

## **FE Academic Appeals Procedure**

## Version Control History

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date of Change</b>	<b>Summary of Revisions Made</b>
1.0	New Procedure.	Drafted by the UHI Single Policy working group to support the revised Policy.
1.1	April 2020	Codicil added to support students during COVID19 lockdown period
1.2	March 2023	Rebranded

# Further Education Academic Appeals Procedure

## 1 Overview

This procedure aims to provide a fair, accessible and timely process for students who wish to request a review of an assessment decision, where there are grounds to do so. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Further Education Academic Appeals Policy.

These procedures apply to students enrolled on courses normally up to and including SCQF Level 6. There are a small number of Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) courses at SCQF Level 7 that are considered as Further Education courses for the purposes of the UHI Partnership.

As per Section 4.3 of the Further Education Academic Appeals Policy, appeals will normally only be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

- 1 That a student's performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors. The student must have been unable to, or have a valid reason not to, divulge the information to their lecturer prior to assessment. In the case of a Progression Board, the information must have been unavailable at the time the determination was made. In these cases, the appeal must be accompanied by documentary evidence to the Personal Academic Tutor.
- 2 Evidence of college academic assessment administrative error or that an assessment was not conducted in accordance with the college's specific assessment policies/procedures.
- 3 That evidence is produced that some other material irregularity has occurred.

Codicil: only categories 1 and 3 may be used for COVID19 specific academic appeals

As per Section 5.2 of the Further Education Academic Appeals Policy, appeals will not be considered on the following grounds:

- 1 Appeals that question the academic judgement of a member of staff.
- 2 Appeals that question the academic judgement of an awarding body.

All assessment decisions are subject to external verification by the relevant Awarding Body.

## 2 Academic Appeal Stages

Students receive information about their ability to invoke the appeals process as part of their induction process. As it is likely an informal discussion with the relevant member of staff will represent the informal stage of the process – it is the responsibility of the staff member to highlight to the student at this time the stages of the appeals process.

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**Lead Author:** Head of Student Experience

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## Stage 1 – Informal Procedure

- a A student who is dissatisfied with the conduct of an assessment/s should in the first instance discuss the matter with the relevant Lecturer (assessor) or their PAT. This should be done within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome of the assessment.
- b This initial discussion will not alter the student's right to follow the formal procedure (detailed below) but will represent an early opportunity for ambiguities to be resolved and circumstances taken into account prior to decisions being taken on the assessment.
- c All informal decisions on assessment must be discussed with the Internal Verifier prior to an informal decision being given to the student and noted on the appropriate IV decision log.
- d The member of staff will ensure that an informal record is communicated to the Sector Manager/Subject Leader and the Quality Manager.

It is expected that this stage of the process will not take the maximum timeframes specified in the flowchart in Appendix 1.

## Stage 2 – Formal Procedure

- a If the matter is not resolved through the informal procedure, a student who wishes to appeal should do so in writing using the appropriate form, which is held on student portal within 'Key Information for Students', setting out the reasons for the appeal within 25 working days of receipt of the outcome of the assessment. Documentary evidence should support the grounds on which the appeal is being made. This may include but is not limited to letters from medical professionals, communications with College staff, the process which is thought to have been followed incorrectly. Appeals must be sent to the Quality Office.
- b The Chair of the Progression Board shall consider the appeal and the Quality Officer will respond with the outcome to the student (in writing) within 10 working days of the appeal being received.

Codicil: where a student appeals the outcome of an overall course judgment then the appeal must be determined by another College Manager who was not Chair of the progression board, to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

## Stage 3 – Appeals Panel

- a If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, s/he may appeal directly to the Quality Manager, as Centre Coordinator for the relevant awarding body. At this stage appeals may only be made on the grounds of administrative irregularity.
- b The Quality Officer will convene an academic appeals panel of 3 members to consider the appeal. The panel members will include the Quality Manager, or delegate plus 2 other staff members who not have been involved in previous stages of the appeal. The panel shall consider the written evidence, interview

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- appropriate people and recommend either that the appeal be rejected or that the decision at Stage 2 be annulled.
- c The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final.
  - d The Chair of the Academic Appeals Panel will communicate the appeal outcome to the student (in writing) within 30 working days of the appeal being received.
  - e This stage of the process represents the final stage of the College's own process.

### **External Right of Appeal**

Awarding bodies have their own appeal procedures. They are usually used once the College appeals procedure has been exhausted. It should be noted that there is usually a fee payable to the Awarding Body for the use of this service.

Students and staff should be aware that some Awarding Bodies specify clear timeframes which include the date of the assessment as part of the timing for the receipt of an appeal.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for relevant information.

Students should note that some awarding bodies will not consider appeals of internal assessments. Guidance can be provided to students about options for appeal available to them.

Students who are undertaking regulated qualifications have an additional stage of appeal open to them. These are:

- 1 An appeal to SQA (or other awarding body) once Stages 1-3 above have been exhausted.
- 2 An appeal to SQA Accreditation or Ofqual if they feel an appeal has not been dealt with appropriately. Students should be aware that an appeal of this nature will not overturn academic decisions; it may investigate the effectiveness of the process concerned.

## **3 Responsibilities**

- 3.1 Student – A student is responsible for adhering to the relevant conditions of assessment including submission deadline and fulfilling the parameters of the assessment brief. A student is responsible for ensuring they make full use of the support processes available to them at the time of assessment if there is a need to do so. When submitting an appeal ensuring they meet the required deadline.
- 3.2 Lecturer (Assessor) – Where a student raises an informal query regarding their assessment the assessor is obliged to refer the assessment decision to the internal verifier for moderation. The assessor is responsible for informing the student's PAT of all informal assessment appeals they receive.

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- 3.3 Internal Verifier – Where a student raises an informal query through their lecturer (assessor) or PAT, the Internal Verifier will review the information objectively and communicate the outcome to the PAT and the assessor.

Codicil: where a student has appealed the judgement made on their overall course then this will not be reviewed by the internal verifier but by the appointed Investigating Appeals Officer.

- 3.3 Personal Academic Tutor is responsible for logging all informal academic assessment appeal requests. Where a student has previously discussed their informal appeal with their assessor, or comes direct to the PAT, the PAT is responsible for providing advice and guidance to the student on their assessment query. Where the PAT feels the student has a case to be answered that can be informally resolved, the PAT will refer the assessment decision to the assessor and the relevant IV for moderation.
- 3.4 The Quality Officer is responsible for liaising with the relevant Sector Manager/Subject Leader whilst the investigation of a formal assessment appeal at Stage 2 is ongoing and ensuring that the student concerned and all relevant staff have been notified of the outcome of the appeal.
- 3.5 Panel members will be drawn from the management team of the Perth College UHI.
- 3.6 The Quality Officer, will supply evidence of appeals heard to the relevant Awarding Body if this represents part of their quality assurance criteria and if requested to do so.

#### 4 Records Retention

Please refer to the University of the Highlands and Islands Records Retention Schedule for further information.

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