Section Two, G: Academic Appeals

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Academic Appeals

This section of the regulations sets out the procedures for processing student academic appeals.

PART A - General Information about Academic Appeals

1. Introduction and Scope

1.1. An academic appeal is "a challenge to or request for reconsideration of a decision by an academic body that makes decisions on student progress, assessment and awards.[1]" ((Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)).

1.2. This section of the regulations applies to students who wish to appeal against the decision of the following academic bodies:

1.2.1. Progression and Award Board (henceforth "Examination Board") for either an undergraduate or postgraduate taught course of study;

1.2.2. Faculty/School Student Progress Panel;

1.2.3. Academic Misconduct Panels (taught students);

1.2.4. Faculty PGR Committee and Research Degrees Progression and Award Board ;

1.2.5. Examination Board at a Partner institution (Appeals Outcome Review only).

1.3. For the purposes of these regulations the term 'students' includes postgraduate researchers.

1.4. The procedures set out in the Academic Appeals regulations are for current students.

2. General Information about Academic Appeals

2.1. Students who submit an appeal can expect to do so without risk of disadvantage or of unfair treatment. The University recognises that pursuing an appeal may be stressful and aims to finalise the process as quickly and efficiently as possible. Student well-being will be considered throughout the process and reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary in order to ensure equality and accessibility for all students submitting an appeal.

2.2. Students have the right to withdraw their appeal at any time.

2.3. Students may not appeal against the academic judgement of the academic body or its

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[1] The OIA is an independent body set up to review student complaints about higher education providers in England and Wales. See the OIA's Good Practice Framework - Handling complaints and academic appeals

academic nominee. Academic judgement is defined by the OIA as "a judgement which is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential", for example, a judgement about marks awarded for assessment, progression, degree classification or the achievement of course outcomes.

2.4. Appeals are not legal proceedings and legal representation would only be appropriate in very exceptional circumstances. The involvement of a legal representative has potential to change the nature of the procedure or delay the process. However, if a student asks to use a legal representative, the University will carefully consider whether it would be reasonable in the particular circumstances of the case to allow them to do so.

2.5. Students are reminded that all appeals will be dealt with confidentially. All information and evidence submitted as part of an appeal will be treated as sensitive personal data under UK GDPR legislation ('special category data') and processed as such. Materials will be kept securely and destroyed per the records retention policy, with access restricted to those staff in the University who have a legitimate reason for accessing it in order to process the appeal.

2.6. The University also has a complaints procedure[2]. This procedure is distinct from the procedure for Academic Appeals.

2.7. On occasion, students will submit both an appeal and a complaint at the same time and when this happens it may be necessary to suspend one process until the other is completed.

3. Advice on the Appeals Process for Students

3.1. Advice on the process can be found on the Student Hub.

3.2. Independent advice and support for students is available from the University of Sussex Students' Union and students considering submitting an appeal are strongly encouraged to contact the Students' Union Advisors at the earliest opportunity to discuss their appeal submission.

PART B – Academic Appeals Process – General Information

4. Steps of the Academic Appeals Process

4.1. The University's appeal process consists of three steps – Informal Resolution, Formal Appeal and Appeal Outcome Review.

