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Enquiries About Results and Appeals

Report on the June 2009 GCSE and A Level Examinations Series

March 2010

Ofqual/10/4731

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Introduction

This is a report on enquiries about results and appeals made to awarding organisations for the June 2009 GCSE and A level examinations series in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The report provides details of the number of enquiries about results and appeals, and the number of these that resulted in changes to candidates' overall subject grades. The report also summarises the awarding organisations' performance in relation to providing notification of the result of enquiries and appeals within the deadlines set out in the *GCSE, GCE and AEA Code of Practice* (Ofqual/09/4151). The five awarding organisations offering these qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are:

- Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)
- Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)
- Edexcel
- Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)
- WJEC.

The awarding organisations provide the regulators in England (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation; Ofqual), Wales (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills; DCELLS) and Northern Ireland (Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment; CCEA) with statistical data on enquiries about results and appeals.

The report:

- explains the processes and 2009 reporting arrangements for enquiries about results and appeals
- provides information about the three common services provided by the awarding organisations for enquiries about results and the two stages for appeals
- provides data on the number of enquiries and appeals received, the number of resulting subject grade changes and the performance of each awarding organisation in meeting relevant deadlines.

The enquiries about results and appeals process

Enquiries about results

The regulators in England (Ofqual), Wales (DCELLS) and Northern Ireland (CCEA) publish the *GCSE, GCE and AEA Code of Practice* (Ofqual/09/4151) to promote quality, consistency, accuracy and fairness in assessment and awarding. The code of practice helps maintain standards, both within and between awarding organisations and from year to year. It lays down agreed principles, processes and practices for the awarding organisations that develop and deliver these qualifications.

Section 9 of the code of practice requires that each awarding organisation publishes arrangements for the submission of enquiries about results and for appeals against the awarding organisation's decision.

Candidates receive the results of their summer examinations in August. If an examination centre (usually a school or college) is concerned about a candidate's grade, it can ask the awarding organisation to investigate the grade. Candidates cannot ask awarding organisations to investigate; they must ask through their centre. This is because centres have responsibility for entering candidates for examinations. Private candidates are an exception; they can ask the awarding organisation directly.

If the investigation shows that marking or processing errors have been made and the candidate's grade is incorrect, the awarding organisation will adjust the grade to the correct level. Since 2001, grades have been adjusted down as well as up.

The code of practice requires that awarding organisations offer three post-results services for reviewing and checking examination scripts and coursework¹. These are common to all awarding organisations and comprise:

- Service 1: a clerical re-check for an individual candidate
- Service 2: a post-results review of marking for an individual candidate
- Service 3: a re-moderation of coursework with feedback.

¹ The deadlines for completion of these services are in the *GCSE, GCE and AEA Code of Practice*, April 2009 (Ofqual/09/4151) (www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/2009-04-14-code-of-practice.pdf)

Service 1: a clerical re-check for an individual candidate

The awarding organisation checks the script to make sure that every question has been marked and that the total number of marks awarded for each paper is correct. It provides a statement of the marks awarded for each part of the examination for the candidate. Centres must request this service by 20 September. The deadline by which awarding organisations must notify centres about the outcome of enquiries about results for Service 1 is 20 calendar days from the date of receipt.

Service 2: a post-results review of marking for an individual candidate

A second examiner (wherever possible, marking should be undertaken by someone other than the original examiner) reviews the marking of the first examiner to make sure that the authorised mark scheme has been applied reliably. This process may also be called a 're-mark'. The awarding organisation also does a full clerical re-check (Service 1).

There are two levels of priority for Service 2:

- non-priority – centres must request this by 20 September
- priority – centres can request this if the candidate's place at further or higher education depends upon the outcome of an enquiry about results. Requests for a priority level Service 2 enquiry must be submitted within eight calendar days of the result being issued.

The deadline by which awarding organisations must notify centres about the outcome of enquiries about results for Service 2 is 30 calendar days at non-priority level and 18 calendar days at priority level.

Service 3: a re-moderation of coursework with feedback

The awarding organisation re-moderates a centre's coursework marks and provides feedback on the centre's assessment of the coursework. Service 3 is not available for individual candidates as the re-moderation must be undertaken on the sample of candidate work used in the initial moderation. Service 3 subject grades can only be confirmed or raised.

This service must be requested by 20 September. The deadline by which awarding organisations must notify centres about the outcome of enquiries about results for Service 3 is 40 calendar days.

Appeals

If a centre has gone through the enquiries about the results process and is still dissatisfied with the outcome, it can appeal to the awarding organisation.

A centre must make an appeal within 14 calendar days of receiving the outcome of the enquiry.

There are two stages in the appeals process:

- Stage 1 – a review of the case by a senior member of the awarding organisation who has not been involved previously with the particular case
- Stage 2 – a presentation of the case to an appeals panel. The awarding organisation convenes the panel. It will comprise at least three members, one of whom must be independent (someone who is not, and has not been, a member of the awarding organisation's board or committees, or an employee or examiner at the awarding organisation, at any time during the previous seven years). A centre can take the appeal to Stage 2 only after going through Stage 1.

