

Board Examination Appeals Policy

NAME OF POLICY	Policy Name
PERSON RESPONSIBLE	Executive Principal
REVIEW DATE	8 th August 2021
APPROVED DATE	9 th August 2021
APPROVED BY	Executive Leadership Team
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW	June 2022
RELATED POLICIES	Complaints Policy, Examinations Policy

Executive Principal / CEO




Introduction

It is important that the process used to determine examination grades is rigorous, thorough, open and fair. In the 2020-21 academic year the UK based international examination boards (Cambridge International, Oxford AQA and Pearson Edexcel) decided that examination grades would be determined by assessments carried out by the examination centre (in this case The Westminster School, Dubai). Although the school submitted the grades to the examination boards, the final grades are awarded by the examination board and not the school. Therefore, the school does not have the authority to unilaterally change the examination grade and the only body that can change the grade is the relevant examination board. However, the school may request a change if they think an error was made.

A very rigorous process of determining examination grades was developed in conjunction with the examination boards. This process involved students undertaking a range of assessments, covering the full syllabus, for each subject. The marking of the assessments was checked for accuracy by another teacher and all assessments were moderated by the Head of Department to ensure consistency and fairness across the subject. Once submitted by the Head of Department, the results were moderated at four further levels culminating in a final check being carried out by the Executive Principal / CEO. The moderation process used a very wide range of data to ensure that grades awarded this year were not only consistent across the school but that they were consistent with grades awarded in previous years. The examination boards thoroughly checked the school's processes; carried out their own moderation, checked submitted grades against previous years' results, and were able to challenge schools if they thought they had made a mistake. After this scrutiny, no such challenge was received by The Westminster School, Dubai from any of the examination boards.

All three examination boards were satisfied with the processes used by The Westminster School. Therefore, students, parents and external educational institutions can be assured that grades awarded this year are of the same standard to those awarded in previous years.

In all examination systems, no matter how robust the procedures are, it is possible for errors to be made. This policy outlines the process to be followed if a student, their parents, or the school think that a wrong grade has been awarded. The policy is designed to ensure all students have access to an appeal which is why in the first stage, unlike an appeal to the examination board, there is no charge for the process. If the student or parent is not satisfied with the procedure carried out by the school the policy includes the right to appeal to the examination board. The examination boards have set out their own procedures and fees for this process. The process of appealing directly to an examination board is summarised in this policy and full details can be found on their websites. The school will support parents and students with this process.

Appeal Process

The process consists of two stages for Pearson Edexcel and Oxford AQA. For Cambridge International there are three services available. These are summarised in the tables in Appendix A at the end of this policy. In all cases the school is expected to review the case first. All board examination appeals must be submitted using the official form which can be found through this link: [Link to Examination Results Appeals – May/June 2021](#) .



No appeals will be considered without the submission of this form. School staff, including those who speak Arabic and other languages common to The Westminster School, will be available in school to ensure that language or technical ability is not a barrier to making an appeal.

Due to timelines set out by the examination boards the deadline for submitting an appeal is **2pm on Thursday 2nd September 2021**. Appeals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

When submitting the form as much information and evidence as possible should be included. This should include the reason why the grade is considered to be inaccurate (e.g. that the correct process was not followed, there was an administrative failing, that the grade reflects an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement, etc). Evidence to back up the allegation should be submitted where possible. **Please note that work that has not been completed under direct school supervision and references from external tutors will not be considered.**

It is important to note that a grade may go down as well as up (or stay the same) during an appeals process. If the school finds that an error led to a higher grade being awarded then it has a duty to report this to the examination board. Not doing so would jeopardise its status as an examination centre. Likewise, if the examination board carries out a review of a student's work and deems it to be of a lower standard than the grade awarded by the school then it may decrease the grade.

Stage 1 Appeal

The Stage 1 Appeal is a review carried out by the school and is split into two levels.

Level 1a

Appeals at Level 1a will be conducted by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The person hearing the review will look at all available evidence including the assessment grades used to determine the grade; the process used to calculate the grade; other available data and any evidence submitted with the appeal.

There are two possible outcomes from a Level 1a review:

1. There is no evidence to suggest that the wrong grade was awarded. In this case either a Level 1b or a Stage 2 appeal may be submitted using the same link as for Level 1a.
2. There is evidence to suggest that the wrong grade was awarded. In this case the school will support the student in requesting a change of grade from the examination board.

In most cases a communication will be sent with the outcome within ten working days of the appeal being submitted. The communication will include a summary of the checking that has taken place and the reason for the decision. In more complicated cases, where additional evidence may be required, the process could take longer but this should be rare.



Level 1b

Appeals at Level 1b will only be heard after the outcome of a Level 1a appeal has been received. Appeals at this level will be conducted by a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) who is a different person to the person hearing the Level 1a appeal. This will normally be the Head of School or the Executive Principal but other ELT members may be used if there are a large number of cases to be heard. The purpose of a review at this level is to check whether the person conducting the Level 1a review followed the correct procedure. There are two possible outcomes from a Level 1b appeal:

1. The correct procedure was followed and the outcome is upheld.
2. The correct procedure was not followed and the Level 1a review needs to be carried out again. In this case the Level 1a review will be carried out by the same ELT member who carried out the level 1b review and a new outcome letter will be issued.

The Level 1b review is the final level of appeal at school level and all further appeals must be submitted to the examination boards.

Stage 2 Appeal

Stage 2 appeals are made directly to the examination boards and incur a fee. In most cases the school submits the appeal on behalf of the student but the student / parent is responsible for paying the fee. No appeals will be made to the examination boards without the fee being paid in full beforehand. Normally the examination board expects the school to have undertaken its own review first so a Stage 2 appeal should only be requested after the outcome of a Stage 1 appeal has been received. The examination boards have different deadlines for the submission of an appeal and these are non-negotiable. The appeal must be submitted to The Westminster School through the official link by the deadline stated in this policy in order for us to meet the examination board deadlines. We cannot accept late submissions.

