

Appeals Procedure for Partner Institutions

Date of Implementation: July 2019

Process Management Document

This procedure should be read in conjunction with S.1 of the Academic Regulations and S.7 of the Assessment Handbook:

Document Control Box	
Procedure Title:	Appeals Procedure for Partnership Institutions
Date Approved:	July 2019
Version:	One
Supersedes:	NA
Previous review dates:	NA
Next review date:	July 2020
Related regulations, legislation, policies:	Academic Regulations, OIA, OFS
Related information:	
GDPR impact considerations:	Sharing of student information
Related policies:	NA
Related procedures:	NA
Process Owner:	Registry Partnership Team
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A student has the right to appeal any assessment decision made by the University under the Academic Appeals Procedure, including Assessment Board decisions, early withdrawal and the outcome of an unfair means hearing.

Background

The OIA (Office of the Independent Adjudicator <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>) Good Practice Framework (GPF) for Handling Student Complaints and Appeals states that it is good practice for academic appeals procedures to include:

- *a formal stage for the investigation and determination of academic appeals (stage 1)*
- *a review stage where the student can appeal to a higher body (stage 2)*

The OIA GPF states that formal academic appeals (stage 1) should be dealt with by: *'a member of staff who has had no previous involvement in the matter.'* At its meeting on 6 June 2018, the Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee (ASQAC) approved changes to the UCLan Academic Appeals Procedure, including the following:

'The CAS Hub or RSR will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within 3 working days and will refer it to the Faculty Director of Academic Development who will allocate the appeal to a member of staff with appropriate assessment expertise, who has had no previous involvement in the case.'

The following process is intended to support colleagues in Faculties, Schools, Partner Institutions and Academic Registry to implement the new procedure: **Text in red to be completed by the Partner Institution**

1. Following results day, and within 10 working days, students complete the stage one appeal form http://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/support/academic_appeals.php and submit the completed form plus any evidence to the Partner Administration Team (preferably by email)
2. Administrator saves the appeal form and any supporting documents.
3. Administrator sends acknowledgement email to student
4. Administrator logs appeal
5. Administrator will collate any evidence and paperwork including, where possible,
 - Assessment or Research Degree Board minutes;
 - Assessment Board profile
 - Any special course regulations or PSRB requirements;
 - Outcome of any applications for extenuating circumstances;
 - Attendance record; details of any interruptions of study;
 - Documents from the course/supervisory team concerning academic performance e.g. details of academic support provided and any other relevant information.

6. Administrator sends appeal form and supporting documentation to appropriate Hub

7. The CAS Hub will forward the First Stage Appeal and supporting information to the Faculty Academic Director (or equivalent).

What the Faculty Academic Director will do:

1. The Faculty Academic Director (FAD) (or equivalent) will exercise discretion to allocate the appeal to a suitable member of staff who shall act as the Chair of the First Stage Appeal (the Chair). Where appropriate, the FAD (or equivalent) will consult with the Head of School.
2. The FAD will ensure that: the Chair is at the appropriate level; has had no previous material involvement in the assessment decision; has undertaken the University assessment board training delivered by Assessment and Awards or the equivalent training by the RSR; has relevant knowledge of PSRB requirements, where required.
3. For example, Faculties may choose to operate a reciprocal arrangement whereby the Chairs of two separate, but cognate Assessment Boards agree to hear each other's appeals.

Academic Registry will arrange an additional training session for Assessment Board Chairs if required. Please contact cliaison@uclan.ac.uk
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What the Chair of the First Stage Appeal will do:

1. The Chair of the First Stage Appeal (the Chair) will undertake an initial evaluation of the First Stage appeal application to determine whether: a. it has been submitted under the correct procedure; b. it is submitted within the published timescale; and/or c. it falls within the published grounds for appeal.
2. If the Chair considers that the appeal has been submitted under the incorrect procedure e.g. that it is a complaint about a University service, s/he shall inform the Student Compliance Team who will arrange for the matter to be investigated as a complaint.
3. If the Chair considers that the procedure is submitted outside the published timescale, and there is no good reason for this, the appeal may be ruled 'out of time'
4. If the Chair considers that valid grounds have not been demonstrated, s/he will offer the student a meeting to explain why this is the case, and to review the matter in the light of any representations by made by the student. If the Chair concludes that there are no valid grounds, this will be notified to the student in writing, together with their right to submit a Second Stage appeal.
5. If the Chair considers that the appeal is eligible to be considered because there are valid grounds for appeal, s/he will arrange a hearing with the student, normally within 10 working days of receipt of the request for appeal. Alternative arrangements will be considered, where appropriate, including the opportunity to undertake the appeal by correspondence, video or teleconference. Standard letter AAP04 should be used,

informing the student of their right to be accompanied and seek advice from the Student Union Advice and Representation Centre etc.

