know my son's grades. Why can't you tell me? What if you know we haven't met our university conditional offer?

We are forbidden from disclosing the Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG's) to any third party, including students and parents/carers, 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 this month our submitted TAG's may be moved up or down. 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.

I hope that your son will achieve the results which reflect the amount of effort he has shown.

Yours sincerely.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. McCullagh'.

P E McCullagh
Head of Centre

Centre review

This form 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:

Student Name:

Centre Number:

Candidate Number:

Qualification title:

Teacher Assessed Grade:

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.

If Yes, provide your UCAS personal ID:

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 e.g. the wrong grade/mark was recorded against an item of evidence

-Procedural Error by the centre e.g. a reasonable adjustment / access arrangement was not provided for an eligible student

Please provide up to 5000 characters on what you believe went wrong and how you think this has impacted your grade:

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: