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FOR PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS FOR SUMMER 2021

# The Matthew Arnold School

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This policy explains how we will deal with complaints and concerns relating to teacher-assessed grades (TAGs) which are due to be released in August 2021. It sets out our internal arrangements for the swift and effective handling of Centre Reviews as set out in our Centre policy for examination grades and how appeals to the exam boards will be handled. Our Centre policy is available on our website.

1.2 As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the government cancelled public examinations that were due to take place in the summer term and an alternative system has been consulted on and implemented by Ofqual, the body responsible for overseeing exams. In summary, this involves the following process:

1.2.1 Teachers have generated a grade based on evidence of students' performance. This is known as the TAG and should be an objective and fair judgement based on a range of evidence completed as part of the course, which demonstrates each student's performance on the subject content they have been taught. Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements should have been in place where appropriate when the evidence was generated. Where they were not, teachers should have taken that into account when coming to their judgement.

TAGs were subject to an internal standardisation of marking and grading judgements (quality assurance) and were then submitted by the school to the relevant exam boards; and

1.2.2. The exam boards will be responsible for issuing students with their final grades. This is the grade that students will receive on results day on 12 August 2021 for GCSEs and equivalent level 2 qualifications. Exam boards will also check a sample of the evidence used to support teacher grades in a sample of centres.

1.3 For more information about the process for generating exam grades for summer 2021, please refer to [Ofqual's guidance for students, parents and guardians](#).

1.4 We understand that some students might be disappointed with their final grade and may wish to explore whether they have grounds for challenging it. This policy sets out the process for doing so.

1.5 It is important that students understand that the grade **could go up, down or stay the same** during the appeal process. Students should read the Joint Qualifications Council's ('JQC's') 'Important information for students' document which is available on the school's website.

1.6 The appeals process, and therefore this policy, applies to private candidates as well as other students.

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- 1.7 There are tight timescales for requesting appeals. Students who wish to appeal are encouraged to submit the relevant forms to the school without delay to ensure that we can process them within the timescales set by the exam boards. Please see section 3 of this policy for more information about the deadlines for requesting appeals.
- 1.8 It is the student's responsibility to keep your chosen college informed about the progress of the appeal and the impact it might have on your college application.
- 1.9 If you are unable to comply with any parts of this policy because you or your parents / carers have a disability, or for some other exceptional reason, please inform the school so that we can provide further assistance to you.
- 1.10 We will ensure that any conflicts of interest are managed appropriately during the appeals process.
- 1.11 We reserve the right to make amendments to this policy to reflect any changes to the guidance issued by Ofqual and / or the JCQ. We will also have regard to guidance issued by the exam boards when we are considering requests for centre reviews and appeals.
- 1.12 Please contact the school for any support or advice.

## 2 How can students challenge a teacher-assessed grade?

- 2.1 This section sets out the two-stage process for challenging a teacher assessed grade. The timescales for submitting an appeal are set out in section 3.

### 2.2 Stage One: Centre review

- 2.2.1 Students may submit a request for a centre review on the grounds that the School has:
  - a. failed to follow its procedures properly or consistently in arriving at the result; or
  - b. made an administrative error in relation to the result.
- 2.2.2 For private candidates, it is the responsibility of the centre that entered them to conduct the review.
- 2.2.3 In order to request a Stage One review, students should complete a **Student Request for a Stage One Centre Review Form** (available from the school website or from the school office) and email it to Mrs Gould at [mgould@matthew-arnold.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:mgould@matthew-arnold.surrey.sch.uk) or hand it in to the school office for the attention of Mrs Gould.
- 2.2.4 When we receive your form, staff at the school will check if there have been any administrative and / or procedural errors in the subjects identified in the form. We will consider the following points when we are conducting a review:

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- a. the reason presented by the student for the review, where this has been specified, and any evidence provided by the student about issues that were not known about at the time the grade was determined;
  - b. the School's approved policy and whether it was followed properly and consistently;
  - c. the evidence which was used to determine the student's grade;
  - d. any relevant assessment records for the student detailing any amendments to the range of evidence used for the cohort and, where applicable, steps taken to address any known mitigating circumstances/special consideration or approved access arrangements/reasonable adjustments;
  - e. a record that the grades had been signed off by at least two teachers in the subject, one of whom was the Head of Department or Head of Centre where there was only one teacher in the department/subject;
  - f. the record, where it exists, of any relevant pre-results communications between the centre and student (for example, where a student has raised mitigating circumstances earlier in the process);
  - g. relevant centre administration records.
- 2.2.5 The outcome of the review will be communicated to the student by 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The outcome letter / form will include the following information:
- a. whether or not the review found a procedural failure or administrative error;
  - b. if it did, what that error was;
  - c. the reason for the finding;
  - d. whether there was a grade change and, if so, what the new grade is (if we are reporting an outcome before the results are published, this information will not be provided);
  - e. a reason for the grade change, or lack of change (including any additional explanation from the awarding organisation where its decision was different to the centre's); and
  - f. information on the next steps if a student wishes to submit an appeal to the awarding organisation.
- 2.2.6 If we find that any errors have been made and that, as a result, the wrong grade was submitted to the exam board, the school will contact the relevant exam board to explain the nature of the mistake and ask the exam board to change the grade (an error correction request). An error correction request will be accompanied by the outcome of the review; the reason for the decision made and will be signed off by the Head of Centre or a designated member of the senior leadership team. It will be for the exam board to issue

a revised grade if it is satisfied with the rationale presented by the school and it considers it appropriate to correct the result.

- 2.2.7 Whether or not a procedural or administrative failure was found, and whether or not the grade changed as a result, students can request an appeal to the exam board under Stage Two of this policy after they have received the outcome of the Stage One process.

### 2.3 Stage Two: Appeal to the awarding organisation (exam board)

- 2.3.1 Following the outcome of the Stage One review, a Stage Two appeal can be made if a student believes:
- a. that the school did not follow its procedures properly or consistently in arriving at the result, or during the centre review;
  - b. that the awarding organisation (exam board) has made an administrative error in relation to the result; and / or
  - c. that the grade awarded was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/or in the determination of the grade from that evidence, they can ask the school to submit an appeal on their behalf to the relevant exam board(s). Students will not be able to submit an appeal directly to the exam board. An appeal to the exam board can only be submitted if the Stage One review by the school has been completed and the outcome has been communicated to the student.
- 2.3.2 A request for a Stage Two appeal should be submitted by the student within the timescales set out in section 3 of this policy.
- 2.3.3 For private candidates, it is the responsibility of the centre that entered them to contact the exam boards to request an appeal.
- 2.3.4 In order to request a Stage Two appeal, students should complete the **Request for a Stage Two Appeal to the Exam Board(s) Form** (available on the school website or from the school office and email it to Mrs Gould at [mgould@matthew-arnold.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:mgould@matthew-arnold.surrey.sch.uk) or hand it to the school office marked for the attention of Mrs Gould.
- 2.3.5 Following receipt of a form requesting an appeal, the school will contact the relevant exam board(s). The information required by the awarding bodies includes the following:
- a. what the student considers the centre failed to do, why that was a failure to follow the centre's procedures, and why that failure was important to the determination of the Teacher Assessed Grade;

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- b. in what way the student considers the awarding organisation made an administrative error, and what difference it made to the determination of the Teacher Assessed Grade;
  - c. in what way the student considers there was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement. This can be an unreasonable exercise of judgement in:
    - i. the selection of evidence used to determine the Teacher Assessed Grade; and / or
    - ii. the determination of a Teacher Assessed Grade from the selected evidence.
  - d. a clear statement that grades may be raised, stay the same or be lowered as the result of an appeal, with space to confirm that the student understands this and consents to those outcomes;
  - e. relevant accompanying evidence;
  - f. a named contact at the centre who can handle any awarding organisation queries.
- 2.2.5 For some types of appeal under Stage Two, students will be required to provide a further explanation of the reasons for requesting an appeal (in addition to the reasons set out in the request for a Stage One review). Students will be prompted to do this in the 'Request for a Stage Two Appeal to the Exam Board(s) Form'.

The reasons for requesting a Stage Two appeal are set out the following table:

Reasons for Stage Two appeal	Is an additional explanation needed?
General procedural check	No
Unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the determination of the grade from the evidence	No
Procedural check in relation to mitigating circumstances or access arrangements/reasonable requirements	Yes
Unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the <b>choice</b> of evidence from which to determine the grade	Yes
Administrative error	Yes

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- 2.2.6 The exam boards will decide whether or not to accept the appeal for evaluation when it receives the application from the school. This will depend on:
- a. whether the grounds of appeal are within the remit of the appeals process (where an additional explanation is needed);
  - b. whether a centre review has been completed;
  - c. the timing of the application in relation to the published deadlines for submitting appeals;
  - d. whether the student has confirmed that they consent to their grade being raised, lowered or staying the same.
- 2.2.7 Exam boards are required to give reasons if they decide not to accept an appeal.
- 2.2.8 The approach that the exam boards will take when considering an appeal, if accepted, is set out in section 6 of the JCQ's Guide to appeals processes Summer 2021 series (available [here](#)) and Ofqual's Guidance for the General Qualifications Alternative Awarding Framework (available [here](#)).
- 2.2.9 An appeal will either be rejected or upheld in whole or in part. Even if an appeal is upheld, it does not necessarily mean that a student's grade will change.
- 2.2.10 If the exam board:
- a. identifies a procedural error; or
  - b. finds alternative evidence should have been included in the range of evidence and that might have impacted the TAG, this will be reported to the school and we will be directed to review the TAG. We will then be required to inform the exam board if we believe there should be a change to the grade. A change to the grade can also be imposed by the exam board.
- 2.2.11 The exam board will notify the school about the outcome of the appeal, with reasons. The school will then be responsible for promptly notifying the student of the outcome of the appeal and, where appropriate, the next stage of the process.
- 2.3 If the student or school considers that the exam board has made a procedural error, an application can be made to Ofqual's Exam Procedures Review Services (EPRS) to review the process undertaken by the awarding organisation.

### 3 Timescales

- 3.1 The timescales for requesting an appeal are set out in the following table:

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Stage	Timescales
<p><b>Stage One:</b> Timescales for <b>students</b> to submit the form to the school requesting a centre review</p>	<p>Ideally by seven days from collection of results or by 1 September 2021 at the latest</p>
<p><b>Stage One:</b> Timescales for the <b>school</b> to conduct the stage one review</p>	<p>From results day to 10 September 2021</p>
<p><b>Stage Two:</b> Timescales for the <b>school</b> to submit the appeal to awarding organisation</p>	<p>12 August to 17 September 2021  Students are asked to submit any requests for a Stage Two appeal as soon as possible after the outcome of a Stage One decision has been communicated and ideally by 9am on 16<sup>th</sup> September</p>

- 3.2 The exam boards will aim to complete Stage Two of the appeals process within 42 calendar days of receipt of the application but this may be subject to change depending on the circumstances.