6. If there is a need for swift action e.g. because the issues have consequences for the student's mental health, or whether there are external time limits imposed by PSRB requirements, the Chair will expedite the matter.
7. Before meeting with the student, the Chair will make enquiries that are appropriate and proportionate to the nature of the appeal and the complexity of the issues raised. This will involve reviewing the documentation provided by the CAS Hub, and requesting any additional evidence as required.
8. The Chair may also ask the student's School/Partner Institution to comment on the appeal in the context of the particular regulations and structure of the course. If at this point, it becomes clear that the appeal can be upheld and resolved without further investigation, the Chair, the School and the Partner Institution will take action and inform the student accordingly.
9. The purpose of the meeting with the student should be:
 - to enable the student to present and amplify the written case;
 - to enable the Chair to ask questions and consider the evidence in order to reach a conclusion;
 - to manage the student's expectations about possible outcomes, if these appear to go beyond what the University can reasonably deliver;
 - to sign-post the student to relevant support services e.g. Student Wellbeing Services, if appropriate.
10. In complex cases, the Chair may confer with a second member of staff, normally the FAD, where it is proportionate to do so.
11. The Chair may seek advice at any point in the process from the Compliance Team in Academic Registry.
12. The Chair will decide on the outcome of the appeal which may be that:
 - i) the appeal is upheld and referred back to the academic decision making body for reconsideration;
 - ii) the appeal is upheld and the Chair of the First Stage Appeal takes immediate action on behalf of the academic decision making body. Where appropriate, the Chair of the First Stage Appeal will consult with the Chair of the academic decision making body to ensure the outcome is academically and professionally acceptable;
 - iii) the appeal is turned down.
13. The Chair will prepare an outcome letter using Doc AAP05 which should: identify the evidence considered; the findings of fact; the regulations applied; the decision and associated reasons; any remedy that has been identified; and instructions on the next steps.

8. *Chair will review the appeal and decide whether the student needs to come in for an appeal hearing. (See [Academic Regulations section I](#) and [Assessment Handbook section 7](#))*
9. *If hearing required, the Hub will liaise with the Chair and arrange the hearing, invite the student, and update the appeal log with the date the letter was sent and date of appeal.
Note: invitation must be sent by email and hard copy*.*
10. *The Hub will attend and minute the meeting, using Doc AAP06, and save notes and minutes in the student's file along with any scanned evidence.*
11. *The Hub will produce a letter using Doc AAP05 which should: identify the evidence considered; the findings of fact; the regulations applied; the decision and associated reasons; any remedy that has been identified; and instructions on the next steps.*
12. *Once confirmed, the Hub will send the notes and outcome letter to the student by email and hard copy*. The email will be copied to the relevant Partner Institution, for them to update their own log.*
13. **Administrator updates the log with outcome of the appeal and when the details were sent to them.**

Further information and relevant templates can be found at
<https://intranet.uclan.ac.uk/ou/sass/Pages/Academic-Appeals.aspx>

NOTES

If a student is not happy with the outcome of their appeal, they can submit a second stage appeal. The student will send the Second Stage Appeal directly to the Complaints Liaison Team https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/support/academic_appeals.php. The appeal will then be heard by a panel comprising staff from outside the School and staff from the Quality Unit, neither Hub or Partner Institution staff get involved in Second Stage Appeals. The outcome of a Second Stage Appeal should be sent from Complaints Liaison directly to the Hub responsible for the relevant School for the Programmes Officer to make any necessary changes on Banner. If the School Quality Lead/Head of School and the Partner Institution, have not been copied into the original email from Complaints Liaison then the Hub will forward any information to them, this also needs to be logged on the Appeals spreadsheet.

If the Panel determine that there are no grounds for appeal the student is advised that the internal appeals procedure is exhausted and that if they are still dissatisfied they may appeal to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#).

* Hard copy letters go to both the student's term time address and permanent address, unless the appeal is heard during student vacation time, in which case they go to the student's permanent address only.

Appeals must not be heard by anyone who attended the original Assessment Board or Hearing. In most Schools the application will be reviewed by the Faculty Academic Director, who will then allocated the appeal hearing to an appropriate member of staff who was not at the original meeting. In general this will be the Dean/Head of a different School within the Faculty or someone of a similar or higher grade.