

7 July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer/Student

I am writing to update you on the process regarding Teacher Assessed Grades this summer. All the qualification grades were sent to the awarding organisations before the deadline and they are now conducting quality assurance checks nationally. The College followed its Centre Policy for Determining Teacher Assessed Grades, which was approved by the exam boards earlier in the process, and can be found on the College website for your reference using this link:

<https://www.arthurmellows.peterborough.sch.uk/site/data/files/users/3/docs/pdfs/exams/9D92797F71BA4AB96B7C79DE6E6E9745.pdf>

Results days this year are as follows:

- **Tuesday 10 August 2021 for Year 13**
- **Thursday 12 August 2021 for Year 11**

More information will soon be sent out in a separate letter regarding results days. Following results days we hope that all students are able to move on to the next stages of their lives and that they look back upon their experiences at Arthur Mellows fondly. We look forward to welcoming a large number of the Year 11 students joining us in the Sixth Form from September 2021.

The final part of the process in awarding grades this year is around appeals and details of appeals procedures are outlined in the attached document.

I hope that this information helps you to understand the appeals process fully. I feel that it is only appropriate to make it quite clear that if a student chooses to appeal a grade that they recognise their grade could be lowered. Once the appeals process has been actioned and a decision to change a grade made, it cannot be reversed. This process is not like an exam re-sit where the student gets the best grade.

Also attached is the latest timeline produced by JCQ for students to see the different stages of the process involved in the grading this summer.

I sincerely hope that all students have an enjoyable experience on their results day, and we look forward to seeing them then.

Yours sincerely



Mr P Cradock
Assistant Headteacher

INFORMATION REGARDING THE APPEAL PROCESS FOR SUMMER 2021 GRADES

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.

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, the lower grade will be awarded and recorded on their exam certificate.

There is also the option to re-sit GCSEs, A Levels and some AS Levels in the autumn, which may be preferable to some students who were entered for the qualifications in Summer 2021. 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 (Stage 1 – Centre Review).
- 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 (Stage 1 – Centre Review).
- You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**: you think the evidence used to grade you was not reasonable (Stage 2 – appeal to awarding organisation, after Stage 1 Centre Review has been completed).
- You think the **academic judgement on the grade you were given was unreasonable** (Stage 2 – appeal to awarding organisation, after Stage 1 Centre Review has been completed).

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 submitting an appeal the student will be required 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 are only open to **A Level students starting university this autumn, who have missed out on the conditions of their firm choice of university ie the offer accepted as your first choice and you wish to appeal an A Level or Level 3 qualification result.**

Priority appeals will be handled more quickly than other appeals, where possible before UCAS's advisory deadline of 8 September 2021.

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 the Sixth Form team on results day 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 (Stage 1)**. 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 once completed.

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.

Following the outcome of a centre review, students may then choose to pursue an **awarding organisation appeal (Stage 2)**. They must fill in the appropriate form, which we will 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 once it has been received back from the exam board.

How do I make an appeal?

Following results days, students should complete the 'Stage 1 Centre Review' Form which can be found on the College website using this link:

<https://www.arthurmellows.peterborough.sch.uk/page/?title=Examinations&pid=39>

All Stage 1 Centre Review Forms will need to be returned by the student and sent from their school email account to gradeappeals@arthurmellows.org

After receiving the result of the Centre Review appeal request then an appeal to the awarding organisation can be made by completing the 'Stage 2 Appeal to Awarding Organisation' form which can be found on the College website using the link above.

All Stage 2 Appeal to Awarding Organisation Forms will need to be returned by the student and sent from their school email account to gradeappeals@arthurmellows.org

What are the deadlines for priority appeals?

You should submit a request for a Stage 1 Centre Review by **9.00 am on 13 August 2021 for a priority appeal.**

The deadline for requesting a Stage 2 Appeal to an Awarding Organisation is **9.00 am on 19 August 2021** (students cannot appeal before results day on 10 August 2021).

We will aim to complete the centre review as quickly as possible*. If students wish to progress this to a Stage 2 Awarding Organisation appeal, they must return the completed form by the deadline outlined above.

*At both stages of the appeals process, there may be the need for specialist, expert knowledge (eg 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.

You should submit a request for a centre review by **9.00 am 31 August 2021 for non-priority appeals.**

Once the centre review outcome has been returned to the student then if they wish to progress this to a Stage 2 Awarding Organisation appeal, they must return the completed form by **9.00 am 17 September 2021 for non-priority appeals.**

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.