

# Teacher Assessed Grades 2021 (16-18 courses): a guide for students as to the TAG and Q-TAG process at ASFC.

## TAGs: An explanation

In January, alongside the announcement of the national lockdown was the news that the way in which grades are to be awarded this summer will be different. Examinations are not going ahead and, instead - across most qualifications (including A Levels, BTECs, GCSEs and other equivalent qualifications offered at ASFC) - the assessments that students would have normally completed are being replaced, either wholly or in part, with Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). Although we started to consider our approach to this from January onwards, it was only in late March that the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) issued thorough guidance to schools and colleges, with further information communicated throughout April and early May. We are now in a position to let our students and parents know the approach we will take regarding TAGs at ASFC. This document outlines the specifics for each qualification type for all our 16-18 courses, and our policy document provides further details of our commitments and processes.

What TAGs are:

- They are an overall, holistic, professional judgement made by your teacher/s of the level you have demonstrably been working at during the course
- They are objective and evidence-based. For all our courses, your teachers have a 'basket of evidence' that they will use to make this judgement. There is information in this document about the 'basket of evidence' for each course type
- They are an assessment of each student against a grade descriptor that provided for each subject by JCQ. The grade descriptor outlines what a 'candidate' (student) knows and can do within each grade. Your teachers' judgements will therefore involve them considering the evidence they have (your assessed work across a wide range of topics from the specification) alongside the expected range/level of skills and knowledge for each grade. The grade your teacher decides upon will be that which they feel best fits the level you have been working at

***'Basket of evidence' refers to the range of evidence that will be used by teachers in making their judgement. Within the basket of evidence, there will be individual pieces of evidence, for example, an essay you were given for Formal Assessment Point 3, or your December mock exam. For a two year course, the basket will be fuller (i.e. there will be more individual pieces of evidence/formal assessment points) than a one year course. So, the 'basket' is ALL the evidence your teachers will consider.***

What TAGs are not:

- They are not your UCAS predicted grade
- They are not your MEG
- They are not a calculated average of all your grades on a course
- They are not based upon an application of exact weightings, although there will be a consideration of the usual 'worth' of a particular element. For example, if an A Level course

would normally be assessed by examination (80%) and Non Examined Assessment/coursework (20%), teachers will broadly consider that the skills and knowledge demonstrated in the examined assessments are more influential. However, as we are not working in numerical marks/UMS, teachers will not be applying exact 'weightings' and will consider the skills and knowledge you demonstrate through your NEA 'in the round'.

- They cannot be a projection of what would have happened if the exam had gone ahead. Teachers are not permitted to give a grade based upon a trajectory. For example, if the past 4 grades achieved by a student were D, C, B and A, the teacher is not permitted to enter a TAG of an A\* by projecting that the student was on a pathway to this grade.
- They are not a judgement of your potential. It is not possible for us to enter a grade that you may be capable of, but that we have no or very little evidence of.
- They are not a judgement of your behaviour, attendance, character or work-rate.

What we can tell you:

- We can tell you what is in the basket of evidence for each qualification type
- We can tell you your individual marks/grades for each individual piece of evidence within the evidence base. For example, your grade in the April Formal Assessment Point, or your grade on a particular BTEC assignment/unit. Where most or all of the assessment comes from NEU/coursework, we are unable to tell you the grade for this as it will also indicate your overall TAG grade.
- Your teachers can tell you about how the TAG process works.
- We can direct you to our Policy; a senior leader can explain to you any aspects that you are not clear on or where you would like more detail.
- We can direct you to the Grade Descriptors provided by JCQ. These give an outline, for each subject, of the knowledge and skills demonstrated by a candidate achieving each grade for that qualification.
- We can assure you that all evidence we are using in our 'baskets of evidence' will be based upon aspects of the specification that we have delivered.
- We can also assure you that any assessments that have taken place before your EAA was in place will not adversely affect your grade. We will take this into account.

What we cannot tell you:

- We cannot tell you the overall Teacher Assessed Grade that we will submit to awarding bodies for you in each of your courses. You will receive this on the stated results day in August.
- We cannot tell you the mark/grade you will need to achieve in any assessments still to come.

