



STRATFORD GIRLS'
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Shaping Futures

Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGS)

**A guide for students and their
parents/carers**

How were grades arrived at this year?

Grades this summer were based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs were submitted to the exam boards by the school as a holistic assessment of students' performance in a subject. The decision was based purely on content that was taught and covered all Assessment Objectives that had been covered. It followed 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 should a student do if they are not happy with their 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**. Therefore, if a student puts in an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark.

Please also note that an appeal that results in a change of grade is likely to impact the grades of other students in the exam group.

There is also the **option to resit GCSEs and A-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.

Please email the Exams Officer (robbins.a@sqgs.org.uk) by Wednesday 1 September 2021 if you would like to resit an A-level and by Friday 22 September, 2021 if you would like to resit a GCSE.

What are the grounds for appeal?

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

- You think we (the school) 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 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 decided 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, unfortunately.

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 the Sixth Form office about your options. You may wish to go through clearing, or resit 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 before appealing?

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before appealing, which will be available on the JCQ website by Results Days.

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.

What are the two stages of an appeal?

Stage 1: 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.

Stage 2: 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 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 exams@sggs.org.uk

Please note that the appeal has to be made by the student. However, should this not be possible due to extenuating circumstances, e.g. seriously unwell, a parent could make the appeal on their behalf. Please contact the school via exams@sggs.org.uk should this be the case and to determine how an appeal should be submitted.

What are the deadlines for Priority Appeals?

The deadline for requesting a priority appeal is **11.59am on Monday 16 August, 2021**.

We will attempt to complete the centre review by **4pm on Thursday 19 August 2021**.¹

For Priority Appeals, students must have made the request to the Centre for Stage 2 by **11.59am on Friday 20 August 2021**. All the required information must be supplied with the request with the application signed by the student. Priority Appeals will then be submitted by the Centre to the relevant awarding organisation by **4pm on Monday 23 August**.

What are the deadlines for Non-Priority Appeals?

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

The deadline for submitting a centre review is **11.59am on Friday 3 September 2021** and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is by **11.59am on Wednesday 15 September 2021**. This will allow the school to submit to the awarding organisation by **4pm on Friday 17 September 2021**.

We will attempt to complete the Stage 1 review within 10 working days of receipt of a centre review, but this will be dependent upon staff availability.¹

Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

Awarding bodies aim to complete Stage 2 appeals within 42 calendar days of receiving an application.

School knows a student'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 days. 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.

¹ *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.*

During the external quality assurance process that took place in June, our submitted TAGs may be moved up or down (although this will always be done through human agency, not by an algorithm). 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.

For further information, please contact:

Mr Blackwall, Deputy Head Assessment Lead and oversight of the TAG process in school

headspa@sggs.org.uk

Mrs Robbins, Exams Officer Results Collection and making an appeal

exams@sggs.org.uk

Mrs Cornell, Headteacher Head of Centre

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