



Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021

### **RE: A level results day**

We hope all our Year 13 students are having a relaxing summer. This letter is to make sure all students are aware that A-level results day is on **Tuesday 10th August. The examination boards have embargoed results this year until 8.30am, so this is the earliest time we can actually give you your results.** NUAST will be open from 8.00am for students who wish to wait in the outside bench area. Results will be given in the main hall, as this is the safest place for social distancing.

Remember that some universities will send you emails overnight letting you know their decision. You may arrive on the day not knowing your results but knowing the outcome for your university place. Please be prepared for this.

### **How to prepare**

This is one of the most important days of your life so far and it is important to prepare carefully;

- Make sure you are available on results day, because UCAS cannot speak to anyone else about your application details unless you give them nominated access to speak on your behalf. You really should come in early.
- Have your UCAS Track sign in details handy and update your contact details if you need to. We will have computers available for students to sign in if you need to. You particularly need your Personal ID number.
- **Make sure that you have the specific contact details for the admissions office of the department you have applied to.** Don't just get the general university admissions number, as you will never get through; if you have applied for chemical engineering you need to have the chemical engineering admissions office number. **This is really important.**
- Check how your examination results get to your universities/colleges – most come directly to UCAS from the awarding organisations, and UCAS send them on to your choices. But if not, you just send your examination results to your universities or colleges yourself.

### **What happens next?**

Hopefully you'll get the examination grades you need. If you have, most often you won't need to do anything and your university will contact you.

But if you just miss out, the university or college might accept you anyway.

- You might get a place on either your firm or insurance choice, depending how well your examinations go.
- You might be offered an alternative by the university/college – a 'changed course offer' (which you'll need to accept or decline).
- You might not get a place, but you can search through the Clearing service to see what courses still have vacancies.

If no decisions are showing on Track, give your universities or colleges a call to find out more.

## If you don't get what you need

- Check Track to see if you have been accepted to either of your choices.
- Get straight on the phone to the admissions office of the department you applied for. Many university hotlines open between 7.30-8.00am, so the earlier you pick up your results the more of a jump you will get on other students in the same boat.
- **NUAST will have rooms available where you can use your phone to make these calls and a limited number of landlines. We will support you with this.**
- The admissions office might offer you an alternative related course, or they might say no
- If that is the case, try your reserve choice.

## Clearing

- If neither is an option, get onto our computers and go on Track - you will have been entered for Clearing and will have a Clearing number. The search tool on UCAS will show the clearing places available.
- Write down a list of courses you would be interested in and get straight on the phones to them, in order of preference.
- When speaking to the admissions tutor, ask them if they would be willing to accept you – they might reconsider you (maybe for the same course) even if you applied to them earlier in the year.
- Get informal offers over the phone – maybe from a variety of universities and colleges – then decide which one you want to accept.
- If you get a Clearing offer you want to accept, click 'Add Clearing choice' and fill in the course details by the date the university/college gave you on the phone.
- This counts as you definitely accepting the offer, so if they confirm it'll show as an acceptance on the choices page of Track and UCAS will send you a Confirmation letter.
- You can only add one choice at a time, but if the university/college doesn't confirm your place, you'll be able to add another.

None of this information is intended to frighten you, just to make sure you are aware of the process and options available to you. The majority of students will have nothing to do.

## Adjustment

- This is where you have done better than you expected in your examinations and decide you would like to apply to a higher ranking university.
- You first register for Adjustment via UCAS track, which will then allow you to search for courses in a way very similar to clearing; find a course you would like to do and

contact either the universities clearing line, or dedicated adjustment line if they have one.

- Once offered a place, you will need to contact your original university to ask them to release you.

## Appeals

The following is taken from official guidance about appeals:

### How were my/my child's grades arrived at this year?

Grades this summer were based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs were submitted to the examination boards by us as a holistic assessment of students' performance in a subject, following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance.

These grades were then approved by the relevant examination board, following external quality assurance checks.

In some cases, the TAGs we submitted may have been reviewed by the examination board, who may have asked us to submit an alternative grade. However, any changes to the grades we submitted were done by professional teachers or reviewers; this year no grades have been changed as a result of an algorithm.

### What do I do if I'm not happy with my/my child's grade?

All students have the opportunity to appeal their grade if they meet the eligibility criteria (see below). It is important to note that an appeal may result in a grade being lowered, staying the same, or going up. So if a student puts in an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark.

There is also the option to resit GCSEs, A levels and some AS levels in the autumn, which may be preferable to some students. The design, content and assessment of these papers will be the same as in a normal year.

