

Student Guide to GCSE, EPQ and A-Level Qualifications – Summer 2021

This information has been summarised from the Ofqual guidance that you can find [here](#). There are further links to additional information in the 'Where to Find More Support' section at the end of this document.

Awards this summer are based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs were submitted to the exam boards as a holistic assessment of each student's performance in each of his subjects, following a rigorous process outlined in our Centre Policy and using a range of evidence including the Controlled Condition Tests, NEA and other assessed work completed during the course. All grades were subject to rigorous internal controls and signed off by your teachers, the head of department, a senior member of staff within the school and ultimately the Head of Centre. These grades were then approved by the relevant exam board, following external quality assurance checks. Although the process of arriving at your grades has been different this year, they will look exactly the same as any other year on the results slips and your certificates.

Autumn Exam series

If you wish to try and improve upon your grade, you might consider sitting an exam in the Autumn series 2021 or Summer 2022. These papers are set and marked by the examination boards.

You should speak to Mr Harmsworth in the Main School Office if you wish to be entered for the autumn exam series – you will need to know the subject and the exam board. Members of the pastoral team and senior members of staff are available for you to discuss your options if you wish and you should consider this carefully. Preparing for a public examination at the same time as studying other courses (at A level or degree level) is a significant undertaking and shouldn't be taken lightly.

Would I have to sit exams in all of my subjects?

No. You can choose to take as many subjects in the autumn as you want to. But if you want to take a particular subject, you will need to take all of the exam papers in that subject, you cannot (for example) be entered for a unit.

Which grade will stand if I sit the exams?

If you choose to take exams in the autumn of 2021 or summer 2022 and achieve a different grade from the grade you received this summer, the higher of the two grades will stand.

Will the number or format of the exam papers be different?

No. You will have the same number of exams in each subject as would typically be the case and they will be in the same format as the summer 2021 exams would have been. However, there will not be any non-exam assessment (NEA), except in Art & Design.

Will the non-exam assessment I have completed previously count towards my grade?

No. The autumn results will be based on your exam performance alone; there will be no non-exam assessment and results from previous non-exam assessment will not carry over. In Art & Design, grades will be based on your performance in a new task, set and marked by the exam board and completed under supervised conditions.

Who will enter me for the exams?

Wilson's is responsible for entering you in the autumn even if you will have left the school.

When will the Autumn series examinations take place?

| Qualification | Deadlines for Entry | Exam Dates |
|---------------|--------------------------------|---|
| A levels | 8 th September 2021 | 4 th October to 22 nd October 2021 |
| GCSEs | 4 th October 2021 | 1 st November to 3 rd December 2021 |

Appeals

This year the appeals process consists of two stages:

- Stage one – centre review
- Stage two – appeal to awarding organisation

A centre review **must be completed** before you can appeal to the awarding organisation. Students and parents cannot send appeals directly to the exam board themselves – it must be sent to the relevant examination board by us using the form attached.

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before requesting an appeal, which will be available on the JCQ website by results days. It is important to note that if you appeal your grade, **it can go up, down or stay the same**. Once a decision has been made on an appeal, the appeal can't be withdrawn.

What are the grounds for appeal?

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

1. Administrative error by the centre - an error in recording your grade or submitting your grade to the awarding organisation.
2. Procedural error by the centre - failure to follow the process set out in our centre policy (which is on the website).
3. An appeal to the examination board on the grounds of an 'unreasonable exercise of academic judgement' in this case, a Centre Review to confirm that the correct grade was submitted to the awarding organisation must take place first.

JCQ has asked us to highlight that where a student submits an appeal on more than one grounds (i.e more than one of the above point), the appeal process is likely to take longer. This could be an important consideration for students who urgently need the outcome of their appeal, given the timescale suggested by the examination boards is up to 42 days from receipt..

How do I make an appeal?

To make an appeal you should complete the attached form and send it to appeals@wilsonsschool.sutton.sch.uk. **You will also need to bring a signed copy of the form into school and submit it to Mr Harmsworth in the main school office – this is so we can be certain we have your consent, as grades can go down as well as up. We cannot process your appeal until we have both the signed hard copy and the email.**

On this form you will be asked what the grounds for your appeal are and to provide a short explanation as to what you believe went wrong and how this impacted your grade. You can should complete the details for stage two (appeal to awarding organisation) at the same time as stage one (centre review), but we won't submit any appeals to the awarding organisation until we have confirmed the result of the centre review. The reason we are asking you to do this, is because it will speed up the process and is of benefit to you.

What are the deadlines for submitting an appeal?

| | Deadlines for Stage one Centre review | Deadlines for Stage two Appealing to awarding organisation |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Priority appeal | 16 th August 2021 | 23 rd August 2021 |
| Non priority appeals | 3 rd September 2021 | 17 th September 2021 |

Priority appeals are open to A level students starting university this autumn, who have missed out on the conditions of their firm or insurance offer. 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).

GCSE appeals do not count as priority by the exam boards, but internally we will prioritise the submission of them where they relate to course choice / Sixth Form entry.

Centre review

A senior member of staff will carry out the centre review and will e-mail you to confirm the decision. Note that a centre review cannot change the academic judgement that was made about the grade:

- If we find we made an administrative error when submitting your grade, we will submit the revised grade to the exam board to change it.
- If we don't find an administrative error we will notify you of this. If you indicated your intention to appeal to the exam board, we will ask for written confirmation that you want us to submit this to them on your behalf.

Appeal to awarding organisation

Once we have received written confirmation from you, we will submit your appeal to the exam board along with all the evidence that we considered.

If you are appealing on the grounds of an 'unreasonable exercise of academic judgement' you should note the following from JCQ *"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 students, 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 wrongs i.e. there no basis upon which the grade could properly have been given."*

The awarding organisations will aim to complete the appeals process within 42 calendar days. We will confirm any decision to you via e-mail once we have it from the exam board. **Remember when you submit an appeal, your grade can go up, down or stay the same.**

Why can't you tell me my final grade?

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, which is a disciplinary offence.

WHERE TO FIND MORE SUPPORT

Remember that we are here to support you, but here are a range of sources of help and guidance.

Ofqual - more information on the awarding process

You can find more resources and information about this year's awarding process on the Ofqual website:

- [Resources for students receiving their qualifications this summer](#)
- [Student guide to exams in summer 2021](#)
- Or call: 0300 303 3344 (lines open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, calls charged at your standard network rate)

Results, appeals, complaints and next steps

The Exam Results Helpline can provide information on appeals or what your next steps may be once you've received your results:

- 0800 100 900 (lines open from 8am to 10pm, 7 days a week. Calls are free from landlines and most mobiles)
- nationalcareers.service.gov.uk

Higher education

For higher education questions, such as application and admissions, you may need to contact the relevant institution directly.

UCAS can also provide information on university applications:

- 0371 468 0 468 (lines open Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 6pm, calls charged at your standard network rate)
- ucas.com

Mental Health Support

Make sure you speak to somebody if you are feeling anxious or struggling with your mental health. This might be a member of the pastoral team, another teacher, a parent, carer or someone else you trust.

You can also contact:

- **Young Minds:** Text YM to 85258, or go to youngminds.org.uk
- **Childline:** 0800 11 11, or go to childline.org.uk
- **Your GP:** call and ask for an emergency appointment.
- **NHS 111:** they can assist in providing the mental health support you may need.