

GUIDANCE

# Appeals in vocational and technical qualifications

Guide to the data submission process

**ofqual**

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## Introduction

In order to fulfil our regulatory and accreditation functions as set out in the [Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](#), we require awarding organisations to provide exams delivery data for regulated qualifications.

## What data will be collected?

Data on appeals made for assessments taken or decisions made during the 2020 to 2021 academic year (1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021).

The data should include all appeals relating to the following qualifications and learners in centres in England:

- all Tech Awards, Tech Certs, Tech Levels and Applied Generals
- all Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs)
- all ESOL Skills for Life Qualifications
- all Core Maths, IB Diplomas, and Cambridge Pre-Us

The data should only include appeals against assessments taken or decisions made during the 2020 to 2021 academic year and should include both 'in-progress' and completed appeals. Appeals made outside of this time period should not be included, for example, an appeal completed in 2020 to 2021 for an appeal made in 2019 to 2020 should not be included.

## When will data be collected?

Data will be collected according to the [vocational and technical qualifications reporting schedule](#) which is agreed and maintained by Ofqual's data services team.

There will be three reporting deadlines for this collection, to capture the progress of appeals at different points in time. The data submitted should reflect the current status of all appeals made during the 2020 to 2021 academic year at the data cut-off point.

## General completion guidelines

1. Numeric values must not have any formatting.
2. We previously collected data on completed appeals only. This year we want to understand the volumes of appeals you are receiving and so we have added the field 'AppealsReceived'. Please report on all appeals received, whether they have been completed or not, by the data cut-off date.

3. We have also added a 'AppealsRejected' field to capture the number of appeals you have received which you have decided not to progress, for example, because they have been made on invalid grounds.
4. We have also added the field 'NumberOfCandidates' to capture the number of candidates involved in all of the appeal requests you have received. This may be different to the number of qualification grades challenged.
5. A complete appeal is one that has an outcome (i.e., upheld or not upheld) and any grade changes as a result of the appeal have been determined and the appeal is not expected to progress to a further appeal stage at the point of data cut-off. Any appeals which have been completed at one stage and have progressed to another and the outcome is yet to be determined should not be included in the figures for completed appeals. Appeals which progress through multiple stages should be classified as one appeal and if the status of these changes between data submissions then please update the data as necessary.
6. We have added a 'TypeOfDecisionAppealed' field to separate out the types of decisions that are subject to appeals from the grounds of appeal. This template is therefore now at the level of 'GroundOfAppeal' for each 'TypeOfDecisionAppealed' for each qualification. Please note that you only need to include rows for the types of decision and ground of appeal that you have received. You do not need to submit blank rows or rows of zeros for any that you have not received.
7. The 'TypeOfDecisionAppealed' value of 'Eligibility for TAG' is accepted only for Functional Skills and ESOL Skills For Life qualifications. Where you are dealing with requests to review decisions on eligibility of TAGs as complaints, please classify all such complaints as appeals and report them in this data return.
8. Data on appeals made on multiple grounds should be submitted using the 'multiple' value under 'GroundOfAppeal' and should not be included under two or more other categories. For example, an appeal made on the grounds of 'administrative error – centre' and 'procedural error – centre' should be included under the 'multiple' ground of appeal category and not under both the 'administrative error – centre' and 'procedural error – centre' categories and therefore double counted in the data.
9. For appeals made on multiple grounds, the overall appeal should be considered 'upheld', and counted in Field 12, if it has been upheld on any ground.
10. Please note that you should report only **qualification level grades** that were challenged and, if applicable, changed. For certificating learners, where appeals are made at the assessment level, it is assumed that those appeals would also ultimately affect the qualification grade to which they contribute and should be recorded as such.

## File format

You will need to submit the file through Ofqual's Data Portal. The file must be CSV format and the first row must be headers as displayed in the '**Name**' column of the table below. The subsequent rows must have the values of the data to be reported which must match the format and validation rules below. An [example of the CSV file is provided as a separate download](#).

**NB.** If a file needs to be submitted again, any previous files submitted will need to be rejected by Ofqual's Data Services team before an updated file can be submitted. You will need to contact [Data.Services@Ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:Data.Services@Ofqual.gov.uk) to notify us if you intend to resubmit a file.

