

# Academic Appeals: A Guide for Students

## IS AN APPEAL RELEVANT TO ME?

Before you make an appeal, we strongly recommend that you first ask your department for a copy of the Transparency Report from the exam board that considered your results. You can also ask for a results appraisal if you don't understand how your results were determined.

### Who can use the academic appeals procedure?

The right of appeal is available to all students who:

- a) have failed to qualify to proceed from one stage of a degree programme to the next; or
- b) have failed to qualify for the award of the degree for which they were registered; or
- c) wish to challenge, on procedural grounds, the class of degree awarded; or
- d) have been judged by an appropriate University body to have committed academic malpractice.

### What are the grounds (reasons) for an appeal?

You can appeal if you are in one of the categories above, and if you can provide evidence of one or more of the following:

- a) *There was a material administrative error or irregularity in the conduct of assessment which adversely affected your performance and results.* For example, there was an administrative error which led to a mark you received being incorrectly recorded, leading to you being awarded a 2:2 rather than a 2:1.
- b) *There were significant exceptional circumstances which adversely affected your performance and results.* For example, serious illness affected your studies and assessment performance. Whilst exceptional circumstances should normally be considered by the Exceptional Circumstances Committee (which meets in advance of the Exam Boards), there may be occasions on which a student had good reasons for being unable to make an exceptional circumstances submission at the appropriate time. In those cases, an academic appeal is appropriate. If you cannot demonstrate good reason why you did not submit exceptional circumstances at the appropriate time, your appeal will be rejected. **It is strongly recommended that you use the [Exceptional Circumstances](#) process at the appropriate time, rather than submitting an appeal.**
- c) *There was unfair treatment or discrimination, out-with the exercise of academic judgement.* This could be evidence of bias or prejudice in reaching decisions about your outcome

**I have completed my degree and am disappointed with the classification I've received. I believe I have grounds for appeal and haven't submitted a claim for Exceptional Circumstances – should I appeal?**

If you still have reassessment opportunities, you must complete these first before you can submit an appeal. This also includes any fail marks that have been automatically condoned by your departmental exam boards in accordance with our regulations.

If you had exceptional circumstances that you believe affected your performance, you should have submitted these at the appropriate time. If you do not have good reasons for why you did not advise your department of your exceptional circumstances before their exam boards you will not qualify for an appeal. For example, believing you did not need to submit an exceptional circumstance claim as you thought you had already met the threshold for the higher award would not be deemed sufficient grounds.

If you have passed all of your modules or you have exhausted all opportunities for reassessment, and can demonstrate good reason for not having previously submitted evidence of your exceptional circumstances to your department, you should submit an **Stage 1 Appeal Form** with supporting evidence.

If you qualify for a classification appeal, you must submit your form and supporting evidence within 15 calendar days of the formal publication of results.

If you are an **undergraduate student** completing your studies this year, you will have 15 calendar days from formal publication of results in which to submit any appeal.

If you are a **postgraduate taught student** completing your studies this year, you will have 15 calendar days from formal publication of results in which to submit any appeal. MBChB students must declare their intention to appeal within 10 calendar days.

### **I don't feel any of the above apply to me, but I deserve a better mark/classification – can I appeal on these grounds?**

No, not being happy with your mark/classification is not a valid reason for appeal. In matters of academic judgement, only the opinions of academic experts are relevant. As there are processes in place to ensure that academic judgements are sound, it is not possible to appeal against those judgements.

### **A number of my cohort were affected by the same issue - can a group/collective appeal be made?**

Yes, a group appeal can be made. You would need to provide reasons why a group appeal should be considered and nominate one student as a spokesperson.

### **I have failed to progress because I have failed too many credits following reassessments – can I still appeal?**

If you are told that you cannot progress onto the next part of your degree programme after you have exhausted all opportunities for reassessment, then you meet the grounds for appeal. For undergraduate students, this normally means you have not qualified to progress to the next year of study. For postgraduate students, you may not have passed sufficient taught credits to move onto your research project.

For undergraduate students that are required to complete assessments in August, if these assessments are first attempts at work from that academic year and you do not successfully pass them, you will be entitled to a resit attempt in the next available exam period.

**You cannot appeal until you have completed your reassessments.** If you have any exceptional circumstances that affect your performance in the August assessments, you must submit these to your department as soon as possible following your final assessment, and by no later than **the end of the month.**

If your August assessments are resit attempts or deferred reassessments from the previous academic year, and you fail them, you will have no further assessment opportunities and will be withdrawn from the University. If you believe that Exceptional Circumstances have affected your performance in the August assessments, you should submit a claim by no later than the **end of the month.**

Following the formal publication of August assessment results, if you have grounds for an appeal, then you will be entitled to submit an appeal to the University as explained in this guide. You must submit your appeal within 15 calendar days of receiving your results. If your exceptional circumstances have already been considered by your department, we cannot reconsider the same circumstances through the appeals process. If you did not submit any exceptional circumstances and now wish them to be taken into consideration, you must provide a good reason in your appeal form why you didn't submit an exceptional circumstance claim at the appropriate time.

