



Appeals in GCSE, AS and A level Qualifications

Background Information Accompanying Statistical Release for Summer 2018 Examination Series – Northern Ireland

Publication Date: 11th April 2019

Ref: CCEA19/APP/1

Information about the Statistics

Purpose

In this release, CCEA Regulation presents data on all preliminary appeals and appeal hearings (formerly known as 'stage 1' appeals and 'stage 2' appeals and collectively referred to as 'appeals') requested for all GCSE, AS and A level unit/component assessments taken during the summer 2018 examination series.

Geographical Coverage

This report presents data on appeals in Northern Ireland (NI). Five awarding organisations offer GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in NI:

- AQA Education (AQA)
- Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)
- Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- Pearson Education Ltd. (Pearson)
- WJEC-CBAC Ltd. (WJEC)¹

These five awarding organisations are members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), which issues regulations, instructions and guidance on examination conduct and administration, including the appeals process.

Description

The reviews and appeals system for GCSEs, AS and A levels has a number of stages, illustrated in the diagram below.

The Review of Marking and Moderation Process

[*The Qualification Level Conditions for GCE and GCSE*](#) (the Conditions) published by CCEA Regulation outlines the requirements for post results reviews which CCEA Awarding Organisation must follow for GCSE and A level. The three English awarding organisations (AQA, Pearson and OCR) follow conditions published by Ofqual; and the Welsh regulator publishes conditions which the Welsh awarding organisation, WJEC, must follow.

¹ Schools were [issued guidance](#) by the Department of Education informing centres that WJEC GCSEs would not be available for schools in NI to use from September 2017. This is the last summer series for which schools in NI would have entered candidates for WJEC GCSEs.

Appeals

Review of Marking/Moderation

If a school is unsatisfied with the result of a review of marking, review of moderation, malpractice decision, or a judgement on a reasonable adjustment or special consideration, it can make an appeal to the relevant awarding organisation. Private students are the exception – awarding organisations must accept appeals requests directly from private students. An appeal can be made regarding the outcome of one candidate or more than one, if they are all thought to be affected by the same issue. For GCSE qualifications, appeals against reviews of marking and reviews of moderation decisions are only allowed where a centre believes there has been a procedural failure by the awarding organisation. In these cases they need to show the awarding organisation had not applied its procedures consistently or followed them correctly or fairly.

For AS and A levels, the grounds on which a result can be appealed have been extended. Commencing in 2018 for all AS and A level subjects, centres could appeal the mark a candidate was given if they believe one or more of the following:

- a marking or moderation error was not corrected when the original result was reviewed;
- there was an error in the review itself; or
- the awarding organisation has made a procedural error

Malpractice

Centres may submit appeals regarding an awarding organisation's decisions about malpractice on one or more of the following grounds:

- the awarding organisation's procedures were not followed;
- new evidence has come to light;
- the decision was unreasonable given existing evidence;
- the sanction was disproportionate.

Reasonable Adjustment, Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

Centres may also submit appeals related to reasonable adjustments and special consideration, if they believe due procedures have not been followed correctly.

The Appeals Process

The awarding organisations have in place a two-stage appeals process:

- a preliminary appeal (formally referred to as a 'stage 1' appeal) is a review of the case by a senior member of the awarding organisation who has not been previously involved with the case;
- an appeal hearing (formally referred to as a 'stage 2' appeal), at which applicants and awarding organisations present their case to a panel, which the awarding organisation convenes. The panel comprises at least three members, one of whom must be independent (that means someone who is not, and has not at any time during the previous five years, been a member of the board or its committees, or an employee or examiner in the awarding organisation). A centre can only request an appeal hearing after having gone through a preliminary appeal.

The Examination Procedures Review Service (EPRS)

If a centre is still dissatisfied with the outcome following an appeal, it can apply to the Examination Procedures Review Service (EPRS) within 25 working days of receiving the outcome from the awarding organisation. The EPRS is provided by CCEA Regulation. CCEA Regulation will review each application and arrange a review hearing if appropriate. CCEA Regulation will look at whether the awarding organisation has followed the appropriate procedures and used them properly and fairly. CCEA Regulation will only look at whether or not the rules about the examination, how it was marked and how the qualification was graded have been properly followed. If it is found that the awarding organisation has not followed its own procedures or has not secured the outcomes required by the regulations of CCEA Regulation, and a candidate had been disadvantaged as a result, the application to EPRS may be upheld. Awarding organisations must give due regard to the outcome of EPRS hearings, both in respect of results issued to the candidate making the application and, where appropriate, other potentially affected results. You can find further details of the review and EPRS process on [CCEA Regulation's website](#).

Data Source

Awarding organisations submit data to Ofqual for GCSEs, AS and A levels they award. Ofqual process these data returns and share them with CCEA Regulation. Any provider that does not return a complete set of data within the collection period is contacted to make sure the data are as complete as possible. Due to the nature of appeals, the awarding organisations may revise their figures for an examination series in subsequent years.

Limitations

Because the data does not originate in Regulation but is collected from awarding organisations, CCEA Regulation cannot guarantee that the information received from the awarding organisations is correct. However, CCEA Regulation compares the data over time and checks for systematic issues. Summary data are sent back to awarding organisations for checking and confirmation.

Revisions

Once published, data are not usually subject to revision, although subsequent releases may be revised to update data that were previously unavailable or subject to change.

Confidentiality and Rounding

To ensure confidentiality of the accompanying data, if the value is less than 3, it is represented as 0~ and 0 represents zero values.

Total values of rows or columns are calculated using unrounded figures; the sum of rounded figures may differ from the total reported. Some totals may be masked to prevent small counts being calculable.

Status

These statistics are classified as Official Statistics.

Useful links

Previous releases of malpractice statistics for Northern Ireland as well as those for England and Wales can be found [here](#).

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on our publications. Should you have any comments on this statistical release and how to improve it to meet your needs please contact us at ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk.

We wish to make our publications widely accessible. Please contact us at ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk if you have any specific accessibility requirements.

This publication is available at ccea.org.uk/regulation/statistics.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

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