

Westlands School

Expect More

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BAR/TELA/Year 11

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Dear Parent/Carer

As we move closer to the 2021 Year 11 Results Day, (Thursday 12 August), I thought it would be appropriate to write and explain in more detail the procedures that have been put in place nationally for any student who wishes to appeal their grade.

Whilst it may seem that this is a similar process to the grades awarded last year, there are in fact many important differences.

How were my child's grades decided this year?

Grades this summer were based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs were submitted to the exam boards by us using various assessments of students' work, following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance.

The TAGs we submitted are currently being reviewed by the exam boards. If the exam board is unhappy with our TAGs, feeling that we have been too generous or too harsh when compared to other schools, they may ask us to submit an alternative grade. However, any changes to the grades we submit will be done by professional teachers or reviewers. Unlike last year, no grades will be changed as a result of a government algorithm.

What do I do if I, or my child, are not happy with the 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 submits an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark.**

There is also the option to resit GCSEs in the autumn, which may be preferable to some students.

What are the grounds for appeal?

There are four main grounds for appeal, as dictated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). They are:



- 1) You think we have made an **administrative error**.
- 2) You think we have made a **procedural error**. This means we haven't properly followed our own process, as approved by the exam board.
- 3) You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**.
- 4) 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.

Independent reviewers will look to see whether any teacher acting reasonably could have arrived at the same grade.

What will be the outcome of an appeal?

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 receive a lower grade than their original TAG.

What is 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 or insurance offer. JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students.**

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 day.

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 checked 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 (school) 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 then be communicated to students.

At the centre review stage, if we find that a grade should change (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 complete the stage two JCQ form [here](#) (page 4-5), 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 then be communicated to students.

How do I submit an appeal?

Following results days, students should complete the first section of the JCQ form [here](#) (page 2) and email it to WSS-Results2021@swale.at.

Students who are thinking of appealing a grade, can submit the form at the end of this letter to the same email address to request access to a full data sheet showing evidence that has been used to decide the grade (only available after results have been published).

It is worth remembering that JCQ have been very clear about what constitutes a valid appeal. Simply believing your child could have done better will not meet their strict criteria, unless there is evidence of:

- An **administrative error**.
- A **procedural error**.
- The **academic judgement on the selection of evidence being unreasonable**.
- The **academic judgement on the grade given is unreasonable**.

For example, a previous teacher assessment at a higher grade from earlier in their studies, (before the student had finished the whole course), would be unlikely to meet the JCQ appeals criteria as it would be **reasonable** for a student's grade to fluctuate as they learn more. It would also be **reasonable** for a teacher to adjust their assessment based on the most recent pieces of work.

Further guidance on the grounds for an appeal can be found on JCQ's Student and Parent guide .

What are the deadlines for GCSE appeals?

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

The deadline for submitting a centre review is **3 September**; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is **10 September**. Appeals received after these dates may not be accepted.

You know the students' grades. Why can you not tell us?

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

We understand that this is an unusual time, with lots of information to process. If you would like any additional help with an appeal, or if you would like to discuss any of the information in this letter further, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Year 11 team.

- Year 11 Outcomes Lead - Mrs Arculus-Pennells: bethany.arculuspennells@swale.at
- Year 11 Vice Principal - Mrs Tucker: jackie.tucker@swale.at
- Learning Leader - Mr Corrente: christopher.corrente@swale.at

All Year 11 students will receive a phone call on results day to discuss their results and get any further clarification they need.

We wish all our students well.

Your sincerely



Miss Honess
Headteacher

