



# Guidance on post-results checks and appeals for school-assessed grades in the November 2021 series

This document is a guide for Heads of Centre and exams officers. It explains the post-results checks and appeals that are available to candidates who have followed the school-assessed grade route to a grade. It is a supplement to the 'Appeals: Regulations and guidance' section of the *Cambridge Handbook*. This guidance is for centres that have followed the school-assessed grade route to a grade in Cambridge IGCSE™, Cambridge O Level and Cambridge International AS & A Level qualifications.



## Important information

Due to the changes we have made because of the Covid-19 outbreak, the guidance in our current *Cambridge Handbook* about our usual enquiries about results services and appeals procedure is not applicable for the November 2021 series for candidates who have been awarded school-assessed grades. You should follow the guidance in this supplement instead.

## Enquiries about results

The *Cambridge Handbook* (section 6.3) outlines our usual enquiries about results services. These services are not available for the November 2021 exam series for candidates who have been awarded school-assessed grades.

All our usual enquiries about results services involve a check of or reference to the marking or moderation of candidates' work. For the November 2021 series, we have not undertaken any marking of candidates' work for candidates who have been awarded school-assessed grades. Instead, we have sampled at least one syllabus at your centre to check the accuracy of the grades.



## Important information

Before you submit a post-results check or appeal you must tell candidates that their syllabus grade will either stay the same, go up, or go down. In exceptional circumstances, grades may be withdrawn. By submitting a post-results check or appeal request to us, you are confirming you have told each of your candidates this.

## Post-results checks

Post-results checks provide an opportunity for you to amend a candidate's grade or to request a review of the grade awarded.

Post-results checks will only be accepted if they are submitted by a centre. We will not accept requests for post-results checks directly from candidates, parents or legal guardians. However, a centre must be prepared to submit a request on behalf of a candidate, parent or legal guardian even if the centre does not have concerns about the grade awarded.

There are three services available:

Service	Description
Service 1: Change of grade following identification of an error	This service is available for individual candidate requests only. The centre submits a revised grade for a candidate to us. We issue the revised grade.
Service 2: Individual candidate review	This service is available for individual candidate requests only. An independent review by an Assessment Specialist of the candidate's portfolio of evidence. The Assessment Specialist makes a judgement about whether the grade awarded by the centre was reasonable. If the Assessment Specialist concludes that the grade awarded by the centre was not reasonable, we issue a revised grade based on the Assessment Specialist's judgement.

Service	Description
Service 3: Review of Quality Assurance decision	<p>This service is available for whole cohort requests only.</p> <p>A review of our judgement during the Quality Assurance process, conducted by our Assessment Specialist. If the reviewing Assessment Specialist concludes that our original judgement was not reasonable, we may issue revised grades based on the reviewer's judgement.</p>

If we have queries about the grade you have submitted for a Post-results check Service 1 we may need to contact you. In exceptional circumstances, we reserve the right to reject your request for a Post-results check Service 1.

We expect centres to have followed their own procedures and our requirements correctly when assigning grades, so we expect the number of requests for Post-results check Service 1 from individual centres to be low. We will be monitoring the number of requests. If we have concerns about a high volume of requests from an individual centre or for an individual syllabus, we may need to contact you to investigate these further.

If you need to request a Post-results check Service 1, you should do this before you request any of our other services. You cannot request this service if a candidate has already had a Post-results check Service 2 for the same syllabus. This is because the Assessment Specialist's view of the grade will take precedence over the grade awarded by the centre.

### Post-results check Service 2: Individual candidate review

This service exists for centres that want one of our Assessment Specialists to review the grade awarded to a candidate. Centres that choose this service must first complete their own Centre Review of the candidate's grade. We would expect a centre to choose this service if a candidate, parent or legal guardian continues to have concerns about the judgement that the centre has made about the quality of the work produced by the candidate in their portfolio of evidence, and the final grade that has been awarded, **after** the Centre Review has taken place.

For this service you will need to send us the candidate's three pieces of evidence for review and a copy of your Rationale Document for the relevant syllabus using Secure Exchange. Please follow the guidance for the submission of files, as large files may cause problems. We will tell you how to do this once we have accepted your request. We will contact you if we have queries about the candidate evidence or the Rationale Document that you have submitted for a Post-results check Service 2. You must be able to send us the three pieces of candidate evidence. If you cannot send this to us we will not be able to complete this service for you.