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Name	Description	Position	Validation Regular Expression	Description of Regular Expression
ReportingDate	Date the file was due to be submitted regardless of when it was actually uploaded	1	^(20)\d\d[-](0[1-9] 1[012])[-](0[1-9] 12)[0-9] 3[01])\$	The date in the following format: year (4 digits), a dash, month (2 digits), a dash, day (2 digits)  Format accepted 120 ODBC canonical <b>yyyy-mm-dd</b>
AcademicYear	Academic year that the appeal was requested e.g. 2020-2021	2	^(20)\d\d[-](20)\d\d \$	The academic year in the following format: start year (4 digits), a dash, end year (4 digits)  Format accepted <b>yyyy-yyyy</b>
AwardingOrganisation	Name of the awarding organisation	3	^.{1,100}\$	1 to 100 characters accepted
QualificationNumber	Qualification Number e.g. 123/1234/1	4	^.{1,10}\$	1 to 10 characters accepted
QualificationTitle	The qualification title as it appears on Ofqual's Register	5	^.{1,100}\$	1 to 100 characters accepted
TypeOfDecisionAppealed	The type of decision that is being appealed	6	^(Result based on assessment Result based on TAG Eligibility for TAG Malpractice or maladministration Reasonable adjustment Special consideration)\$	<p><b>Accepted values:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Result based on assessment</li> <li>• Result based on TAG</li> <li>• Eligibility for TAG</li> <li>• Malpractice or maladministration</li> <li>• Reasonable adjustment</li> <li>• Special consideration</li> </ul> <p>Note. 'Eligibility for TAG' is accepted only for Functional Skills and ESOL Skills For Life qualifications</p>

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GroundOfAppeal	Ground of appeal	7	^(Administrative error – centre  Administrative error – AO  Procedural inconsistency – centre  Procedural inconsistency – AO  Unreasonable exercise of academic judgement – centre  Unreasonable exercise of academic judgement – AO  Multiple  -2) \$	<p><b>Accepted values:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative error – centre</li> <li>• Administrative error – AO</li> <li>• Procedural inconsistency – centre</li> <li>• Procedural inconsistency - AO</li> <li>• Unreasonable exercise of academic judgement – centre</li> <li>• Unreasonable exercise of academic judgement – AO</li> <li>• Multiple</li> <li>• -2 (to be used in cases where the nature of appeal is unknown or not a valid nature of appeal)</li> </ul> <p>See Annex A for further guidance</p>
AppealsReceived	Number of appeals received, for each type of decision and ground of appeal, per qualification	8	^\d{1,5}\$	A numeric value between 0 and 99,999 accepted
NumberOfCandidates	Number of candidates involved in all appeals received for each type of decision and ground of appeal, per qualification	9	^\d{1,5}\$	A numeric value between 0 and 99,999 accepted
AppealsRejected	Number of appeals rejected, for each type of decision and ground of appeal, per qualification	10	^\d{1,5}\$	A numeric value between 0 and 99,999 accepted

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CompletedAppeals	Number of completed appeals, for each type of decision and ground of appeal, per qualification	11	^\d{1,5}\$	A numeric value between 0 and 99,999 accepted
AppealsUpheld	Number of appeals upheld, for each type of decision and ground of appeal, per qualification	12	^\d{1,5}\$	A numeric value between 0 and 99,999 accepted
AppealsNotUpheld	Number of appeals not upheld, for each type of decision and ground of appeal, per qualification	13	^\d{1,5}\$	A numeric value between 0 and 99,999 accepted
GradesChallenged	Number of qualification grades challenged, for each type of decision and ground of appeal, per qualification. Upheld appeals only	14	^\d{1,5}\$	A numeric value between 0 and 99,999 accepted
NoGradeChange	Number of qualification grades that remained unchanged, for each type of decision and ground of appeal, per qualification. Upheld appeals only	15	^\d{1,5}\$	A numeric value between 0 and 99,999 accepted
GradeChangeUp	Number of qualification grades changed upwards, for each type of decision and ground of appeal, per qualification. Upheld appeals only	16	^\d{1,5}\$	A numeric value between 0 and 99,999 accepted



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GradeChangeDown	Number of qualification grades changed downwards, for each type of decision and ground of appeal, per qualification. Upheld appeals only	17	^\d{1,5}\$	A numeric value between 0 and 99,999 accepted
GradeChangeTBD	Number of qualification grade changes still to be determined, for each type of decision and ground of appeal, per qualification, as the appeal is not yet complete. Upheld appeals only	18	^\d{1,5}\$	A numeric value between 0 and 99,999 accepted

## Annex A: Grounds of appeals

Some guidance to understand the ground of appeal values is given below:

- Administrative error – centre: the centre made an administrative error, e.g. they submitted an incorrect grade or they used an incorrect assessment mark when determining a grade.
- Administrative error – AO: the awarding organisation made an administrative error, e.g. they changed a grade during the processing of grades.
- Procedural inconsistency – centre: the centre did not apply a procedure correctly, e.g. they did not follow their Centre Policy, did not undertake internal quality assurance, did not take account of access arrangements or mitigating circumstances, such as illness.
- Procedural inconsistency – AO: the awarding organisation did not apply a procedure correctly, e.g. the awarding organisation did not follow its policy while investigating an allegation of malpractice and did not consider all of the relevant evidence while making a determination of malpractice
- Unreasonable exercise of academic judgement – centre: the centre made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which they determined a grade and/or in the determination of a grade from that evidence.
- Unreasonable exercise of academic judgement – AO: the awarding organisation made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement while awarding marks to an assessment completed by a candidate
- Multiple: Where an appeal has been lodged against multiple grounds described above

## Contacts

For all queries relating to the data collection process, amendments to data previously provided, or for general guidance, please contact us via the Ofqual Portal.



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