[2] See Complain about the University : University of Sussex

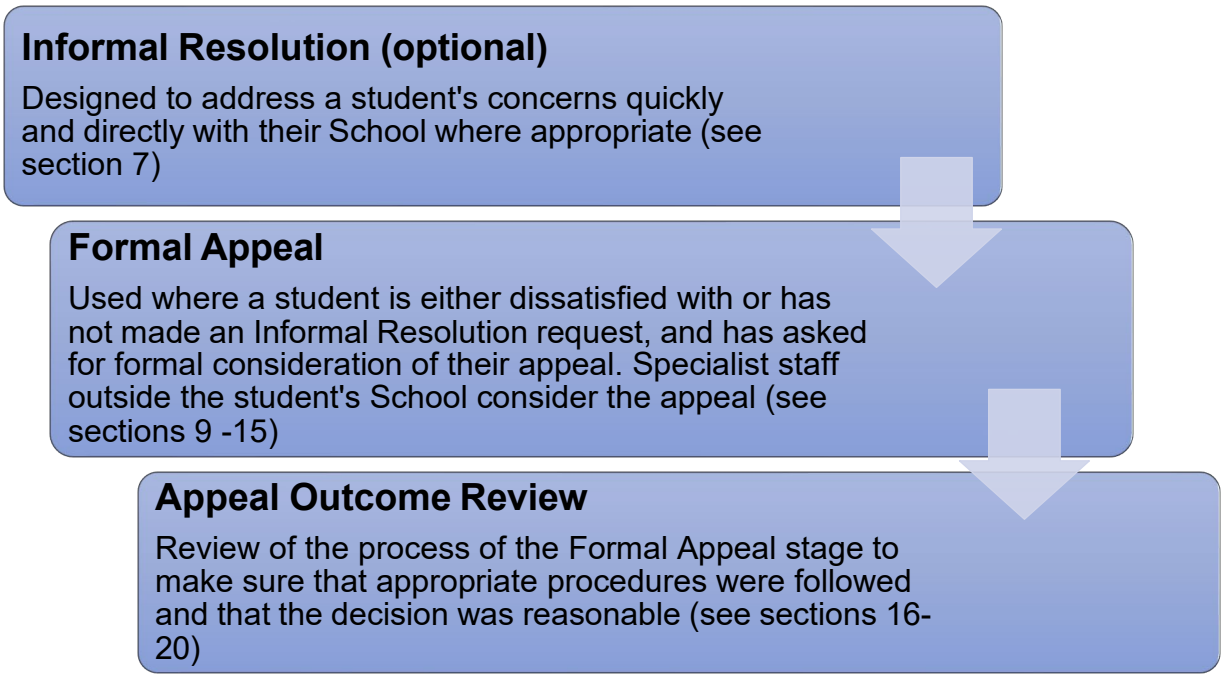


Figure 1: Diagram showing three steps in Academic Appeals process.

5. Deadlines for Submitting Academic Appeals

5.1. Students should submit by the following deadlines:

5.1.1. Informal Resolution – **must be submitted within a maximum of 10 University working days** following receipt of the academic body's decision;

5.1.2. Formal Appeal – within **10 University working days** following receipt of the academic body's decision or within 10 university working days following receipt of the outcome of Informal Resolution, whichever is the longer;

5.1.3. Appeal Outcome Review Request – within **10 University working days** of receipt of their Formal Appeal Outcome.

5.2. Exceptionally, late appeals or appeal outcome review requests may be accepted for consideration if there is good reason to do so. Such reasons may include:

5.2.1. Where a student has Reasonable Adjustments (RA) in place which recommend adjustments in order to accommodate difficulties around meeting deadlines; this is limited to 7 days after the appeal deadline;

5.2.2. Where there is evidence of mitigating circumstances that would have prevented a student from submitting their appeal by the relevant deadline (e.g. hospitalisation).

This list is not exhaustive.

6. Timeframes for Processing Academic Appeals

6.1. The completion of the full formal appeals process by the University (Formal Appeal

and Outcome Review) should normally take no longer than **3 calendar months** as prescribed by the OIA. If deadlines are exceeded, the student will be kept informed.

7. Informal Resolution

7.1. Informal Resolution is a route to correct administrative or technical errors, in a timely manner.

7.2. Students should consult the relevant appendix of these regulations to determine whether or not their issue or concern can be considered via the process of Informal Resolution with their School.

7.3. The School must provide a response to the student in a timely manner. This will ensure that, where Informal Resolution has not proven successful, students are still able to proceed to the formal stages of the appeals process if they wish.

