

# HE Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure

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## **1. Purpose**

The following details the procedure to follow when a student disagrees with assessment outcomes or progression and wishes to appeal against the Assessor/Tutor's decision. This Procedure applies to all programmes/courses.

## **2. Responsibility**

The Dean of College is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the appeals procedure. Head of Degree Programmes is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the appeals procedure. All teaching and assessment staff are responsible for informing learners of the procedure and for its effective operation within their programmes. Overall responsibility lies with the Dean of Higher Education and Research

## **3. Definition/Scope**

An academic appeal is defined as 'a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on admission, assessment, student progression and awards.' Decisions about entry requirements, reasonable adjustments for teaching and assessment for students with disabilities, progression rules, academic misconduct, assignment marks, module results, thesis submission and the award and classification of qualifications would be covered by the Academic Appeals Procedure.

The policy applies to any assessment made by the College. This includes at entry to a programme (assessment of prior knowledge and experience), during a programme or at the end of a programme.

Disagreement with the academic judgement of the examiners assessing the merits of an individual piece of work, or in reaching any decision based on the marks, grades and other information relating to a candidate's performance, does not in itself constitute grounds for a request for reconsideration by a candidate.

Those involved in consideration of an appeal at all stages will not attempt to re-examine the student, nor to appraise the professional judgement of the examiners, but to consider whether the decision of the Board of Examiners was fair and whether all relevant factors were considered.

This procedure applies to appeals on academic matters only. If a student is dissatisfied regarding any other matter they should utilise the relevant College policy, for example, the College's Complaints Procedure.

An academic appeal differs from a complaint and therefore appeals and complaints are considered under different procedures. A complaint is defined as a formal expression of dissatisfaction made by a student about either:

- The provision of their programme of study or related academic service/facility.
- Any other service provided by the College.

Therefore, the Academic Appeals Procedure should not be used to bring complaints.

An appeal may then only be based on one or more of the following grounds:

- Your performance was affected by factors outside your control, for example, sickness or accident (known as "extenuating circumstances") which you do not consider having been sufficiently, or fairly, considered.
- There has been an administrative error, examinations were not conducted according to regulations, or there has been some other material irregularity in conduct of assessment which has affected the student's results and/or classification.
- Other grounds where unfair treatment or discrimination is alleged which is outside the exercise of academic judgement and which for good reason had not been brought to the attention of the boards of examiners.

Please note that an appeal cannot be made against an academic judgement of college staff.

An appeal against a grade cannot be made following the outcome of the final Examination

Board unless the appeal is based upon extenuating circumstances or an administrative error.

An independent member of college staff will be made available to support and advise students through the Formal Appeals Procedure.

If the circumstances above apply, you should follow the procedure outlined below:

## 4. Process

### 4.1 Stage 1 – Informal Appeals Process

An informal appeal against a grade must be **within 7 working days** after receiving a grade. Please follow the process outlined in the flowchart in **Fig. 1**.

The student must be notified of the outcome, as a result of the internal verification process, **not later than ten working days** from that date raising the informal appeal, i.e.; discussion with the module lead, whose assessment decision the student is concerned with.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Informal Appeals Procedure outlined above, you should progress to Stage 2 – the Formal Appeals Procedure. The Course Leader or Head of Degree Programmes can offer further advice.

