



## **BHASVIC Appeals Guide**

Enquiries about results for Grade Awarding Summer 2021

July 2021

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### **1. General Principles**

**Headline: Students cannot appeal directly to the Awarding Organisation, they must make their appeal through the college and the college, in turn, must make appeals to Awarding Organisations for the student. A Stage One Centre Review must be completed before a Stage Two Appeal to the Awarding Organisation can be submitted.**

- 1.1. BHASVIC, its teachers and all other staff involved in determining our students' grades have made every effort possible to produce grades which are accurate, error-free, fair to all students and a reasonable exercise in academic judgement. All staff want the best possible outcomes for all our students and grades were determined with values and procedures in place to avoid problems, misunderstandings or disappointments. We hope students are happy with their grades or, if not so happy, that they understand and recognise that their grade is a fair reflection of their progress and learning on their course.
- 1.2. Where a student feels that an error has been made, we would like to explore and resolve this calmly, amicably and swiftly, through efficient and swift procedures, so that the culmination of the student's time at the college ends in harmony, celebration, mutual respect and gratitude for the efforts and professionalism of everyone concerned in the student's education, including the student themselves.
- 1.3. BHASVIC will support students through the processes of a Stage One: Centre Review and Stage Two Appeal to the Awarding Organisation by having:
  - Clear and centralised communications and administrative procedures in place ahead of, on and after the Results Days in August
  - Information accessible through our website about the timings, deadlines and steps required to make decisions about and to submit appeals
  - Specialised staff available to provide advice where relevant and to handle appeals
  - Evidence of the college's assessment of students for all relevant stakeholders, including students, college staff and Awarding Organisations
- 1.4. Awarding Organisations will not accept appeals directly from students, parents or carers - these will not be processed and will need to be re-submitted via the college. BHASVIC must process all appeals that are requested by its students, including private candidates. Failure to do so could constitute malpractice and Awarding Organisations are required to follow up on such cases.
- 1.5. Appeals must be made sequentially, whereby a Stage One: Centre Review must have been completed before a Stage Two Appeal to the Awarding Organisation can be submitted.
- 1.6. BHASVIC aims to ensure that a Stage One: Centre Review can be conducted as swiftly as is

possible, to avoid the administrative error checking nature of these appeals delaying the application for a Stage Two Appeal to the Awarding Organisation to be submitted, if it is requested. Therefore, administrative errors will be checked by the college prior to Results Day and any errors identified will be submitted to the Awarding Organisation for correction.

## 2. The three main stages to a grade appeal

**Assessment Record Enquiry** – a copy of the marks for assessment evidence used to determine your grades, along with an explanation of the assessments, their weightings and (where relevant) notes acknowledging special or mitigating circumstances that were taken into account by your teacher when determining your grade.

You will need this information to inform any decisions about the next two stages of an appeal.

**Stage One: Centre Review** – an error check with the college (you need to acknowledge that you understand that your grade may be lowered or raised and give consent to the grade change to make a Stage One Appeal).

**Stage Two: Appeal to Awarding Organisation** – a review of data errors, marks or assessment evidence (you need to acknowledge that you understand that your grade may be lowered or raised and give consent to the grade change to make a Stage One Appeal).

## 3. THIS SECTION IS NO LONGER RELEVANT AS IT IS IN THE PAST **Raising queries about grades or their determination before the end of term (up to Tuesday 13 July)**

**Headline: All queries need to be processed centrally by emailing [results2021@bhasvic.ac.uk](mailto:results2021@bhasvic.ac.uk) – teachers and other staff cannot respond to queries they receive.**

