

General Principles

Students are encouraged to seek early resolution to concerns in relation to grading by seeking clarification and feedback on their results from course tutors prior to making a formal Academic Appeal.

An Academic Appeal is a request for a review of an Assessment and Award Board decision.

If a student decides to make an appeal the appeal will be submitted in writing no later than 20 working days from receipt of the assessment result. This time limit will be extended only in exceptional circumstances.

Stages of Appeal

The Formal Stage

On receipt of a formal academic appeal the Group Vice Principal for Quality and Curriculum Management undertakes an initial evaluation determine if the grounds for appeal are recognised as valid. Key questions asked at this stage are:

- Is this a complaint or academic appeal?
- Has the student set out clearly what the academic appeal is about?
- Has the student provided evidence in support of the academic appeal?
- What outcome is the student hoping for and can it be achieved?
- What assistance or support can be provided to the student in taking this forward?

Special attention needs to be given to identifying academic appeals that may require swift action eg where there may be an impact on mental health or for example where there are time limits for completion to meet the regulatory requirements of a professional course.

Examples of why an appeal may be rejected are:

- A student's disappointment with a result or classification where marks have been accurately recorded, assessment regulations correctly followed and where no evidence of irregularity exists;
- Questioning the academic or professional judgement of the assessors;
- When extenuating circumstances have already been considered by panel and the appropriate Award and Assessment Board;
- No appropriate explanation has been provided to account for the fact that evidence of extenuating circumstances was not submitted;
- The appeal is considered to be a complaint.

HE – Academic Appeals (Pearson)

If the appeal is rejected this will be communicated to the student in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal, giving a clear explanation and outlining the reasons for the decision in straightforward language. This will help the student decide whether or not to pursue the matter further.

If the appeal is to be formally investigated the student will be advised within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. The student may be asked at this stage to provide additional relevant information, a deadline will be given to produce this.

Once all relevant information is available the Group Vice Principal for Quality and Curriculum Management will nominate an investigating officer to investigate the appeal. The student will be invited to a meeting to discuss the appeal and invited to bring a representative.

The Investigating Officer will produce a report based on their investigations and present this to an Appeals panel. The panel will consist of the Group Vice Principal for Quality and Curriculum Management, the Investigating Officer, the HE Lead and a Curriculum Leader.

The panel will determine whether to reject or allow the appeal. The student will be provided with a written outcome at the conclusion of this stage.

If the decision is to reject the appeal the student will be given information on:

- the student's right to take the academic appeal to the review stage
- the grounds on which the student can do this
- the time limit for escalating to the review stage
- the appropriate procedure
- where and how to access support.

The student can expect to receive a response to their formal academic appeal within 20 working days of initial receipt.

The Review Stage

If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal stage the student can request a review. A request for a review is usually on limited grounds, including but not confined to:

- a review of the procedures followed at the formal stage
- a consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable in all circumstances
- new material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

The review stage will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation. An academic appeal must have been considered at the formal stage before it can be escalated to the review stage. If a student decides to request a review this will be

submitted in writing no later than 5 working days from receipt of the response to the formal academic appeal.

What the college will do when it receives a request for review

The Group Vice Principal for Quality and Curriculum Management will allocate the request for review to a designated senior member of staff not involved at any previous stage. It is important to be clear from the start of the review stage exactly what is being reviewed, and to ensure that both the reviewer and the student understand the purpose and scope of the review. If the student's expectations appear to exceed the scope of the review stage, the student will be advised of this as soon as possible in writing in order to manage expectations about possible outcomes.

Key questions asked at this stage are:

- were the relevant procedures followed during the formal stage?
- was the outcome reasonable in all the circumstances?
- has the student received clear reasons why the academic appeal was rejected at the formal stage?
- if new material evidence has been provided has the student given valid reasons for not supplying this earlier?

If the review of the academic appeal is not upheld, the outcome of the review stage will be communicated to the student in writing by issuing a Completion of Procedures letter as soon as possible and normally within 20 working days from of the request for a review. This will include a clear explanation and outline the reasons for the decision in straightforward language. This will help the student decide whether or not to pursue the matter further.

The decision will also advise the student about:

- Their right to submit a complaint to the OIA (the Independent Ombudsman Service) for review
- The time limit for doing so
- Where and how to access advice and support.

Once the review stage has been completed, the student is entitled to ask the OIA, (the Independent Ombudsman Service) to review his or her complaint about the outcome of the College's academic appeals process. The complaint should normally be submitted to the OIA within three months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.