The Assessment Specialist will review the candidate's portfolio of evidence and make a judgement about whether the grade awarded by the centre was reasonable. This will include a check that the final school-assessed grade awarded was within the range of the grades allocated to the individual pieces of evidence, in line with our guidance. If the Assessment Specialist concludes that the grade awarded by the centre was not reasonable, we will issue a revised grade based on the Assessment Specialist's judgement.

### Important information



You must complete a [Centre Review](#) first before you apply for a Post-results check Service 1, Post-results check Service 2 or [Special Enquiry appeal](#).

We therefore recommend that you plan time to complete any Centre Reviews as soon as possible after the publication of results, so that you can meet our deadlines for post-results checks and appeals.

### Post-results check Service 1: Change of grade following identification of an error

This service exists for centres that have completed a Centre Review and have identified that a grade they submitted to us was incorrect.

We will accept grade changes through this service for any of the following reasons:

- You have identified a clerical error or an administrative error in the production of a candidate's grade.
- You have identified a clerical error or an administrative error in the submission of a candidate's grade on our Grade Submission system.
- You have completed a Centre Review of your judgements based on the candidate evidence, or about how special consideration or access arrangements have been managed, and have identified a reason why the original grade submitted was incorrect.

We will ask the Head of Centre to sign a declaration when you submit a Post-results check Service 1 to confirm the following:

- that a Centre Review of the candidate's grade has been completed and that the Head of Centre supports the submission of this post-results check
- that the Head of Centre understands the syllabus grade will either remain the same, go up, or go down and this has been explained to the candidate
- that you have candidate consent.



If you request this service, you cannot go on to request a Post-results check Service 1 for the same candidate/syllabus.

If you request this service, you can also request a Special Enquiry appeal at the same time for the same candidate/syllabus. The Post-results check Service 2 and the Special Enquiry appeal are designed to investigate different aspects of the school-assessed grade, and will be investigated independently of one another.

We will ask the Head of Centre to sign a declaration when you submit a Post-results check Service 2 to confirm the following:

- that a Centre Review of the candidate's grade has been completed and that the Head of Centre supports the submission of this post-results check
- that the Head of Centre understands the syllabus grade will either remain the same, go up, or go down and this has been explained to the candidate
- that you have candidate consent.

### Post-results check Service 3: Review of Quality Assurance decision

This service asks us to check our judgement about your candidates' grades. It is only available for situations where we sampled your candidates as part of our Quality Assurance, and consequently changed your school-assessed grades.

We will use the candidate sample of evidence and the Rationale Document that you have already sent to us for the Quality Assurance process. We will conduct a review of the judgements we made during the Quality Assurance process. If the reviewing Assessment Specialist concludes that our original judgement was not reasonable, we will issue revised grades for all affected candidates based on the reviewer's judgement.

We will ask the Head of Centre to sign a declaration when you submit a Post-results check Service 3 to confirm the following:

- that you understand all your candidates who were entered for this syllabus may be affected by this review and that the Head of Centre supports the submission of this post-results check
- that the Head of Centre understands the syllabus grades will either remain the same, go up, or go down and this has been explained to the candidates
- that you have candidate consent.

**A** It is good practice for Cambridge Associates to submit post-results check requests for their Associate Centres before the closing date. This gives the Associate time to check them and resolve any problems before the deadline. Cambridge Associates may set earlier deadlines for their Associate Centres.



### Important information

We will charge a fee for each post-results check, irrespective of the outcome.

The exception to this is for Post-results check Service 3, where we will not charge the whole or part of a fee if the syllabus grade changes as a result of the check. A fee will be charged for Post-results check Service 3 if there is no change to the syllabus grade(s).

You can access more detailed information about fees in the 'My Messages' section of Direct.

### Concerns about the choice of evidence, special consideration or access arrangements

Candidates, parents or legal guardians may raise concerns with you about the choice of the three pieces of evidence used to produce the overall grade, or about how special consideration or access arrangements have been managed. These scenarios are not included in the post-results check services that we offer.

You should explore these concerns by conducting a [Centre Review](#). If you decide that it would be appropriate to change a grade following this review, you should do this by requesting a Post-results check Service 1.

If you have completed a Centre Review but a candidate, parent or legal guardian still has concerns, you should request a [Special Enquiry appeal](#).

### Allegations of bias or discrimination

Some candidates may have concerns about the fairness of the grades awarded by their centre. If this is the case, candidates should discuss this directly with you in the first instance. You will be able to provide additional context and explanations to help candidates understand the school-assessed grade you submitted to us.

You should explore their concerns by conducting a Centre Review. If you decide that it would be appropriate to change a grade following this review, you should do this by requesting a Post-results check Service 1.

