



July 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian/Student awaiting exam results,

Re: Exam results and appeals process – summer 2021

We are writing to outline the process this summer both for results' days and post-exam services, including the appeals procedure. Please read the information below very carefully so that you/your child are fully aware of the process ahead of Results Day.

Calculating grades in the absence of external examinations

This year, schools have been required to submit student exam results to the exam boards, based on the professional judgments of the teaching staff. These judgments are based on what students have been taught and teachers have used a consistent range of evidence from across the course of study to make their decisions. These assessments include records of student performance across the course, Continuous Assessment Tests and non-exam assessment/coursework.

These exam results – Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) - are holistic grade judgments of student performance in their GCSEs, A levels or vocational studies in relation to the JCQ grade descriptors following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance at every stage of the process, finally signed off by the head of centre. These grades were then approved by the relevant exam board following external quality assurance checks.

Quality assuring all results submitted to the exam boards

The results submitted for students are based upon reasonable academic judgement. As a Centre, we have undertaken a very robust approach to quality assurance, at individual teacher, subject, key stage and senior level. Teachers, departmental teams, subject leads, the senior leadership team and the Trust have all participated in this process. We know how serious this whole process is for our students and their future progression and have taken every step required to make sure every single grade awarded is correct, fair and in line with JCQ requirements – see more information at <https://www.jcq.org.uk/summer-2021-arrangements/>. More information about the school's approach to assessment and grading can be viewed on our Centre policy here: <https://www.theforestacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Summer-exams-2021-TFA-policy.pdf>.



Assessments used to calculate grades

The School will be publishing next week the records of which assessments have been used to calculate the overall judgment on the website here: <https://www.theforestacademy.org/exams-and-data/>.

For students eligible for special consideration their assessment evidence may differ so they will be contacted separately with the individual evidence form for their qualifications later in the week.

Results' Day

- GCSE and other Level 2 Vocational qualification results will be shared via year 11 students' school email addresses shortly after **8.30am on Thursday 12th August 2021**.

For those students who would prefer to collect their results in person, the Main Hall will also be open for the face to face collection of results between 8.30-9.30am on the 12th August. Please be aware that owing to our risk assessment no siblings/parents/guardians are permitted onsite for the collection of results.

Year 11 students seeking to enroll at Beal Sixth Form can do so online from 8.30am via their 'Applicaa' account (<https://bhs.applicaa.com/5>) from 9.30am onwards or in person in the Main Hall and Library on Thursday 12th August. These students have been written to separately about these arrangements.

Malpractice – important notice

It is possible that some students or individuals acting on behalf of a student may attempt to influence their teachers' judgements about their grades or apply pressure before/following results' days and/or question the academic judgment exercised in the process. Such incidents would constitute **malpractice** and schools are asked to report these to the appropriate awarding organisation in the normal way using the JCQ M1 form (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Malpractice-MP-1-Candidate-2019-2020.docx>).

Any queries relating to CAG decisions or appeals directed at individual teachers or departments will not be responded to and could be reported to the examination board. If you have a query relating to the grade, you should contact the email inboxes mentioned in the 'Appeal process: required paperwork' paragraph on pages 4/5.

Students/parents must not contact individual teachers, heads of departments or senior leaders as these queries will not be responded to nor processed: all queries relating to appeals must be sent to the dedicated email inboxes stated on page 5. This way we can process the appeal efficiently, robustly and promptly.



The appeals process and eligibility criteria

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 grade and this will replace the prior higher grade.

Whilst students may consider an appeal, 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. If students would like to sit the Autumn examinations, they should let us know by 10th September at year11examappeals@theforestacademy.co.uk

Grounds for appeal

There are four main grounds for appeal, as dictated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). They are:

1. You think we have made an **administrative error**
2. You think we have made a **procedural error**
3. You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**
4. You think the **academic judgement on the grade you were given was unreasonable.**

Please note: '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.

Appeal outcomes

At either stage of the appeals process (see '**The appeal process: two stages**' paragraph on page 4), 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 CAG.



Prior to appealing

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before appealing, which can be found here: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JCQ-Guidance-for-Students-and-Parents-on-Summer-2021.pdf>

Priority appeals

Priority appeals will be handled more quickly than other appeals and where possible, before UCAS's advisory deadline of 8 September. **However, 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. JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students, unfortunately.**

Non-priority appeals and their deadlines

Non-priority appeals are any A levels, GCSEs or vocational qualifications, where a firm or insurance university place is not pending. All Year 11 students will therefore only be eligible to submit non-priority appeal requests. For non-priority appeals, the deadline for submitting a centre review is 3rd September; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 10th September. Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

The appeal process: two stages

All appeals, on any of the grounds above, must first go through a **centre review – stage 1**. 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 – stage 2**. They must complete an online form 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.



Appeal process: required paperwork

Following results days, students should complete the form at the link here: https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/JCQ_Appeals-Guidance_Summer-2021_Appendix-B.pdf and return the form via email to: year11examappeals@theforestacademy.co.uk (for all year 11s requesting appeals)

As stated earlier in the letter, students/parents must not contact individual teachers, heads of departments or senior leaders as these queries will not be responded to nor processed: all queries relating to appeals must be sent to the dedicated email inbox above.

The embargo on results

We are forbidden from disclosing the Centre Assessed Grades to any third party, including students and parents, until results' days.

I hope that provides clarity on the process for the summer, and thank you for your ongoing support.
Yours faithfully

Mr Mackintosh

Principal and Head of Centre – The Forest Academy