



Our Ref: BTa/CAd

7 July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

GCSE 2021 Grading and Appeals Important Information

We would like to make you aware of lots of important information regarding your GCSE grades this year. This information has all been added to our website at <https://www.sybilandrewsacademy.co.uk/gcse2021/>

This information includes:

1. Guidance on the Awarding of grades
2. Guidance on Appeals
3. Information about Results Day

Guidance on the Awarding of Grades

You will see on the website a letter previously sent about the awarding of grades at Sybil Andrews Academy. Also available is the centre policy which is the policy we have followed in awarding grades. Further information includes an 'OFQUAL student and parent guide' and 'JCQ Awarding Grade Guidance'.

Guidance on the appeals

Frequently asked questions can be found at the end of this letter, and we will add any further information to our website. Appeals will take place on a two-stage process. Stage 1 will be for the centre (in this case the school) to check we have followed out centre policy and for any administrative issues. Only when Stage 1 is complete then you can request a Stage 2 , awarding organisation appeal . Stage 1 appeals will be processed on Wednesday 18th August and Wednesday 1st September. Stage 2 appeals will be processed no later than Friday 10th September but cannot be submitted until a Stage 1 appeal is complete.

Please be aware with any appeal the grade awarded can go down as well as up.

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The form to complete for an appeal can be found [here](#). All enquires for appeals and 2021 grades can be sent to our dedicated e-mail address gcse2021@sybilandrewsacademy.co.uk.

Information about Results Day

A separate letter is attached with information about Results Day which will take place on Thursday 12th August.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ben Tanner'.

Ben Tanner
Assistant Principal - Head of Upper School



Frequently Asked Questions

How were my / my child'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 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 an algorithm.

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 mark.

There is also the option 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 in a normal year.

What are the grounds for appeal?

There are five 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 should have received extra time for assessments but this wasn't given in a certain subject.
- 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 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 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.

What's a priority appeal?

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.**

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**. They must fill in the form below, which 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.

How do I make an appeal?

Following results days, students should fill in the first section of the JCQ form [here](#) and send it to gcse2021@sybilandrewsacademy.co.uk.

What are the deadlines for non-priority appeals?

Non-priority appeals are any A levels, GCSEs or vocational qualifications, where a firm or insurance university place is not pending.

The deadline for submitting a centre review is 3 September; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 10 September. **As school we will process appeals in two batches on Monday 18th August and on Wednesday 1st September.**

Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

You know my / my child'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.

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).