7.4. A written response should be provided to the student setting out the outcome.

PART C – Formal Stages of the Academic Appeals Process

8. Important Note on Evidence for a Formal Appeal or an Appeal Review Request

8.1. Evidence requirements

8.1.1. Evidence should be a letter or email from someone who knows you in a professional capacity and who can independently verify your circumstances. Evidence should be robust, explain the impact of the circumstance and the dates and duration of the circumstance.

8.2. New Supporting Evidence

8.2.1. Where an appeal includes new supporting evidence (i.e., evidence that was not made available to the academic body for good reason), original hard copy documentation may be requested before the appeal will be considered. Students will be informed if this is the case.

8.3. Supporting Evidence not in English Language

8.3.1. If the original documentation is not in English, the student is required to also submit a translation into English that has been certified by an independent person or agency. They must provide their contact details to confirm the translation is a true and accurate representation of the original source.

8.4. Falsified Evidence

8.4.1. Should the Appeals Office have cause to suspect that the documentary evidence provided with the appeal has been falsified, they will refer the case to the Office for Complaints, Conduct and Funding for consideration under the Student Discipline Regulation. The appeal will be paused, or the appeal outcome withheld until the matter has been resolved.

8.5. Reasonable Adjustments (RA)

8.5.1. Students with a fluctuating condition that is covered by Reasonable Adjustments (‘RA’) who suffer an acute episode or worsening of that fluctuating

condition are not required to submit fresh medical or other evidence related to the condition. The RA constitutes the evidence-base for such applications.

8.5.2. However, students are required to submit evidence relating to conditions or mitigating circumstances that are not covered by that established arrangement.

9. Formal Appeal

9.1. Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the Informal Resolution or choose not to seek Informal resolution, they can submit a Formal Appeal.

9.2. The submission of an appeal is not a guarantee of a successful outcome. The decision that the student is appealing against remains in force until the appeal is completed.

9.3. Formal Appeals should be submitted within **10 University working days** of the date the University informed the student of the academic body's decision or Informal Resolution outcome.

9.4. All appeals are assessed for level of urgency upon receipt. This is to ensure that urgent appeals are dealt with first. Where appeals are assessed as less urgent, they will be processed in the order in which they were received. Examples of urgent appeals are normally those where a successful outcome will allow a student to continue with their studies, undertake optional sits, or where there are visa implications.

10. Grounds for Making a Formal Appeal

10.1. Formal Appeals can only be made if they meet one or more of the specified grounds:

10.1.1. **Ground a) Illness or other mitigating circumstance:** there exists evidence of circumstances that have impacted on a student's studies which could not reasonably have been presented to the academic decision-making body by the relevant deadline;

10.1.2. **Ground b) procedural irregularity or error**; where the University has not acted in accordance with its own regulations or procedures, and this has had a detrimental effect on the outcome. Procedural irregularity does not include disagreement with an academic judgement or the application of discretionary rules within the regulations. An appeal on the basis of procedural irregularity must be supported by evidence;

10.1.3. **Ground c) Prejudice and Bias** there exists evidence of prejudice or of bias on the part of those making the decision. If students have a reasonable perception of prejudice or bias, this will be investigated to determine whether there exists evidence of prejudice or bias.

10.2. The following matters are not grounds for an academic appeal:

10.2.1. Academic judgement of the decision-making body which includes the markers of assessments. Academic judgement is defined as an opinion that can only be given by an academic expert, for example, a judgement about marks awarded for assessment, progression, degree classification or the

achievement of course outcomes;

10.2.2. Student's lack of awareness of the relevant procedure or regulations;

10.2.3. Matters that would be more appropriately addressed through the University's Complaints Procedure[3].

This list is not exhaustive.

10.2.4. Appeals of decisions made by other types of University decision making bodies on matters unrelated to a student's progress, assessment or award, will be set out by the regulation or policy governing that area.