Appeals must be completed within 50 working days of being lodged with the awarding organisation.

If a centre is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 appeal, it can apply for a hearing to the Examinations Appeals Board (EAB). The EAB is independent of the awarding organisations and the regulators and has been set up to ensure that schools and colleges, and through them candidates and parents, are satisfied that the grades awarded are as fair and accurate as they can be.

June 2009 examinations series data

The number of enquiries about results received by awarding organisations represented a small proportion of the total entry for these qualifications. For A level, 1.14 per cent of the 5.9 million unit entries resulted in a request for a Service 2 priority or non-priority re-mark. For GCSE, the number of requests for a re-mark represented 1.5 per cent of the total subject entry.

The number of subject grades that changed following enquiries about results constituted a very small proportion of the total subject grades awarded. The three enquiries services resulted in changes to 0.3 per cent of the total GCSE subject grades issued and 0.4 per cent of the total A level subject grades issued.

In virtually all cases, 100 per cent of enquiries were completed and notification of the outcome provided to centres within the required deadlines. Where this was not the case, awarding organisations had always completed at least 99 per cent of the enquiries within the deadlines.

There were 504 appeals received by awarding organisations following the completion of the initial enquiries about results process. There were 48 changes to subject grades as the result of an appeal.

Enquiries about results

The entry figures in the tables on the following pages were provided by the awarding organisations.

- GCSE data include GCSE short course and applied GCSE data.
- A level data include GCE and applied GCE data.

The awarding organisations and regulators have an agreed schedule for reporting on enquiries about results and appeals.

Total entry

Qualification	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	CCEA²	WJEC	Total
GCSE (subject entry)	2,800,886	1,372,063	1,299,735	168,897	581,831	6,223,412
A level (subject entry)	913,409	518,586	570,489	57,113	157,843	2,217,440
A level (unit entry)	2,348,256	1,473,438	1,546,904	150,113	409,152	5,927,863

Service 1: clerical re-check

	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	CCEA	WJEC	Total
GCSE (subject entry)	2,800,886	1,372,063	1,299,735	168,897	581,831	6,223,412
Enquiries received <i>(% of total subject entry)</i>	670 <i>(0.024)</i>	480 <i>(0.035)</i>	290 <i>(0.022)</i>	7 <i>(0.004)</i>	147 <i>(0.025)</i>	1,594 <i>(0.026)</i>
Enquiries completed within deadline <i>(% of enquiries received)</i>	670 <i>(100)</i>	480 <i>(100)</i>	290 <i>(100)</i>	7 <i>(100)</i>	147 <i>(100)</i>	1,594 <i>(100)</i>
Changes to a subject grade as a result of enquiries <i>(% of total subject entry)</i>	51 <i>(0.002)</i>	0 <i>(0.000)</i>	3 <i>(0.000)</i>	0 <i>(0.000)</i>	3 <i>(0.001)</i>	57 <i>(0.001)</i>
A level (unit entry)	2,348,256	1,473,438	1,546,904	150,113	409,152	5,927,863
A level (subject entry)	913,409	518,586	570,489	57,113	157,843	2,217,440
Enquiries received at unit level <i>(% of total unit entry)</i>	246 <i>(0.010)</i>	193 <i>(0.013)</i>	300 <i>(0.019)</i>	1 <i>(0.001)</i>	42 <i>(0.010)</i>	782 <i>(0.013)</i>
Enquiries completed within deadline <i>(% of enquiries received)</i>	246 <i>(100)</i>	193 <i>(100)</i>	300 <i>(100)</i>	1 <i>(100)</i>	42 <i>(100)</i>	782 <i>(100)</i>
Changes to a subject grade as a result of enquiries <i>(% of total subject entry)</i>	19 <i>(0.002)</i>	14 <i>(0.003)</i>	25 <i>(0.004)</i>	0 <i>(0.000)</i>	0 <i>(0.000)</i>	58 <i>(0.003)</i>

² In previous reports (pre-summer 2006 reporting), CCEA GCSE (subject entry) figures included unit entries. Also in previous reports, CCEA A level (subject entry) figures excluded AS entries.