If you are a postgraduate student and have completed all reassessments and you have not qualified to progress onto your research project to complete your target award, you will receive an email from the Student Registry advising you of this outcome. The deadline for your appeal submission will be 15 calendar days from the date of the email - you will also receive confirmation of the deadline date in writing at this time.

### **I have left the University – can I still appeal?**

Yes, if you have left the University you can use the appeals procedure, but **you must submit your appeal by no later than 15 calendar days from the formal publication of results.**

## **WHAT IS THE APPEALS PROCEDURE, HOW DO I MAKE AN APPEAL AND WHO CAN HELP?**

### **What is the academic appeals procedure?**

There are two stages to the academic appeals procedure. In the first stage, a student submits an appeal and, if it is agreed that there are legitimate grounds for the appeal, the case will be considered by an Academic Appeals Panel. The Panel may accept (agree with) or deny (disagree with) the appeal. In situations where the Panel denies the appeal, the student can, under some circumstances, choose to move to stage 2 of the procedure. In stage 2, the appeal is considered by a reviewer nominated by the Academic Registrar. That Reviewer will make a final decision.

A diagram setting out the appeals procedure in more detail can be found in Appendix 1.

**Where can I find more details of the appeals procedure and who can I ask if I have questions about it?**

The full detail of the academic appeals procedure is set out in the [Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures \(MARP\)](#). Please ensure you read and fully understand this in advance of making an appeal. If you have any questions about the procedure you should contact [ug.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:ug.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk) if you are an undergraduate student, or [pg.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:pg.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk) if you are a postgraduate student.

### **What documentation do I need to complete in order to appeal?**

You need to complete the **Stage 1 Appeal Form** and indicate if your appeal is about progression, your degree outcome, or a sanction imposed by the Standing Academic Committee (SAC).

Once you have submitted your appeal, no further evidence will be accepted.

### **What do I need to include in my appeal submission?**

Your submission needs to provide **evidence** of the grounds for your appeal. You also need to clearly set out the reasons why the situation could not have been brought to the attention of the Examination Board at the appropriate time.

### **When do I need to submit an appeal?**

You must submit your appeal by no later than 15 calendar days from the formal publication of results.

### **Where can I get advice and support for making an appeal?**

The [Students' Union](#) can advise on the appeals procedure and provide help and advice on preparing evidence and supporting documentation. They may also be able to offer support and/or representation for any appeals meetings you are invited to attend. Your academic tutor, [Student Wellbeing Services](#) or college advisory/welfare staff can also be asked for help and/or support.

### **How long will the appeals procedure take from beginning to end?**

Usually the appeals procedure (stage 1 and stage 2) will be completed within 90 calendar days. However, if your case is particularly complex, we may need a longer timeframe, in which case we will keep you informed of the likely timeframe.

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## **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I HAVE SUBMITTED MY APPEAL?**

### **When will I hear whether the University has deemed there to be grounds for my appeal?**

You will normally be informed about your appeal submission within 28 calendar days of submitting your appeal form and documentation. If there are deemed to be grounds for your appeal, an Academic Appeals Panel will hear your case. If there are not deemed to be grounds for your appeal, you will receive an outcome letter that explains why no further action can be taken by the University.

On receipt of your outcome letter you will have the right to challenge this decision by requesting the University Complaints Coordinator conducts a review of your case. You must submit your request for a review within 14 calendar days of receiving your outcome letter.

If you do not request a review, you will then be sent a Completion of Procedures letter and your case will not be considered further by the University. If you do not wish to seek a review, you may also request your Completion of Procedures letter as soon as you receive your outcome.

### **Will I have to attend an Academic Appeals Panel meeting?**

This will depend on the case. In some situations, it may be possible to resolve an appeal without you being asked to attend a Panel meeting. However, in other situations, you may be asked to attend when the Academic Appeals Panel considers your case. If you choose not to attend, the Appeals Panel will consider your case in your absence.

### **If I'm asked to attend an Academic Appeals Panel, can I bring someone with me?**

Yes, you have the right to be accompanied and supported by one person. You may wish to contact the Students' Union to see whether one of their representatives can attend with you to advise and provide support.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF MY APPEAL IS UNSUCCESSFUL?**

### **What happens if I'm told that my appeal has been unsuccessful and I'm unhappy with this outcome?**

You cannot request a review of Stage 1 simply because you are dissatisfied with the outcome. However, if any of the following are relevant, you can request a further, stage 2 review:

- a) There exists evidence that could not reasonably have been made available at Stage 1;
- b) There exists evidence of a material procedural irregularity in Stage 1;
- c) There exists evidence that the judgement at Stage 1 was perverse or biased.

### **How do I request a stage 2 appeal?**

Within 14 calendar days of receiving your stage 1 outcome letter, you would need to complete and submit the stage 2 appeals form.

### **What happens if I've reached the end of the Academic Appeals Procedure but I'm still unhappy?**

If the internal appeals procedure has concluded and you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you can take your case to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education - OIAHE](#) for further

review. An application to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the issue of the University's Completion of Procedures letter.