

**STAGE 2: APPEAL TO AN AWARDING ORGANISATION/s**

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**1. Notes to help Completing the Form (From JCQ Guidance):**

Please note that the requirements for each ground of appeal are different and not all grounds require any additional rationale:

* appeals made on the grounds of a general procedural check or on the grounds that there has been an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the determination of the grade from the evidence **do not** require submission of an explanation
* appeals made on the grounds of a procedural check in relation to mitigating circumstances or access arrangements/reasonable requirements **do** require submission of an explanation
* appeals made on the grounds of an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade **do** require an explanation of the student’s concerns
* appeals made on the grounds of an administrative error **do** require an explanation of the perceived error

**2. What happens during the awarding organisation appeal? (From JCQ & OFQUAL Guidance):**

* The Ofqual document *Guidance for the General Qualifications Alternative Awarding Framework* sets out that an appeal is *‘not an investigation by the awarding organisation but an evaluation of the Learner’s result in light of the grounds of appeal’*. This document may be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-qualifications-alternative-awarding-framework>
* When considering an appeal, the awarding organisation will consider the factors raised by the appeal and attach such weight to them as it considers appropriate. For example, the Ofqual Guidance explains at paragraph 8 that *‘whether a Learner raised any objection to the inclusion or exclusion of particular evidence before the determination of the TAG is a factor which an awarding organisation may take into account, but it should not be determinative. Similarly, a failure by a Centre, prior to the determination of the TAG, to disclose to the Learner what evidence they would rely on might or might not be a relevant factor’.*
* The guidance explains that a procedural appeal requires the awarding organisation to ‘*consider whether there is sufficiently persuasive evidence that the Centre deviated from its own procedures in the way(s) identified by the Learner in the grounds of appeal. The determination of such an appeal does not require a comprehensive or step-by-step evaluation of the merits of the procedure set by the Centre. The appropriateness of the Centre’s procedure will have been checked by the awarding organisation as part of its external quality assurance. The question on appeal is whether the Centre followed that procedure properly and consistently in arriving at the Learner’s TAG’.*
* As procedures are evaluated at the centre review stage, it is expected that most procedural errors and centre administrative errors will have already been rectified by the centre before an appeal is submitted.
* Where an appeal is made on the grounds of an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement (either in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/ or the determination of that grade from the evidence), the awarding organisation will take into account Ofqual’s guidance which sets out that the starting point is the Teacher Assessed Grade itself and not any alternative grade put forward as part of the appeal. Therefore, the focus of any appeal will be on whether the Teacher Assessed Grade was unreasonable and not that any other grade or mark would have been reasonable.
* As the Teacher Assessed Grade is holistic in nature, the awarding organisation’s independent reviewer will take a similarly holistic approach to their decision-making. The purpose of the independent review is not to review the marking of individual assessments.
* The independent reviewer will consider whether the original Teacher Assessed Grade decision was reasonable. The independent reviewer will not consider whether they would have given an alternative grade or whether an alternative grade could also reasonably have been given.

The independent reviewer will consider whether the original Teacher Assessed Grade decision was reasonable on its own terms, not if any alternative proposition for the Teacher Assessed Grade or evidence put forward by the student, would be a more appropriate exercise of academic judgement. There may be a difference of opinion as to the assessed grade without there being an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement. The reviewer will only conclude that there has been an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement if the Teacher Assessed Grade was clearly wrong – i.e. there was no basis upon which the grade could properly have been given.

* Where the appeal concerns the selection of evidence, the academic decision will be considered in the context of the centre’s procedure. Where this sets a starting point that the same evidence will be used for all students in a cohort, the relevant question will usually be whether an academic decision to depart from, or not to depart from, the starting point in respect of the particular student was unreasonable.
* Depending on the grounds submitted by the student (procedural/administrative, unreasonableness of academic judgement or both), the awarding organisation may assign the appeal for evaluation either to a member of their staff and/or to an independent reviewer.
* An independent reviewer will be a subject expert appointed by the awarding organisation and trained to evaluate appeals. The independent reviewer will have no personal interest in the decision being appealed and will evaluate any appeal made on the grounds that there was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement by the centre.
* Where the student submits an appeal on more than one ground (e.g. the awarding organisation is asked to review both procedures and the exercise of academic judgement), the appeal process is likely to take longer. This could be an important consideration for students who urgently need the outcome of their appeal.
* For appeals on multiple grounds, it is possible that one ground (e.g. a procedural error) could identify an error that impacts the reported Teacher Assessed Grade. The result of this could then be overridden by a second ground of appeal (e.g. the unreasonableness of the Teacher Assessed Grade). An appeal outcome will therefore only be reported when all submitted grounds have been evaluated. It is also possible that the awarding organisation could identify that the grade awarded was not correct on grounds other than the grounds upon which the appeal was submitted. Where this is the case, the awarding organisation will take the appropriate action to correct the grade.