Service 2: non-priority level re-mark

	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	CCEA	WJEC	Total
GCSE (subject entry)	2,800,886	1,372,063	1,299,735	168,897	581,831	6,223,412
Enquiries received <i>(% of total subject entry)</i>	44,351 <i>(1.58)</i>	22,599 <i>(1.65)</i>	19,267 <i>(1.48)</i>	3,669 <i>(2.17)</i>	4,931 <i>(0.85)</i>	94,817 <i>(1.52)</i>
Enquiries completed within deadline <i>(% of enquiries received)</i>	44,351 <i>(100)</i>	22,599 <i>(100)</i>	19,267 <i>(100)</i>	3,669 <i>(100)</i>	4,931 <i>(100)</i>	94,817 <i>(100)</i>
Changes to a subject grade as a result of enquiries <i>(% of total subject entry)</i>	7,330 <i>(0.26)</i>	4,888 <i>(0.36)</i>	1,241 <i>(0.10)</i>	634 <i>(0.38)</i>	916 <i>(0.16)</i>	15,009 <i>(0.24)</i>
A level (unit entry)	2,348,256	1,473,438	1,546,904	150,113	409,152	5,927,863
A level (subject entry)	913,409	518,586	570,489	57,113	157,843	2,217,440
Enquiries received at unit level <i>(% of total unit entry)</i>	20,084 <i>(0.85)</i>	15,018 <i>(1.02)</i>	13,701 <i>(0.89)</i>	1,935 <i>(1.29)</i>	2,786 <i>(0.68)</i>	53,524 <i>(0.90)</i>
Enquiries completed within deadline <i>(% of enquiries received)</i>	20,084 <i>(100)</i>	15,018 <i>(100)</i>	13,701 <i>(100)</i>	1,935 <i>(100)</i>	2,786 <i>(100)</i>	53,524 <i>(100)</i>
Changes to a subject grade as a result of enquiries <i>(% of total subject entry)</i>	2,506 <i>(0.27)</i>	1,688 <i>(0.33)</i>	1,260 <i>(0.22)</i>	291 <i>(0.51)</i>	415 <i>(0.26)</i>	6,160 <i>(0.28)</i>

Service 2: priority level re-mark

	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	CCEA	WJEC	Total
A level (unit entry)	2,348,256	1,473,438	1,546,904	150,113	409,152	5,927,863
A level (subject entry)	913,409	518,586	570,489	57,113	157,843	2,217,440
Enquiries received at unit level <i>(% of total unit entry)</i>	4,824 <i>(0.20)</i>	4,532 <i>(0.31)</i>	3,894 <i>(0.25)</i>	606 <i>(0.40)</i>	301 <i>(0.07)</i>	14,157 <i>(0.24)</i>
Enquiries completed within deadline <i>(% of enquiries received)</i>	4,824 <i>(100)</i>	4,532 <i>(100)</i>	3,887 <i>(99.82)</i>	606 <i>(100)</i>	301 <i>(100)</i>	14,150 <i>(99.95)</i>
Changes to a subject grade as a result of enquiries <i>(% of total subject entry)</i>	554 <i>(0.06)</i>	435 <i>(0.08)</i>	332 <i>(0.06)</i>	72 <i>(0.13)</i>	56 <i>(0.04)</i>	1,449 <i>(0.07)</i>

Service 3: re-moderation of coursework

Service 3 enquiries are the number of requests for a sample of candidate work to be re-moderated rather than the number of candidates affected (a moderation sample will include the work of several candidates and therefore a single enquiry may result in changes to the grade of more than one candidate).

	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	CCEA	WJEC	Total
GCSE (subject entry)	2,800,886	1,372,063	1,299,735	168,897	581,831	6,223,412
Enquiries received	588	284	321	6	27	1,226
Enquiries completed within deadline	588	284	321	6	27	1,226
<i>(% of enquiries received)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(100)</i>
Changes to a subject grade as a result of enquiries	2,828	1,134	593	78	67	4,700
<i>(% of total subject entry)</i>	<i>(0.10)</i>	<i>(0.08)</i>	<i>(0.05)</i>	<i>(0.05)</i>	<i>(0.01)</i>	<i>(0.08)</i>
A level (unit entry)	2,348,256	1,473,438	1,546,904	150,113	409,152	5,927,863
A level (subject entry)	913,409	518,586	570,489	57,113	157,843	2,217,440
Enquiries received at unit level	586	455	270	2	36	1,349
Enquiries completed within deadline	586	454	270	2	36	1,348
<i>(% of enquiries received)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(99.8)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(99.9)</i>
Changes to a subject grade as a result of enquiries	823	297	344	0	6	1,470
<i>(% of total subject entry)</i>	<i>(0.09)</i>	<i>(0.06)</i>	<i>(0.06)</i>	<i>(0.00)</i>	<i>(0.00)</i>	<i>(0.07)</i>

Appeals**Stage 1 and Stage 2 appeals**

	AQA	Edexcel	OCR	CCEA	WJEC	Total
Stage 1 appeals received	75	314	106	7	2	504
Stage 2 appeals received	18	10	11	1	1	41
Stage 2 appeals completed within 50 working days of receipt	14	3	11	1	1	30
<i>(%)</i>	<i>(78)</i>	<i>(30)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(100)</i>	<i>(73)</i>
Changes to a subject grade as the result of appeals	2	32	12	2	0	48

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First published in 2010.

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Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
Spring Place
Coventry Business Park
Herald Avenue
Coventry CV5 6UB
Telephone 0300 303 3344
Textphone 0300 303 3345
Helpline 0300 303 3346
www.ofqual.gov.uk

This report has been published in accordance with the guidance for official statistics produced by the UK Statistics Authority following the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. In addition, guidance in the Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008 has been followed.

Alison Fisher – Head of Profession for Statistics

Chris Harvey – Policy Lead