



Carrickfergus Grammar School policy on:	Appeals Procedures Public Examinations 2020 – A2 and AS
Date implemented:	August 2020
Consulted:	Board of Governors SLT
Allied School Policies: n/a	

1. Introduction

The summer 2020 exams season has been unparalleled, with the cancellation of all GCSE, AS and A2 examinations.

This policy duly outlines an exceptional appeals process which will remain in place for this season only. It is a result of the directions that the summer 2020 exam series for GCSE, GCE AS and A level qualifications should be cancelled following the COVID-19 outbreak and the subsequent arrangements made by the regulators to ensure that as many candidates as possible could receive qualifications based on calculated results. This involved schools submitting Centre Assessment Grades and rank ordering of students to exam boards, followed by statistical modelling and standardisation by the exam boards. Potential key messages from this process are as follows:

- Teachers know their students well and centres are able to assess grades with a high degree of accuracy.
- The grades centres submitted to the exam boards were agreed by the centre following an internal quality assurance process and are not the sole responsibility of any individual teacher.
- The standardisation models developed and approved by the Regulator is statistical and may not reflect the grades submitted by the centre.
- The standardisation process applied by the exam boards ensures grades awarded this year are consistent with those awarded to other cohorts in other years.
- This was the fairest possible approach available under extreme circumstances. It is a rigorous process which means that grades awarded this year are as valid as in any other year.
- This process will hopefully allow pupils to progress to the next stage of their lives in the normal way.

The regulators were directed to develop an appeals process that focuses on the accuracy and application of the data provided, rather than challenge teachers' professional judgement on the ability of individual students.

This appeals process is designed to meet the extraordinary regulatory framework conditions for summer 2020, together with the relevant general/standard and qualification level conditions, of the three qualification regulators for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and CCEA Regulation). Their regulatory documentation underpins the awarding bodies' appeals processes.

Students are also reminded that they can sit examinations next year if they are not satisfied with results.

Where the school feels that a subject has received results which are below expectations, it will raise this with the exam board and raise an appeal if appropriate. School will undertake this following consultation with affected students.

2. Appeals Process

Whilst the school has a formal complaints policy available in the Policy section of the school website, that policy shall be superseded by the procedures outlined in this Appeals Procedure for Public Examinations 2020 for the purposes of the current examination season. This unique Appeals Procedure will now therefore come under Section 1.2. of the school's Complaints Policy which reads:

Where it becomes evident at an early stage that the nature of the complaint should be dealt with according to other established procedures or appeals mechanisms, this complaints procedure would be set aside by the Principal and/or Board of Governors in favour of the alternative procedure such as Safeguarding (Child Protection), Special Education, Admissions, Suspensions and Expulsions, Grievance, Discipline or Harassment.

Dissatisfaction with the grades issued by exam boards does not constitute grounds for appeal, unless there is evidence that there has been a technical error by the centre or the board.

Using the processes outlined in this policy, a student who believes that an error has been made by the centre (Carrickfergus Grammar School) or by the exam board which has affected their result can raise this with the centre to be considered and resolved. If it is found that a centre-based error was made, the centre can then ask the exam board to rectify this (if required) on the student's behalf.

If the centre and student believe that the exam board has made a mistake, an appeal can be lodged to the exam board.

Candidates can also complain to the centre if, for example, they believe they have suffered from discrimination or negative bias.

Candidates and/or their parents/carers cannot appeal directly to an awarding body. Candidates may make representations to the Principal (head of the centre) who submits information to the awarding body on behalf of that candidate. The head of centre's decision as to whether to proceed with an appeal is subject to the centre's internal appeal arrangements.

Appeals cannot be submitted before the published results day, must be supported by evidence and must provide a clear explanation of the basis for the appeal in all cases. An appeal may be submitted if the head of centre considers that:

- the awarding body did not apply procedures consistently, or procedures were not followed properly and fairly; or
- the awarding body used the wrong data * (as defined by JCQ) in calculating results; or
- the result generated was incorrectly issued by the awarding body to one or more candidates.

* wrong data includes where:

- the centre provided the awarding body with incorrect data (centre error); or
- the awarding body used an incorrect data set, which includes the transposition of data sets from two or more centres (awarding body error); or
- the awarding body introduced errors into a specified data set (awarding body error); or
- in exceptional circumstances, the centre establishes an exceptional factor that undermines the assumption that using a default data set is the most appropriate basis to calculate results. This would require a centre to establish that its previous cohorts of candidates are not sufficiently representative of the 2020 cohort to reliably inform the calculation of results.

3. How candidates request an internal review

A candidate can request an internal review at a centre-level followed by the submission of an appeal by the centre on their behalf to the exam board if he/she is of the view that the centre (Carrickfergus Grammar School) did not apply the school's procedures consistently, or procedures were not followed properly and fairly.

- (i) A candidate wishing to lodge a request for a centre-level internal review must do so within 5 working days of receipt of his/her results. A request must be made to the Principal in writing, clearly outlining the rationale for the review.
- (ii) The request will be acknowledged, in writing, within 3 working days.
- (iii) Following the receipt of a request for an internal review the Principal will instigate the school's Internal Review Procedure and report the outcome to the candidate within 10 working days of receipt of the request.

4. Carrickfergus Grammar School's Internal Review Procedure Summer 2020

The first stage will be a request for a centre-based internal review as outlined in section 3. This is the mechanism which asks the centre to confirm that the information it had submitted about a candidate to the exam board was accurate.

The head of centre will appoint a member of staff who was not previously involved in the final Centre Assessment Grading process for the subject(s) in question, to investigate the request. He/she will clarify if the correct data and procedures were applied consistently, properly and fairly in respect of the candidate, via discussion and review of the information with the appropriate members of staff, in the following order:

- Head of Department
- Examinations Officer

The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the Principal, who will respond to the candidate, in writing, outlining whether or not an appeal will be submitted to the awarding body on their behalf. If an error is identified, the centre will inform the awarding body of the error and request the error is corrected.

A written record of the review will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request.

The school may make a decision not to forward an appeal to the exam board if it is satisfied that its internal procedures are correct and if it is satisfied that there is no apparent mistake on the part of the exam board.

If the student disagrees with the decision by the centre that an appeal should not be made to the exam board, they may write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. The Chairperson will be responsible for referring the complaint to a Complaints Sub-Committee of the Board of Governors, which will investigate and respond to the complaint in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

If the student remains dissatisfied with the centre's handling of the complaint, the student can report their complaint and the centre's handling of it to the relevant awarding body.

Please note that there will be a small fee for appeals made to English and Welsh exam boards.

5. Centre Assessment Grades

For A2 students who believe they have been disadvantaged by this year's process in a manner which has had an impact on their progress to the next stage of education or employment, the option may be available to have their Centre Assessment Grades disclosed. Any student wishing to avail of this opportunity should do so in writing as part of the request for internal review outlined in section 3(i) above. Centre Assessment Grades will only be released from the following day after results are published.

AS students are reminded that the grades received on Thursday 13th August 2020 are nominal, and will not count towards their overall A Level grade.