



16<sup>th</sup> July 2021

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Dear Parents/Guardians of Year 11 & 13 Students

## Overview of the Appeals Process for Summer 2021 Examination Series

The summer 2021 exam series could not take place because of the COVID-19 pandemic. All students in year 11 and 13 will now receive qualifications based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs), which are based on the content they have been taught.

We have worked extremely hard to make sure all our students are issued with the correct grades on results day, there is, however, an appeals system 'safety net' in place, to correct any genuine errors that were not identified earlier in the process. Results day itself can be an emotional day, hence we are writing to you now to outline the appeals process. It is unlikely that any student at Arden will need to appeal, however, by sharing this information in advance, you may choose to read some of the documentation and/or share it with your child. Additionally all schools in England are required to share, with parents, information about the appeal process.

If your child believes an error has been made in determining their grade, they will have a right to appeal.

There are two stages to the appeals process:

### **Stage 1: Centre Review**

If a student believes the exam board have issued an incorrect grade, they can appeal to their school or college, who will review whether the school:

- made an administrative error, e.g. they submitted an incorrect grade; they used an incorrect assessment mark when determining a grade.
- did not apply a procedure correctly, e.g. they did not follow their Centre Policy, did not undertake internal quality assurance, did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances, such as illness.

To help our students decide if there are grounds for centre review, we will provide the following information:

- Before results day:
  - the TAG Centre Policy
  - list of the sources of evidence used to determine the grades (available on our TAG website - <https://sites.google.com/arden.solihull.sch.uk/tagwebsiteyear13/home-page>)
- On results day
  - dedicated page on the Arden TAG website outlining the appeal process and explaining the steps that need to be taken to appeal
  - response to general questions submitted on a google form regarding the appeals process



- After results have been issued, on request and after the student completes the required documentation:
  - the sources of evidence used to determine grades along with any grades/marks associated with them
  - details of any special circumstances that have been taken into account in determining grades, e.g. access arrangements, mitigating circumstances such as illness

A centre review has to be completed before an appeal can be made to the exam board.

### **Stage 2: Appeal to the Exam Board**

Following a centre review, students can ask their school or college to appeal to the exam board, who will review whether:

- the school or college made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which they determined the grades and/or in the determination of the grades from that evidence.
- the school or college did not apply a procedure correctly, e.g. they did not follow their Centre Policy, did not undertake internal quality assurance, did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances, such as illness.
- the exam board made an administrative error, e.g. they changed your grade during the processing of grades.

A reasonable judgement is one that is supported by evidence. An exercise of judgement will not be unreasonable simply because a student considers that an alternative grade should have been awarded, even if the student puts forward supporting evidence. There may be a difference of opinion without there being an unreasonable exercise of judgement. The reviewer (exam board) will not remark individual assessments to make fine judgements but will take a holistic approach based on the overall evidence.

At both stages of the process students will need to submit appeals to their school or college and give them written consent to conduct the appeal or submit it to the exam board. As a result of an appeal it is important to remember that a grade can go down, up or stay the same through either stage of the process.

If a Year 13 student has a place at university that is dependent on the appeal, they should tell the university that they are hoping to go to so they can decide how to handle your offer. The timelines for priority and non-priority appeals will be as follows:

10 August to 7 September: priority appeals window.

- 10 August to 16 August: student requests centre review
- 10 August to 20 August: centre conducts centre review
- 11 August to 23 August: centre submits appeal to exam board

A priority appeal is only for Year 13 students applying to higher education who did not attain their first choice and wish to appeal an A Level or other Level 3 qualification result.

10 August to end October: majority of non-priority appeals take place

- 10 August to 3 September: student requests centre review
- 10 August to 10 September: centre conducts centre review
- 11 August to 17 September: centre submits appeal to exam board

To ensure that the majority of our staff have a break over the summer holiday we will prioritise the processing of priority appeals. Other appeals may not be processed until school is open again on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021.

Finally, if a student believes the exam board has made a procedural error in handling the appeal, they can apply to Ofqual's Exam Procedures Review Service to review the process undertaken by the exam board.

### **More information and any questions**

If you would like to find out more about how TAGs have been decided and the process that has been followed, please read the following document produced by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). Pages 6-8 outline the appeals process:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JCQ-Guidance-for-Students-and-Parents-on-Summer-2021.pdf>

The Arden TAG Centre Policy is available to read on the Arden TAG website. We will add additional information on this page on results day. You can access the site using this link:

<https://sites.google.com/arden.solihull.sch.uk/tagwebsiteyear13/home-page/appeals>

Our Centre Policy was scrutinised and approved by JCQ during their quality assurance checks of the TAG processes implemented by schools.

At this stage it will not be possible to answer any questions relating to individual students and their grades, as all schools still need to follow the JCQ guidance and systems concerning malpractice. Any requests for such information will be declined and the correspondence has to be retained by the school. In the event of a student then making an appeal, we then have to pass that information on to the exam board. However you may have general questions about the appeal process. When we send the information out on results day we can ensure that those questions are answered in the form of an FAQ sheet. Please note that we will not answer individual questions. If you have any general questions please can you use this google form:

<https://forms.gle/qy6JpyASSN3PZW489>

### **Support on and after results day**

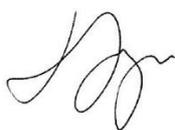
As mentioned in previous correspondence, 'Results' Day' can bring some unexpected outcomes and raise questions about intended next steps. There will be support services available in school, or accessible via video meetings, to support answering these questions. Mr Brady, our Careers Advisor, will be available, as will a range of pastoral and senior staff. We will include details of this facility, as well as links to meeting booking arrangements, with the information that we send out on exam results day.

We put this support in place to assist students who have not achieved the grades they needed to access specific college or university courses. We strongly encourage all our students to access these services on or after results day if needed. Appealing a grade on the basis that a higher grade was needed, will not be accepted by the exam boards as a reason for an appeal. The appeals system is in place to ensure genuine errors are rectified. The grades themselves are based on evidence and the exam boards will not change them because a student wanted or hoped for a higher grade.

For those students who wish to retake examinations, there will be a full Autumn series available. From 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021 students will be able to sit examinations in any subject that they had been entered for in the Summer 2021 examination series.

Once again I would like to reassure you that we have done all we can to ensure that no errors have been made in the determination of Teacher Assessed Grades. The appeals process is a safety net to identify and fix any errors that may have occurred. We are required, by JCQ, to inform all parents that this process exists, however we do not expect that any of our students will need to make use of the appeals process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L Page', written in a cursive style.

**Miss L Page**  
Deputy Headteacher