### What are the grounds for appeal?

There are five main grounds for appeal, as dictated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). They are:

- You think we have made an **administrative error**: an example of this would be putting the wrong information into a spreadsheet.
- You think we have made a **procedural error**: this means we haven't properly followed our own process, as approved by the examination board. An example of this would be where you've been told you should have received extra time for assessments but this wasn't given in a certain subject.
- You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**: you think the evidence used to grade you was not reasonable.
- You think the **academic judgement on the grade you were given was unreasonable**.

### What does 'unreasonable' mean?

'Unreasonable' is a technical term in this context and means that no educational professional acting reasonably could have selected the same evidence or come up with the same grade.

This means that just because other forms of evidence may have been equally valid to use, the selection of evidence is not unreasonable. Because of the flexibility of the approach this year, every school and college will have used different forms of evidence.

It also means that the independent reviewers will **not** remark or grade students' evidence. Instead, they will look to see whether any teacher acting reasonably could have arrived at the same grade.

### **What will be the outcome of an appeal?**

At either stage of the appeals process (see 'What are the two stages of an appeal?' below), a student's grade may go up, stay the same, or go down. When placing an appeal the student will have to sign a declaration saying that they accept the fact their grade may go down and they may get a lower grade than their original TAG.

### **What's a priority appeal?**

Priority appeals will be handled more quickly than other appeals, where possible before UCAS's advisory deadline of 8<sup>th</sup> September.

Priory appeals are only open to **A level students starting university this autumn, who have missed out on the conditions of their firm or insurance offer.**

If you decided not to confirm a firm conditional offer and to go through clearing instead, JCQ cannot offer you a priority appeal.

JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students, unfortunately.

When making a priority appeal, students will have to include their UCAS number so it can be confirmed that it is a genuine priority appeal.

### **What should I do if I don't get into my first choice of university?**

First, don't panic. Speak to Mr Edwards about your options. You may wish to go through clearing, or sit the autumn examinations or summer examinations next year to try to improve your grade.

If you are going to appeal your grade, you must let your university know you are appealing. They will then let you know whether they will hold a place for you pending the outcome of an appeal (note that universities are not obliged to hold a place for you; this is at their discretion).

### **What should I do before appealing?**

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before appealing, which will be available on the JCQ website by results days.

We may not be able to offer as much advice and guidance on the likely success of an appeal this summer as we would in normal years, as we have already moderated and quality assured all the grades ourselves.

### **What are the two stages of an appeal?**

All appeals, on any of the grounds above, must first go through a **centre review**. At this stage, we will check for any administrative errors, and check that our policies and procedures were followed correctly. Our policy has already been approved by the examination boards, so we are only ensuring that we followed this properly.

The outcome of the centre review will be communicated to students when made.

At the centre review stage, if we find that a grade should go up or down, we will ask the examination board to change it. They will then consider this request.

Following the outcome of a centre review, students may still choose to pursue an **awarding organisation appeal**. They must fill in the form below, which we will then send on their behalf to the examination boards. Students and parents cannot send appeals directly to the examination board themselves – it must come from us.

The outcome of the awarding organisation appeal will be communicated to students when made.

### **How do I make an appeal?**

Following results days, students should fill in the first section of the JCQ form [here](#) and send it to Mr White.

### **What are the deadlines for priority appeals?**

The suggested deadline for requesting a priority appeal is 16 August (students cannot appeal before results day on 10 August).

We will attempt to complete the centre review by 20 August\*. If students wish to progress this to an awarding organisation appeal, they must send the completed form to us by 23 August for priority appeals.

\*At both stages of the appeals process, there may be the need for specialist, expert knowledge (e.g. subject teachers, SEND knowledge). This may not be possible in August. In such cases, we may have to wait until the start of term, but priority appeals will still be treated as a priority.

### **What are the deadlines for non-priority appeals?**

Non-priority appeals are any A levels, GCSEs or vocational qualifications, where a firm or insurance university place is not pending.

The deadline for submitting a centre review is 3<sup>rd</sup> September; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 10<sup>th</sup> September.

Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

### **You know my/my child's grades. Why can't you tell us? What if you know we haven't met our university conditional offer?**

We are forbidden from disclosing the Teacher Assessed Grades to any third party, including students and parents, until results days. Any teacher or member of staff who does this is committing examination malpractice.

Although students may have been given marks or grades on single pieces of evidence, we cannot disclose the final submitted TAG.

During the external quality assurance process taking place in June or July, our submitted TAGs may be moved up or down (although this will always be done through human agency, not by an algorithm).

Student conditional offers have not and cannot form part of our objective grading of students. Where we do know this information, we must not let students know their submitted TAGs, even if they haven't met the conditions of their offer.

Yours sincerely



Andy Edwards  
Head of Post 16