If you have completed a Centre Review but a candidate, parent or legal guardian still has concerns, you should either request a Post-results check Service 2 or request a [Special Enquiry appeal](#), depending on the nature of their concern.



### Important dates

The deadline for submitting post-results checks to us is **26 February 2022**.

## Appeals

For school-assessed grades for the November 2021 exam series, you can request three types of Stage 1 appeal. Appeals can be requested for individual candidates, or for a group of candidates.

Stage 1 appeals will only be accepted for investigation if they are submitted by a centre. We will not accept appeals directly from candidates, parents or legal guardians. However, a centre must be prepared to submit a request on behalf of a candidate, parent or legal guardian even if the centre does not have concerns about the grade awarded. We expect you to have completed a Centre Review first

before you apply for a Special Enquiry Appeal. We therefore recommend that you plan time to complete any Centre Reviews as soon as possible after the publication of results, so that you can meet our deadlines for post-results checks and appeals.

If you apply for a Special Enquiry appeal, you can also request a Post-Results check Service 2 at the same time for the same candidate/syllabus. The Post-Results check Service 2 and the Special Enquiry appeal are designed to investigate different aspects of the school-assessed grade, and will be investigated independently of one another.

Appeal type	Description
Malpractice decision	<p>This route is for centres that want to appeal against a malpractice decision.</p> <p><b>Malpractice decision</b></p> <p>Section 7.3 of the <i>Cambridge Handbook</i>, which outlines how to appeal against a malpractice decision, continues to apply for the November 2021 exam series. There are no changes to the guidance.</p> <p>You should submit the details of the decision that you want to have investigated by completing <i>Appeals – Form 1</i>, available from the 'Support Materials' section of Direct, and sending it by email to <a href="mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org">info@cambridgeinternational.org</a>. We will complete this investigation within 28 days of receipt.</p> <p>If the Stage 1 appeal is not fully successful at this stage, you may choose to ask for a Stage 2 appeal. You must do so within 14 days of receiving the Stage 1 appeal outcome.</p>
Procedure (post-results check)	<p>This route is for centres that believe we have not followed our post-results check procedures correctly and that the grade(s) issued are incorrect as a result of this error.</p> <p>This service <b>does not</b> involve a review of the candidate's evidence.</p> <p>To apply for this appeal type, submit <i>Appeals – Form 2</i> through the 'Enquiries about results' section of Direct within 28 days of receiving your post-results check outcome. If you are unable to submit the form through Direct you may email it to <a href="mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org">info@cambridgeinternational.org</a> with 'Stage 1 Appeal – EAR' in the subject line. We will complete this investigation with 21 days of receipt.</p> <p>If the Stage 1 appeal is not fully successful at this stage, you may choose to ask for a Stage 2 appeal. You must do so within 14 days of receiving the Stage 1 appeal outcome.</p>
Special Enquiry	<p>This route is for centres that are raising an appeal on behalf of a candidate, parent or legal guardian who, following a Centre Review, still has concerns about the choice of the three pieces of evidence used to produce an overall grade, or about how special consideration or access arrangements have been managed.</p> <p>This service <b>does not</b> involve a review of the candidate's evidence.</p> <p>You should submit the details of the decision that you want to have investigated by completing <i>Appeals – Form 3</i>, available from the 'Support Materials' section of Direct, and sending it by email to <a href="mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org">info@cambridgeinternational.org</a>. We will complete this investigation within 28 days of receipt.</p> <p>If the Stage 1 appeal is not fully successful at this stage, you may choose to ask for a Stage 2 appeal. You must do so within 14 days of receiving the Stage 1 appeal outcome.</p>

### Important information

We will charge a fee for a procedural (post-results check) appeal and for a Special Enquiry appeal. You can find more detailed information about fees in the 'My Messages' section of Direct. A malpractice appeal is free of charge.



### Important dates



The deadline for submitting an appeal against a malpractice decision is within 28 days of receiving the malpractice investigation outcome from us.

The deadline for submitting a procedural (post-results check) appeal to us is within 28 days of receiving the post-results check outcome from us.

The deadline for submitting a Special Enquiry appeal to us is **26 February 2022**.

### Important information



The changes we have made to the November 2021 series for school-assessed grades mean that many of the commitments described in our *Code of Practice* are not relevant to the November 2021 series for school-assessed grades. Therefore, we are suspending the *Code of Practice* for this series for centres following the school-assessed grades route. Where necessary, we are adapting our policies and procedures to make sure we maintain the fairness and integrity of our assessments.

