

A Pupil and Parent Guide to the Appeals Process – GCSEs: Summer 2021

Introduction

As you know, your child's GCSE results in the summer of 2021 have been determined by their teachers based on assessment evidence. In line with government requirements, all GCSE Grades were uploaded to the examination boards on Friday 18th June. Results are due to be issued on Thursday 12th August, earlier than in a normal year. The school's Centre Policy, about which I have written before, regarding the processes for the determining of the pupils' grades, is on the school's website (https://springfield.uk.net/images/files/examinations/Centre_Policy.pdf). The Centre Policy outlines how the grades were arrived at as well as explaining quality assurance measures to make sure the process was as fair as possible.

Both teachers and pupils alike worked extremely hard to make sure that the grades issued to pupils reflected their performance over the course of the GCSE. Additionally, pupils showed determination and resilience when completing assessments over the course of a disrupted Year 11, especially in the period from March to May.

I hope that the vast majority of Year 11 pupils will be pleased with the grades they have been awarded and that they are able to proceed to the next level of their education/chosen career path but also understand that some may wish to appeal against a grade. The following is a guide as to how pupils may appeal their grades, taken from JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) guidance. JCQ have stated that they will also publish a guide for parents regarding the appeals process but, at the current time of writing, we still await this guide. We strongly recommend, therefore, that pupils read the following guide prior to commencing any appeal.

Stage One Appeal (Centre Review)

A Stage One Centre Review appeal is made if a pupil thinks that there has been an administrative error or procedural error in the way the grade was communicated or recorded.

Grounds for appeal	What this means
Administrative error	That there was a clerical error in recording the grade given by the teacher to the exam board or that the exam board made an administrative error in communicating the grade
Procedural error	That the school did not follow its Centre Policy in the way grades were assigned eg that pupils who had agreed access arrangements when completing assessments did not receive them



It is important to note that:

- as a result of the Stage One Centre Review, grades may go up, stay the same or go down
- once the outcome of a Stage One Centre Review has been decided, pupils cannot then withdraw the request for a Stage One Centre Review. In other words, if a grade is lowered as a result of the Stage One Centre Review, pupils will not be able to revert back to the original grade awarded on results day
- in all cases, pupils must submit a Stage One Centre Review before progressing to a Stage Two appeal. The school will communicate the outcome of a Stage One Centre Review before pupils progress to a Stage Two appeal

Timescale for a Stage One Centre Review

From results day, Thursday 12 th August, to 3 rd September 2021	Window for pupils to request a Stage One Centre Review
From results day, Thursday 12 th August, to 10 th September 2021	Centres conduct Stage One Centre Reviews

Please note: Stage One Centre Reviews will be processed from Thursday 2nd September onwards even if they are requested from results day, 12th August 2021.

If pupils would like to request a Stage One Centre Review, they should complete the 'Stage One – Centre Review' form on the school's website (<https://bit.ly/3r2E75j>) and submit by email (rebecca.millar@springfield.uk.net) to Mrs Millar, the Examinations Officer, by 5pm on Friday 3rd September. The school will not respond to appeals submitted incorrectly.

Once the outcome of the Stage One Centre Review has been communicated to pupils, and dependent on the outcome, pupils can submit a Stage Two (Appeal to an Awarding Organisation) to the school.

Stage Two Appeal (Appeal to an Awarding Organisation)

A Stage Two appeal is made if a pupil thinks that there has been an 'unreasonable exercise of academic judgement' (JCQ) when a grade was decided.

Grounds for appeal	What this means
Selection of evidence	That the choice of evidence selected to determine a grade was not appropriate or representative of a pupil's performance
Determination of Teacher Assessed Grade	That the grade based on the evidence showed an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement ie that the grade did not reflect what the evidence showed



It is important to note that:

- pupils do not appeal directly to an Examination Board but to the school who will communicate with the Examination Board in every case
- as a result of an Appeal to an Awarding Organisation, grades may go up, stay the same or go down
- once the outcome of Stage Two Appeal to an Awarding Organisation has been decided, pupils cannot then withdraw the request for a Stage Two Appeal to an Awarding Organisation. In other words, if a grade is lowered as a result of the Stage Two Appeal to an Awarding Organisation, pupils will not be able to revert back to the original grade awarded on results day
- the relevant Examination Board will communicate its findings to the school who will then communicate with pupils regarding the outcome. It is important to note that, even where the Examination Board upholds the appeal, this may not necessarily result in a change of grade

Timescale for a Stage Two Appeal to an Awarding Organisation

From results day, Thursday 12 th August, to 17 th September 2021*	Centres submit Stage Two Appeals to Awarding Organisations
*This must be <u>after</u> a Stage One Centre Review has been concluded	

Please note: The Examination Boards have stated that they will process Stage Two appeals within a 42 day period of time.

Given that a Stage Two appeal to an Awarding Organisation involves sending evidence, any such appeal made on the 17th September would be difficult to process. Please be mindful of this and, if you wish to make such an appeal, we would recommend that pupils do so between 11th September - 16th September.

If pupils would like to request a Stage Two Appeal to an Awarding Organisation, they should use the 'Stage Two Appeal to an Awarding Organisation' form on the school's website (<https://bit.ly/2VzhwSg>) and submit it to Mrs Millar, the Examinations Officer, (rebecca.millar@springfield.uk.net) by 5pm on Thursday 16th September.

The result of the Stage Two Appeal to an Awarding Organisation will be communicated by the Examination Board to the school and we will then forward this to pupils.

The final thing to note is that there will be an autumn series of examinations as last year so pupils can re-sit GCSEs if they wish to in October/November. The design, content and assessment of these papers will be the same as in a normal year.

I wish all Year 11 a successful progression to the next stage of their chosen education/career path.

Yours faithfully

Mr W Wharton
Deputy Headteacher