

Academic Appeals Procedure

QA158a

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ACADEMIC APPEAL PROCEDURES

Procedure for dealing with an appeal by an undergraduate or taught-course postgraduate student who is enrolled on a programme leading to an award of the Writtle University College against substantive decisions of an Examination Board.

- a. A student who wishes to appeal against the decision of a Board of Examiners must do so in writing on the Academic Appeal Form, stating fully and precisely the grounds for appeal. A student appealing against the progress decision of a First or Second Year Board of Examiners must submit a formal appeal within **two weeks** of the publication of results. In all other cases the appeal must be submitted within four weeks of publication of the results.
- b. **Academic Appeal Form** (SF004) is available from Quality and Registry, Room L69, [or can be found on Moodle.](#)
- c. The main legitimate grounds for appeal are the following:
 - i. Extenuating circumstances of which the Board of Examiners was unaware and of which the student could not reasonably have been expected to inform the Board of Examiners in advance, of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result might have been different had they not occurred.
 - ii. Procedural irregularities in the conduct of the Board of Examiners (including alleged administrative error) of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result might have been different had they not occurred.
- d. Other grounds will be considered on their merits.
- e. The following are not considered legitimate grounds on which to appeal, and any appeals based exclusively on one or more of these grounds will be rejected automatically, and a Completion of Procedures letter would be issued:
 - i. Disagreement with a mark or grade and/or appeals against the academic judgement of internal or external examiners. Coursework and examinations cannot be remarked, except in cases of procedural irregularities.
 - ii. Any provisional mark or informal assessment of the student's work by a member of staff that is not the final mark approved by the Board of Examiners.
 - iii. The retrospective reporting of extenuating circumstances which a student might reasonably have been expected to disclose to the Board of Examiners before their meeting.
 - iv. Appeals against the judgement of the Board of Examiners in assessing the extenuating circumstances.
 - v. Marginal failure to attain a higher class of degree.
 - vi. Appeals where the grounds of complaint concern the inadequacy of teaching or other arrangements during the period of study; such complaints must be raised, in writing, before the examination board meets.
- f. The form must be returned to the HE Quality Office, receipt of the appeal will be acknowledged within five working days.

- g. Quality and Registry may reject the appeal if the student does not cite legitimate grounds for appeal. In that case, the student will be advised in writing within 10 days, a copy of the Completion of Procedures letter and the Appeal Form will be held by Quality and Registry and on the student's central record.
- h. If there appear to be legitimate grounds for appeal then Quality and Registry will forward the Appeal Form, together with all relevant documentation, for consideration by the Academic Appeals Panel consisting of the Head of Quality and Registry and an Academic Head of Department not directly responsible for the subject area in which the appealing student's course resides. The Academic Appeals Panel will consider any appeal that meets the criteria stated above (c and d). The student will be informed by Quality and Registry within 10 days from receipt that the investigation is under way.
- i. Any such appeal will be considered by the Academic Appeals Panel, which may consult such persons as deemed fit, including the student who has lodged the appeal, in arriving at a decision as to whether or not the appeal is well-founded.
- j. The Academic Appeals Panel will conduct the investigation as quickly as possible but, particularly during the summer vacation, there may be unavoidable delays. The student will be advised of progress in writing within six weeks of receipt of an appeal application; including an estimated date for an outcome decision.

The Appeal is Dismissed

- k. If the Academic Appeals Panel decides that there are no sufficient grounds for putting the case to the Board of Examiners, the student will be informed in writing, and the reasons for the decision will be stated. The communication of this decision shall, in such cases, constitute the formal dismissal of the appeal.
- l. If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they may request a review on the following grounds only:
 - i. procedural irregularity in the appeals process
 - ii. consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable given all the circumstances
 - iii. that new material evidence is now available which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
- m. The review stage will not normally consider the issues afresh or involve further investigation.
- n. In order to request a review of an appeal, students must complete a Request for Review Form (available from Quality and Registry, quality.registry@writtle.ac.uk); which should be returned to Quality and Registry within four weeks from receiving the decision letter.

Quality and Registry will then forward the review request to the University College Registrar and Secretary, or their nominee, for consideration. The Registrar and Secretary (or their authorised nominee) will consider the grounds stated in the review request; but will not normally consider the issues afresh or undertake a further investigation. The Registrar and Secretary (or authorised nominee) will then respond in writing within fifteen working days where possible, with a copy to Quality and Registry. A record of the appeal review will be maintained by Quality and Registry and the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter at this stage.

The Academic Appeals Panel upholds the appeal

- o. If the Academic Appeals Panel decides there are sufficient grounds for putting the case to the Board of Examiners, they will forward it, together with their written comments, to the relevant Head of School/Department. The Quality Office will advise the student accordingly; and will subsequently inform the student when the Board of Examiners will meet to reconsider the case. On receipt of the appeal and the Academic Appeals Panel's comments, the Head of Department shall instruct the Board of Examiners responsible for the assessment against which the student has appealed to reconvene and put before the Board the student's submission, the Academic Appeals Panel's comments and any material relevant to the original assessment. The Head of Department will then formally ask the Board to review its decision. The Academic Appeals Panel will have the right to attend and to address the meeting of the Board of Examiners.
- p. If the Academic Appeals Panel decides to uphold an appeal by a second-year undergraduate student on the grounds of extenuating circumstances of which the Board of Examiners was unaware and of which the student could not reasonably have been expected to inform the Board of Examiners in advance, the Academic Appeals Panel will decide whether it is appropriate to ask the Head of School/Department to reconvene the Board of Examiners. If it is the Academic Appeals Panel's view that the likely outcome of such a meeting would be that the Board of Examiners would decide either that the extenuating circumstances should be carried forward to the final year Board, or that the extenuating circumstances would not have a material effect on the results, then the Academic Appeals Panel will not ask the Head of School/Department to reconvene the Board. However, Academic Appeals Panel will ensure that the Head of School/Department is fully apprised of the extenuating circumstances so that they can be placed before the Board of Examiners in the student's final year.
- q. In causing a Board of Examiners to reconvene, the Head of School/Department/Chair may, at their discretion, consult by telephone or in writing any internal or external examiner who is unable to attend the reconvened meeting of the Board.
- r. If, following review of its decision, the Board of Examiners is satisfied that there is no reason to amend its original decision the Head of School/Department/Chair will so inform the Academic Appeals Panel in writing, giving the Board's reasons for reaffirming its original decision and its comments, if any, on the grounds for appeal stated by the student.
- s. If, following review of its decision, the Board of Examiners concludes that its original decision was wholly or partly incorrect to the extent that it decides on a new outcome, the Head of School/Department/Chair will so inform the Academic Appeals Panel in writing and advise them of the amended mark or classification.
- t. The decision of the Board of Examiners following review will be communicated in writing to the student stating the grounds for the decision. The communication of the decision shall in all cases constitute the formal conclusion of action taken in accordance with these procedures, and will take a form of Completion of Procedures letter.

All appeals

- u. [The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints or appeals. When the University's internal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals have been exhausted, the University College will issue a Completion of Procedures letter. Students wishing to avail

themselves of the opportunity of an independent review by the OIA must submit their application to the OIA within **twelve months** of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. Full details of the scheme are available on request and will be enclosed with the Completion of Procedures letter.