### 4.2 Stage 2 – Formal Appeals Procedure

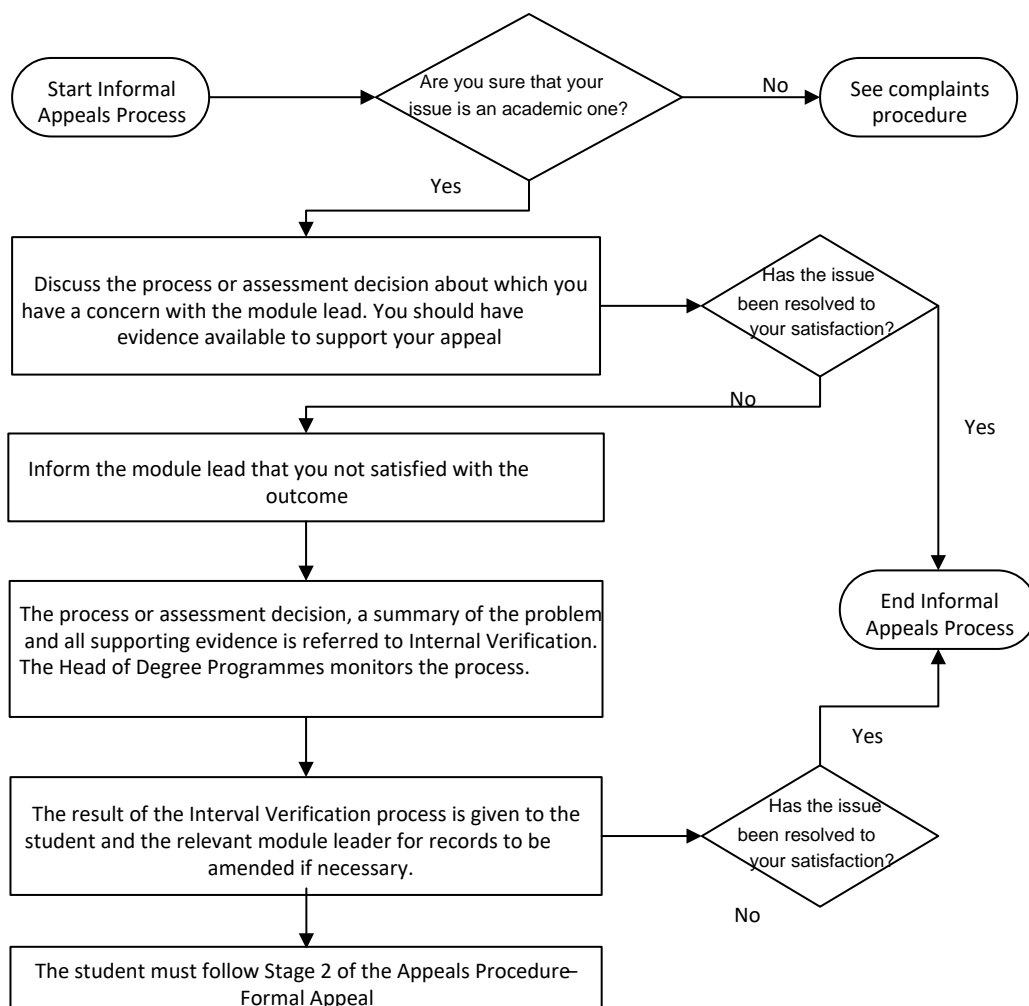
1. Complete a College Formal Appeal Form (attached) and attach relevant evidence documents **within 5 working days** of the informal appeal decision notification.
2. Submit your appeals form [here](#).
3. A date will be set for the Appeals Panel\* to meet **within 10 working days** of receiving the Appeal Form.
4. Students will be notified when the Appeals Panel will meet and who will hear the appeal.

5. The Appeals Panel will give the opportunity to everyone involved in the assessment to present his or her account of the matter under appeal. This account can be given either verbally or in writing, whichever is preferred.
6. The Appeals Panel will notify the student and the Assessor of its decision in writing through a Completion of Internal Procedures (COIP) letter, sent to the student **within 5 working days**. The decision of the Appeals Panel is binding within college.
7. The whole process should not exceed **28 calendar days** from receipt of formal academic appeal till the issue of COIP.
8. Records of the appeal decision will be filed by the Head of Degree Programmes and made available to the External Examiner.

*\*Note - The Appeals Panel will consist of three people, none of whom should have been involved with original assessment in any way and will normally be chaired by the Dean. The other members will be an independent lecturer within the Curriculum Area as well as the Head of Degree Programmes.*

#### **Possible outcomes from the Appeals Panel:**

- The appeal is upheld.
- The appeal is declined with reasons and advice on what to do next.
- That the original assessment decision is confirmed.
- That the original work should be re-assessed by the original assessor.
- That the original work should be re-assessed by a different assessor appointed by the panel.



**Fig.1: The Informal Process**

#### 4.3 Stage 3 – – Referral to Open University review

1. If you are unhappy with the Appeals Panel decision at the College, you have the right to appeal to the validating partner, the Open University (OU). You will have **28 calendar days** from receipt of COIP to appeal to the OU. The review stage (three) will be received and managed by The Senate Academic Appeals Review Panel at the OU. The OU formal complaints procedures are detailed in section F1.27 and Appendix 1 of the [Open University Handbook for Validated Awards 2024-25](#).
  
2. The Office for the Independent Adjudicator [OIA](#), stipulates that formal and review stages (stages two and three above) should be completed within **90 calendar days** of the student raising their complaint or academic appeal at the formal stage.
  
3. The OU reviews your appeal if all the following are true:
  - Your appeal is against an institutional body, such as an Exam board, or the decision related to one or more of the following:
  - Your final award
  - Your progression from one stage or level of the programme to the next
  - Your assessment on the programme
  - Your admission to the programme and
  - You can demonstrate that you have exhausted all appropriate internal procedures open to you at your institution and,
  - You have grounds to believe that the partner institution's internal procedures and regulations for dealing with appeals were not interpreted or implemented correctly or fairly.
  - Disagreement with the academic judgement of an institutional body - an exam board, or an admissions board - cannot of itself constitute grounds for an appeal.



## Appendix: Appeal Form

### Formal Appeal Form

Student Name	
Qualification Title	
Programme	
Module Leader	
Internal Moderator	
Head of Degree Programmes	
Date	
Reason for Appeal (attach supporting evidence, assessment etc. as applicable)	
Student Signature	
Student Email Address	

Please ensure that the completed form is submitted through [here](#).