- 3.1. Grades have now been determined and submitted to the Awarding Organisations by teachers and where relevant other staff from Additional Learning Support, Tutors, Guidance and Student Services.
- 3.2. This means that students, parents, carers and other stakeholders cannot discuss or raise queries directly with those staff and communications about grading must be processed centrally by the college's Curriculum and Quality Team, comprising Heads of Faculty and the Deputy Principal. This is to avoid any misunderstandings or inadvertent breaches of grade awarding policy.
- 3.3. Additional information may be provided to a student's Guidance Manager that may be relevant to the determination of grades, if this information is new and has not been previously disclosed, but the Guidance Manager will not be able to discuss the implications of this information until after results have been released by Awarding Organisations. A record will be kept of all checks and be provided to the relevant Awarding Organisation upon its request in the event of a Stage Two Appeal.
- 3.4. If you want to communicate with any member of staff about your grades (a teacher, for example) then this must happen through the central process. Any communication directly to that member of staff will go unanswered and may cause you delays in having your enquiry resolved.
- 3.5. **In the Summer Holidays and before Results Day (Wednesday 14 July to Monday 9 August):** there will not be staffing available to respond to queries – we ask that you raise these as part of the Results Day Help Desk (see below).

## 4. Raising queries on and after Results Day (from Tuesday 10 August)

**Headline: All queries need to be raised via the central BHASVIC Help Desk – communications sent to teachers, Heads of Department or other staff may receive no response and may also cause deadlines to be missed by the student. When the Help Desk is closed [probably Tuesday 17 August] you will be directed from the FAQs webpage to specific links, depending on your query.**

- 4.1. BHASVIC will have a full complement of staff available to support those students who need help about their results and/or their progression.

- 4.2. All queries about results must be raised and dealt with through the centralised Results Day Help Desk – teachers, tutors and other staff will not deal with or respond to queries raised directly with them that are outside of the Help Desk, via other forms of communication, such as email, telephone, Teams messages etc – whether from students, parents. Carers or schools. Any communications made outside of the Help Desk process run the risk of not being seen, which may cause delays in any application for appeals or the missing of deadlines for these.
- 4.3. BHASVIC will communicate to the student that an appeal has been submitted and the outcomes, including if an Awarding Organisation raises or lowers the student’s grade.

## 5. Assessment Record Enquiry

**Headline: To help students who believe there may have been a grading error, the Assessment Record enables you to check relevant data we used to determine your grade. You do not have to request your Assessment Record before submitting a Stage One: Centre Review.**

- 5.1. Students must submit Assessment Record Enquiries by:
  - **Thursday 12 August 2021 – Priority Deadline** (for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice – missing this deadline may lead to appeals not being completed in time for a university to hold a place open pending an appeal outcome).
  - **Friday 27 August 2021 – Non-priority Deadline** (in all other cases).
- 5.2. If a student believes they have been awarded the wrong grade, they may request their **Assessment Record**. BHASVIC will provide this to help a student with their decisions about whether to request a Centre Review or a subsequent Stage Two Appeal.
- 5.3. No grade change will occur as a consequence of requesting your Assessment Record.
- 5.4. Due to the demands of Results Day, we ask our students to only request their Assessment Record if they feel that an error may have been made in determining their grades. This will enable the college to focus on the students who most need support with their grades, in particular priority enquiries due to university or college places dependent on appeals outcomes.
- 5.5. The **Assessment Record** will include all the evidence of student work (On-Course Assessments, Coursework and End-Point Assessments) their weightings and the student’s marks used to determine their grade, as well as a note of any mitigating or extenuating personal circumstances considered by the teacher when determining the grade. An explanation of the evidence will accompany record.
- 5.6. If you are concerned about time and simply want the college to check for administrative or procedural errors, you can miss this step and go straight to submitting a Stage One: Centre Review.

## 6. Stage One: Centre Review

**Headline: This is a checking exercise to identify and resolve administrative errors – it is not a review of marking, grading or selection of assessment evidence (which only Awarding Organisations can do, at Stage Two).**

- 6.1. Students must submit Stage One Appeals by:
  - **Monday 16 August 2021 – Priority Deadline** (for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice – missing this deadline may lead to appeals not being completed in time for a university to hold a place open pending an appeal outcome).
  - **Friday 3 September 2021 – Non-priority Deadline** (in all other cases).
- 6.2. Missing these deadlines may mean that the college will not be able to meet the deadlines to submit Stage One Appeals outcomes to Awarding Organisations (such as administrative corrections or Stage Two Appeals), should they be needed.

