



Mission statement: Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures

Curriculum policies and procedures

Teacher Assessed Grades 2021 appeals policy

Aim: This policy outlines the process for requesting a centre review and appealing against teacher assessed grades (TAGs)

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1. Introduction

Students' grades for A levels, GCSE resits and vocational qualifications have been determined by the college this year (summer 2021), through the teacher assessed grades (TAG) process, in line with [Ofqual's General Qualifications Alternative Awarding framework for summer 2021](#) and the [Vocational and technical qualifications contingency regulatory framework](#).

*subject to confirmation by OCR

2. Scope of the policy

The appeals process for summer 2021 allows students to appeal their grade where they believe there has been an error. This policy, which lays out the relevant grounds for appeal, the time frames and the process, is based on the [JCQ appeals guidance](#) issued on 10 June 2021.

3. Background

- 3.1 The college will follow its Centre Policy when determining TAGs. The Centre Policy has been approved by AQA, the allocated awarding organisation, and shared on the [website](#).
- 3.2 All students and parents/carers have been notified about the process for determining TAGs and what evidence has been used, via email and the college website. They have access to the basket of evidence.
- 3.3. All students and parents/carers were invited to share with the college any relevant individual information or circumstances that they wish to be considered when determining the TAG. This information has been considered in terms of whether the issue or event had, or was likely to have had, a material effect on a student's ability to demonstrate their normal level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration cannot be applied due to lost teaching and learning, instead, this has been addressed through the flexibility of the range of evidence we used to determine students' grades.

- 3.4 A rigorous quality assurance process, as set out in our [centre policy](#), has been undertaken by the college to ensure TAGs are an accurate reflection of the evidence presented for each student.
- 3.5 All students and parents/carers have been notified of the arrangements for results distribution and the appeals process via email and the college website.

4. Time frame for appeals

- 4.1 **Priority** appeals (where a student's next steps are reliant on this grade, e.g. entrance to university)
 - 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
- 4.2 **Standard** appeals (where a student's next steps are not reliant on this grade)
 - 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

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5. Appeals process - stages

- 5.1 The appeals process has 3 stages, stage 1 is a centre review which is undertaken by the college, stage 2 is an appeal to the awarding organisation and stage 3 is an appeal to Ofqual's Exams Procedure Review Service (EPRS) for A level and GCSE courses and directly to Ofqual for vocational courses. It may not be necessary for each stage to be undertaken, however, students/parents/carers have a right to use them should they feel it is necessary.
- 5.2 Appeals cannot be made to an awarding organisation until the centre review has been completed and the awarding organisation will not accept appeals directly from students or parents/carers. Appeals submitted by students or parents/carers directly to an awarding organisation will not be processed. Students/parents/carers will need to re-submit the appeal to the college which could result in a delay or not meeting the deadlines set out above.
- 5.3 Grades can go up or down, or stay the same as the result of an appeal.

5.4 Stage 1 - Centre review

5.4.1 Grounds for appeal

a] Administrative error by the college: centre/the college made an administrative error, e.g. an incorrect grade was submitted; an incorrect assessment mark was used when determining the grade.

b] Procedural error by the college: centre/the college did not apply a procedure correctly, such as the centre did not follow its centre policy, did not undertake internal quality assurance, did not take account of access arrangements or special consideration.

5.4.2 Process

- 5.4.2 i On receipt of a Stage 1 appeal from a student the college will undertake a centre review to establish whether there have been any administrative or procedural errors.
- 5.4.2 ii If the college identifies an administrative or procedural error with the grade it submitted to the awarding organisation, a request for a revised grade with a rationale for the grade change will be submitted to the awarding organisation. If the awarding organisation is satisfied with the rationale presented by the college and it considers it is appropriate to correct the result, it will issue a revised grade. The final decision about whether a grade will be changed will be made by the awarding organisation, not the college.
- 5.4.2 iii Where the college does not believe that an error has been made they will inform the student of its findings. If the student believes that an error persists, they may ask the college to submit an appeal to the awarding organisation on their behalf. The college is obliged to submit the student's appeal if requested and will provide the required full supporting evidence.

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5.5 Stage 2 - appeal to the exam board(s) (this must be made via the college)

5.5.1 Grounds for appeal

a] Administrative error by the exam board: the awarding organisation made an administrative error, e.g. the grade was incorrectly changed by the awarding organisation during the processing of grades.

b] Unreasonable academic judgement by the college: student considers that the centre made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/or the determination of the grade from that evidence.