***Please do not try to elicit information from your teacher/s, or attempt to influence them in relation to the overall grade they are awarding to you. This is considered to be malpractice and we need to record any incidences of this and report to JCQ/awarding bodies.***

At ASFC, we have prepared for the TAG process in the following ways:

- As required by JCQ, we have produced a policy that outlines our approach to TAGs. This has been sent to JCQ for approval and it is available to you on our website.

- We ensure, through training and supervision, that any teachers who are new to assessing a course (including newly qualified teachers) have prepared fully for this process so that they are judging to the same standards as their team and in-line with awarding body mark schemes/grade boundaries and JCQ grade descriptors.
- We have ensured that all teachers understand fully the published Grade Descriptors for 2021 and that they use these alongside the 'basket of evidence' they have for each student.
- We have ensured that all work that is contained within the 'basket of evidence' reflects what has been taught from the relevant course specification, and that marking/grading of individual pieces of evidence is based upon awarding body standards.
- Where there is more than one teacher of a course, we have ensured that standardisation and moderation processes take place within teams, to ensure consistency of assessment.
- Where there is a sole teacher of a particular course, there is close supervision by their curriculum manager to ensure that awarding body guidelines and schemes (and their JCQ grade descriptors) are applied.
- We have made sure that teachers have received full training in the TAG process, and they are aware of both JCQ rules and the college's policy.
- We have ensured that all those involved in the TAG process have received training in 'Unconscious Bias' to ensure the highest levels of objectivity, fairness and equality.
- We have built-in accountability at all levels. Teachers involved in TAGs and Q-TAGs have a responsibility to ensure that they have read all documentation and attended any relevant training. Heads of Department are responsible for ensuring that the Centre Policy is applied at subject level – they sign off all TAGs for subjects within their department. The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that policies, procedures and training is in place and of a high quality. The Principal, as Head of Centre, signs off all TAGs and Q-TAGs submitted by the college.

## **INFORMATION ON DIFFERENT QUALIFICATION TYPES AT ASFC**

### **GCSE Maths and English**

Teachers will consider the following evidence from this year (2020/21) when deciding upon your Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs):

- A consideration of your grade, marks and strengths shown in the November external examination.
- Your marks/grade in the February Formal Assessment Point (sat remotely).
- Your marks/grade in the April Formal Assessment Point (week beginning 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021).
- Your marks/grade in the May Formal Assessment point (week beginning 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021). This will be a significant assessment as it tests a range of skills and your ability to interpret questions and apply what you know. So, this will be an important piece of evidence for your teachers in arriving at their TAG.
- Your teachers will use this evidence alongside the relevant JCQ Grade Descriptor.

### **A Level courses**

As these are two year courses, you will have completed several assessments and your teachers have a full 'basket of evidence' to consider. There is just one further formal assessment point to come, in

week beginning 17<sup>th</sup> May. This will complete the evidence base that your teachers will consider in deciding upon your final Teacher Assessed Grade.

### About the May assessment point...

- The May formal assessment will be a significant assessment and will be the final one. This will be the length and style/structure of a 'mock' (so, around 2 hours – some subjects may be a little shorter or longer as appropriate) and will again be held in a venue other than your classroom (e.g. sports hall/Lecture Theatre, may include some classrooms).
- The paper you sit will be an exam/exam style paper on material that has been taught and that you have had time to consolidate and revise.
- You can access the results of this assessment once fully marked and moderated. This is likely to be mid-June as these are significant assessments and we will take the time to complete the marking and moderation process thoroughly. However, the work will not be returned to you as we need to retain it for evidence.
- Any EAA you are entitled to will be put into place.

**Once you have sat this May final assessment, your teachers will have their full basket of evidence. For all A Level courses (with the exception of Art and Design A Levels, and A Level Drama and Theatre which are outlined separately), the basket of evidence/evidence base that will be considered by teachers is outlined below.**

### The 'basket of evidence' for A Level courses:

By the end of the two-year A Level programme, there will have been 9 Formal Assessment Points, excluding Formal Assessment 1 which took place very early in the A1 year. We will exclude this from the basket of evidence as our first assessment is an end-of-induction test held after just a few weeks of A Level study.