- 6.3. The Centre Review is a check on whether an administrative or procedural error has been made. BHASVIC cannot review its academic judgements as part of a Stage One Appeal.
- 6.4. The outcome of a Stage One: Centre Review may be that the grade is raised, stays the same or is lowered, depending on the impact of the error or failure.
- 6.5. A Stage One Centre Review can only be initiated by completing the [on-line form](#) located on the FAQ page of the website.
- 6.6. By submitting a request for a Stage One: Centre Review, the students must acknowledge an understanding that the grade may be lowered and give consent to a change in their grade, whether that is raised or lowered.
- 6.7. Where an internal administrative error identifies that a student's grade was too high and should be lowered, the college, under GDPR regulations and a duty to ensure accurate data is held and communicated about its students as data subjects, **will** submit an error correction request to the Awarding Organisation with a rationale for the grade to be lowered. The rationale will include information about any adverse effect that a decision to lower a grade would have on the student, for example if they have been accepted in a further or higher education establishment based on the higher grade. It will then be a judgement by the Awarding Organisation as to whether to lower the grade or not.
- 6.8. A student may subsequently decide they wish to withdraw an appeal but can only do so as long as no finding has been made. A Stage One: Centre Review cannot be withdrawn once a finding has been made (for example, if the finding shows the grade is lower than the grade awarded).
- 6.9. The grounds on which to request a Stage One: Centre Review are that BHASVIC has:
- 6.8.1. Failed to follow its procedures properly or consistently in arriving at that result, for example:
- a) the existence and consideration of mitigating circumstances at the time of an assessment
  - b) the provision of agreed access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for an assessment
  - c) the process for determining and quality assuring grades such as internal standardisation; authentication of student work
- NB:** Please refer to [BHASVIC Policy - Determining Grades in Summer 2021](#); JCQ's [Guidance on the Determination of Grades for A AS Levels and GCSEs Summer 2021](#); JCQ's [Special Consideration – Summer 2021](#)
- 6.8.2. Made an administrative error in relation to the result.
- If the issue raised by the student has been addressed by the checks carried out prior to Results Day, BHASVIC will not repeat this check and records will be provided to Awarding Organisations where necessary.
  - In cases where a student raises an issue that hasn't been considered in checks that were conducted in advance of Results Day, then this new issue will need to be considered for the Centre Review to be completed.
- 6.10. If BHASVIC identifies an error with the grade it submitted to the Awarding Organisation, the college must submit a revised grade to the Awarding Organisation **not** to the student; the submission will include a rationale for the grade change. The error correction request must be signed off by the Head of Centre or a designated member of the senior leadership team. If the Awarding Organisation is satisfied with the rationale presented by the college and it considers it is appropriate to correct the result, it will issue a revised grade to BHASVIC, and we will in turn communicate this to the student.
- 6.11. The resulting outcome may be that the grade is raised, stays the same or is lowered, depending on the impact of the error or failure.
- 6.12. In cases where BHASVIC considers that there has been a procedural failure or administrative error,

the college must decide whether this affected the grade submitted to the Awarding Organisation. It is possible for a procedural failure or an administrative error to be identified but for this not to have had any impact on the grade awarded. In this case the outcome of the review would be that the grade stays the same and this will be reported to the student by the college, instead of being reported to the Awarding Organisation.

- 6.13. It is also possible for a procedural failure or an administrative error to be identified at the review which, when rectified, leads to a lowering of the grade. In such cases, the student who has submitted the review will already have consented to their grade being lowered as a possible outcome and the college will submit a request to lower the grade to the relevant Awarding Organisation.
- 6.14. BHASVIC must keep a record of all review applications and their outcomes and will provide this record to an Awarding Organisation, should a Stage Two Appeal subsequently be submitted to them.
- 6.15. A Centre Review may highlight other students who have an incorrect grade who have not submitted an appeal. These students will not have consented to having their grades lowered. If the college finds that a student who has not requested a Centre Review has received a grade which is too high, we will consider the adverse impact that lowering the grade may have on the student concerned before deciding whether to submit a request to the Awarding Organisation that the grade be lowered. The college may determine that the benefit of correcting the incorrect result is outweighed by the adverse impact on the student (for example, there is just one grade difference and the student has accepted and prepared for a place at a university which requires the incorrect grade). Where a grade error is two or more grades in difference, the case will be reviewed by the Deputy Principal who will consult with the student to check their circumstances, as the college still has a duty of care to support the student in their progression and sustained success into continued study or employment. In every case, and under GDPR rules, the college will inform the student of these data errors, regardless of any other actions that are or are not taken.
- 6.16. Whether or not a procedural or administrative failure was found, and whether or not the grade changed as a result, all students have the right to submit a Stage Two Appeal to the Awarding Organisation as the next stage in the process.

