Merchant Taylors' School

EXAMINATIONS – COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

Centre 17632

Grounds for Complaint

A candidate (or their parent/guardian) may make a complaint on the grounds below (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Teaching and learning
  - The quality of teaching and learning
  - Pre-release material/set task not provided on time
  - Assessments not conducted according to JCQ/awarding body instructions
  - Marking of an internal assessment not undertaken according to the requirements of the awarding body
  - Failure to adhere to our Appeals Procedure
  - Candidate not informed of their centre assessed mark in sufficient time to request a review or appeal

- Access arrangements
  - Candidate not assessed by our approved assessor
  - Candidate not involved in decisions about their access arrangements
  - Candidate not informed/adequately informed of the arrangements in place, and the subjects, or components of subjects, where the arrangements would not apply
  - Exam information not appropriately adapted for a disabled candidate to access it
  - Adapted equipment put in place failed during exam/assessment
  - Approved access arrangement(s) not put in place at the time of an exam/assessment
  - Appropriate arrangements not put in place at the time of an exam/assessment as a consequence of a temporary injury or impairment
  - Candidate unhappy with centre decision relating to access arrangements or special consideration
  - Centre fails to adhere to its internal Appeals Procedure

- Entries
  - Candidate not entered or entered late, hence incurring a late entry fee for a required exam/assessment
  - Candidate entered for a wrong exam/assessment

- Conducting examinations
  - Failure to adequately brief candidate on exam timetable/exam regulations prior to exam/assessment taking place
  - Room in which exam held did not provide candidate with appropriate conditions for taking the exam
  - Inadequate invigilation in exam room
  - Failure to conduct exam according to the regulations
  - Online system failed during (on-screen) exam/assessment
  - Disruption during exam/assessment not investigated/reported
  - Alleged, suspected or actual malpractice incident not investigated/reported

    - Eligible application for special consideration for a candidate not submitted within the timescale
    - Failure to inform/update candidate on the outcome of a special consideration application if rejected

- Results and Post-results
    - Before exams, candidate not made aware of the arrangements for post-results services and the accessibility of senior members of centre staff after the publication of results
    - Candidate not having access to a member of senior staff after the publication of results to discuss/make decision on the submission of enquiries about results.
    - Candidate request for return of work after moderation and work not available/disposed of earlier than allowed in the regulations
    - Candidate (or parent/guardian) unhappy with a centre decision not to support a clerical re-check, a review of marking, a review of moderation or an appeal
    - Centre applied for the wrong post-results service for a candidate
    - Centre missed awarding body deadline to apply for a post-results service
    - Centre applied for a post-results service for candidate without gaining required candidate consent
    - Centre fails to adhere to its internal Appeals Procedure

If a candidate (or their parent/guardian) has a general concern or complaint about the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification, we encourage them to try to resolve this informally in the first instance. A concern or complaint should be made in person, by telephone or in writing to the relevant Head of Department.

If a complaint fails to be resolved informally, the candidate (or their parent/guardian) is then at liberty to make a formal complaint. In this instance, a concern or complaint should be made to the Head of Centre following the Internal Appeals Procedure below.

Internal Appeals Procedure

Merchant Taylors' School is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff mark candidates' work this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.
Merchant Taylors' School ensures that all centre staff follow a robust *NEA, controlled assessment and coursework Policy* (for the management of GCE and GCSE non-examination assessments). This policy details all procedures relating to qualifications delivered at the centre, including the marking and quality assurance/internal standardisation processes which relevant teaching staff are required to follow.
All access arrangements will be put into place by the SENCO using their department policy document.
Candidates' work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, who have been trained in this activity and do not have any potential conflict of interest. If AI tools have been used to assist in the marking of candidates' work, they will not be the sole marker. Merchant Taylors' School is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where more than one subject teacher is involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking.
On being informed of their centre assessed marks, if a candidate believes that the above procedures were not followed in relation to the marking of their work, or that the assessor has not properly applied the mark scheme to their marking, then the candidate may make use of the appeals procedure below to consider whether to request a review of the centre's marking.

Merchant Taylors' School will:

1. Ensure that candidates are informed of their centre assessed marks so that they may request a review of the centre's marking before marks are submitted to the awarding body.

2. Inform candidates that they will need to explain on what grounds they wish to request a review of an internally assessed mark as a review will only focus on the quality of their work in meeting the published assessment criteria.

3. Inform candidates that they may request copies of materials (as a minimum, a copy of their marked assessment material (work) and the mark scheme or assessment criteria plus additional materials which may vary from subject to subject) within 5 school days to assist them in considering whether to request a review of the centre's marking of the assessment.

