



School Complaints Addendum for Grades Awarded Summer 2021

This addendum should be read in conjunction with the following guidance:

Joint Council for qualifications - A guide to appeals processes Summer 2021 series
JCQ (approved) - School Centre Policy
Letter - Appeals Process for Grades Awarded in 2021

Context

The summer 2021 exam series could not take place because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students will now receive qualifications based on a range of evidence, including recent assessments, which are based on the content they have been taught. All schools under instruction from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) have completed a rigorous process as outlined in the Schools Centre Policy which was agreed with the JCQ.

Should any student or parents feel that the grade awarded in a specific subject was unfair or unjust, please be aware that there is no recourse to schools or individual members of staff. The procedure for appeals and complaints for examinations is outlined in the JCQ guide to appeals and the Examination Procedures Review Service. Any issues or concerns regarding awarded grades cannot be addressed by the normal school complaints policy.

Procedure for an appeal/complaint

All requests for an appeal must be made directly to the centre which submitted the grade - please refer to the centre appeals guidance and centre policy.

The centre will adhere to the following dates outlined in section 6.3 of the JCQ guidance and there is no recourse to the school if the appeal is not made according to the times outlined in the centre appeals guidance. These deadlines allow The School to ensure it meet the deadlines set by the JCQ.

Section 6.3 states: '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.



There are 2 stages to the appeals process as detailed in the JCQ guidance. Rickmansworth School will follow these processes. Stage 1 is detailed in section 5 and stage 2 is detailed in section 6. There were no private candidates at Rickmansworth School.

Contained in the JCQ document appendix D is the guidance for centres on changing grades following the issue of results. Rickmansworth School will follow this guidance.

Reviewing academic judgements at the appeals stage

Appendix E in the JCQ appeals guidance, refers to the academic judgements as outlined in an stage 2 appeal.

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.

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.

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.

Reasonable adjustments, access arrangements and special consideration

Complaints against reasonable adjustments, access arrangements and special consideration will be taken seriously. As detailed in the JCQ guidance on the determination of grades for Summer 2021 that the and reflected in the centre policy ' Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs), SEND leaders and assessors have previously been advised to continue to process online applications as if examinations were taking place this summer. This will formalise the arrangements for the student's assessments and will ensure consistency with the Equality Act 2010.'

The usual process of centres submitting special consideration applications to awarding organisations for qualifications did not apply this summer. Rickmansworth School detailed all submitted items on a google form. Special consideration was not applied due to lost teaching and learning. Where it was judged that the determined misfortune had an impact this was detailed on the subject change form or on the google sheet. Rickmansworth School must be satisfied that the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a student's ability to demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment. Where this was not the case any misfortune was not considered.

Confidentiality, malpractice and maladministration

The School staff followed the guidance contained in the centre policy. Any form of malpractice and maladministration was prevented by a rigorous internal and external programme of moderation and training, including training on unconscious bias and discrimination. Assessments undertaken in high level of control followed the school policy on internal examinations (derived from the Ofqual valid mock guidance).



Complaints

Any issues or concerns regarding awarded grades cannot be addressed by the normal school complaints policy. Following the conclusion of the awarding organisation's appeal process (stage 1 and 2), 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 day this summer and will be communicated to parents and students accordingly.