All A1 and A2 assessments will be included in the basket of evidence, as this will ensure that teachers consider all aspects of the specification taught. However, your A2 work best reflects the level you are working at, so greater attention will be given to this over A1 work. A2 assessments are more synoptic and assess skills and knowledge from both the A1 and A2 year, so again they provide a more accurate indication of a student's working level. Within your A2 work, greater consideration will be given to the assessments that have taken place with the highest control levels and test your knowledge and skills in a broader range of content and AOs. As such, the December 2020 mock, April 2021 FAP and May 2021 assessments will have greater significance.

Your teachers will use this evidence alongside the relevant JCQ Grade Descriptor for the appropriate subject.

Here is a summary in grid form of the dates and types of formal assessments that teachers will consider in deciding upon your TAG:

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Assessment description</b>
Formal Assessment Point 2	November 2019	In-class assessment (A1)
Formal Assessment Point 3	January 2020	In-class assessment (A1)
Formal Assessment Point 4	March 2020	In-class assessment (A1)
Formal Assessment Point 5	October 2020	In-class assessment (A2)
Formal Assessment Point 6	November 2020	In-class assessment (A2)
Formal Assessment Point 7	December 2020	Mock examination (A2) *Will carry greater significance (alongside the May 2021 assessment) than other assessments
Formal Assessment Point 8	February 2021	'Lockdown' assessment carried out remotely during week of re-arranged timetable (A2)
Formal Assessment Point 9	April 2021	Formal assessment run centrally. Sports Hall – no lessons during this week (A2).
Formal Assessment Point 10	May 2021	Final A Level assessment (A2) *Will carry greater significance, (alongside the December assessment) than other assessments
<p><b>NEA (coursework) will be considered for A Levels where this would normally be part of the final grade.</b></p> <p><b>NEA grades will be made available to students during week beginning 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021.</b></p>		

So, in summary:

- All assessments from your two year A Level course will be considered in the basket of evidence by your teachers.
- However, A2 work will be of particular importance, for two reasons. Firstly, A2 assessments provide teachers with a more current picture of your level of achievement. A Levels usually build to a terminal examination at the end, where students are usually at the peak of their knowledge and skill level. A greater focus on A2 work reflects this. Secondly, they are more likely to be 'synoptic' than A1 assessments (some will have drawn upon learning from over the two years). The December 2020 and May 2021 assessments are longer and assess against a wider range of content and skills than other assessments. They have also taken place with high control levels (i.e. the cohort sits the assessment together). Therefore, these two assessments will be particularly significant, along with the April 2021 assessment that was also carried out towards the end of the course under a high level of control.

- Your teachers will match this evidence of your level of work with the JCQ Grade Descriptors and awarding body guidance to align you with the most appropriate grade in that subject.

## A Level Basket of Evidence

### Most Significant Assessments

- Covers a range of topics
- May be synoptic ( involving making links between topics)
- High level of control / reliability
- The May assessment reflects recent level of work