4. Having received a request for copies of materials, promptly make them available to the candidate (or for some marked assessment materials, such as artwork and recordings, inform the candidate that these will be shared under supervised conditions) within 2 school days.

5. Inform candidates they will not be allowed access to original assessment material unless supervised.

6. Provide candidates with sufficient time to allow them to review copies of materials and reach a decision, informing candidates that if their decision is to request a review, they will need to explain what they believe the issue to be.

7. Provide a clear deadline for candidates to submit a request for a review of the centre's marking. Requests will not be accepted after this deadline. Requests must be made in writing within 5 school days of receiving copies of the requested materials by completing the **Examination Complaints and Appeals Form** on the school website.

8. Allow 2 school days for the review to be carried out, to make any necessary changes to marks and to inform the candidate of the outcome, all before the awarding body's deadline for the submission of marks.

9. Ensure that the review of marking is conducted by an assessor who has appropriate competence, has had no previous involvement in the assessment of that candidate and has no personal interest in the review.

10. Instruct the reviewer to ensure that the candidate's mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre.

11. Inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the review of the centre's marking.

The outcome of the review of the centre's marking will be made known to the Head of Centre who will have the final decision if there is any disagreement on the mark to be submitted to the awarding body. A written record of the review will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request.

If a parent/guardian wish to complain about any non-exam related matter, they should follow the Complaints procedure for Parents/Guardians policy.

Appeals against decisions to reject a candidate's work on the grounds of malpractice

The JCQ *Information for candidates* documents (*Coursework*, *Non-examination assessments*, *Social media*) which are distributed to all candidates prior to relevant assessments taking place, inform candidates of the things they must and must not do when they are completing their work.
Merchant Taylors' School ensures that those members of teaching staff involved in the direct supervision of candidates producing work for assessments are aware of the potential for malpractice.

Malpractice by a candidate discovered in a controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment component prior to the candidate signing the declaration of authentication does not need to be reported to the awarding body but will be dealt with in accordance with the centre's internal procedures. The only exception to this is where the awarding body's confidential assessment material has potentially been breached. The breach will be reported to the awarding body immediately.
If there are doubts about the authenticity of the work of a candidate or irregularities are identified in a candidate's work before the candidate has signed the declaration of authentication/authentication statement (where required) and malpractice is suspected, Merchant Taylors' School will begin an investigation into the matter using the relevant JCQ document (*Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments*/*Instructions for conducting coursework*) and any supplementary guidance that may be provided by the awarding body. Where this may lead to the decision to **not** accept the candidate's work for assessment or to reject a candidate's coursework on the grounds of malpractice, the affected candidate will be informed of the decision.
If the candidate disagrees with this decision, they can submit a written request, setting out as clearly and concisely as possible the grounds for the appeal including any further evidence relevant to supporting the appeal. An Examinations Complaints and Appeals Form should be completed and submitted within 5 school days of the decision being made known to the appellant.
The appellant will be informed of the outcome of the appeal within 2 school days of the appeal being received and logged by the centre.

Appeals regarding centre decisions relating to access arrangements and special consideration

In accordance with the regulations, Merchant Taylors' School will:

- recognise its duty to explore and provide access to suitable courses, through the access arrangements process submit applications for reasonable adjustments and make reasonable adjustments to the service the centre provides to disabled candidates
- comply with its responsibilities in implementing appropriate access arrangements and reasonable adjustments
- submit eligible application for special consideration for a candidate within the timescale
- inform/update candidate on the outcome of a special consideration application if rejected

If a candidate (or their parent/guardian) has a general concern or complaint about the centre's delivery or administration of a qualification, we encourage the candidate to try to resolve this informally in the first instance. All concerns or complaints should be made in person, by telephone or in writing to the relevant member of staff.
If a complaint fails to be resolved informally, the candidate (or their parent/guardian) is then at liberty to make a formal complaint.

A formal complaint should be submitted in writing using the Examinations Complaints and Appeals Form found on our website. The form should be returned to the Head of Exams or the Head of Centre. Forms received will be logged by the centre and acknowledged within 2 school days.
The Head of Centre will further investigate or appoint a member of the Senior Leadership Team (who is not involved in the grounds for complaint and has no personal interest in the outcome) to investigate the complaint and report on the findings and conclusion. The findings and conclusion will be provided to the complainant within 2 weeks.