Each examination board has a different process and these are summarised in Appendix A at the end of this document. Full details are available on each examination board's website.

In order to submit a Stage 2 appeal the parent or student should complete the appeal form in the normal way: [Link to Examination Results Appeals – May/June 2021](#) . The Examinations Officer, Ms Anjana Sanalkumar, will then advise on the rest of the process including the fees that need to be paid to the examination board.

An appeal to the examination board is the final level of appeal.



Appendix A: Summary of the appeals process set out by each examination board.

Below is a summary of the appeals process for each examination board. The fees shown are charged by the examination board and not the school although payment should be made through the school. Full details can be found on the examination board websites and our Examinations Officer is also able to advise.


Cambridge International

Service	Description	Fee
Service 1: Change of grade following identification of an error	This service is available for individual candidate requests only. The centre submits a revised grade for a candidate to Cambridge if the school's review finds that the wrong grade was awarded. Cambridge issue the revised grade	For IGCSE -105 Dhs For AS/A Level -120 Dhs
Service 2: Individual candidate review	This service is available for individual candidate requests only. An independent review by an Assessment Specialist of the candidate's portfolio of evidence is carried out. The Assessment Specialist makes a judgement about whether the grade awarded by the centre was reasonable. If the Assessment Specialist concludes that the grade awarded by the centre was not reasonable, Cambridge issue a revised grade based on the Assessment Specialist's judgement. This grade could be higher or lower than that originally awarded.	For IGCSE -245 Dhs For AS/A Level -295 Dhs
Service 3: Review of Quality Assurance decision	This service is available for whole cohort requests only and is normally made by the school. It consists of a review of Cambridge's judgement during the Quality Assurance process, conducted by their Assessment Specialist. If the reviewing Assessment Specialist concludes that the original judgement was not reasonable, Cambridge may issue revised grades based on the reviewer's judgement.	For IGCSE -790 Dhs For AS/A Level -930 Dhs

Pearson Edexcel

Service	Description	Fee
Stage One – Centre review	The centre must provide a centre review as the first stage of the appeals process for 2021. Requests for appeals on the grounds of academic judgement (unreasonableness) will only be considered by Pearson (at Stage Two) and not by centres. In these cases, an initial centre review must still be completed to ensure that the centre has not made any procedural or administrative errors.	No charge made by the school
Stage Two – Awarding organisation appeal	The centre is required to submit an appeal to Pearson on behalf of a student where the student wishes to continue to the second stage	



	<p>of the appeals process. The centre must confirm at this stage to Pearson that it has not found a procedural or administrative error by the centre. The student / parent pays Pearson's fees for this process.</p> <p>Ground for appeal – centre The ground upon which a centre may appeal to Pearson are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre Aggregation Appeal – where a centre believes an error has been made by Pearson regarding the aggregation of UMS and the subsequent calculation of the cash-in grade for an International AS/A Level qualification. Due to the unitised structure of IAL qualifications each unit TAG is assigned a UMS mark, these are then combined to form an overall qualification UMS mark and an overall grade. <p>Grounds for appeal – student The grounds upon which a student may appeal to Pearson (following completion of a centre review) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pearson Error Appeal (Student) – where the student believes Pearson has made an error and has not issued the grade that the centre has requested. The student must provide its reason for believing we have made an error. • Centre Process Appeal (Student) – where the student believes the centre has not followed its process for determining the Qualification level Teacher Assessed Grade correctly, or it has made an admin error, or it has not followed the centre review/appeal process properly. This will also include where a student does not believe the centre has made appropriate provision for any reasonable adjustments they were entitled to or applied special considerations appropriately. • Centre Academic Judgement Appeal (Student) – grade – a student believes the centre's Qualification level Teacher Assessed Grade was unreasonable. 	<p>No charge to centre</p> <p>GCSE/International GCSE, GCE: 45 GBP per qualification</p> <p>International A level: 45 GBP per unit</p> <p>GCSE/International GCSE, GCE: 45 GBP per qualification</p> <p>International A level: 45 GBP per unit</p> <p>GCSE/International GCSE, GCE: 100 GBP per qualification</p> <p>International A level: 100 GBP per unit (capped at £400 per IAL qualification)</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre Academic Judgement Appeal (Student) – range of evidence – the student believes the centre has not been fair in its selection of evidence upon which it has based its Qualification level Teacher Assessed Grade determinations. • Centre Process and Academic Judgement Appeal – combined (Student) – the student believes the centre has not followed its process for determining Qualification level Teacher Assessed Grade correctly and that the centre’s Qualification level Teacher Assessed Grade was unreasonable. 	<p>GCSE/International GCSE, GCE: 145 GBP per qualification</p> <p>International A level: 145 GBP per unit</p>
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Oxford AQA

Service	Description	Fee
Stage One - Centre reviews	This is the first stage of the appeals process in May/June 2021. This section covers the school’s role in handling requests from students who wish to correct a perceived error once they have received their grades	No charge made by the school
Stage Two – appeals to OxfordAQA	<p>This is the second stage of the appeals process for May/June 2021. This section covers the school’s role in submitting student appeal requests to Oxford AQA, including the supporting information needed, what Oxford AQA will do and how outcomes will be reported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any student, including a private candidate, who considers that there has been a procedural error, an administrative failing or that their grade reflects an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement (either because of the way that the grade has been determined and/or the selection of the evidence), may submit a request for an OxfordAQA appeal after they have received the outcome of their centre review and after the publication of results 	No charges for any appeal.