

THE SYDNEY RUSSELL SCHOOL



Appeals Policy

For A/AS LEVELS AND GCSES FOR SUMMER 2021



Overview

This policy serves to outline the school's rationale and approach to the Appeals Procedures for the A/AS Level and GCSEs of summer 2021. The information outlined in this policy is in line with the *JCQ A guide to appeals processes Summer 2021* (named *JCQ Guide to Appeals 2021* throughout this document), as issued to Heads of Centre by the JCQ on 8th June 2021. This policy is designed to be read alongside the JCQ document, as well as the *Sydney Russell School Centre Policy 2021*, which is available on the school website and to students and parents on request. A version in summary of this document for students, titled *SRS Appeals 2021 Student Information* has also been made available to students and can be given on request, but for the sake of clarity, this document serves as the definitive outline of school's appeals policy for summer 2021.

Introduction

The grading of A/AS Levels and GCSEs in summer 2021 has been unique. The creation of the Teacher Assessed Grading process, alongside a Centre Policy and the requirement for teachers to collate, mark, evaluate and grade student produced evidence has not been seen before and poses its own challenges. At all stages of the process, the school has done its best to clearly communicate the details of what is happening to parents and students, as well as the rationale behind the decisions that we have made. At all times, the school has followed the JCQ guidance provided and it is with this in mind that we outline our appeals policy.

In line with JCQ guidance, we have taken the following steps to give students and parents confidence in our processes, to minimise perception that there may have been an error and failure in the grade that students have received:

- Our Centre Policy is published on the school website. This outlines in detail our rationale for how the grading process worked this year at Sydney Russell. This has been ratified by the JCQ (ratified on 26th May 2021 through the Edexcel exam board) and our Governors as being fit for purpose. This policy has been followed by all staff involved in the process
- We have communicated regularly with students and parents – we have shared with them the evidence used, as well as giving an opportunity to flag and discuss any variations to evidence or mitigating circumstances before the grades were submitted to the exam boards. Undertaking this before we submitted the grades to the exam board was not a requirement from the JCQ, but it was done to ensure confidence in students and parents that we had considered all relevant aspects before finalising the grades and submitting them to the exam boards.
- Our procedures have been checked and documented in line with Appendix F of the *JCQ Guide to Appeals 2021*
- Our documentation has been checked in line with Appendix C of the *JCQ Guide to Appeals 2021*

However, in spite of this, should a student or parent still feel that there has been an error or a failure, this document outlines the steps they can take to raise this with the school and the outcomes that these steps may have.



Stage One – Centre Review

This is the first stage of the appeals process in summer 2021 and covers our role in handling requests from students who wish to correct a perceived error once they have received their grades. We have undertaken procedural and administrative checks at length prior to results day as part of our quality assurance processes, so this stage applies to students only once they have received their grades.

Any student, including Private Candidates, may submit a request for a centre review on the following grounds:

1. Procedural failure – that the centre has not followed its procedures properly or consistently in arriving at the grade (the procedures as outlined in the JCQ ratified Centre Policy)
2. Administrative error – that an administrative error has been made in relation to the result

In line with JCQ guidance, a student cannot appeal to the school on the grounds of unreasonable academic judgement, either in the evidence we have selected or in the academic judgement of a grade based on this evidence.

Before a student decides to request a review, they will be given access to, if they have not already:

- the Centre Policy
- the sources of evidence used to determine the student's grade, along with the marks/grades associated with them
- details of any variations in evidence used based on disruption to what that student was taught
- details of any special circumstances that have been considered, such as access arrangements/reasonable adjustments or mitigating circumstances such as illness

To request a Centre Review, a student will need to complete a Student Request Form, available from Appendix B of the *JCQ Guide to Appeals Summer 2021* and provided by the school alongside this Appeals Policy to students on Results Day. This document will require the student to outline the grounds for the review from the above, with, where appropriate, a brief explanation for perceived errors.

For an administrative error, no explanation is required, unless there is a specific reason for the request, such as the knowledge of an error in transposing the grades for multiple students with the same name.

For a procedural error, a student may wish to raise concerns about a failure to follow procedure over:

- a) the existence and consideration of mitigating circumstances at the time of an assessment
- b) the provision of agreed access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for an assessment
- c) the process for determining and quality assuring grades (for example internal standardisation, authentication of student work).

To submit a Centre Review, a student will need to:

1. Request access to any necessary documentation, as listed above (Centre Policy, evidence sources, variation documents, special circumstances)
2. Complete a Student Request Form (Stage One) and submit it to the Examinations Officer (either physically, or preferably digitally to exams@sydneyrussellschool.com)
3. In completing this document, acknowledge through their signature that, as outlined on the covering page, they consent that their grade may go down as well as up in the review/appeals process
4. Submit the relevant documentation before the required dates – Centre Reviews requested after the final date will not be processed by the school
5. Provide an appropriate contact email and phone number

The dates for the submission of the relevant documentation for a Centre Review are as follows:

16th August 2021 – a priority review. This is only applicable for students who are applying to higher education (such as university) who did not attain their firm choice (i.e the offer they accepted as their first choice) and wish to appeal an A Level or L3 qualification result. To submit a priority review, a student will need to provide their UCAS personal ID as evidence of the above criteria and will need to let the higher education institution know of the review process being undertaken, so that they can decide how to process their offer.