10.3. Further detail and derogations from the Academic Appeals regulations for different types of appeal are laid out in the following documents:

10.3.1. Examination Board for either an undergraduate or postgraduate taught course of study, see Appendix 1;

10.3.2. Faculty/School Student Progress Panel Decision, see Appendix 2;

10.3.3. Academic Misconduct Panels for taught students, see Appendix 3;

10.3.4. Research Degree Examination Board for either a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) course of study and Doctoral School Board, see Appendix 4;

10.3.5. Professional Doctorate Examination Board, see Appendix 5;

10.3.6. Examination Board at a Partner institution (Appeals Outcome Review only), see Appendix 6.

11. Technical Conditions for the Submission of a Formal Appeal or an Appeal Review Request

11.1. Appeals will be considered only if submitted in accordance with these technical conditions:

11.1.1. it is submitted using the correct appeal form;

11.1.2. includes all necessary documentary evidence substantiating the grounds of the appeal;

11.1.3. within the applicable deadline (see section 5);

11.1.4. includes a clear explanation of how it meets one or more of the grounds for appeal or appeal outcome review;

11.1.5. includes an explanation of the outcome that is being requested;

[3]See Student Complaints website

12. Processing of Formal Appeals by the Appeals Office

12.1. On receipt of a Formal Appeal, the Appeals Office will undertake an initial assessment to determine whether it meets the technical conditions outlined in section 11 of these regulations.

12.2. If the appeal meets the technical conditions, it will proceed to formal consideration in line section 13 of these regulations.

12.3. In some circumstances, the Appeals Office may contact the student for additional information to be submitted by a given deadline. If the student fails to respond, the appeal may be rejected.

12.4. Where the appeal does not meet the technical conditions, it will be rejected. The student can ask for a review of the decision by submitting an Appeal Outcome Review request which will be considered in line with section 16 of these regulations.

13. Investigation of the Formal Appeal

13.1. The Formal Appeal will be investigated by the Appeals Office.

13.1.1. If there is a conflict of interest that would prevent an Appeals Officer from dealing with the case and any subsequent reviews, the case will be assigned to another member of staff who has the required training, experience and authority to process the appeal.

13.2. The Appeals Office will compile a case file, which normally contains the evidence base for the appeal:

13.2.1. Appeal form submitted by the student;

13.2.2. supporting evidence submitted by the student;

13.2.3. information relating to the decision made by the academic body that is the subject of the appeal;

13.2.4. any other relevant information gathered by the Appeals Office.

14. Formal Appeal Outcomes

14.1. When the Appeals Office has investigated the case, they will come to one of three outcomes. The outcomes are:

14.1.1. upheld in full: all grounds cited in the appeal can be upheld;

14.1.2. partially upheld: at least one ground for appeal can be upheld, but there are other grounds for appeal which cannot be upheld;

14.1.3. that the appeal is rejected as no grounds for appeal can be upheld.

14.2. If at least one ground for appeal can be upheld then the academic decision-making body will be asked to review its decision in light of the new information. It will consider whether the outcome that the student has requested can be offered. If the outcome is not permitted under the relevant academic regulations or should not be offered on the basis of academic judgement, then an alternative outcome should be considered. If no outcome can be offered, then this will be communicated to the student.

14.3. Appeal decisions that do not require academic judgement can be determined by the Appeals Office rather than being referred back to the academic decision-making body. Examples include: the uncapping of a resit that has already been offered or the removal of a late penalty.

15. Reasons for Rejecting the Formal Appeal

15.1. The Formal Appeal can be rejected for one or more of the following reasons:

15.1.1. The technical conditions as per clause 11 have not been met;

15.1.2. None of the grounds for appeal can be upheld.

15.1.3. that no evidence, or no relevant evidence, has been submitted to support the appeal;

15.1.4. that the appeal is against the academic judgement of the academic decision-making body;

15.1.5. the appeal is deemed ineligible as it was submitted prior to the academic body making a decision.

16. Request for an Appeal Outcome Review (review of the decision made at Formal Appeal Stage)

16.1. The purpose of the Appeal Outcome Review stage is to review the decision taken at the Formal Appeal stage. The matter of the Formal Appeal itself will not normally be considered afresh.

16.2. The Appeal Outcome Review will be undertaken by the University's Academic Appeals Panel.

16.3. Where a student is not satisfied with the Formal Appeal Outcome they may submit a request for a review of this decision within **10 University working days** of being notified of it.

16.4. Requests should be submitted to the Appeals Office using the standard form[4].

16.5. Students should be aware that entering the Appeal Outcome Review stage of the formal appeals process might impact upon their ability to proceed to the next stage of their course, graduate with their cohort or participate in the re-sit period. This is because of the additional time that the Appeal Outcome Review will add to the overall timescale for completion of the formal appeals process.

17. Grounds for Requesting an Appeal Outcome Review

17.1. When requesting a review of the decision taken at the Formal Appeal stage, the student is required to show that they have evidence to demonstrate that one or more

[4] Students will be provided with the link to the form as part of their appeal outcome, where applicable.

of the following grounds apply:

17.1.1. that there was a procedural irregularity in the formal appeal decision, i.e., where the University has not acted in accordance with its own regulations or procedures, and this has had a detrimental effect on the outcome. Procedural irregularity does not include disagreement with an academic judgement or the application of discretionary rules within the regulations;

17.1.2. that relevant new evidence has become available that should be considered and there are valid reasons why it was not presented at the time of the appeal;

17.1.3. that there are reasonable grounds to suggest that the Formal Appeal outcome was biased against the student.

18. Submission of an Appeal Outcome Review – Technical Conditions

18.1. On receipt of an Appeal Outcome Review request, the Appeals Office will assess whether it meets the technical conditions outlined in section 11 of these regulations and determine whether any of the grounds cited can be upheld.

18.2. If the Appeal Outcome Review request **does not** meet the technical conditions set out in section 11 of these regulations, or if none of the grounds cited can be upheld, it will be rejected and the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

18.3. As required, the student may be contacted for additional information to be submitted by a given deadline. If the student fails to respond, the appeal review may be rejected.

18.4. If the Academic Appeal Outcome Review request meets the technical conditions then:

18.4.1. a review of the Formal Appeal outcome will be undertaken by the Academic Appeals Panel;

18.4.2. where there is clear evidence of a procedural irregularity at the Formal Appeal stage (per 17.1.1)the Appeals Office will be empowered to re-open the appeal without referral to the Academic Appeals Panel.

18.4.3. where there is clear evidence that relevant new evidence has become available and there are valid reasons why it was not presented (per 17.1.2) the Appeals Office will be empowered to re-open the appeal without referral to the Academic Appeals Panel.

19. The Academic Appeals Panel

19.1. The Academic Appeals Panel is an independent body comprised of a pool of expert senior academic and professional services staff.

19.2. Members of the Academic Appeals Panel are available to provide advice to the Appeals Office on the interpretation and application of these regulations (and associated regulations) as they pertain to both Formal Appeals and Appeal Outcome Reviews.

19.3. The Academic Appeal Panel will review the Formal Appeal decision, taking consideration of the following:

19.3.1. Whether the relevant policies, procedures and regulations were followed during the formal stage;

19.3.2. Whether the outcome was reasonable;

19.3.3. Whether the student received clear reasons why the academic appeal was rejected at the formal stage;

19.3.4. Whether the student has provided new evidence that could have made a difference to the outcome, and given good reasons for not providing this earlier.

19.4. The Appeals Panel is empowered to come to one of the following decisions:

19.4.1. Determine that the outcome of the Formal Appeal stage was reasonable and correct and there is no further information provided in the review form to alter this decision. A Completion of Procedures letter will be sent to the student;

19.4.2. Refer the appeal request to the Appeals Office and/or the relevant academic body for reconsideration.

19.5. Membership of the Academic Appeals Panel will include a minimum of a Chair, and at least two members drawn from a pool of expert academic and professional services staff. Members of the Academic Appeals Panel are appointed by the University Education Committee normally for a period of three years. Secretariat will be provided by the Appeals Office.