## Appeals against malpractice decisions (Stage 1 and Stage 2)

### What has changed for the November 2021 exam series?

Section 7.3 of the *Cambridge Handbook*, which outlines how to appeal against a malpractice decision, continues to apply for the November 2021 exam series. There are no changes to the guidance.

### Stage 1 appeals against post-results checks

The *Appeals against post-results checks* process is not a way of getting another opinion about the candidates' results, nor is it an opportunity for you to provide more evidence. It is a way to challenge us if you believe we have not followed our procedures for post-results checks correctly. Section 7 of the *Cambridge Handbook* outlines the appeals process.

### What has changed for the November 2021 exam series?

The scope (section 7.1.2) of what we will consider an appeal has changed.

- To make a Stage 1 appeal you must show you have a permitted reason for appeal.
- The only reasons that we will consider are that either:
  - we did not follow the procedures we developed for the post-results checks in the November 2021 exam series correctly; or
  - our procedures are not consistent with our published guidance for school-assessed grades.

- We will not consider appeals for any other reasons. Our *Code of Practice* has been suspended for the November 2021 series and therefore, the commitments in our *Code of Practice* are not a valid reason for appeals in November 2021.
- If you wish to make an appeal, this must be done within 28 days of the date when we uploaded the outcome letter for your post-results check to Direct.

### What remains the same?

- You will be able to make a Stage 1 appeal.
- We will only accept appeals through centres.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a Stage 1 appeal, you can ask for a Stage 2 appeal.
- Stage 1 of the appeal process will be an investigation by a senior member of Cambridge staff.

**A** Associate Centres should make appeals through their Cambridge Associate. Cambridge Associates may set earlier deadlines for their Associate Centres.

To make a Stage 1 appeal, complete *Appeals – Form 2*, available from the 'Support Materials' section of Direct. You should fully explain the reason for the appeal, otherwise we will not be able to consider it. We will email you to acknowledge your appeal within three working days of receiving it. If you have not received an email within that time, please contact us to check we have received your appeal.

One or more members of Cambridge staff, none of whom were involved in the original decision, will review your appeal and any relevant evidence, and will consider whether we correctly followed the procedures we developed for the November 2021 exam series.

We will write to you within 21 days of receiving your appeal to let you know whether it was fully successful, partly successful or unsuccessful. We will not communicate with candidates or parents/legal guardians involved in the appeal. You should tell candidates and parents/legal guardians the outcome as soon as you receive it.

### Stage 1 Special Enquiry appeals

This is a new type of appeal which exists for school-assessed grades in the November 2021 series only. This route is for centres that are raising an appeal on behalf of a candidate, parent or legal guardian who, following a [Centre Review](#), still has concerns about the choice of the three pieces of evidence used to produce an overall grade, or about how special consideration or access arrangements have been managed.

When you submit this appeal you must:

- Explain the grounds of dispute between the candidate, parent or legal guardian and the centre. This should include a statement from the candidate, parent or legal guardian outlining their remaining concerns.



- Explain the steps that you have taken in your centre to resolve the dispute.
- Send us a copy of your Rationale Document for the relevant syllabus, so that we can understand the approach that you have taken to determine grades and consider whether you have followed your own approach properly and consistently.
- Send us a copy of the record of your Centre Review for the candidate who is the subject of the appeal.
- In cases where the dispute is about the choice of the three pieces of evidence used to produce an overall grade, send us a copy of the three pieces of evidence used to produce the grade, and any evidence that the candidate, parent or legal guardian believes should have been used instead.

In line with our usual practice for procedural appeals:

- You will be able to make a Stage 1 appeal.
- We will only accept appeals through centres.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a Stage 1 appeal, you can ask for a Stage 2 appeal.
- Stage 1 of the appeal process will be an investigation by a senior member of Cambridge staff.

**A** Associate Centres should make appeals through their Cambridge Associate. Cambridge Associates may set earlier deadlines for their Associate Centres.

To make a Stage 1 appeal, complete *Appeals – Form 3*, available from the 'Support Materials' section of Direct. You should fully explain the reason for the appeal, otherwise we will not be able to consider it.

You must also send us:

- the Rationale Document for the syllabus
- the record of the Centre Review for the candidate
- for selection of evidence appeals, the three pieces of evidence used to produce the grade
- for selection of evidence appeals, any evidence that the candidate believes should have been used instead.

If you do not send these to us, we may not be able to accept your appeal for investigation.

