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Name and post of person responsible:	Quality
Highest College body approving the policy:	SLT
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Comments:	

Appeals against TAGs under the regulatory arrangements for the awarding of vocational, technical and other general qualifications in 2020-21

Each teacher assessed grade (TAG) or outcome is a holistic professional judgement, balancing different sources of evidence. Judgements have been based on records and evidence that demonstrate a learner's performance in relation to the subject content that they have been taught.

Unlike in other years when in most cases a learner may request a review of marking and then an appeal against results and the centre will decide whether a review or appeal should be pursued, this year every learner will be able to instruct the centre which determined their TAG to conduct a centre review and to submit an appeal to the awarding organisation on behalf of the learner, in relation to that TAG.

When an appeal is submitted to the awarding organisation (AO), it will be necessary to explain in the application the reasons why the learner considers their result was incorrect and should be changed. These reasons are known as the grounds of appeal. In other years grounds of appeal are usually prepared by the centre which submits the appeal on the learner's behalf. This year, because the centre made the decision subject to the appeal (the TAG), the learner will be responsible for explaining the grounds of appeal.

The centre has a written procedure for the determination and internal quality assurance of TAGs. A procedural error will occur where the centre did not follow that procedure properly or consistently. A procedural error may be identified as part of the centre review or as part of an appeal to the awarding organisation. Where a centre deviated from its written procedures in relation to a TAG, it will usually be able to identify that deviation. Therefore, the majority of procedural errors will be identified during the centre review, which will allow the impact of such errors to be corrected promptly.

The purpose of the appeal to the awarding organisation is to consider only whether the centre made a procedural error. The purpose of the appeal is not to consider whether the centre's written procedure was adequate. An administrative error might have been made by the centre or by the awarding organisation. The former can be corrected at the centre review stage and the latter at the appeal stage.

In many cases, a learner will seek a centre review on procedural grounds as well as on the basis of administrative error. In the rare cases where a learner requests a review on the basis of administrative error only, but then goes on to seek an appeal on the basis of a failure to follow the centre procedure properly or consistently, the centre should promptly review the procedural grounds prior to submitting the appeal on the learner's behalf. This is because if the centre agrees that it failed to follow its procedure properly or consistently, it will be more efficient for it to resolve that failure through the review process, and if appropriate submit a new proposed TAG to the awarding organisation.

A result may be incorrect where it is too low or too high, and an incorrect result could affect the learner who submitted the application for review or appeal or, less commonly, another learner whose result is found to be incorrect because of someone else's review or appeal.

Awarding organisations are responsible for issuing results and have the final decision whether to correct a result, and what the revised result should be, whenever an incorrect result is identified.

Learner's right to a review or appeal

Where requested by a Learner, a Centre must conduct a procedural and/or administrative review in relation to any Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) that it determined for that learner. Where the learner remains concerned that the TAG is incorrect after that review, the Centre must submit an appeal on the learner's behalf to the awarding organisation, where requested. An appeal must not be submitted on behalf of a learner without that learner's consent.

Grounds of appeal

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.

It is for the learner to present the grounds of appeal. The most effective grounds of appeal may be those which explain simply and clearly what the learner considers went wrong and how they think this made a difference to the determination of the TAG by the centre. This appeals process will lead the learner step by step to explain, as appropriate:

- what they consider the Centre failed to do, why that was a failure to follow the centre's procedures, and why that failure was important to the determination of the TAG
- in what way they consider the awarding organisation made an administrative error, and what difference it made to the determination of the TAG
- in what way they consider there was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement:
 - in the selection of evidence used to determine the TAG
 - in the determination of a TAG from the selected evidence

An explanation why a learner considers a decision was unreasonable need not be detailed or complex. The awarding organisation needs to know:

- what evidence the learner considers should have been included, or excluded, and why they think it was unreasonable to exclude or include it; or
- why the learner considers the TAG derived from the evidence which was used, was unreasonable because, for example, it did not reflect the standard shown by that evidence.

The question is whether the Centre followed its procedure properly and consistently, or determination of the TAG represents an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement.

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.

Correcting results

In practice, this might arise:

- Following a centre review, where having considered the outcome of that review the awarding organisation must decide whether to issue a revised result for the learner who requested the review
- Following an appeal, where the awarding organisation finds that the result for the learner who requested the appeal was incorrect

- Following a centre review or an appeal, where the awarding organisation discovers that a result issued to a different learner was incorrect

Appeals

Although everyone will be working hard to make sure the correct grades are issued on results day, the appeals system is a safety net to fix any genuine errors that were not identified earlier on. If a learner believes an error has been made in determining their grade, they will have a right to appeal.

There are two stages to the appeals process:

Stage 1: centre review

If a learner thinks they have been issued with an incorrect grade, they can appeal to the college, who will review whether they:

- made an administrative error, e.g. they submitted an incorrect grade; they used an incorrect assessment mark when determining the grade.
- did not apply a procedure correctly, e.g. they did not follow their Centre Policy, did not undertake internal quality assurance, did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances, such as illness.

To help a learner decide whether to appeal, they can request that the college shares the following information on results day if not before:

- their Centre Policy
- the sources of evidence used to determine the grade along with any grades/marks associated with them
- details of any special circumstances that have been taken into account in determining the grade, e.g. access arrangements, mitigating circumstances such as illness

Stage 2: appeal to the exam board

If a learner still doesn't think they have the correct grade after the centre review is complete, they can ask the college to appeal to the exam board, who will review whether

- the college made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which they determined the grade and/or in the determination of the grade from that evidence.
- the college did not apply a procedure correctly, e.g. they did not follow their Centre Policy, did not undertake internal quality assurance, did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances, such as illness.
- the exam board made an administrative error, e.g. they changed the grade during the processing of grades.

At both stages of the process a learner will need to submit the appeal to the college and give them written consent to conduct the appeal or submit it to the exam board on their behalf. It's important to remember that **a grade can go down, up, or stay the same** through either stage of the process.

If a learner has a place at university that is dependent on the appeal, the learner should tell the university they are hoping to go to so they can decide how to handle the offer. They should also tell the college so they can ask the exam board to prioritise the appeal.

The timelines for priority and non-priority appeals will be as follows:

Priority appeals window - 10 August to 7 September

10 August to 16 August: student requests centre review

10 August to 20 August: centre conducts centre review

11 August to 23 August: centre submits appeal to exam board

Non-priority appeals take place - 10 August to end October:

10 August to 3 September: student requests centre review

10 August to 10 September: centre conducts centre review

11 August to 17 September: centre submits appeal to exam board

Finally, if a learner believes the exam board has made a procedural error in handling the appeal, they can apply to Ofqual's Exam Procedures Review Service to review the process undertaken by the exam board.

All appeals must be sent to ExamTagappeals@blc.ac.uk