| **Title** | **Examination Appeals Policy** |
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| **Summary** | This policy explains the operation of our examination appeals system with clear guidelines for all. |
| **Purpose** | To ensure that the procedures examination appeals is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of our students |
| **Operational Date** | September 2024 |
| **Frequency of Review** | Every year |
| **Date last Reviewed and Approved by Board of Governors** | February 2024 |



**Examination Appeals Policy**

**Rationale**

Newry High School is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff mark candidates’ work this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body’s specification and subject-specific associated documents. Candidates’ work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, and who have been trained in this activity. Newry High School is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where a number of subject teachers are involved in marking candidates’ work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking.

**Aims**

The purpose of this examinations appeals policy is to ensure that the management of appeals is conducted efficiently and in the best interest of our students and to ensure the operation of an efficient appeal system with clear guidelines for all relevant stakeholders.

This policy is written in accordance with the following Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance documents:

* JCQ General Regulations for approved centres <http://www.jcq.org.uk/examsoffice/general-regulations>
* JCQ Post-results services <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/post-resultsservices>
* JCQ A guide to the awarding bodies’ appeals processes <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals>
* Ofqual GCSE, GCE, Principal Learning and Project Code of Practice

The following School policies are also relevant:

* Examination policy
* Complaints policy
* Controlled Assessment policy
* SEN policy
* Charging policy
* BTEC procedures and policies document

**Complaints in relation to examinations**

If a candidate (or their parent/carer) has a general concern or complaint about the centre’s delivery or administration of a qualification they are following, Newry High School encourages them to try to resolve this informally in the first instance. A concern should be made in person, by telephone or in writing to the head of centre. If a concern / complaint fails to be resolved informally, the candidate (or their parent/carer) is then at liberty to make a formal complaint.

Making a formal complaint

The school requires complaints to be made in writing to the principal / head of centre and should provide as much information as possible including;

* name and contact details
* what the complaint is about
* what has already been done to try to resolve it and
* what you would like the school to do to resolve the complaint.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days. The principal / head of centre will then further investigate or appoint a member of the senior leadership team who is not involved in the grounds for complaint and has no personal interest in the outcome to investigate the complaint and report on the findings and conclusion. A response will normally be made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the principal and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

If the complainant is unhappy with the outcome they should write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors *(care of the school and marked ‘private and confidential’)* in order to appeal the initial decision. The Chairperson will convene a committee to review the complaint. The complainant must provide as much detail as possible as indicated above. The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a final response normally made within 20 school working days from date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

Acceptable grounds for appeal Appeals will only be deemed valid when based on procedural irregularity in terms of the conduct of the examination or determination of the result. Appeals will be deemed invalid and not upheld if based purely on the following candidate’s lack of awareness of exam regulations and procedures. A candidate (or his/her/parent/carer) may make a complaint about examinations on the grounds below:

* The taking of an assessment, which contributes to the final grade of the qualification not conducted according to the JCQ/awarding body instructions
* The marking of an internal assessment, which contributes to the final grade of the qualification, not undertaken according to the requirements of the awarding body (complainant should refer to the centre’s internal appeals procedure)
* Centre fails to adhere to its internal appeals procedure
* Exam information not appropriately adapted for a disabled candidate to access it
* Adapted equipment put in place failed during exam/assessment
* Approved access arrangement(s) not put in place at the time of an exam/assessment
* Candidate not entered/entered late (incurring a late entry fee) for a required exam/assessment
* Candidate entered for a wrong exam/assessment
* Inadequate invigilation in exam room
* Failure to conduct exam according to the regulations
* Alleged, suspected or actual malpractice incident not investigated/reported
* Candidate not having access to an appropriate member of staff after the publication of results to discuss/make decision on the submission of an enquiry
* Candidate (or parent/carer) unhappy with a result (complainant to refer via exams officer to awarding body post-results services) or with a centre decision not to support a clerical check, a review of marking, a review of moderation or an appeal (complainant to refer to the centre’s internal appeals procedure)

Further information can be obtained from:

* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/controlled-assessments>
* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/coursework>
* <https://www.gov.uk/appeal-exam-result>
* <http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-system/the-appeals-process>

**Enquiries or appeals for vocational qualifications**

As part of BTEC quality assurance procedure and the equality of opportunity of each learner, have the right to appeal against the grade they have been awarded for submitted BTEC coursework. However, before an appeal is made the student should raise this informally with the assessor (the teacher who marked the work) for consideration.

An enquiry or appeal concerning an individual learner must be made through the learner’s centre and submitted by the Vocational Coordinator. The Vocational Coordinator is required to submit the appeal on the behalf of the learner to Pearson.