19.6. Members of an Academic Appeal Panel will have no current academic or personal connection with the student (or students) considered by the Panel.

PART D – Outcomes of Appeals Reviews

20. Issuing of Outcomes

20.1. Outcomes of Appeals Reviews will be communicated by the Appeals Office.

20.2. If the Appeals Panel determines that the decision at Formal Appeal stage was correct and the grounds for appeal cannot be upheld, then the Appeals Office will issue a Completion of Procedures letter.

20.3. If the Appeals Panel determines that the decision at the Formal Appeal stage was correct and at least one ground for appeal can be upheld, then the student may request a Completion of Procedures if they are not satisfied with the outcome.

20.4. A Completion of Procedures letter will allow the student to take their case to the OIA within 12 months of the date of issue and will only be automatically issued at the end of the Appeal Review stage where the Formal Appeal decision was found to be correct. This includes cases where the appeal review was not taken forward because it did not meet the technical conditions (section 11 of these regulations).

Appendix 1: Appeal Grounds against a Decision of the Progression and Award Board (Examination Board) for taught students

1. Introduction and Scope

1.1. This document outlines the grounds for academic appeals against the decision of the Progression and Award Board (Examination Board) for either undergraduate or postgraduate students on a taught course of study. This appendix of the regulation should be followed without derogation.

1.2. This document should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic Appeals Regulations, and Progression and Award Regulations

2. Informal Resolution

In the first instance, students are strongly advised to resolve any issues informally. It is beneficial to resolve concerns and queries as early as possible and prior to entering the formal appeal process.

2.1. How to Seek Informal Resolution

In order to benefit from Informal Resolution, students should first raise their concerns directly with their Faculty/School Office.

2.2. Informal Resolution Deadlines.

Informal Resolution requests must be submitted as soon as an issue arises.

If the Informal Resolution request relates to an Examination Board's decision, the Informal Resolution request should be submitted no later than **10 University working days** following the publication of that decision.

2.3 Informal resolution examples and limitations

Examples of issues that may be raised directly with the Faculty/School as part of the Informal Resolution process include:

2.3.1 Seeking clarification that marks and results have been recorded accurately;

2.3.2 Seeking confirmation that the impact of Exceptional Circumstances have been considered by the Examination Board, and any adjustments that have been taken as a result.

2.3.3 Seeking clarification of the Examination Board's decision and the rationale for that decision.

Note that this list is not exhaustive.

2.4 Students who wish to submit new evidence under academic appeal ground a) should proceed directly to the Formal Appeal stage.

2.5 Students wishing to seek feedback on the way in which marks have been arrived at should contact the relevant Module Convenor.

3. Grounds for Academic Appeal at the Formal Appeal stage

Appeals from students against the decision of an Examination Board will be considered on the following grounds only:

3.1. **Ground a): Illness or other mitigating circumstances:** there exists evidence of circumstances that have impacted on a student's studies which could not reasonably have been presented to the Examination Board (e.g. via an Exceptional Circumstances claim) by the relevant deadline.

and/or

3.2. **Ground b): procedural irregularity or error;** where the University has not acted in accordance with its own regulations or procedures, and this has had a detrimental effect on the outcome.

Procedural irregularity does not include disagreement with an academic judgement or the application of discretionary rules within the regulations. An appeal on the basis of procedural irregularity must be supported by evidence

and/or

3.3. **Ground c): Prejudice or Bias:** there exists evidence of prejudice or of bias on the part of the Examination Board. If students have a reasonable perception of prejudice or bias, this will be investigated to determine whether there exists evidence of prejudice or bias.

