



Mulberry Academy Shoreditch (MAS) Appeals Policy

Background

This is an exceptional appeals policy as a result of the government directions that the normal 2020/21 assessment process could not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic with the result that learners could receive qualifications based on teachers' professional holistic judgement of the assessed evidence produced by learners. These are referred to as Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). Although robust internal checks were in place to ensure all marks/grades accurately reflected learners' assessed work, there is always the possibility that a procedural/administrative error occurred in either determining the final TAGs, the submission of these marks/grades to the awarding organisation or in the awarding organisation's processing of these TAGs. This policy sets out the process for learners who wish to appeal their TAG grade for the academic year 2020/21 only, and will expire on 17 September 2021 (JCQ's deadline for submission of all appeals). In conducting a review/appeal of an individual learner's TAG, MAS will adhere to the guidance and deadlines provided by JCQ.

Grounds for Appeal

The appeals process for Summer 2021 allows learners to appeal their grade where they believe there has been an error. Learners must first submit a written request to MAS for a Centre Review to determine whether an administrative or procedural error has been made. If MAS identifies an error with the grade that has been submitted to the awarding organisation, MAS will submit a revised grade and rationale for the grade change to the awarding organisation. If the awarding organisation is satisfied with the rationale presented and it considers it is appropriate to correct the result, they will issue a revised grade. Where MAS does not believe an error has been made, MAS will explain the reasons why to the learner. If the learner still believes that an error has been made, the learner may ask MAS to submit an appeal to the awarding organisation on their behalf. MAS will submit the student's appeal if requested along with the required supporting evidence. Depending on the grounds of appeal, the awarding organisation will consider: a) whether the grade reflects an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement b) whether MAS followed its procedures correctly and consistently in arriving at the student's grade c) whether the awarding organisation made an administrative error. It is important for learners to be aware that at either Stage 1-Centre Review or Stage 2- Awarding Organisation Appeal, the outcome of the investigation may determine that the learner's grade is adjusted downwards as well as upwards. Therefore, as part of the learner's application for a review/appeal, the learner must provide written consent for their grade to be lowered by the awarding organisation.

Information provided to learners as part of the Appeals process

On results' day, candidates will receive a letter with their results outlining how to contact the school if they wish to submit an appeal for any qualification or subject. Students will need to email: examsappeals@mulberryacademyshoreditch.org stating their name and the subject(s) they wish to appeal. The exams team will then contact the student to schedule a meeting to provide further guidance on the process and assist the student in filling out necessary paperwork. Priority appeal student meetings will be scheduled between Wednesday 11th August – Monday 16th August. Non-



priority appeal student meetings will be scheduled between Tuesday 17th August – Friday 27th August.

In order to provide learners with sufficient information to enable them to determine whether or not to submit a review/appeal request, MAS will provide an explanation/make available the following: a) the sources of evidence used to determine their grade along with (and where appropriate) any grades/marks associated with them. However, under no circumstances is MAS authorised to provide final TAG grades prior to publication of the final results on Results Day. b) the centre policy and any supporting documentation in order to submit an appeal, e.g. Appeals Policy, Appeals Request Forms, etc. c) details of any variations in evidence used based on disruption to what a learner was taught. d) details of any special circumstances that have been considered in determining their grade, e.g. access arrangements/reasonable adjustments or mitigating circumstances such as illness.

Stages of the Appeals Process

There are two stages to the appeals process:

Stage 1 – Centre Review (MAS):

Learners may submit a request for a Centre Review of their TAG on procedural or administrative grounds that MAS: a) failed to follow its procedures properly or consistently in arriving at that result, e.g. selection of evidence, marking/checking of results/grades or b) made a clerical/administrative error in relation to the result e.g. data inputting error when entering the results/grades etc.