Pearson expects most enquiries or appeals from individual learners to be resolved within the centre and will only consider an individual learner’s enquiry or appeal after the centre’s internal enquiries or appeals procedures have been fully utilised.

Further details – see BTEC policies & procedures & BTEC student handbook

**Appeals against Externally Assessed Marks (Enquiry about Results – EAR)**

Following the issue of results, the general qualification awarding bodies offer post results. Each Awarding Body publishes procedures for appeals against its decisions, details of which are available on their websites (under Post Results Services); full details of these services, internal deadlines for requesting a service and fees charged will also be provided by the exams officer.

Where a concern is expressed that a particular result may not be accurate, the centre will look at the marks awarded for each component part of the qualification alongside any mark schemes, relevant result reports, grade boundary information etc. when made available by the awarding body to determine if the centre supports any concerns.

The service, enquiries about results (EARs), may be requested by centre staff or candidates (or their parents/carers) if there are reasonable grounds for believing there has been an error in marking. Where a student is unhappy with the mark/grade awarded for a particular examination unit a clerical check or re-mark may be requested from the awarding body via the Examination Officer. The decision as to whether to support such an enquiry will be made on the basis of several factors, including knowledge of the exam system and professional judgement. The students will be required to acknowledge that their marks and subject grades may be confirmed, raised or lowered following a review of marking.

Awarding bodies will only accept applications for reviews of marking from centres and not from candidates or their parents, therefore appropriate staff are accessible to candidates immediately after the publication of results so that results may be discussed and decisions made on the submission of enquiries. Written candidate consent (informed consent via candidate email is acceptable) is required in all cases before a request for an EAR service 1 or 2 is submitted to the awarding body.

The awarding bodies offer the following enquiry about results services:

Service 1 (Clerical re-check). This service will include the following checks:

* that all parts of the script have been marked;
* the totalling of marks; o the recording of marks.

The outcome of the re-check will be reported along with a statement of the total marks awarded for each unit, or component, included in the enquiry. Only Service 1 clerical re-checks can be requested for objective tests (multiple choice tests).

Service 2 (Review of marking).

This is a post-results review of the original marking to ensure that the agreed mark scheme has been applied correctly. It is not a re-marking of the candidate’s script. The service is available for externally assessed components of both unitised and linear specifications and will include:

* the clerical re-checks detailed in Service 1;
* a review of marking as described above.

Priority Service 2 (Review of marking).

This is a priority post-results review of the original marking to ensure that the agreed mark scheme has been applied correctly. It is not a re-marking of the candidate’s script. This service is only available if a GCE A-level candidate’s place in higher education is dependent on the outcome.

The outcome of each enquiry will be confirmed by the respective awarding body and will be shared with the candidates. The awarding body will provide a reason for the decision of a review of marking. If the mark has changed the reason will either be that an administrative error has occurred or there was a marking error. If there is a disparity of two qualification grades or more between the original marker and the reviewer, the awarding body will automatically provide the centre with specific details.

Where a grade changes and a certificate has previously been issued, once the centre has returned the original certificate to the awarding body a replacement will be issued showing the revised grade. Where there has been a reduction in marks or a downgrade, the request cannot be revoked and the original mark or grade cannot be reinstated.

Further actions

If the Newry High School remains dissatisfied after receiving the outcome of an enquiry about results, it will follow the subsequent appeals process, available on the JCQ website http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals. This site also provides full details of the awarding bodies’ appeals processes and the associated timescales.

Appeals can only be submitted after the outcome of an enquiry about results has been reported to the centre. Only the head of centre can submit an appeal to the relevant awarding body. Appeals must be made in writing and clearly state the grounds for appeal. Awarding bodies may charge a fee for appeals. This fee will be refunded if the appeal is upheld.

NB An appeal against a moderation decision cannot be made on behalf of an individual candidate.

**Appeals procedure against centre decisions not to support an enquiry about results.**

If a query is raised about a particular examination result, the Examinations Officer, teaching staff and Head of Centre will investigate the feasibility of requesting an enquiry at the centre’s expense. When Newry High School does not uphold a request from a candidate, the candidate may pay the appropriate fee, and a request will be made to the awarding body on the candidate’s behalf.

In deciding whether to support an appeal, the Newry High School will take account of all relevant factors and afford candidates or their parents/carers a reasonable opportunity to express their views. If the candidate (or their parent/carer) believes there are grounds to appeal against the centre’s decision not to support an enquiry, a formal complaint can be submitted following the procedure above.