## 7. Stage Two: Appeal to the Awarding Organisation

**Headline: Stage Two Appeals can only be submitted to the Awarding Organisations after a Stage One: Centre Review has been completed. Stage Two Appeals are the only stage where a review of marking or selection of assessment evidence can be conducted and this review can only be done by the Awarding Organisation not by the college.**

### Submitting an appeal

- 7.1. All requests for a Stage Two Appeal must be received by the Awarding Organisation by:
  - **Monday 23 August 2021 – Priority Deadline** (for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice – missing this deadline may lead to appeals not being completed in time for a university to hold a place open pending an appeal outcome).
  - **Friday 17 September 2021 – Non-priority Deadline** (in all other cases).
- 7.2. We advise that you submit a priority Stage Two appeal to BHASVIC by **Friday 20 August**, to enable the college time to then process and submit the appeal to the awarding organisation by their priority deadline.
- 7.3. You will receive details about the method to submit a Stage Two Appeal with the outcome of your Stage One Appeal.
- 7.4. Priority appeals that aren't submitted to the Awarding Organisation by 23 August 2021 will still be treated as a priority and Awarding Organisations will endeavour to process them as promptly as possible. There is, however, a risk they may not be completed in time for those with a higher education place which is dependent on the outcome of the appeal.

- 7.5. The Awarding Organisations will aim to complete Stage Two Appeals within 42 calendar days of the receipt of the application. Due to the nature of appeals this year, Awarding Organisations may require additional input from BHASVIC, and it may not always be possible to meet this target.
- 7.6. Any student, including a Private Candidate, may submit a request for a Stage Two Appeal to the Awarding Organisation but only after they have received the outcome of a Stage One: Centre Review. Any Stage Two Appeals submitted where this has not happened, will be rejected by the Awarding Organisation and a new Stage Two Appeal will need to be resubmitted once the Stage One: Review has been completed. Where the college does not believe that an error has been made but a student believes that an error persists, a student may ask BHASVIC to submit a Stage Two Appeal to the Awarding Organisation on their behalf. The Stage One: Centre Review outcome and BHASVIC's own findings when considering the student's Stage One Appeal must be included with the Stage Two Appeal submission.

### Grounds for Appeal

- 7.7. The grounds for a Stage Two Appeal, and the information the Awarding Organisation will require when a student appeal is submitted include:
- what they consider the college failed to do, why that was a failure to follow the college's procedures (including, where relevant, a Stage One: Centre Review), and why that failure was important to the determination of the grade
  - in what way they consider the Awarding Organisation made an administrative error, and what difference it made to the determination of the grade
  - in what way they consider there was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the way that the grade has been determined
  - in what way they consider there was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the selection of evidence used to determine the grade
- 7.8. Requests for appeals on the grounds of academic judgement (unreasonableness) will only be considered by Awarding Organisations at Stage Two and not by BHASVIC at Stage One: Centre Review.
- 7.9. Where the student submits an appeal on more than one ground (e.g. the Awarding Organisation is asked to review both procedures and the exercise of academic judgement), the appeal process is likely to take longer. This could be an important consideration for students who urgently need the outcome of their appeal.

