



Joint Council for  
Qualifications<sup>CIC</sup>

## Appeals FAQs, Summer 2024

These FAQs are designed to support the JCQ guide to awarding bodies appeals processes, June 2024, which can be found on the JCQ website. Exam officers, the head of centre, **teaching staff** and other senior leaders within a centre should familiarise themselves with this document.

Produced on behalf of:



©JCQ<sup>CIC</sup> 2024

## What is an appeal?

If, as a centre or private candidate, you think an awarding body has made an error on a review of results (review of marking or moderation) or not applied its procedures consistently, properly or fairly, it's possible to submit an 'appeal'. Please note that if you are unhappy with a result, you first need to submit a review of results and receive the outcome before you can submit an appeal.

## What decisions can be appealed?

It's possible to submit appeals against:

- Results – appeals can only be submitted after a review of results has taken place
- Malpractice decisions
- Decisions about access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration.

Some other administrative decisions, such as cases of missing scripts, can also be reviewed.

## Who can submit an appeal?

Appeals can be submitted by:

- Heads of centre
- Private candidates (or their representative) – A private candidate is a candidate who has not received any tuition at the centre for the subject during the academic year in which the exam series occurs.

In addition, members of staff or **contracted** personnel may appeal against a malpractice decision or sanction directly to the awarding body.

These are referred to as the 'Appellant'.

Unless they're a private candidate, candidates cannot submit appeals directly to the awarding body. If they do, they will not be accepted, which may delay an appeal submission and lead to the deadline being missed.

**Only in the most exceptional circumstances, for example**, permanent centre closure, will an awarding body accept an appeal directly from an internal candidate.

## What is the deadline for submitting an appeal?

Appeals must be made within:

- 30 calendar days of receiving the outcome of a review of results (clerical re-check, review of marking or review of moderation)
- 14 calendar days of receiving a reasonable adjustment or special consideration decision
- 14 calendar days of receiving a malpractice decision.

Requests for a review of other administrative decisions must also be received within 14 calendar days of the original decision.

Awarding bodies will not usually accept appeals after these dates.

## What is the process for appeals?

There is generally a two-stage appeals process:

- Stage One – the preliminary appeal – the case will be reviewed by a member of the awarding body who has not had any previous involvement with or personal interest in the matter.
- Stage Two – the appeal hearing – the case will be considered by a panel which will include at least one independent person.

At each stage, the appeal will either be upheld, not upheld or partially upheld.

An awarding body will send the centre or private candidate an outcome letter for each appeal once a decision has been reached.

## How long will it take for an awarding body to conduct an appeal?

Awarding bodies will process:

- Preliminary appeals (Stage One) within 42 calendar days of receipt of a valid application.
- Appeal hearings (Stage Two) within 70 calendar days of receipt of a valid application.
- Reviews of other administrative decisions within 42 days of receipt of **a valid application.**

Awarding bodies try to process appeals as quickly as they can.

## How can I submit an appeal?

Please check the information provided by the relevant awarding body and follow their process to submit an appeal. In all cases, the appeal should set out the grounds for the appeal clearly and concisely.

## Does a centre have to submit an appeal if a candidate requests it?

A centre may decide not to submit an appeal on behalf of a candidate if the grounds for the appeal are not permitted grounds or where it does not agree there is a sound rationale for the appeal.

The centre should have its own internal appeals process for candidates to appeal any such decisions.

## Do centres have to get consent from candidates before they submit an appeal to the awarding body?

Yes. It is vital a centre has the consent of a candidate before they submit an appeal on a candidate's behalf. The outcome of the appeal could be that the candidate's grade goes down, stays the same or goes up. It is therefore important that the candidate knows this and has consented to the appeal to the awarding body.

Candidate consent is not required for an appeal against a review of moderation. Candidates' marks may be lowered but their published subject grades will not be lowered in the series concerned.

## What should a centre do if they do not agree with the outcome of the appeal?

We hope that the two-stage appeal process provides centres and candidates with confidence in the appeal outcome. However, if a school or college believes an awarding body has not followed its appeal process, it can make an application to the relevant regulator's Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS). Details of EPRS, the types of appeal and the qualifications that are in scope of this service, can be found on the relevant regulator's website.