

### Reviewing academic judgements at the appeals stage

Independent reviewers at the appeals stage will be asked to review whether there has been an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the selection of evidence on which the student's Teacher Assessed Grade has been based and/or the determination of the Teacher Assessed Grade on the basis of the selected evidence.

The independent reviewer will consider the judgement exercised by the teacher in applying the centre policy to the individual student who has submitted the appeal. They will not consider the reasonableness of the centre policy itself, which will be reviewed as part of the awarding organisation quality assurance process. The independent reviewer will expect to see that the teacher has had due regard to the guidance issued for the summer 2021 series by Ofqual and JCQ, and the subject specific grading support materials provided by awarding organisations.

Reasonable in this context allows for normal variation in academic judgement between two professionals with appropriate subject knowledge and understanding of the Ofqual and JCQ requirements. The teacher's exercise of judgement will not be considered unreasonable simply because an alternative exercise of judgement would have resulted in a more or less favourable result for the individual student. The teacher's judgement will be considered unreasonable only if it is such that no teacher acting reasonably could have reached the same judgement.

### Reviewing the selection of evidence

The independent reviewer will first review the centre policy, to gain an understanding of the centre's overall approach, and then consider the explanations provided by the teacher on the assessment record (or equivalent centre documentation) for the selection of evidence at a cohort level and any variation in the evidence selected for individual students. They will also consider the student's grounds of appeal, in order to understand why they believe the selection of evidence was unreasonable in their case.

The independent reviewer will consider whether the teacher's academic judgement has been exercised in a way which is contrary to the guidance issued by Ofqual and JCQ to such an extent that no teacher acting reasonably, and being mindful of that guidance, could have reached the same judgement. The following example is intended to illustrate this approach.

The Ofqual guidance states that teachers should assess students on as broad a range of specification content as they can. A selection of evidence will not be unreasonable simply because it does not cover every area of content that has been taught, since students are not assessed on every area of content in a normal exam year. Nor will a selection of evidence be unreasonable because it does not cover all assessment objectives for the specification, if this has been necessary because of disruption to teaching and learning. However, a selection of evidence which completely excluded one or more assessment objectives may be unreasonable if no appropriate justification has been provided.

### Reviewing the Teacher Assessed Grade

The independent reviewer will review the section on determining grades in the centre policy, to gain an understanding of the centre's overall approach, and the assessment record for the subject (or equivalent centre documentation), to gain an understanding of any mitigating circumstances or other relevant factors relating to the individual student. The reviewer will also review all available items of performance evidence on which the Teacher Assessed Grade has been based, and the student's grounds of appeal.

The independent reviewer will consider whether the Teacher Assessed Grade awarded to the student is contrary to the grading descriptors and exemplification issued by the awarding organisation for the specification in question to such an extent that no teacher acting reasonably, and being mindful of that guidance, could have reached the same judgement. A grade will only be considered unreasonable if the reviewer considers that the student's performance evidence is clearly and unequivocally indicative of a higher or lower grade.