

Teacher assessed grades (TAGs) and proposed changes to assessment in 2022

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During the summer break, students were issued with their final teacher assessed grades (TAGs) in GCSE, AS, A Level and other qualifications, with the vast majority achieving exceptional grades. Schools and students alike should be rightly proud of their successes, particularly given the severe disruption caused by the pandemic.

For students who are disappointed with their TAG in one or more subjects, there is the opportunity to challenge the grade using the procedures outlined in the [Joint Council for Qualifications \(JCQ\) appeals guidance](#). The first stage is for schools, as exam centres, to undertake a 'centre review' to ascertain whether there was an administrative error or a failure to follow their procedures properly or consistently. The second stage is for the student to require the school to submit an 'awarding organisation appeal' to the exam board, on the grounds of administrative or procedural error or that the school made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence and/or the determination of the grade.

Priority reviews and appeals, for students applying to higher education who did not attain their first-choice offer, were conducted over the summer break. Students had until 3 September to submit a request for other centre reviews, which must be determined by the school by 10 September. Schools must have submitted any student appeal requests to exam boards by 17 September.

From what we have seen so far, there have been very few student requests for reviews and appeals and most appeals have been rejected (disallowed) by exam boards. The most difficult challenges have centred around whether appropriate reasonable adjustments were made and/or whether adequate special consideration measures were put in place to address a student's circumstances. To have the best chance of appeals being rejected, schools faced with challenges should ensure their position is comprehensively outlined at both the review and appeal stages and clearly supported with the available evidence.

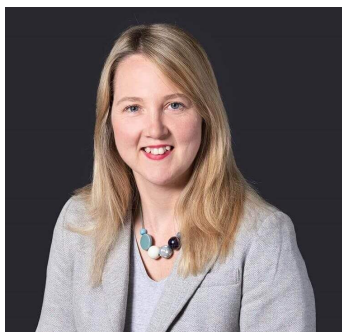
At this stage, we have also seen very few subject access requests (SARs) under the Data Protection Act 2018 or requests for general information under the Freedom of Information Act 2010 (FOI) on TAGs. Where such requests are received, schools need to respond within the relevant statutory time periods of not more than one calendar month for SARs and 20 school days for FOI requests.

As the autumn term begins, attention now inevitably turns to summer 2022 and the proposals and contingency plans being considered for student exams and grading. We await the outcome of the [joint DfE and Ofqual consultation on proposed changes](#) to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2022 and confirmation of the measures and adaptations to be put in place for 2021-22 to continue to mitigate the disruption to students' education caused by the pandemic.

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