Appeals in relation to academic judgement (unreasonableness) cannot be investigated by MAS. These can only be investigated by the awarding organisation. Procedural and administrative checks may take place before or after results have been issued, whether prompted as a result of a candidate request or as part of MAS' own quality assurance processes. For example, MAS may conduct quality assurance checks should a learner query the information provided to them regarding the procedures used for the selection of evidence used for their TAG and the consequent determining of their TAG based on this evidence. In order to submit a request for an appeal, learners should complete a Centre Review Request Form explaining their grounds for an appeal making reference to the guidance information provided earlier. Centre Reviews will be undertaken by the relevant Head of Curriculum for that qualification. Findings of the investigation and the Outcome of the Centre Review will then be internally quality assured by exams manager. Recommendations resulting from the Centre Review will be submitted to the Head of Centre (or delegated to a member of the Senior Leadership Team) for approval prior to responding to the learner or submission to the awarding organisation. Where MAS considers that there has been a procedural failure or administrative error, MAS will decide whether this affected the grade submitted to the awarding organisation. The resulting outcome may be that the grade is raised, stays the same or lowered, depending on the impact of the error or failure.

Deadlines for Stage 1 – Centre Review forms must be submitted by the following dates:

16 August 2021 (Priority Appeals) - for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice i.e. the offer they accepted as their first choice, and wish to appeal a Level 3 qualification result. Applications which are not submitted by 16 August 2021 may lead to appeals not being completed in time for those with a higher education place dependent on the outcome of the appeal. For reviews where a higher education place is dependent on the outcome of an appeal,



learners must include their UCAS personal ID. The learner should also notify their preferred higher education provider that a review/appeal has been requested at the earliest possible opportunity so they can decide how to handle their offer.

3 September 2021 (non-priority appeals) – for any other students wishing to appeal a subject.

Stage 2-Appeal process

If the findings of the Review are that a grade change is necessary due to a procedural failure or administrative error, MAS will contact the awarding organisation to request a change to the grade using an Error Correction Request Form. This will include the outcome of the review, the reason for the decision made and will be signed off by the Head of Centre or a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team. The Awarding organisation will then consider the outcome and reasons and make the final decision about changing the grade. Amended grades will be reported to MAS by the awarding organisation and shared with the learner. In cases where the awarding organisation disagrees with the centre's decision to amend a grade as a result of a review and considers it inappropriate to do so, or considers a different grade to be appropriate, the awarding organisation will clearly communicate its reasons to MAS and this will be shared with the learner.

If the learner is not satisfied with this outcome, they have the option to request MAS to proceed with a Stage 2 appeal to the Awarding Organisation.

Stage 2 – Appeals (Awarding Organisation):

A Stage 2 Appeal can only be made against a result issued. After the publication of their results and once they have received the outcome of the Stage 1 - Centre Review, if a learner is still not satisfied, they can request MAS to submit a Stage 2-Appeal to the awarding organisation on their behalf (learners cannot appeal directly to the awarding organisation). Learners must complete the second part of the Appeal Request Form (Stage 2 -Appeal to Awarding Organisation).

Deadlines for Stage 2 – Appeals (Awarding Organisations) must be submitted by the following dates:

- 19 August 2021 (Priority Appeals*) - for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice i.e. the offer they accepted as their first choice, and wish to appeal a Level 3 qualification result.
- 15 September 2021 (in all other cases). A learner, upon completion of Stage 1 (Centre Review), may submit an appeal to the awarding organisation on the grounds that: a) MAS did not follow its procedures properly or consistently in arriving at the result, or during the centre review b) the awarding organisation made an administrative error in relation to the result c) MAS made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/or the determination of that grade from the evidence. When submitting their Stage 2 Appeal, the learner must clearly explain in detail their rationale for appealing.

A learner submitting a request for a Stage 2- Appeal may subsequently decide they wish to withdraw their request up until a finding has been made. An application for an awarding organisation appeal cannot be withdrawn once a finding has been made, for example if the finding of the appeal is that the TAG should be downgraded to a lower grade.

MAS will advise the learner of the outcome of their appeal and any changes to their TAG that may have been made. Awarding organisations will aim to complete Stage Two of the appeals process (the

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awarding organisation appeals stage) within 42 calendar days of the receipt of the application, however where additional information is required it may not always be possible to meet this target. For most qualifications, this marks the final stage of the appeals process. However, a learner who remains concerned that their grade was incorrect may be able to either submit a complaint to Ofqual regarding the awarding organisation's appeals process or apply for a procedural review of the awarding organisation's appeals process to the Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS). Guidance regarding the next stage will vary according to each awarding organisation and will be provided to learners once the final outcome has been shared with the learner.