



Longton Hall Road, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent. ST3 2NJ
Tel: 01782 882900 | Email: office@stmca.org.uk | www.stmca.org.uk | @StThomasMoreCA
Headteacher: Mr M Rayner BA(Hons) NPQH

Dear Y11/Y13 student,

Summer 2021 has been a unique year for assessment in that you have received a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) based on a range of internal evidence. The aim of the TAG process is to ensure that you were not disadvantaged due to the pandemic; as a school we have worked hard to ensure that the range of assessment evidence used to inform TAGs which are indicative of your ability.

How were my grades arrived at this year?

Grades this summer were based on Teacher Assessed Grades. TAGs were submitted to the exam boards by the school as a holistic assessment of students' performance in a subject, following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality-assurance.

In April, the centre policy was submitted to the exam boards and approved without any need for changes; this meant that the exam board has confidence in our procedures as a centre.

During May and June, the school has taken part in many moderation processes; internally and externally. This means that TAGs have been checked against the range of evidence by centre staff (many of whom are examiners) and where possible, external staff or examiners were deployed to ensure our TAGs accurately reflect the evidence students had completed.

As Head of Centre, I have met with all subject leaders to ensure that each qualification has followed the centre procedures, as well as ensuring that TAGs have been scrutinised to ensure they are accurate. There have been several further internal checks to ensure your TAG is representative of the evidence you have provided your teacher.

During the external quality-assurance stage, exam boards have sampled from a range of subjects across year 11 and year 13. All grades have to be approved by the relevant exam board, before being provided to you on results day.

What do I do if I believe that an error has been made?

All students have the opportunity to appeal their grade subject to meeting the eligibility criteria which I outlined below. It is important to note that an appeal may result in a **grade being lowered, staying the same, or going up**. So, if you put in an appeal and your grade is lowered, you will receive the lower mark.

There is also the option to resit GCSEs, A levels and some AS levels in the autumn, which may be preferable for some students. The design, content and assessment of these papers will be the same as those sat in an uninterrupted year.



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What are the grounds for appeal?

There are five main grounds for appeal, as dictated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). They are:

- Stage one appeal - You think the school has made an **administrative error**: an example of this would be putting the wrong information into a spreadsheet.
- Stage one appeal - You think the school has made a **procedural error**: this means we haven't properly followed our own process, as approved by the exam board. An example of this would be if specific access arrangements – such as extra time – hadn't been given.
- Stage two appeal - You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**: you think the evidence used to grade you was not reasonable.
- Stage two appeal - You think the **academic judgement on the grade you were given was unreasonable**.

What does 'unreasonable' mean?

'Unreasonable' is a technical term in this context and means that no educational professional acting *reasonably* would have selected the same evidence or come up with the same grade.

This means that just because other forms of evidence may have been equally valid to use, the selection of evidence is not reasonable. Because of the flexibility of the approach this year, every school and college will have used different forms of evidence.

It also means that the independent reviewers will **not** remark or grade students' evidence. Instead, they will look to see whether any teacher acting reasonably would have arrived at the same grade.

What will be the outcome of an appeal?

At either stage of the appeals process (see 'What are the two stages of an appeal?' below), a student's grade may **go up, stay the stay, or go down**. When placing an appeal, you will have to sign a declaration saying that you accept the fact your grade may go down and you may get a lower grade than your original TAG.

What's a priority appeal?

Priority appeals will be handled more quickly than other appeals, where possible before UCAS's advisory deadline of Wednesday 8th September.



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Priority appeals are only open to **A level students starting university this autumn, who have missed out on the conditions of their firm or insurance offer.**

If you decided not to confirm a firm conditional offer and to go through clearing instead, JCQ cannot offer you a priority appeal. JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students, unfortunately.

When making a priority appeal, you will have to include your UCAS number so it can be confirmed that it is a genuine priority appeal.

What should I do if I don't get into my first choice of university?

First, don't panic. Speak to one of the sixth form team about your options. You may wish to go through clearing, or sit the autumn exams or summer exams next year to try to improve your grade.

If you are going to appeal your grade, you must let your university know you are appealing. They will then let you know whether they will hold a place for you pending the outcome of an appeal (note that universities are not obliged to hold a place for you; this is at their discretion).

What should I do before appealing?

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before appealing, which will be available on the JCQ website by results days. The full JCQ guidance on appeals is available in link two at the bottom of this letter.

We may not be able to offer as much advice and guidance on the likely success of an appeal this summer as we would in normal years, as we have already moderated and quality-assured all the grades ourselves.

What are the two stages of an appeal?

All appeals, on any of the grounds above, must first go through **stage one: centre review**. At this stage, we will check for any administrative errors, and check that our policies and procedures were followed correctly. Our policy has already been approved by the exam boards, so we are only ensuring that we followed this properly.

The outcome of the centre review will be communicated to students when made.

At the centre review stage, if we find that a grade should go up or down, we will ask the exam board to change it. They will then consider this request.



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Following the outcome of a centre review, students may still choose to pursue a **stage two: awarding organisation appeal**. They must fill in the second part of the form below, which we will then send on their behalf to the exam boards. Students and parents cannot send appeals directly to the exam board themselves – it must come from us after the results of the stage one appeal have been communicated.

The outcome of the awarding organisation appeal will be communicated to students when made.

How do I make an appeal?

Following results days, students will be able to meet with a member of the senior leadership team to discuss the reason for an appeal. Y13 students will book appointments during Tuesday 10th August afternoon and Y11 students will book appointments during Friday 13th August. This meeting will ensure students are fully informed of the evidence used to inform their TAG before completing an appeal. Students can either; fill in the first section of the JCQ form online and send it to TAGS@stmca.org.uk or pick up an appeals pack from the front office on results day and return by the deadlines set out below.

What are the deadlines for appeals?

	Priority Appeals (Y13 only)	Non-Priority Appeals
Stage one requests – forms sent to school by	Friday 13 th August 9am	Thursday 2nd September 9am
Centre review aimed to be completed by	End of day Friday 13 th August	End of Friday 3rd September
Stage two requests - forms sent to school by	Friday 20 th August 9am	Friday 10 th September 9am

You know my grades. Why can't you tell me before results day?

We are forbidden from disclosing the Teacher Assessed Grades to any third party, including students and parents, until results days. Any teacher or member of staff who does this is committing exam malpractice.

During the external quality-assurance process taking place in June and July, our submitted TAGs may be moved up or down (although this will always be done through human agency, not by an algorithm).

We only know what a student's conditional offer is if they have chosen to share that information with us. It has not formed part of our objective grading of students. Where we do know this



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information, we must not let students know their submitted TAGs, even if they haven't met the conditions of their offer.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the TAG Website page (link one) sent out in the letter to parents, dated Friday 30th April that includes all evidence used to inform your TAG grades, centre policy and other important documentation. This page may offer further information about the process and all varying levels of quality assurance that have taken place to ensure your TAG is accurate.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Rayner

Link One: [Teacher Assessed Grades 2021 - St Thomas More Catholic Academy \(stmca.org.uk\)](http://stmca.org.uk)

Link Two: [JCQ Appeals-Guidance Summer-2021.pdf](#)