



Dear Parents /Carers and Students,

Whilst we are not yet able to convey precise information about the appeals process for qualifications for the Summer of 2021, the school will confirm details in advance of the August results dates. (Please see the links that will be published on the Post Exams page of the school website shortly). In the meantime I thought it would be helpful for you all to have the following general information concerning appeals.

How were my child's grades arrived at this year?

Grades this summer were based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) determined in accordance with JCQ guidance. The Ofqual guidance on awarding student grades can be found via the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/986351/21-6780 Student guide to awarding in summer 2021 - accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/986351/21-6780_Student_guide_to_awarding_in_summer_2021_accessible.pdf)

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.

In some cases, the TAGs we submitted may have been reviewed by the exam board, who may have asked us to submit an alternative grade. However, any changes to the grades we submitted were done by professional teachers or reviewers; this year no grades have been changed as a result of algorithm.

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 day. 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 and 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 have not met the conditions of their offer.

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, they will receive the lower grade.

There is also the opportunity to resit GCSEs, A-Levels and some AS Levels in the autumn, which may be preferable to some students. The design, content and assessment of these papers will be the same as they would have been in summer 2021 had exams taken place.

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 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.

How do I make an appeal?

Detailed information on the appeal process and how it runs at St. Olave's will be posted on the school website in advance of results days. We are still awaiting further national guidance before we can finalise and share this information.

What are the grounds for appeal?

The grounds for appeal, as dictated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) are as follows:

Stage One: Centre Review

- You think we have made an **administrative error**; an example of this would be putting the wrong information into a spreadsheet.
- 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. N.B. Appeals can only progress to Stage Two after completion of a Stage One Centre Review.

Stage Two: Appeal to the Awarding Organisation (Exam Board)

- You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**; you think the evidence used to grade you was not reasonable.
- You think the **academic judgement of the grade you were given was unreasonable**.
- You are not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage One **procedural review** and still believe that the school has committed a procedural error.
- You believe there are **issues relating to access arrangements/reasonable adjustments and/or mitigating circumstances** which have not been taken into consideration by the school.
- You believe there has been an **administrative error by the Awarding Organisation (Exam Board)**

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 are the two stages of an appeal?

All appeals, on any of the grounds above, must first go through a centre 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.

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. They will then consider this request. The outcome of the centre review will be communicated to students when made.

Following the outcome of a centre review, students may still choose to pursue an **awarding organisation appeal**. They must fill in a form which will be shared on our website, which we will then send on their behalf to the exam boards. Students and parents cannot send appeals directly to the exam boards themselves - it must come from us.

The outcome of the awarding organisation appeal will be communicated to students when made.

What's a priority appeal?

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

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 offers. If you decided not to confirm a firm conditional offer and go through clearing instead, JCQ cannot offer you a priority appeal. JCQ cannot offer priority appeals to GCSE or AS-Level 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 university?

First, don't panic. Speak to the Sixth Form Pastoral Team 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 (please note that universities are not obliged to hold a place for you; this is at their discretion).

What are the deadlines for priority appeals?

The suggested deadline for requesting a priority appeal is 16th August (students cannot appeal before results day on 10th August).

We will attempt to complete the centre review by 20th August*. If students wish to progress this to an awarding organisational appeal, they must send the completed form to us by 23rd August for priority appeals.

*At both stages of the appeals process, there may be the need for specialist, expert knowledge (e.g. 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, AS-Levels, GCSEs or project qualifications, where a firm or insurance university place is not pending.

The deadline for submitting a centre review is 3rd September; the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 17th September.

Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

What will be the outcome of an appeal?

At either stage of the appeals process (see "What are the two stages of an appeal?"), a student's grade may go up, stay the same, or go down. 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 get a lower grade than their original TAG.

I hope this general information proves useful and further guidance regarding the appeals process at St. Olave's will be posted on the school website in advance of the results days on 10th August (AS-Level and A-Level) and 12th August (GCSE).

Mr Budds, Deputy Headteacher, Curriculum.