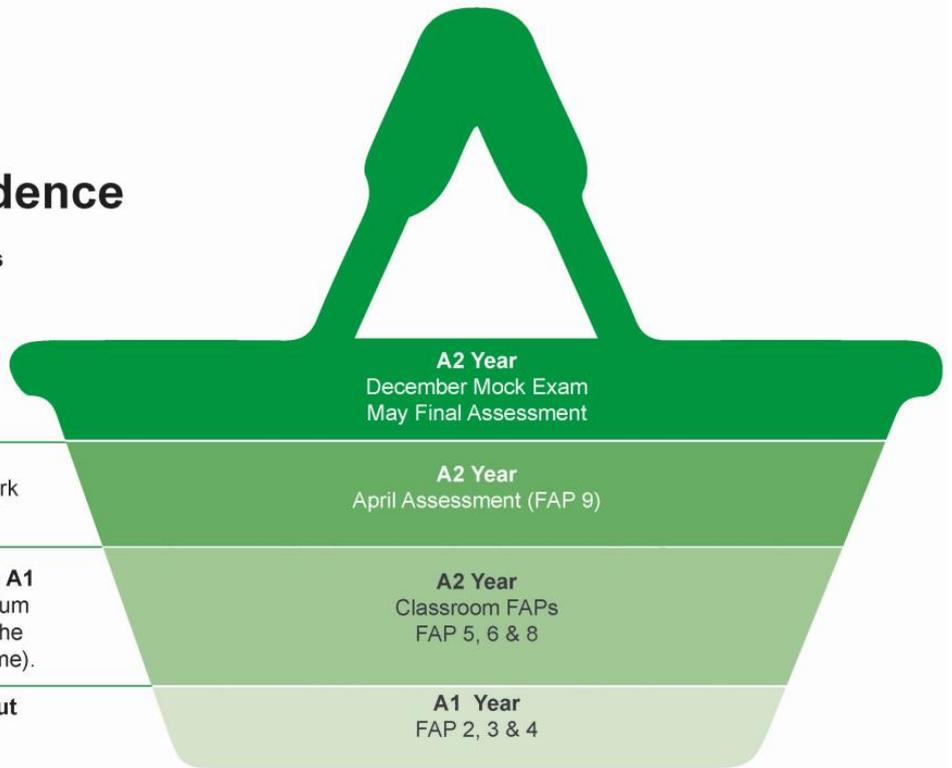
### More Significant

- Reflection of recent level of work
- High level of control / reliability

### A2 work more significant than A1

These assessments are of medium control/ reliability as they sat in the classroom or remotely (from home).

### A1 work included in basket, but less significant than A2 work.



## Art and Design A Level subjects

Students continued to work on their portfolios until WB 26th April when teachers moved into the Art Consolidation Period to consolidate and enhance skills in readiness for course completion and progression. These activities will take three weeks (until Friday 14th May), during which time students may continue to work privately on portfolios. Final portfolios need to be with teachers by 4pm on Monday 24th May.

Teacher Assessed Grades for Art and Design subjects will be arrived at through a holistic review of your final portfolio submission and the work you have produced over two years to support your final pieces. Teachers will take account of your ongoing progress in A1 and A2 Formal Assessment Points as these reflect your skills and achievements over time. Your teachers will use this evidence alongside the relevant JCQ Grade Descriptor.

You will be able to see your FAP grades in Cedar, but your teachers are unable to tell you the grades they are awarding for your portfolio, as this would essentially be telling you your TAG.

## A Level Drama and Theatre

Teachers will make sure all of the assessment objectives and the three components on the drama and theatre specification are covered in full. The consideration for each component remains the same as in the specification and we will align this evidence with the JCQ Grade Descriptor for this subject.

To ensure fairness we will complete the practical component 2, for all of our students who are stronger on the practical performance elements than the written academic elements.

Teaching for components 1 and 3 is complete. Teaching and assessment of component 2 will be completed by the end of April, leaving time for revision for the final written assessment.

	Assessment	Date	Assessment Description	% of Specification
<b>Component 1: Devising</b>	Formal Assessment Point 8	February 2021 A2	Monologues - practical performance, 25% of NEA	40%
	NEA	Oct 2020 - March 2021 A2	Written portfolio, 75% of NEA	
<b>Component 2: Text in Performance</b>	Formal Assessment Point 9	April 2021 A2	Duologues - practical performance	20%
<b>Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice</b>	Formal Assessment Point 2	November 2019 A1	Machinal - Episode 1	40%
	Formal Assessment Point 3	January 2020 A1	Machinal – Episode 7	

	Assessment	Date	Assessment Description	% of Specification
	Formal Assessment Point 4	March 2020 A1	Lysistrata – full question	
	Formal Assessment Point 5	October 2020 A2	Live Theatre - Frankenstein	
	Formal Assessment Point 7	December 2020 A2	Full paper – mock exam	
	Formal Assessment Point 10	May 2021 A2	Constructed paper – questions on Machinal and Live Theatre (no questions on Lysistrata)	

