



Beechen Cliff School

Exam Results Guidance

Advice for students and parents



Introduction

This guide aims to explain the results process and answer some questions that may come up regarding results day, how marks are awarded and how to or whether to make an enquiry about results.

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How does marking of formal exams work?

Between June and August all exam papers and coursework modules are marked by examiners who work remotely for the exam boards. Most papers are scanned and added to electronic databases and the papers are downloaded by examiners at home in batches of 20 or so. Examiners are mostly teachers or retired teachers who are employed by the exam boards to mark papers. These examiners are continually checked for accuracy throughout the process to ensure that marking is fair and consistent across all markers.

In August the Standards Committees meet and analyse the numerical marks awarded across the whole country and decide for each separate module where the grade boundary will fall for that subject for this season. The numerical marks for each paper, perhaps 3 for each subject are added up and the grades are then awarded for each student.

For coursework units the process is that teachers mark the coursework at school. This is then internally moderated with other teachers and sometimes with other centres too to ensure the system has been followed accurately. The marks are then entered online and the exam boards request a sample of the work to double-check the marking. At this point the mark can be adjusted to ensure that marking has been fair and consistent across all schools.

On Results Day we download the results and print a results statement for each student. These are given out early on Results Day so that students have as much time as possible to make decision on their next steps.



What if the grades are lower than expected?

If a grade is not as expected there are several options available.

For those awaiting a university place there is a Priority Review of Marking which can be requested. The fee is approx. £45-70 per paper for this service. Once the request is received an examiner looks through the original marking and checks it is in line with the mark scheme. Only if an error is found will they actually award a new mark. They are not aware of the overall grade awarded or how close it is to the grade boundary as they only see the mark not the overall grade.

If there is time it is recommended that students order a copy of their script (their answers) to see first if there is an explanation for the disappointing mark. Mostly these copies will NOT show the examiners' marks just the candidate's answers.

We never recommend a review of marking unless the candidate is near the upper grade boundary as marks can and do often go down.

The overall grade boundaries for each subject can be located on the public exam board websites soon after results are published eg; <http://www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/results-days/grade-boundaries-and-ums/raw-mark-grade-boundary-tables>

New linear grades provided by the exam boards offer no breakdown to show the marks for each paper or component for each student, just the overall grade and overall mark.

It is possible for us to research and find out the breakdown by paper/component, but it is not simple or straightforward so please only ask for your mark breakdown when your overall grade is of real urgent concern. Priority will be given to those with further education places in jeopardy and all other requests will be processed at the start of September.



Is it worth getting a marking review?

Parents and students often ask if it is worth trying for a Review of Marking. This depends on the circumstances. Marks can go down as well as up, and mostly are confirmed as correct as the paper is not actually re-marked, merely checked to see if the original marking is considered to be within the bounds of the mark scheme. For instance, a question may be worth 11 marks and there may be 4 grading boundaries within this question eg: 0-1 very vague answer, 2-5 fair answer missing many points, 6-8 good answer making some strong points but without depth, 9-11 excellent answer including most or all key points.

The reviewer will check each answer to see if they agree with the BANDING that answer has been placed within. They will not ordinarily change the mark perhaps from 2 to 4. If they consider the answer has been placed within the wrong marking category then the paper may be actually re-marked.

It is NEVER advisable to review the marking of a paper unless it is close to the upper grade boundary. We will of course calculate this for you if you have an urgent concern and are considering review of one of more papers within a subject. The fees charged are per paper, for instance A level science has three papers which make up the overall grade.

To give an indication of the success of marking reviews please note the following statistics.

In 2017 of 55 reviews of marking requested 3 A level grades changed and 7 GCSE grades changed.

In 2018 of 49 reviews of marking requested 7 A level grades changed and 6 GCSE grades changed.

Nationally, the Government figures show an average of 20% of reviews resulting in a rise of one grade.

Further reading is supplied by Ofqual; <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reviews-of-marking-and-moderation-for-gcse-as-and-a-level-summer-2018-exam-series>



Key information regarding picking up/discussing results

The Examinations Officer and other senior staff are available throughout late August to help guide you through the various services on offer.

Two important things to note are:

- Only the student can make an enquiry and their written permission is essential.
- Payment must be made before the enquiry can be requested.

Key Dates are as follows for Results Summer 2019

A level results publication: 15th August 2019 8am

GCSE results publication: 22nd August 2019 9:30am

Priority 2 Review of Marking deadline: NOON on 21st August 2019

A level script request: NOON on 21st August 2019

GCSE script request: NOON on 28th August 2019

(NB not ALL exam boards offer this service for GCSE and some only offer copies for English Language and Maths)

Scripts should arrive around or before 5th September.

Review of Marking (non-urgent) deadline: 18th September 2019

Forms and fees will be available on results days at the school, or via email from the Exams Office. The office is manned at certain hours (usually 7am-12:30pm) between 14th August and 23rd August but please email exams@beechencliff.org.uk in the first instance, many queries can be resolved this way.

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