### The Awarding Organisation's Review of the Appeal

- 7.10. All Stage Two Appeals will only be accepted by the Awarding Organisation where the following are included:
- Confirmation that the student understands this and consents to the final grade being raised, staying the same or being lowered as the result of an appeal
  - Relevant accompanying evidence including, and where relevant, an explanation and supporting evidence for appeals made on the grounds of procedural errors in relation to mitigating or special circumstances (known as Extenuating Personal Circumstances at BHASVIC) or exam access arrangements.
- 7.11. Appeals made on the grounds of procedural error will be evaluated by a staff member or an independent reviewer appointed by the Awarding Organisation.
- 7.12. The appeal will be based on the available evidence. Where not all evidence or records have been retained, an Awarding Organisation will consider the available evidence when determining the outcome of the appeal. This may affect the extent to which the Awarding Organisation can review the college's decision. Where no evidence has been retained (or has been lost due to an unforeseen situation) the Awarding Organisation may need to determine the outcome of the appeal solely on the marks/grades on which the grade was determined.
- 7.13. Evidence of a student's performance **not used** to determine grades, could still be required for the appeals process in exceptional cases where the Awarding Organisation deems the selection of

evidence to have been unreasonable.

- 7.14. If a student appeals because they believe BHASVIC made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in selecting the evidence used, alternative evidence may need to be submitted to an Awarding Organisation
- 7.15. Where an appeal is made on the grounds of an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement (either in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/ or the determination of that grade from the evidence), the Awarding Organisation will conduct a review.
- 7.16. As the determined grade is holistic in nature, the Awarding Organisation's reviewer will take a similarly holistic approach to their decision-making. The purpose of the review is not to review the marking of individual assessments. The starting point of the review is whether the grade awarded was reasonable. The reviewer will not consider whether they would have given an alternative grade or whether an alternative mark or grade put forward as part of the appeal could also reasonably have been given.
- 7.17. There may be a difference of opinion as to the assessed grade without there being an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement. The reviewer will only conclude that there has been an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement by BHASVIC if the determined grade was clearly wrong (i.e. there was no basis upon which the grade could reasonably have been given).
- 7.18. Where the appeal concerns the selection of evidence, the academic decision will be considered in the context of the [BHASVIC Policy - Determining Grades in Summer 2021](#) and procedures, which sets out a starting point that the same evidence will be used for all students in a cohort. The Awarding Organisation will review whether an academic decision to depart from, or not to depart from, the starting point in respect of the particular student was unreasonable.

### **Stage Two Appeal Outcomes**

- 7.19. Where the Awarding Organisation identifies a procedural error or finds alternative evidence should have been included in the range of evidence and that this may have impacted the final grade, they will report these findings to the college and direct us to review the grade. BHASVIC must then inform the Awarding Organisation if it believes there should be a change to the grade. An Awarding Organisation may impose a change to the grade.
- 7.20. As a result of the appeal, the case will either be rejected (disallowed) or upheld (allowed) in whole or in part. The fact that an appeal has been upheld (allowed) will not necessarily result in a grade change for the student.
- 7.21. Depending on the grounds of the appeal, the Awarding Organisation will consider:
  - whether the grade reflects an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement
  - and/or whether the college followed its procedures properly and consistently in arriving at the student's result **or in conducting its review**
  - and/or whether the Awarding Organisation made an administrative error.
- 7.22. It is possible that the Awarding Organisation could identify that the grade awarded was not correct on grounds other than the grounds upon which the appeal was submitted. Where this is the case, the Awarding Organisation will take the appropriate action to correct the grade (for example, the student may appeal for their grade to be raised on the basis of the college's failure to follow its procedures, but the Awarding Organisation determines that the grade awarded was too high based on unreasonable academic judgement).

## **8. Appealing to the Exam Procedures Review Service**

**Headline: If you dispute the outcomes of an appeal to the Awarding Organisation, this is your next option.**

Following the conclusion of the Awarding Organisation's Stage Two Appeal process, a student who remains concerned their grade was incorrect may be able to apply for a procedural review to the Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) from the relevant regulator. There are EPRS processes for Ofqual

(England) and Qualification Wales. Ofqual and JCQ will provide further details about the EPRS processes for summer 2021 ready for Results Days in August.