- Greater consideration will be given to FA 7 and FA 10 in component 3
- FA 6 will not be counted as it was a practice question for the portfolio
- The teaching and assessment of Lysistrata was covered in A1 and FA 4 and FA 7

## Criminology

### A1

In order to determine your Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) for Criminology, your teachers will consider the following evidence:

Assessment	Date
Formal Assessment Point 1	October 2020
Formal Assessment Point 2	November 2020
Formal Assessment Point 3	February 2021 (sat remotely)
A1 Significant Assessment: Exam style assessment	April 2021 This is a significant assessment as it is a full, past exam paper. It will show your teachers your ability to interpret information and synthesise/apply your knowledge. Therefore, this piece will have a significant influence on your TAG.
A1 Controlled Assessment (adjusted from 8 to 4 hours)	May 2021 This is a significant assessment in that it brings together many aspects of the course and shows that application of knowledge. Therefore, this piece will have a significant influence on your TAG.

You will be able to access your FAP grades on Cedar, but you will not find out your Controlled Assessment grades until results day.

## A2

In order to determine your Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) for Criminology, your teachers will consider the following evidence:

Assessment	Date	Comments
A2 Formal Assessment 1	October 2020	
A2 Formal Assessment 2	November 2020	
A2 Formal Assessment 3	February 2021	
A2 Significant Assessment: Exam style assessment.	April 2021	This is a significant assessment as it is a full, past exam paper. It will show your teachers your ability to interpret information and synthesise/apply your knowledge. Therefore, this piece will have a significant influence on your TAG
A2 Controlled Assessment (4 hours).	May 2021	This is a significant assessment in that it brings together many aspects of the course and shows that application of knowledge. Therefore, this piece will have a significant influence on your TAG.
<p><b>A1 work</b> As the majority of A1 assessment points involved short knowledge-based tasks, these will not be included in the TAG for this course. The majority of students chose not to sit the Autumn exam, so this will not be considered across the board. A student's A1 Controlled Assessment grade will be considered if the grade achieved is significantly higher than the student's A2 achievements; so, your A1 work may increase your TAG but we will not lower any student's A2 TAG because of a lower A1 grade.</p>		

You will be able to access your FAP grades on Cedar, but you will not find out your Controlled Assessment grades until results day.

## Core Maths

Core Maths is one year in duration, and will be certificated in August 2021. Students on this course will therefore receive Teacher Assessed Grades this summer. In order to arrive at your TAG for this course, your teachers will take into account the following evidence; they will use it alongside the JCQ Grade Descriptor for Core Maths.

Assessment	Date	Comment
Formal Assessment Point 2	November 2020	
Formal Assessment Point 3 (online during remote learning period)	February 2021	
Formal Assessment Point 4	April 2021	
Formal Assessment Point 5	May 2021	This is a significant assessment, assessing knowledge and skills from across the course. Examination style papers also contain unfamiliar questions that require you to interpret and apply your skills. Therefore, this assessment is an important piece of evidence within your basket of evidence.

*[Formal Assessment Point 1 will not be used to inform teacher judgement (TAGs) as it is a very early, end of induction assessment with the main purpose of familiarising students with the style of assessment on this course. It is not a reliable indicator of performance].*

## EPQ

EPQ students will be awarded a Teacher Assessed Grade for this qualification. The EPQ course will be fully complete by May, so the EPQ Team will be in a very good position to make an informed judgement as to the standard of the project.

