

GCSE TAG Appeals information and guidance

The arrangements for awarding grades to students in summer 2021 include internal and external quality assurance measures which aim to ensure that on results day, students are issued with fair and consistent grades that have been objectively reached.

Students should be confident in their grades because of the following:

- An effective Centre Policy which is adhered to by all centre staff involved in the determination of teacher assessed grades, and which has been reviewed by awarding organisations.
- A high standard of internal quality assurance both in determining teacher assessed grades based only on student evidence and ensuring that there are no administrative or procedural errors.
- Effective provision of access arrangements for all eligible students.
- Effective arrangements for students that may have been disadvantaged during an assessment that contributes to their grade either by taking the circumstances into account in determining grades or by using alternative evidence that was unaffected by the adverse circumstances. (Special consideration requests)
- Effective communication with students and parents/guardians so that they understand the school's approach to determining their grades before grades are submitted. The school will make students aware of the sources of evidence that will be used to determine their grade in advance of that grade being submitted to awarding organisations. This transparency should enable students to raise any errors or circumstances relating to particular pieces of evidence to be taken into account in advance of the grade submission and should reduce the number of instances in which students need to appeal.
- Accurate recording and effective checking of information on the assessment record for the student to avoid errors in submitting teacher assessed grades.
- Effective oversight and clear professional accountability from the Head of Centre who will complete the Head of Centre Declaration.

Noel-Baker Quality Assurance timeline

In order to meet the above points, an overview of the actions taken by the school have been included below;

- All students were informed how the process would work via emails / letter, in assemblies and in their lessons.
- Subjects informed students which subject areas would be assessed and what they would be examined on well in advance of final exams.
- Students sat examinations in examination conditions
- Effective provision of access arrangements for all eligible students was made
- Examination papers were blind for other teachers and students (unseen)
- Examination papers were marked blind (students did not write their names meaning teachers did not know whose paper they were marking)
- Students who may have been adversely affected during exams were able to apply for special consideration. (Communicated in advance via assembly and email, also placed onto school website)
- Subjects held marking training before they marked each paper and then moderated a significant number of papers to ensure accuracy and fairness was maintained

- Deputy Headteacher (alongside subject leaders) collated all relevant data to form each subject's assessment record.
- Provisional TAGS were assigned based on raw data alone as a starting point (using predicted and historical data as a guide)
- Subject leaders then held recorded conversations with subject teachers to discuss each student in turn and made any relevant changes using grade descriptors as guidance.
- Subject leaders then sampled select student's evidence base and compared against grade descriptors and exemplification work as a final layer of subject quality assurance.
- Grades checked and moderated by Deputy Headteacher and uploaded onto system
- The Final layer of quality assurance involved subject leaders meeting with DHT and HT to check the above procedures had taken place and done so in an appropriate way before formally submitting exam results to the exam board.

The appeals process relies on excellent record-keeping through the assessment process, with this in mind teachers / heads of department will:

- Document the sources of evidence used for determining grades for the class/cohort along with a rationale for what was selected, along with any grades/marks associated with them
- Document any exceptional circumstances for students, i.e. if a student's evidence is different from the subject cohort and the rationale for that
- Maintain records as documented in their Centre Policy.
- Ensure that any evidence that is to be used to determine students' grades (e.g. student work and marks where work is not available) is stored safely and can be retrieved promptly by centre staff, if needed for a centre review or requested for awarding organisation appeal.
- Details of any special circumstances that have been taken into account in determining their grade, e.g. access arrangements, mitigating circumstances such as illness,

There will also be an appeals system as a safety net to resolve any errors not identified during the earlier parts of the process. Students who consider that an error has been made in determining their grade will have a right to appeal.

We do not expect that there will be errors this year because of the steps taken above.

Appeals process

There are two stages to the summer 2021 appeals process:

Stage 1: Centre review

If a student does not consider that they have been issued with the correct grade, they can ask the school to check if an administrative or procedural error has occurred. The school will need to ensure the student is aware that their grade could go down, up or stay the same. If the centre finds that an error has occurred, they will be able to submit a request to the awarding organisation to correct the error and amend the grade without the need to make an appeal to the exam board.

Stage 2: Appeal to the awarding organisation

An appeal should be submitted if the student considers that the centre did not follow its procedure properly, the awarding organisation has made an administrative error, or the student considers that the grade awarded was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement. The school will need to

ensure the student is aware that their grade could go down, up or stay the same. The appeal will be made by the school on the student's behalf.

Please note that a grade will only be considered unreasonable if an independent reviewer considers that the student's performance evidence is clearly and unequivocally indicative of a higher or lower grade. The changes of this occurring is highly unlikely because of the quality assurance measures already outlined.

Grounds for appeal

In summary there are four grounds upon which a centre review or an appeal to an awarding organisation may be requested:

- At stage 1: The centre made an administrative error, e.g. an incorrect grade was submitted; an incorrect assessment mark was used when determining the grade.
- At stages 1 and 2: The centre 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 mitigating circumstances such as illness.
- At stage 2: The awarding organisation made an administrative error, e.g. the grade was incorrectly changed by the awarding organisation during the processing of grades.
- At stage 2: The 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.

A student will first need to be informed of the outcome of the centre review. If they wish to appeal to the awarding organisation, they must then submit a request to their centre to proceed. The appeal must be submitted according to the requirements of the awarding organisation to which it is being submitted.

Clear communication with students and parents/carers about the appeals process should clarify the need for student consent. Students should be made aware that awarding organisations will determine the grade at appeal, that the grade could go down, up or stay the same and that the outcome will be final.

The student must provide their written and recorded consent. The centre must conduct a centre review and must also submit an appeal to the awarding organisation if requested to do so by a student. The appeal to the awarding organisation can only be submitted if the first stage (centre review) has been completed and the outcome of the first stage issued to the student.

Appeals process

If a student wishes to lodge an appeal they should read this document and access the relevant request form from the school website.

Students must lodge any appeal by 3rd September. Appeals should be submitted electronically and sent to sleach@noelbakeracademy.co.uk.

Stage one appeals will be processed and decided by 10th September, students will be informed of the outcome by this date.

Stage two appeals should be submitted by Wednesday 15th September.