

Dear Parent / Carer

I am writing to inform you that the government has published details regarding the GCSE appeals process. We have put together the following Frequently Asked Questions to help you understand the process. We hope you will find it useful. Y13 Results Day this year is on **Tuesday 10th August**. Students will be able to collect their results from school between **9am and 11am**. They will need to access school via the 6th form centre. Results will need to be collected by your child. We anticipate that all students will come and collect their results in person, however if they are unable to attend on this date, please contact the school ASAP. Please be aware that if they do not attend there will be a delay in when they will be able to receive their results due to rules about the release of this information.

Senior Leaders will be onsite to take any questions on Y13 results day.

How were my child/children'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 Trust external quality assurance checks to ensure that we followed all processes.

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 an algorithm.

What do I do if I'm not happy with my child/children'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 mark.

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. 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 four 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.
- 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 would have internal mock examinations in April, and this did not happen.

- 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 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.

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's a priority appeal?

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

If you decided not to confirm a firm conditional offer and to go through clearing instead, JCQ cannot offer you a priority appeal.

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 a member of Leadership or the Sixth Form 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 (note that universities are not obliged to hold a place for you; this is at their discretion)

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 stay, 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.

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 will also have copies available for students when they collect their results.

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**. 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 when made.

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.

Following the outcome of a centre review, students may still choose to pursue an **awarding organisation appeal**. Students must fill in a further form which we will provide on request. This must be completed by the student themselves and can not be completed or requested by anyone else. 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 when made. Please be aware this could result in a grade going down or up.

How do I make an appeal?

Following results days, students should fill in the first section of the JCQ form [here](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exam-board/parent-student-guides/2021/2021-2022/2021-2022-appeals-form) and send it to appeals@beckfootthornton.org.

We are here to support our students through this process if it is needed and staff will be available to support them on as per the timeline below. Keeping to our deadlines will ensure any necessary appeals are processed as quickly as possible.

What are the deadlines for priority appeals?

The deadline for requesting a priority appeal is 12 August 2021 (students cannot appeal before results day on 10 August 2021).

We will attempt to complete the first stage centre review by 13 August*. If students wish to progress this to an awarding organisation appeal, they must send the completed form to us by 16 August for priority appeals. We will then process these by the 20th August

If these deadlines are missed, then we will not be able to process the priority appeal as a priority.

*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 where a firm or insurance university place is not pending. They are also for any GCSEs or vocational qualifications.

The deadline for submitting a non-priority or centre review is the **3rd September**; We will ensure that these reach the exam board by 10th September.

Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

You know my child/children's grades. Why can't you tell us?

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 look forward to seeing our students on Tuesday 10th August.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information. Please do not hesitate to contact us via the results@beckfootthornton.org email address before we break for the summer (23rd July). Emails sent after this time will not be accessed before results days.

Yours sincerely

Mr Jeremy Richardson

Headteacher