

CCEA Regulation Decisions at a Glance

Key points from our Decisions Report following our consultation on an appeals process for CCEA GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in Summer 2020

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This document sets out decisions made by CCEA Regulation about the appeals process that will apply to CCEA GCSE, AS and A level qualifications awarded in Summer 2020. This is not the appeals process itself but explains principles that CCEA awarding organisation will need to follow when developing that process. It is intended only as a supporting document; those wishing to understand more detail about the Regulatory decisions should use and revert to the main [Decisions Report](#) at www.ccea.org.uk

Between 7 and 21 May 2020 we asked for feedback on 11 proposals, and we received 753 responses. In making the following decisions we have considered the results of this consultation. We've also considered steps being taken by Ofqual and Qualifications Wales.

- **In Summer 2020, CCEA awarding organisation will run an appeals process that reflects the alternative arrangements put in place for examinations as a result of the present exceptional circumstances.**

Although the usual GCSE, AS and A level examination series has not taken place, it's important that the alternative arrangements implemented as a result of the present exceptional circumstances include a facility for students to appeal.

The nature of the appeal available inevitably differs in some respects from that in previous years, given the necessarily different nature of the awarding arrangements in Summer 2020.

- **Centres, independently or on behalf of a student, will be able to submit an appeal on the grounds that CCEA awarding organisation made an administrative error affecting one, some or all of its students.**

In recognition of the alternative arrangements in place, the grounds on which a centre will be able to submit an appeal in respect of Summer 2020 awarding are that CCEA awarding organisation:

- used the wrong data when calculating grades;
- allocated the wrong grades through an administrative or processing error; and/or
- communicated grades incorrectly.

- **CCEA awarding organisation can accept appeals only from centres, not from individual students. Centres must, however, have an internal process that allows students to challenge any decision made by the centre:**
 - **not to seek information from CCEA awarding organisation that the student considers would be needed for an appeal; and/or**
 - **not to appeal to CCEA awarding organisation on a student's behalf.**

This represents no change to the appeals process available in previous years; it is always the case that CCEA awarding organisation accepts appeals only from centres and not from individual students. Importantly, however, students are able to use their centre's internal complaints process to challenge a centre's decision about whether or not to appeal on the student's behalf. See information in the next two points about ways students can raise concerns.

- **The appeals process will not cover a review of the process or procedure a centre has used to submit the centre assessment grade and rank order to CCEA.**

As in previous years, existing regulations including the *JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres* and *JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures* remain applicable this year. These allow students and centres to address potential errors that centres might have made in processing and submitting data. A student who believes an administrative error has affected their result can follow their centre's written complaints process. If their complaint is upheld, the centre must ask CCEA awarding organisation to correct the mistake. A student unhappy with how a centre has handled their complaint can report this to CCEA awarding organisation, who will treat it as a potential complaint of maladministration by the centre and may carry out an investigation.

- **The appeals process will not cover a review of teachers' professional judgements when they set centre assessment grades, and it will not allow students to challenge their position in a centre's rank order.**

This year, unlike previous examination series, no common assessment will be taken by all students against which a decision-maker in an appeals process can evaluate a teacher's professional judgement. Individual centres will have had different evidence available to them when making decisions. As a result, there will be no common benchmark or standard against which those judgements can be evaluated by a decision-maker on appeal. No workable solution to this issue has been identified.

In addition, in order to appeal their position in a centre's rank order, a student would need to know the names of the students above and below them, which would raise issues of confidentiality. For each of these reasons, the appeals process will not cover a review of teachers' professional judgements.

If there are any cases in which there is evidence of demonstrable bias or discrimination against a student, the student can of course raise this with their centre as a complaint to be investigated. If an investigation finds that there has been an attempt to undermine the awarding process put in place this summer, that would be a matter of alleged malpractice. The matter may then be referred to CCEA awarding organisation, which is able to correct results that it finds to be incorrect as a result of malpractice or maladministration.

- **The appeals process will not cover the operation or outcome of the statistical standardisation model that CCEA awarding organisation uses.**

To be fair to all centres and students, it is important to apply the same model consistently to everyone. The consistent application of the statistical standardisation process is central to the maintenance of standards in the qualifications being awarded this summer. To vary the application of the statistical standardisation model for one student, or for a centre's cohort of students, as the result of an appeal would be unfair to other students at other centres and would undermine standards. CCEA will be publishing more details about the model at a later date.

- **If a successful appeal would affect the rank order of students in a centre, those students who were not directly involved in the appeal cannot have their grades lowered; their grades are protected.**

Ofqual has made a similar decision, and feedback from our consultation indicated strong opposition to allowing an appeal to lower the grades of students not directly involved in it. Linked to this, we do not require CCEA awarding organisation to ensure that centres have all students' consent before submitting an appeal on behalf of one or more students.

- **If and when CCEA awarding organisation feels it is appropriate, statistical staff involved in calculating results can also be involved in evaluating appeals. However, the staff involved in considering an appeal must have no personal interest in it.**

CCEA is of the view that it is important that individuals involved in the statistical calculation of results can be involved in the evaluation of appeals given the highly specialised nature of this task. Some of the consultation responses shared this view, with some feeling that this may help to ensure a consistent level of expertise throughout the awarding and appeals processes.

- **We will consider the outcomes of equality impact assessments as we work with CCEA awarding organisation to agree the best statistical standardisation model to use.**

We have also shared feedback with the awarding organisation from the consultation in relation to people who share protected characteristics, as set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

- **Our Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) will be available to centres for this summer's results.**

This will allow CCEA Regulation to consider whether the awarding organisation:

- has followed its processes in dealing with an appeal; and
- has, during the appeal, identified and corrected any administrative error made in calculating and issuing grades.

You can find more details in our full [Decisions Report](#) at www.ccea.org.uk