Appendix 2: Appeal Grounds Against the Decision of a Faculty/School Student Progress Panel

1. Introduction and Scope

1.1. This document outlines the grounds for academic appeals against the decision of a Faculty/School Student Progress Panel (FSPP/SSPP) requiring that a student on a taught course of study is required to either permanently or temporarily withdraw from their studies in accordance with the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy.

1.2. Postgraduate Research Students who wish to appeal against a decision that they withdraw from their studies due to unsatisfactory progress should refer to Appendix 4 of the Academic Appeals Regulation.

1.3. This document should be read in conjunction with the Academic Appeals Regulation and the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy.

2. Informal Resolution

In the first instance, students are strongly advised to resolve any issues informally. It is beneficial to resolve concerns and queries as early as possible and prior to entering the formal appeal process.

2.1. How to Seek Informal Resolution

In order to benefit from Informal Resolution, students should first raise their concerns directly with their Faculty/School Office.

2.2. Informal Resolution Deadlines

An Informal Resolution request should be submitted no later than 10 University working days following notification of the FSPP/SSPP's decision.

2.3. Informal Resolution Examples

Examples of issues that may be raised directly with the Faculty/School as part of the informal resolution process include:

2.3.1 Providing evidence of extenuating circumstances that may have impacted on a student's ability to engage with their studies, that were not previously made known to the FSPP/SSPP.

2.3.2 Seeking clarification of the FSPP/SSPP's decision, and the rationale for that decision.

For all other issues, students should be advised to proceed with the submission of a Formal Appeal.

3. Grounds for Academic Appeal at the Formal Appeal Stage

3.1. **Ground a): Illness or other mitigating circumstances:** there exists evidence of circumstances that have impacted on a student's studies which could not reasonably have been presented to the FSPP/SSPP (e.g. by engaging with the FSPP/SSPP process);

and/or

3.2. **Ground b): procedural irregularity or error:** where the University has not acted in accordance with its own regulations or procedures, and this has had a detrimental effect on the outcome affecting one student.

Procedural irregularity does not include disagreement with an academic judgement of the FSPP/SSPP. An appeal on the basis of procedural irregularity must be supported by evidence.

and/or

3.3. **Ground c): Prejudice or Bias:** there exists evidence of prejudice or of bias on the part of the FSPP/SSPP. If students have a reasonable perception of prejudice or bias, this will be investigated to determine whether there exists evidence of prejudice or bias

4. Continuation of Studies During the appeals process

4.1 Students who have submitted an appeal against a decision of the FSPP/SSPP are permitted to continue with their studies pending the formal appeal outcome.

Appendix 3: Appeal Grounds against the Decision of an Academic Misconduct Panel (taught students)

1. Introduction and Scope

1.1. This document outlines the grounds for academic appeals against the decision of an Academic Misconduct Panel for undergraduate and postgraduate students on a taught course of study. This appendix of the Academic Appeals regulations should be followed without derogation.

1.2. Postgraduate Research students who wish to appeal a decision relating to allegations of misconduct in research should follow the appeals procedure as detailed in the Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research.

1.3. This document should be read in conjunction with the Academic Appeals Regulations and the Academic Misconduct Policy.

2. Informal Resolution

In the first instance, students are strongly advised to resolve any issues informally. It is beneficial to resolve concerns and queries as early as possible and prior to entering the formal appeal process.

2.1 How to Seek Informal Resolution

In order to benefit from Informal Resolution, students should first raise their concerns directly with the Academic Misconduct Office

2.2 Informal Resolution Deadlines

2.3 Informal Resolution requests should be submitted no later than 10 University working days following written notification of the Academic Misconduct Panel's decision.

2.4 Informal Resolution Examples

2.4.1 Informal Resolution will normally be limited to:

2.4.1.1 Seeking clarification of the Academic Misconduct Panel's decision and the penalty imposed.

For all other reasons, students are advised to proceed with the submission of a Formal Appeal.