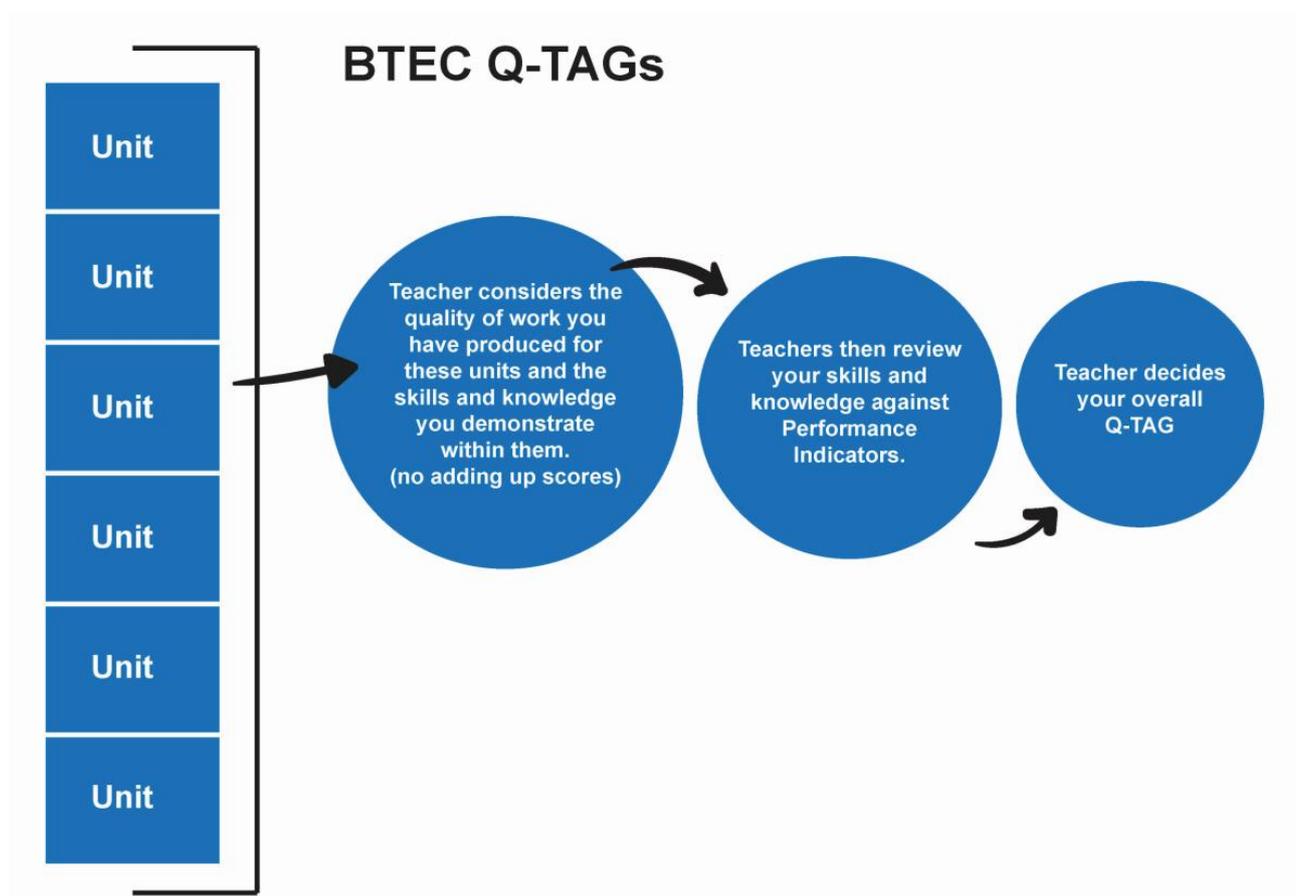
As with other qualifications, JCQ have provided a Grade Descriptor for the EPQ, so your teachers will be able to make a judgement of the work you have done against these descriptors. The grading process will begin with standardisation meetings/team training so that the EPQ team are making judgements based upon the same standards/criteria. Teachers will then make their individual judgements applying these shared standards. The final stage will be team moderation to ensure that grading is fair, accurate and consistent.

As EPQ is assessed entirely by NEA, you will not be informed of your grade prior to results day.

## Q-TAGS for BTEC and NCFE/Cache qualifications (Level 2 and 3)

These qualifications will also be graded by teacher judgements. For vocational courses, these are called Q-TAGs. Your teachers will use all the evidence they have available to them, alongside the awarding body's Performance Indicators for each grade, to arrive at an overall grade for you for the qualification. This teacher judgement is, like with A Levels, a 'holistic' judgement. Teachers will be considering your knowledge, skills and level of work in a 'rounded way', based upon your assignments and other work completed where this is appropriate. Your teachers will be able to tell you, at course level, what the basket of evidence will be, as this will vary from course to course, but your assignment work to date will play a key role. Your courses will continue until your teachers inform you that you have completed and produced the evidence they need to arrive at your Q-TAG. They will then use this evidence alongside the BTEC subject specific Performance Indicators (things you should be able to do for each grade) to ensure that they award you the grade you have been working at.

