

ACADEMIC APPEALS

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Equality Assessment: Deputy Principal **Date:** August 2025

Version and Date		Actions/Notes
1.0	September 2025	-Updated avenues for further Appeal
		Aligned terms with JCP definitions
		Added timelines for each appeal stage aligning with JCQ's standards

Approved by SMT: September 2025

Approved by Corporation: NA

Date of Next Review: August 2026

Related policies or procedures or parent policy if applicable: Teaching, Training & Learning Strategy
Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
Internal verification and Moderation Policy
Assessment Policy

Groups/bodies consulted in the development of the policy: Awarding Bodies Guidance

To be published on College Website: Yes

To be published on Student Hub: Yes

ARRANGEMENTS FOR INTERNAL APPEALS ABOUT INTERNAL ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

Macclesfield College has a rigorous and transparent appeals process which includes:

- An appeals procedure relating to internal assessment decisions, which covers:
 - grading of assessed work
 - achievement or competence
 - referral or progression
 - accreditation of prior learning.
- A formal procedure for handling disputes when a candidate disagrees with a decision by the centre not to support an enquiry
- Published procedures which are made widely available and accessible to all candidates.

Such a process will normally be required when all other mechanisms within the College (for example, discussion between candidates and the Assessor) have failed to resolve the matter. It will be the final stage in the normal process of considering and resolving disputes. It is expected that it will be used only in exceptional circumstances.

The Awarding Bodies will monitor the process in the following ways:

- Centres will be required to produce documentation relating to their procedures for hearing appeals against internal assessment decisions or enquiries about results
- The written records of any appeals will also be required and relevant details of any appeal must be made available to the Awarding Body on request.

(An Awarding Body inspection would be ascertaining that an internal appeals procedure is in place and that records of any appeals are being kept but would not be judging either the appeals process or the decisions reached.)

Definitions: The following terms are aligned with JCQ definitions:

- Appellant: The individual or entity making the appeal
- Centre: An approved institution or organisation responsible for the delivery of assessments and examinations.
- Reasonable Adjustments: Adjustments made to remove the barriers for disabled learners as defined by the Equality Act 2010, without compromising the assessment's integrity.

Centre Principals manage appeals within their curriculum areas. They are responsible for disseminating information to all candidates about the appeals procedures and for informing the Deputy Principal about the existence and outcome of all such appeals.

In the case of some Higher Education programmes, appeals procedures may be stipulated by a Higher Education Institution (HEI) (eg in the case of a Foundation Degree programme) or awarding bodies (eg Pearson/BTEC). Details of appeals procedures for Higher Education programmes must be included in all course handbooks and follow the direction of the HEI/awarding bodies. Candidates (and assessors) on all courses must be made aware of the Appeals Policy. It is the responsibility of the Course Leader to ensure all learners have been

informed of the Appeals Procedure and that the Procedure is included in the Course Handbook

The Appeals Procedure:

Internal Appeals Procedure

Assessors take every care to ensure that assessments are conducted in fair manner and accurately reflect the learning outcomes or performance criteria. However, if a candidate is unsure or unhappy about the assessment given, and they are not able to resolve assessment dispute informally with assessor, they should then ask the internal verifier for a candidate appeal form (appendix i) and take the following action:

- **Stage One:** Appeal in writing to the assessor who assessed the evidence within 5 working days of the assessment decision. A written reply, giving a clear explanation of the decision, must be given by the assessor within 10 working days. If the candidate is still not satisfied:
- **Stage Two:** Speak to their Assessor who will contact, within 5 working days, an Internal Verifier/Moderator from the programme area, who has not been involved in the assessment decision. They will review the assessor's decision and the candidate evidence. They will give the candidate a written reply within 5 working days. If the candidate is still not satisfied:
- **Stage Three:** Speak to their Assessor who will contact an independent Internal Verifier, preferably with some subject knowledge, within 5 working days. An appeals hearing occurs within 15 working days. The following will be invited to provide evidence at the hearing (at least two of which should not have been previously involved in the appeal):
 - The candidate
 - A friend of the candidate (if the candidate wishes)
 - The independent Internal Verifier or expert from Stage Two
 - The original assessor
 - Senior Manager
 - Member of staff/governor.

A candidate will be given reasonable notice of the hearing date. They will have sight of all relevant documents (e.g. the marks given, the assessments made) to the case in advance of the hearing. The assessor(s) and candidate will have the opportunity to hear each other's submission to the panel at the hearing. The evidence will be reviewed and the candidate will be given an oral (and written) decision.

A written record of all appeals will be kept in the IV file. This record will include the outcome of the appeal and reasons for that outcome. We will send a copy to the candidate within 10 working days.

The College will inform the Awarding Body if there is any change to an internally assessed mark as a result of an appeal. Any internal dispute or appeal against an internal assessment decision will be resolved speedily, since Awarding Bodies' cannot change the dates on which certificates are printed and issued.

The candidate appeal form (Appendix 1 - available from the Internal Verifier) must be used for each of the above stages, with copies being given to the candidate, the original assessor and Internal Verifier as appropriate. The Internal Verifier is responsible for

informing the Centre Principal and keeping a copy on their file, which is available to the External Verifier.

- **Stage Four:** Appeal directly to the awarding body e.g. Pearson

Awarding bodies expect 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 have been fully utilised. Most awarding body appeals focus on procedure and are not concerned with making judgements about learner work.

Where a learner considers the centre's internal enquiries or appeals policy to have failed to produce a satisfactory outcome, learners are advised to make an enquiry or appeal, in writing, to the awarding body and to provide evidence that they have exhausted the centre appeal procedure. Appeals must be submitted to the awarding body within 42 calendar days of the centre's final appeal decision.

- **Stage Five:** Appeal to the Regulator (OFQUAL)

For Higher Education appeals, once all stages of the College and awarding body procedures have been exhausted, students have the right to refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education for further review. An application to the OIA must be made within 12 Months of the issue of a Completion of Procedures letter.

Further Avenues of Appeal

The College recognises that there are cases where dissatisfaction with the appeals process may persist. In such situations, the following avenues are available:

- **Exam Procedure Review Service (EPRS):** For centres in England and Wales, this service ensures that schools, colleges, candidates and parents or carers are satisfied that grades issued by an awarding body are fair and accurate as they can be.
- **Qualifications Wales:** For centres in Wales, further appeals can be made against decisions regarding access arrangements, special consideration and post-results services by referring to the Qualifications Wales website

Note: These external options are available only after all internal and awarding body appeal processes have been completed.

In the case of appeals in relation to Higher Education provision, reference should be made to the relevant University appeals process (es).

Appendix 1 - To be issued by the Internal Verifier

Assessment Decision Appeal Form

Candidate Name	Assessors Name
Course	
Assignment Title	
Why I think the decision is wrong?	
Stage 1 Decision	
Assessor print, sign & date	
I am / am not* happy with this decision	
Candidate sign & date:	
Stage 2 Decision	
Independent IV or subject expert, print, sign & date:	
I am / am not* happy with this decision	
Candidate sign & date:	

Stage 3 Decision**Independent Senior Manager on behalf of the panel, print, sign & date**

I am / am not* happy with this decision

Candidate sign & date:

Stage 4

Appeal directly to awarding body yes / no Date:

Stage 5

Appeal directly to the Regulator yes / no Date: