

FAQs for students and parents

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.

Why is the school confident that the grades awarded to students are correct?

Both the school and the exam boards have followed JCQ guidance to ensure that:

- Students' grades reflect the quality of the evidence students have submitted (including a sampling process of evidence by the exam boards which identified no issues)
- Access arrangements have been put in place and reasonable adjustments made for all eligible students
- Effective arrangements have been made for students who may have been disadvantaged during any assessment(s) that contributed to their grade
- Students have already been given the opportunity to report any mitigating circumstances
- Checks have already been made to ensure that students do not receive incorrect results caused by administrative or procedural errors

What do I do if I'm not happy with my / my child's grade?

There is an option to target a higher grade in GCSEs, A levels and some AS levels in the autumn. The design, content and assessment of these papers will be the same as in a normal year.

JCQ require all students to 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.

If a student puts in an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark.

What are the grounds for appeal?

There are four main grounds for appeal, as set out 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. At Hanley we took the decision to apply clerical checks on all student grades and so this process has been completed already for every student and every grade.

- 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. We provided you with a summary of the processes and procedures during your time in school, which you signed to say was correct. We have therefore undertaken this check and you have also confirmed that all procedures have been followed correctly.
- You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**: you think the evidence used to grade you was not reasonable. We shared this information with you at the time of assessment and you signed a form saying that you understood which evidence would be used. 'Unreasonable' is a technical term in this context and means that no educational professional acting reasonably could have selected the same evidence. 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.
- You think the **academic judgement on the grade you were given was unreasonable**. 'Unreasonable' is a technical term in this context and means that no educational professional acting reasonably could have come up with the same grade. 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 did not attain their firm choice (ie the offer they accepted as their first choice)**

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.

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 Key Stage Team about your options. 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 before appealing?

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before appealing, which is available on the JCQ website at <https://www.jcq.org.uk/summer-2021-arrangements/>. A copy is also available on the school website.

What are the two stages of an appeal?

All appeals, on any of the four grounds above, must first go through a **centre review**. At this stage, the check for any administrative errors takes place; this has already been completed for all grades. A check that our policies and procedures were followed correctly also takes place. As our policy has already been approved by the exam boards we are only ensuring that we followed this properly.

The outcome of the centre review will be communicated to students when made.

Following the outcome of a centre review, students may still choose to pursue an **awarding organisation appeal**. They must fill in a 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 Hanley Castle.

The outcome of the awarding organisation appeal will be communicated to students when made.

How do I make an appeal? Sixth Form A level and BTEC grade appeals:

Following results days, students making priority appeals should contact the KS5 office via the electronic form that was sent with their results. They should clearly name their form as a Priority and provide a contact number. Either a phone call discussion will take place or an application form will be emailed to the student. Non-priority A level appeals should also contact the key-stage 5 office through the electronic form but you should be aware that this process does not begin until the return to school in September. Please note, subject teachers will not be available to discuss grades or appeals.

If after consultation with the KS5 team you still wish to make a priority appeal then the school will provide an application form. The deadline for requesting a priority appeal is August 16th 2021

The completed stage 2 priority form must be submitted to our exams officer by 23 August 2021. A signed paper copy is required by the school because of the fact that grades may be reduced through this process.

yappc@hanleycastlehs.org.uk

Year 11 GCSE and BTEC grade appeals:

Non-priority appeals for GCSE can be discussed with the KS4 team via the electronic form that is sent with the results. The KS4 team can be contacted on Thursday 12th and Friday 13th of August 2021.

Please note, subject teachers will not be available to discuss grades or appeals.

If after consultation with the KS4 team you still wish to make an appeal then the school will provide an application form. The deadline for requesting an appeal is 3rd September 2021. Appeal forms will be provided by the 10th September and they must be submitted to our exams officer by 17th September 2021. A signed paper copy is required by the school because of the fact that grades may be reduced through this process.

What are the deadlines for priority appeals?

Year Group	Stage	Date of deadline
Yr13 Priority	Request Centre Review	16 th August 2021
Yr13 Priority	Priority application made by	23 rd August 2021
Yr11, Yr12 & 13 Non-priority	Request Centre Review	3 rd September 2021
Yr11, Yr12 & 13 Non-priority	School issues applications by	10 th September
Yr11, Yr12 & 13 Non-priority	Completed application to school for exam board review	17 th September

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 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. None of our submitted TAGs were changed during the external quality assurance process taking place in June or July.