



Unity of Purpose  
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24<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear student

### **Re: Concerns and questions about grades**

As you know, this year's GCSE and A level results had to be awarded differently from usual, after exams were unable to go ahead due to Covid-19. Schools and colleges were asked to use their professional experience to make a fair and objective judgement of the grades they believed a student would have achieved had they sat their exams this year, based on work that the student had already done, then to submit these centre-assessed grades (CAGs) to the relevant exam board.

Groups of teachers and leaders in each subject worked together to discuss and agree CAGs for each student. They took into account a wide range of available evidence, including class work, mock exams and other records of student performance.

Within Thomas Deacon Education Trust and its Academies we closely followed Ofqual's guidance on determining CAGs, as we were required to do and the process we undertook, therefore, was as follows:

1. Senior leaders agreed the objective evidence that teachers and subject leaders would use when assessing students.
2. Teachers and subject leaders worked together to propose a CAG for each student in each subject.
3. Senior leaders reviewed all the proposed CAGs, moderating them as instructed by Ofqual.
4. Academy Principals presented the final grades to Trust staff for further scrutiny and moderation.
5. The final agreed CAGs were submitted to the exam boards.

As mentioned above, the CAGs were therefore the Academy and Trust's considered assessment of the grade each student would have been most likely to get if they had taken their exams and completed any non-exam assessment this summer. As the Ofqual guidance linked to above makes clear, these are not the same as:

- age-related grades (usually defined as the grade a student would receive if they took the relevant exam now)
- 'working at' grades (the grade a student is currently working at)
- target grades (often set a little higher than likely to be achieved, to motivate students), or
- (for A levels) predicted grades provided to UCAS in support of university applications

The intention was that the exam boards would moderate the submitted CAGs, to check that schools and colleges had approached this task consistently, before providing students with their final calculated grades. Unfortunately, as you will no doubt be aware, the method and algorithm they used to do this proved problematic and was likely to lead to many grades being unfairly downgraded.

The government therefore made the decision that GCSE and A level students would be awarded whichever was higher for each subject – their CAG or their calculated grade. This is what the grades students received are based on.

## Appeals

The grounds on which students can appeal their grades are fairly limited this year. This document from Ofqual explains the grounds for appeal, and the process that would be followed. Essentially, students are only able to appeal, through their Academy, if they believe there has been an administrative error in communicating their grades.

Students **cannot** challenge their Academy under the appeals process on the centre assessment grades it submitted or their rank order positions.

Students **cannot** appeal because their mock result was higher than the grade they were awarded. Their mock grade will have been taken into account in determining their centre assessment grade.

If you believe your grades were wrong as a result of bias, discrimination, malpractice or maladministration then you should first discuss this directly with their Academy.

**If you wish to raise a concern regarding what you believe to be either an administrative error or malpractice in the first instance you will need to contact Thomas Deacon Education Trust via e-mail at [examinationappeals@TDET.education](mailto:examinationappeals@TDET.education)**  
**Your e-mail should clearly set out the very specific detail of your concerns. This detail should include your full name, the subject(s) and grade(s) you are concerned about and the reason(s) you believe an error or malpractice has occurred.**

**The deadline for this first level of concern is 4<sup>th</sup> September 2020.**

## Resits

Finally, the government has said that there will also be an opportunity for you to resit exams in November. We are waiting for further information from the exam boards about this, and will let students and parents know more as soon as we can.

I hope this has helped to explain in more detail the process Thomas Deacon Education Trust and its Academies used to determine students' grades this year and the process of appeal.

Yours sincerely



Scott Hudson  
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Thomas Deacon Education Trust