We will email you to acknowledge your appeal within three working days of receiving it. If you have not received an email within that time, please contact us to check we have received your appeal.

One or more members of Cambridge staff will review your appeal and the evidence that you have provided. The appeal will focus on whether the centre has used an approach which is in line with our guidance for school-assessed grades, and that the centre has applied their approach properly and consistently to the candidate on whose behalf you have submitted the appeal. The appeal process is not a way to change a candidate's school-assessed grade by substituting different evidence, unless the investigation determines that the centre has made an error either in how they have

determined their approach, or in how they have applied it. We will write to you within 28 days of receiving your appeal to let you know whether it was fully successful, partly successful or unsuccessful. We will not communicate with candidates or parents/legal guardians involved in the appeal. You should tell candidates and parents/legal guardians the outcome as soon as you receive it.

### Stage 2 appeals against post-results checks and Special Enquiry appeals

If the appeal is not fully successful at Stage 1, you may choose to ask for a Stage 2 appeal. Email the relevant appeals form, available from the 'Support Materials' section of Direct, to [info@cambridgeinternational.org](mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org) with 'Stage 2 Appeal' in the subject line. You must send your appeal within 14 days of receiving the Stage 1 appeal outcome. All Stage 2 appeals will be considered by an independent panel.

#### What has changed for the November 2021 exam series?

Guidance in the *Cambridge Handbook* still applies for Stage 2 appeals. However, we have revised the following:

- The only reasons we will consider a Stage 2 appeal for either post-results checks or Special Enquiry appeals is that either we did not correctly use procedures developed for the November 2021 exam series or our procedures are not consistent with our published guidance for school-assessed grades. We will not accept appeals for any other reasons.
- For Post-results check Service 1 and Post-results check Service 3 Stage 2 appeals centre representatives may attend the hearing. Stage 2 hearings may have to be conducted remotely.
- For all other school-assessed grades appeals, only the independent panel will attend the hearing.

#### What remains the same?

- You can only proceed to a Stage 2 appeal if you have had a Stage 1 appeal.

#### For Post-results check Service 1 and Post-results check Service 3 Stage 2 appeals only

- Stage 2 of the process will involve a hearing before an independent panel.
- If you have told us you wish to attend the meeting, we will also ask you to name representatives from your centre who will attend.\*
- We will not be able to reschedule meetings to suit your representatives.
- You may name alternative representatives if those you originally named cannot attend.
- Up to three representatives may attend.
- As the Stage 2 appeal is not a judicial or quasi-judicial process, legal representatives cannot attend.

\* *The meeting may be conducted remotely via video link.*

## Summary of services available

	Can I request a post-results check?	Can I submit a Stage 1 appeal?	Can I submit a Stage 2 appeal?
<b>Change of grade following identification of an error</b>	<b>Yes, Service 1.</b> Centre deadline: 26 February 2022.	<b>Yes</b> Includes: • checks to make sure procedures were correctly followed at the Post-results check Service 1 stage.  Centre deadline: within 28 days of Post-results check outcome.	<b>Yes</b> Centre deadline: within 14 days of Stage 1 appeal outcome.
<b>Individual candidate review</b>	<b>Yes, Service 2.</b> Centre deadline: 26 February 2022.	<b>Yes</b> Includes: • checks to make sure we applied our procedures correctly to the candidate evidence provided by you at the Post-results check Service 2 stage.  We will not consider additional information or evidence from you at the appeal stage. Centre deadline: within 28 days of post-results check outcome.	<b>Yes</b> Centre deadline: within 14 days of Stage 1 appeal outcome.
<b>Review of Quality Assurance decision</b>	<b>Yes, Service 3.</b> Centre deadline: 26 February 2022. We will not consider additional information or evidence from you at the Post-results check Service 3 stage.	<b>Yes</b> Includes: • checks to make sure procedures were correctly followed at the Post-results check Service 3 stage.  We will not consider additional information or evidence from you at the appeal stage. Centre deadline: within 28 days of post-results check outcome.	<b>Yes</b> Centre deadline: within 14 days of Stage 1 appeal outcome.
<b>Malpractice</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> There is no change to the process outlined in the <i>Cambridge Handbook</i> . Centre deadline: within 28 days of malpractice investigation outcome.	<b>Yes</b> Centre deadline: within 14 days of Stage 1 appeal outcome.
<b>Special Enquiry</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> Includes: • review of case stated by candidate, parent or legal guardian.  Centre deadline: by 26 February 2022.	<b>Yes</b> Centre deadline: within 14 days of Stage 1 appeal outcome.

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