We know that BTEC and other vocational students are very familiar with the precise scores required to achieve certain grades, and in many ways, this is motivating and provides you with a clear picture of where you are and what you need to achieve in a particular assignment to gain an overall 'Distinction' grade, for example. This will not be possible this year as your teacher will be using your work to make an overall judgement that will not involve calculating your scores. As with all other qualifications, your teachers are not allowed to tell you the grade they have submitted as your Q-TAG, so please do not try to get this information from them.



## TAG information/extenuating circumstances

If there is information that you wish your teachers to know about in relation to your TAG, you can pass on this information to the college using the email address/link below. We wish to ensure that all information is recorded correctly and consistently, so please DO NOT inform your teachers orally or by individual email.

If you feel there are any circumstances (sometimes referred to as 'extenuating' or 'mitigating' circumstances – where there is a situation that you feel has affected your level of work/performance in an assessment) that you think we should know about, you should inform us of the situation. You will need to explain how this might have affected your level of work. This information will be shared with your teachers for their consideration and they will take this into account when arriving at final TAGs. If the information is highly confidential, please complete the form but do not add the details relating to your situation. Instead, please write 'information has been shared with senior tutor'. You then need to make an appointment to see your senior tutor to pass on the information. The link to the form is below, along with the email address where you should send any evidence that supports your outline of your situation. <https://form.jotform.com/211164793820051>

## Results days

- Results day for Level 3 qualifications (A Levels, BTEC Level 3, Core Maths, Criminology) is Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> August.
- Results day for Level 2 qualifications (GCSEs, L2 vocational courses) is Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August.

Your results will be sent to you by email, but there will be support available within college for those who need it. Careers and senior staff will be available to support you in your next steps, should you need it.

## Appeals

You have the right to appeal your grade from the summer 2021 assessment series. There are two stages to the appeal process:

Stage 1 – Centre Review. If you do not consider that you have been issued with the correct grade, you can ask the college to check if we have made an error and submitted an incorrect grade for you, or if we have used an incorrect piece of evidence to arrive at the grade we have submitted for you. If we have made an error, we will submit a request to the awarding body to ask them to correct the error without us needing to appeal to the awarding body. If we make this request of the awarding body, your grade could go up, down or stay the same.

Stage 2 – Appeal to the Awarding body. This would be submitted by the college on your behalf if you consider that the college did not follow its procedure properly; **or** you consider that the awarding body made an administrative error (i.e. they incorrectly changed the grade entered by the college during the processing of grades); **or** you consider that the grade you have been awarded was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement.

We will provide the exam board with the evidence used to determine your grade, together with our justification for the grade, your concerns and, if the exam board does not already hold it, details of the process that we used to determine your grade. The exam board will consider whether the evidence of your performance indicates that the grade represents a reasonable exercise of academic judgement. If they decide that the grade is supported by the evidence, they will not change the grade. If the exam board does not think that the grade awarded is supported by the evidence and does not represent a reasonable exercise of academic judgment, they may change the grade. It is important to note that they can change your grade up or down following an appeal.

You can find more information on appeals on pages 49-53 of the JCQ guidance.

## Autumn examinations

There will be a round of Autumn examinations for students who wish to improve upon their grade. These are open to all students who have received a TAG grade in summer 2021.

**Links to associated documents:**

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JCQ-Guidance-for-Students-and-Parents-on-Summer-2021.pdf>

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Summer-2021-Grade-Descriptors-A-AS-Levels.pdf>

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Summer-2021-Grade-Descriptors-GCSE.pdf>

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/teaching-and-learning-hub/Awarding-results-2021/Awarding-results-2021-guidance.pdf>

**The College's centre policy relating to Teacher Assessed Grades and Q-TAGs can be found on the college's website.**