External Appeals Procedure

Following the issue of results, awarding bodies make post-results services available. Candidates are informed of the arrangements for results day including availability of senior members of centre staff on these days, **before** they sit any exams. This information is within the Examination Pack distributed in the Spring Term. Candidates are reminded about this information and provided with additional information related to post-result services in an email from the Head of Exams just before results are issued.
If the centre or a candidate (or their parent/guardian) has a concern and believes a result may not be accurate, post-results services may be considered.
Where a concern is expressed that a particular result may not be accurate, the centre will look at the marks awarded for each component part of the qualification, alongside any mark schemes, relevant result reports, grade boundary information etc. when made available by the awarding body to determine if the centre supports any concerns.

For written components that contributed to the final result, the centre will:

1. Where a place at university or college is at risk, consider supporting a request for a Priority Service 2 review of marking.
2. In all other instances, (where the service is made available by the awarding body) request a priority copy of the candidate's script to support a review of marking by the awarding body deadline.
3. On access to the script, consider if it is felt that the agreed mark scheme has been applied correctly in the original marking and if the centre considers there are any errors in the marking
4. Support a request for the appropriate review if any error is identified.
5. Where relevant, advise an affected candidate to inform any third party (such as a university or college) that a review of marking has been submitted to an awarding body.

Written candidate consent (in the form of a signature) is required in all cases before a post result service can be submitted to the awarding body. Consent is required to confirm the candidate understands that their script will be shared with the Head of Department for teaching and learning purposes as well as to support a review decision. It is also required to confirm that the final subject grade and/or mark awarded following a clerical re-check or a review of marking, and any subsequent appeal, may be lower than, higher than, or the same as the result which was originally awarded.
Candidate consent will only be collected after the publication of results.

For any moderated components that contributed to the final result, the centre will:

- Confirm that a review of moderation cannot be undertaken on the work of an individual candidate or the work of candidates not in the original sample submitted for moderation
- Consult the moderator's report/feedback to identify any issues raised
- Determine if the centre's internally assessed marks have been accepted without change by the awarding body – if this is the case, a review of moderation will not be available
- Determine if there are any grounds to submit a request for a review of moderation for the work of all candidates in the original sample

Where a candidate disagrees with a centre decision not to support a clerical re-check or a review of marking, the candidate can still proceed with the relevant service. They will need to provide written confirmation that they are aware of the implications and are going against centre advice.

The awarding body will be informed if the centre does not accept the outcome of a review.
The moderation process carried out by the awarding bodies may result in a mark change, either upwards or downwards, even after an internal review. The internal review process is in place to ensure consistency of marking within the centre, whereas moderation by the awarding body ensures that centre marking is in line with national standards. The mark submitted to the awarding body is subject to change and should therefore be considered provisional.

If the candidate (or their parent/guardian) believes there are grounds to appeal against the centre's decision not to support a review of marking, an internal appeal can be submitted to the centre by completing the Examinations Complaints and Appeals Form at least 14 calendar days prior to the internal deadline for

submitting a request for a review of marking. No appeal will be processed without candidate signature on the Examinations Complaints and Appeals Form.
The appellant will be informed of the outcome of their appeal before the internal deadline for submitting a review of marking.

Candidates will be notified of the outcome of their review of marking by email, with the relevant Head of Department cc'd. If the candidate's grade changes, the relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team will also be notified.

Following the review of marking outcome, an external appeals process is available if the Head of Centre remains dissatisfied with the outcome and believes there are grounds for appeal. The JCQ publications, Cambridge Handbook, Post-Results Services and JCQ Appeals Booklet (A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes) will be consulted to determine the acceptable grounds for a preliminary appeal. Where the Head of Centre is satisfied after receiving the review of marking outcome, but the candidate (or their parent/guardian) believes there are grounds for a preliminary appeal to the awarding body, a further internal appeal may be made to the Head of Centre. Following this, the Head of Centre's decision as to whether to proceed with a preliminary appeal will be based upon the acceptable grounds as detailed in the JCQ Appeals Booklet/Cambridge Handbook. Candidates or parents/guardians are not permitted to make direct representations to an awarding body.

The Examinations Complaints and Appeals Form should be completed and submitted to the centre within 25 calendar days of the date of the outcome letter. Subject to the Head of Centre's decision, this will allow the centre to process the preliminary appeal and submit to the awarding body within the required **30 calendar days** of the awarding body issuing their outcome of the review of marking. Awarding body fees which may be charged for the preliminary appeal must be paid to the centre by the appellant before the preliminary appeal is submitted to the awarding body. If the appeal is upheld by the awarding body, this fee will be refunded by the awarding body and repaid to the appellant by the centre.

Head of Examinations
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