3rd September 2021 – all non-priority reviews. This includes students who wanted a priority review, but missed the deadline of the 16th August. We will endeavour to still process these as quickly as possible, but a student must recognise that missing the deadline for a priority review, where applicable, may result in the higher education provider of their choice not receiving the necessary information on time to help them process their offer.

The school will acknowledge the receipt of an appropriately completed Student Request Form in writing. Upon receiving such, the centre will undertake investigation of the query as directed by the form and the JCQ. Once this investigation has been completed, the student will receive, in writing, part B of the form, which outlines the Centre Review outcome. This will include:

- An outcome in terms of whether the request is upheld, not upheld or partially upheld
- An outcome as to whether the school will be keeping the original Teacher Assessed Grade, or will be applying to the exam board to revise the Teacher Assessed Grade in light of the review
- An outline of the evidence reviewed and investigation undertaken
- A rationale for the outcome of the centre review

The time frames for the conduct of these Centre Reviews are as follows:

Priority Review – students will be informed in writing no later than 6pm 20th August

Non Priority Review – students will be informed in writing no later than 6pm 10th September

After the receipt of the outcome, a student who considers that there is still a procedural failure, administrative error or an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement may then proceed to Stage Two and request an appeal to the awarding organisation. This next step will be highlighted to students in the written outcome of the Stage One Centre Review. It is important to note that a student cannot conduct a Stage Two appeal to the exam board without first having submitted and completed a Stage One Centre Review with the school. All requests submitted to the exam board without having been through a Stage One Centre Review will be rejected by the exam board in line with JCQ guidance.



Stage Two – appeals to the awarding organisation

The school will submit a Stage Two appeal to the relevant exam board at the request of any student who has completed the Stage One Centre Review and has a written outcome for it.

Any student, including Private Candidates, may appeal to the awarding organisation on the grounds that:

1. There has been a procedural error (that the outcome of the Centre Review has not acknowledged or is still deemed unresolved)
2. There has been an administrative error (that the outcome of the Centre Review has not acknowledged or is still deemed unresolved)
3. The grade is perceived to reflect an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement (that the evidence used to determine the grade is unreasonable, or that the grade determined from the evidence is academically unreasonable)

A student can only appeal against a result issued and cannot appeal in this way against a centre's decision to withdraw and entry due to insufficient evidence on which to base a Teacher Assessed Grade. Any concerns with this need to come through the schools' complaints procedure on the website.

All appeals must be submitted to the exam board by the school. The exam board will not accept any appeals submitted directly by students or parents.

To submit an Appeal to the Awarding Organisation, a student will need to:

1. Ensure they have the relevant documentation (as outlined for the Centre Review). For the Stage Two appeal, the student will also need their written copy of the Stage One Centre Review outcomes
2. Complete a Student Request Form (Stage Two) and submit it to the Examinations Officer (either physically, or preferably digitally to exams@sydneyrussellschool.com)
3. In completing this document, acknowledge through their signature that, as outlined on the covering page, they consent that their grade may go down as well as up in the review/appeals process
4. Submit the relevant documentation before the required dates – Stage Two appeals requested after the final date will not be processed by the school
5. Provide an appropriate contact email and phone number

It is important to note that the Stage Two appeal will, depending on the grounds, require a 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.

The dates for the submission of the relevant documentation for a Stage Two appeal are as follows:

23rd August 2021 – a priority Stage Two appeal. This is only applicable for students who are applying to higher education (such as university) who did not attain their firm choice (i.e the offer they accepted as their first choice) and wish to appeal an A Level or L3 qualification result. To submit a priority Stage Two appeal, a student will need to provide their UCAS personal ID as evidence of the above criteria and will need to let the higher education institution know of the review process being undertaken, so that they can decide how to process their offer.

17th September 2021 – all non-priority appeals. This includes students who wanted a priority review, but missed the deadline of the 23rd August. We will endeavour to still process these as quickly as possible, but a student must recognise that missing the deadline for a priority review, where applicable, may result in the higher education provider of their choice not receiving the necessary information on time to help them process their offer.

The school will acknowledge the receipt of a Stage Two appeal in writing, as should the exam board (in line with their policies outside of this document). The JCQ guidance states that exam board should aim to complete Stage Two appeals within 42 days of the receipt of the application. An outline of the processes that the exam boards will take in a Stage Two appeal can be found from 6.20 to 6.36 of the *JCQ Guide to Appeals 2021* document. The awarding organisation will provide further guidance in the outcome of the appeal in terms of any further steps.