5.5.2 Process

5.5.2 i Where an appeal is made on the grounds of unreasonable academic judgement an initial centre review (stage 1) will be completed to ensure that there has not been any procedural or administrative errors prior to it being submitted to the awarding organisation.

5.5.2ii When an application for an appeal (stage 2) is received, the exam board will decide whether it will be accepted for evaluation or not. The decision whether to accept the application for an appeal is based on:

- a. whether the grounds of appeal are within the remit of the appeals process (where a rationale is required)
- 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.

If an application for an appeal is not accepted, the awarding organisation will notify the college, providing the reason(s) and the college will then notify the student/parent/carer.

5.5.2 iii The awarding organisation will review whether:

- the college did not apply a procedure correctly, e.g. did not follow the Centre Policy, did not undertake internal quality assurance, did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances, such as illness.
- the college made an **unreasonable** exercise of academic judgement¹ in the choice of evidence from which they determined your grade and/or in the determination of your grade from that evidence.
- the exam board made an administrative error, e.g. they changed a student's grade during the processing of grades.

¹ 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 will not remark individual assessments to make fine judgements but will take a holistic approach based on the overall evidence. The reviewer will only conclude that there has been an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement if the TAG was clearly wrong – i.e. there was no basis upon which the grade could properly have been given.

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5.5.2 iv If the awarding organisation finds the grade is not reasonable, they will determine the alternative grade and inform the college who will notify the student.

5.6 Results of an appeal to the exam board:

As a result of the appeal, the case will either be rejected (disallowed) or upheld (allowed) in whole or in part. The fact that an appeal has been upheld (allowed) will not necessarily result in a grade change for the student.

5.7 Withdrawing an appeal after having submitted it.

Following a submission of a request for a review students may subsequently choose to withdraw it, however this must happen before a decision has been made, otherwise they will not be able to do so.

5.8 An appeal on a number of grounds

Where an appeal is submitted on more than one ground, at any stage, (e.g. the centre has made both a procedural and administrative error or the exam board is asked to review both procedures and the exercise of academic judgement), the appeal process is likely to take longer. This could be an important consideration for students who urgently need the outcome of their appeal.

5.9 Stage 3 - appeal against the decision made by the awarding organisation

In cases of disagreement relating to A levels, GCSEs, WJEC Criminology and LIBF Finance, between the college and the exam board, or if the student disagrees with the exam boards judgment, the case can be referred to Ofqual's Exams Procedure Review Service (EPRS). Where a disagreement is in relation to a BTEC or CTEC* qualification an appeal should be made directly to Ofqual.

The awarding organisation's decision on the grade following appeal will stand unless the EPRS or Ofqual finds that the exam board has made a procedural error.

6. Process for submitting an appeal

6.1 Students wishing to appeal should initially complete stage 1 of the JCQ appeal request form available on the college website exam page.

6.2 Students must indicate on the form whether the appeal should be treated as a priority appeal, where their place at university is dependent on the grade, and are advised to notify the university to which they are applying (this is the student/parent/carers responsibility, not the colleges). The appeal must be submitted, within the stated time frame to exams@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk.

6.3 Following stage 1, the student will be notified via the JCQ form of the outcome of the Centre Review which will include details of the information and evidence considered by the college and a rationale for the outcome of the centre review, this will be dated to indicate when the outcome was shared and when they were informed of how to proceed to Stage 2 (appeal to awarding organisation). Where a grade change has been approved, it will also be signed and dated by a senior leader to confirm their authorisation and indicate the date the grade change was submitted to the awarding organisation.

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If the student does not agree with the outcome of the Centre Review they are invited to complete the request to escalate the appeal to Stage 2 on the same JCQ appeal request form (available on the college website exam page). This must be submitted, within the stated time frame to exams@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk.

- 6.4 An appeals form can also be requested from the college by contacting the exams department (exams@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk).

7. Other related policies and guidance

[Blackpool Sixth Centre policy](#)

[Ofqual's General Qualifications Alternative Awarding framework for summer 2021](#)

[Vocational and technical qualifications contingency regulatory framework](#)

[JCQ appeals guidance](#)

[Compliments, Concerns & Complaints Policy](#)