



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

We are writing to outline the processes in place this year for receiving your exam results and for appeals. The systems this year are unique and there is quite a lot of information that we need to give you so we would recommend saving this letter in a safe place or printing off a copy for future reference.

Examination results - Summer 2021

Results days are as follows:

A Level/AS Results/BTEC Level 3/Edexcel Award - Tuesday 10th August 2021

GCSE Results/BTEC Level 2 - Thursday 12th August 2021

Due to the on-going restrictions related to Covid-19 and the challenges of potential late changes to social distancing rules, we will not be inviting students to collect their results in person this year. Results will be emailed across to students using their school email address. Following JCQ guidance, results cannot be sent out to students any earlier than 8.30am. We aim to ensure that you receive your results as close to this time as possible.

As the process for awarding grades has been determined by assessment this year, there will be no post-results services available. In other words, you cannot request a re-mark. There is a process for appeals outlined below.

Please ensure that you are able to access your school email address. Should there be any concerns regarding the receipt of results, please contact Ms Dalziel our Exams Officer by email exams@bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk.

Appeals

The system for appeals this year is quite complex and the grounds for appeal are very limited. The following is a guide to the system in place and the context behind the awarding of grades.

"This is an OUTSTANDING school" - Ofsted 2016



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.

We have attached separately to this letter a document which outlines all the evidence used by each subject to award grades.

Please note that we are not required to inform students individually of the marks or grades they achieved in each of these pieces of evidence although they may already have a record of some of these results from previous teacher feedback. Teaching staff reviewed this evidence alongside any mitigating factors that may have affected student performance such as whether access arrangements were applied or where a student may have been individually affected by illness etc. Where appropriate, alternative evidence may have been selected for individual students, or evidence may have been given a separate weighting.

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**
- **going up.**

If a student puts in an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark. Once an appeal has been submitted you cannot withdraw it so it is important to think carefully before making an appeal.

There is also the option to resit GCSEs, A levels and some AS levels in the autumn, which may be preferable for 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 limited 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.
- You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**: in other words 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. It would not therefore be a grounds for appeal for a student to request that a different piece of evidence is looked at. They would have to show that the evidence that *was* used was 'unreasonable'.

This 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 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 is a priority appeal?

Priority appeals will be handled more quickly than other appeals, where possible before UCAS's 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 decide not to confirm a firm conditional offer and to go through clearing instead, JCQ cannot offer you a priority appeal.

JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students. 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 us about your options. We will be writing to Year 13 separately to explain the support we will have in place should this happen to you. 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 should I do if I don't have the grades to join 6th Form or college courses, or if I want to change one of my options?

We will be writing to you separately regarding the support we will put in place for students who want to amend their 6th Form choices.

What should I do before appealing?

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

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. Unless we have made a procedural error we are likely to advise you that the grades we have submitted are a reasonable judgement but we will try to support you in any decision regarding an appeal.

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. We have previously shared with you our Centre Policy for Determining TAGs but you can read it again on our website: [Determining Grades Policy Summer 2021 BHGS](#)

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 being issued, students should fill in the JCQ form [here](#) and send it to exams@bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk and hpandya@bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk. You will need to download it as a PDF and then email it as an attachment. If you require any advice or support with this form please email Ms Dalziel or Mr Pandya hpandya@bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk. Please note that the school office will only be staffed for limited hours in the holidays so it is best to communicate via email.

Once a stage one appeal has been processed the school will be in touch with you. We will only be able to process a stage two appeal once a stage one has been processed.

What are the deadlines for priority appeals?

The suggested deadline for requesting a priority appeal is **16 August** (students cannot appeal before results day on 10 August).

We will attempt to complete the centre review by 18 August*. If students wish to progress this to an awarding organisation appeal, they must send the completed form to us by **20 August** for priority appeals.

*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, 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**. Please note that we may not be able to process non-priority appeals until the school term resumes on 1st September.

Appeals received after these dates *may* still be considered but awarding bodies may refuse to amend grades after this point.

You know my / my child's grades. Why can't you tell us? What if you know we haven't met our university conditional offer?

We are forbidden from disclosing the Teacher Assessed Grades to any third party, including students and parents, until results day. 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) so the TAG we have submitted may not be the final grade and we may not have been informed of a change.

We only know what a student's conditional offer is if they have chosen to share that information with us. It has not formed part of our objective grading of students. Where we do know this information, we must not let students know their submitted TAGs, even if they haven't met the conditions of their offer.

What if I am not satisfied with the result of the appeal?

If you believe that the awarding body has not dealt with your appeal properly then you can raise this directly with them. The systems for doing this are found on each awarding body website.

As you can see, the system this year is complex. We are not anticipating that many (or any) students will want to use the appeal process but it is important that you are aware of the process just in case of need. We have worked incredibly hard as a school to make sure that we have followed all the available guidance and awarded grades fairly.

We are extremely proud of our 2021 examination cohorts in Years 11 and 13 in what has been a disruptive and challenging time. We would like to thank everyone for their hard work.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A Wood
Headteacher

Mr H Pandya
Assistant Headteacher

Ms C Dalziel
Exams Officer