3. Grounds for Academic Appeal at the Formal Appeal Stage

Appeals from students against the decision of an Academic Misconduct Committee will be considered on the following grounds only:

3.1. **Ground a): Illness or other mitigating circumstances:** Appeals on grounds of illness or other mitigating circumstances cannot be accepted for consideration. In accordance with the Academic Misconduct Regulations, Exceptional Circumstances cannot be taken into account by an Academic Misconduct Panel, when determining whether or not misconduct occurred. Student who consider that they have been impacted by extenuating circumstances when the misconduct occurred should follow the Exceptional Circumstances policy.

3.2. **Ground b): procedural irregularity or error:** where the University has not acted in accordance with its own regulations or procedures, and this has had a detrimental effect on the outcome affecting one student.

Procedural irregularity does not include disagreement with an academic judgement of the Academic Misconduct Committee. An appeal on the basis of procedural irregularity must be supported by evidence.

and/or

3.3. **Ground c): Prejudice or Bias:** there exists evidence of prejudice or of bias on the part of the Academic Misconduct Panel. If students have a reasonable perception of prejudice or bias, this will be investigated to determine whether there exists evidence of prejudice or bias.

Appendix 4: Appeal Grounds Against a progression or award decision by the Faculty/School PGR Committees or Research Degree Progression and Award Board.

1. Introduction and Scope

1.1. This document outlines the grounds for academic appeals against progression or award decisions and recommendations made by Faculty/School PGR Committees and Research Degrees Progression and Award Board.

1.2. This document should be read in conjunction with the Academic Appeals Regulations and Regulation 23: Degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy and the University's research policies and regulations.

2. Informal Resolution

In the first instance, students are strongly advised to resolve any issues informally. It is beneficial to resolve concerns and queries as early as possible and prior to entering the formal appeal process.

2.1 How to Seek Informal Resolution

In order to benefit from Informal Resolution, students should first raise their concerns directly with their Faculty/School Office.

2.2 Informal Resolution Deadlines

Informal Resolution requests must be submitted as soon as an issue arises.

If the Informal Resolution request relates to a decision as detailed in section 1.1, the Informal Resolution request should be submitted no later than **10 University working days** following notification of that decision.

2.3 Informal Resolution Examples

Examples of issues that may be raised directly with the Faculty/School as part of the Informal Resolution process include:

2.3.1 Seeking clarification of the progression or award decision and the rationale for that decision.

Note that this list is not exhaustive.

3. Grounds for Appeal

Appeals from postgraduate researchers can only be made on the following grounds:

3.1. **Ground a): Illness or other mitigating circumstances:** there exists evidence of circumstances that have impacted on a student's studies which could not reasonably have been presented to the decision making body

and/or

Ground b): procedural irregularity or error; where the University has not acted in accordance with its own regulations or procedures, and this has had a detrimental effect on the outcome.

Procedural irregularity does not include disagreement with an academic judgement or the application of discretionary rules within the regulations. An appeal on the basis of procedural irregularity must be supported by evidence;

and/or

3.2. **Ground c): Prejudice or Bias:** there exists evidence of prejudice or of bias on the part of the decision-making body. If students have a reasonable perception of prejudice or bias, this will be investigated to determine whether there exists evidence of prejudice or bias.

4. Not Grounds for Appeal

A postgraduate researcher may not appeal:

4.1 Against the academic judgement of the decision-making body; or

4.2 On the basis of alleged inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements during the period of registration, as these are a matter for complaint.

Review / Contacts / References

Policy title:	Academic Appeal Regulations
Date approved:	November 2023
Approving body:	Senate
Last review date:	October 2026
Revision history:	November 2023 – formal approval October 2026 – minor clarificatory and editorial updates
Next review date:	2027/28
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	Regulations for Examinations and Assessments Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research.
Division:	Division of Student Experience
Policy Owner:	Director of Student Experience
Point of Contact:	Academic Casework Manager or Head of Student Administration