

11th August 2020

Dear Year 13 and Year 14 parents and carers

I hope this letter finds you safe and well and that you have been able to enjoy some part of the recent lovely summer weather with your family. I am writing to share some further detail about how the Post 16 examination grades have been awarded this summer. An amended copy of this letter is also being sent to your child. I do hope that the long wait for results has not been too painful, especially as the students did not get to sit their exams. I am going through this process with two of my own children this year, so when I say that I can empathise with how you are feeling; I really do mean it!

You may find the following two links useful and I would encourage you to read them. They contain information from the Department for Education (DfE). The first one relates to the process of how the final 'Calculated Results' have been awarded and there are some helpful infographics in it. It also confirms that students can request to be informed what their Centre Assessment Grades were and provides more detail on the opportunity for students to sit exams if they wish to. The second link is much more specific about the process of how a school can lodge an appeal against a result if they are dissatisfied. At the end of this letter I have copied an infographic from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) which provides a simple flowchart related to the new appeals process.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907493/Student_Guide_Summer_2020_6.8.2020_12.30.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907925/Information_for_students_about_malpractice-7-8-2020.pdf

I remain extremely hopeful that the vast majority of our students will receive results that will enable them to progress to their next stage with the minimum of fuss. However, since the publication of the Scottish Highers last week (equivalent to our English A' Levels) I have received several enquiries as to whether students in the English system will be treated in a similar manner. In Scotland, 40% of the grades that were recommended by schools, were reduced. Since the publication of these results there has been much media speculation about the A' Level results being published on Thursday and this has continued today. I am sure that this speculation will be raising the anxiety levels of students even higher than it already might have been. I really do feel for them.

We have no indication of what the scale of adjustments might be when it comes down to our own students. What we know is that OFQUAL have used a statistical model to turn each school's Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs), into a final calculated grade for each student. The Department for Education has shared that if CAGs had been published without any changes then the overall pass rate would have risen by 12%. They have indicated that results will be adjusted to cap the overall rise in pass rate to 2%. Nationally this does mean that there would be adjustments to the CAGs that were provided by schools.

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The following are some key points related to the recently published documents or associated issues:

- Students cannot appeal their results directly. Any appeal has to be made by the school. If students wish to explore this, then they should speak with a member of the 6th Form Leadership Team in the first instance. The deadline for appeals is 17th September.
- Exams will be available from 5th October to 23rd October. The deadline for entry is 4th September. If the students are considering this, it is very important that they speak with a member of the 6th Form Leadership Team as soon as possible.
- If students want to find out what CAG grade they were awarded, then they can request this via an email to our exams office; exams@budmouth-aspirations.org. The email must be sent using the students Budmouth email account to verify identity. We will do our best to provide the information within 24 hours, but this will depend on the demand. We will also be able to share the rank order they were given within that grade. However, due to data protection, we will be unable to provide the rank order if the subject had fewer than 7 entries.
- If students are not happy with the CAG they were awarded, then this should be raised with Mr Henman in the first instance. Students should not directly contact the teacher who awarded the CAG.
- Covid-19 has also had an impact on the ability of UK universities to recruit this year. In particular, the many students who would normally come from overseas to study in the UK have been affected. In addition, a greater number of UK students appear to have chosen to start their courses in 2021, rather than 2020 due to the uncertainty. As a result of this, a larger number of universities have places already available in the UCAS clearing system, including some highly prestigious establishments such as Bristol. Students may consider this when deciding on their final destination and it could be the case that new opportunities arise. It is then very important that students get advice from our staff if they are considering a change of destination. The very unusual circumstances do present new opportunities.

I have been asked about the likelihood for appeals to result in grade changes. It is clearly very difficult to gauge but it is my personal opinion that very few appeals will result in a changed grade. As there is no actual exam paper to re-mark then it would be the statistical model that exam boards have used that would be being challenged. There would be significant implications for the overall system if too many of these were successful. The message that has been repeated by the DfE and OFQUAL is that students have the opportunity to sit an exam if they are unhappy with the calculated grade they have been awarded. However, where we believe there is a good case, we are happy to support appeals. It is interesting to note that 'Stage One' of the appeal process has a maximum of 42 days for the exam board to conduct its investigation and reach a decision. If it were then to progress to 'Stage Two' the time period is a further 42 days maximum. For any students making difficult decisions about courses and destinations starting in September 2020, these time periods would not be helpful. Today the Secretary of State for Education has urged universities to wait for students' appeals to be conducted before making final decisions. Obviously this would be very helpful for the students but it is hard to see how universities could wait for too long as their new terms begin and things like student accommodation have to be finalised.

Finally, I would like to wish all our students the very best of luck with results on Thursday. After so many months of uncertainty I hope that this will mark the start of their next chapter and that the 'calculated results' they are awarded enable them to move on to new and exciting things. As always if any students need to access individual advice and guidance then it will be on offer on the day and in the days and weeks that follow. Mr Henman's end of term letter contained a link to a Google Form that we would like all students to fill in; this will be checked regularly. You can also use this to book individual appointments. You can access the form using the following link: <https://forms.gle/144YqFxt3CofpPR6>.

With fingers firmly crossed!

Yours sincerely



David Herbert



Results 2020: How appeals work - AEA, Extended Project, GCE AS, GCE A level and GCSE qualifications

Who can appeal

All appeals must come from the centre on a candidate's behalf, if agreed, with the candidate's consent. Candidates cannot appeal directly to awarding bodies.



Schools and colleges can appeal:

If there may have been an error processing the grade as per Ofqual's appeals criteria.



The three possible stages of the appeals process

Applications to appeal for an initial review must be made by Thursday 17th September 2020 (where university places are pending centres should submit applications as soon as possible after the publication of results so these can be prioritised).



Stage 1:

Initial Review: if an application for an Initial Review is accepted, this involves a check of the relevant data or procedures. Awarding bodies aim to complete Initial Reviews within **42 calendar days** of the receipt of the application.

Stage 2:

Independent Review: if a centre is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Initial Review, believing that there is still an error with the result, they have 14 calendar days from the outcome of the Initial Review to apply for an Independent Review. Awarding bodies aim to complete Independent Reviews within **42 calendar days** of the receipt of the application.

Stage 3:

Examination Procedures Review Service (EPRS): if a centre remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Independent Review, believing that there is still an error with the result, an appeal may be made to the relevant regulator's EPRS and further details about this will be provided in the awarding body's Independent Review outcome letter. For further information on the regulator's EPRS application process, please see the relevant qualification regulator's website. **Appeals to the regulators must be made within the timescales specified by each regulator.**



A decision tree to help centres and students consider their next steps

Do your results allow you to progress on to your next steps?

Yes

No

Congratulations, you are now ready for the next phase in your education or career

Speak to your school or college first

Option to sit autumn exams

If you cannot move on to your next steps and would like a chance to obtain better grades, you can sit the autumn series of exams.

Appeals

Schools or colleges can appeal on behalf of a student if there may have been an error processing the grade as per Ofqual's appeals criteria.

Concerns about bias or malpractice

Please see Ofqual's guide for students on their website.