



UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

# Academic Appeals Procedure

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## **Academic Appeals Procedure**

An academic appeal is a challenge to, or request for reconsideration of, a decision by an academic body – normally an examination board of the University – that makes decisions on student progress, assessment and awards.

This may include a request to change marks, progress decisions, or final award classifications. It must be based on either serious mitigating circumstances that could not be submitted earlier through the usual processes, procedural irregularities, or evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of the examiners. It cannot be based on a challenge to academic judgement or disagreement with a mark or outcome.

If you wish to submit an academic appeal, you must follow the procedure below.

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## **1. Who can make an academic appeal under this procedure?**

- 1.1 Any current taught student registered with the University, or recent alumni when made within the timeframes indicated in Section 3.
- 1.2 Appeals should be made by individuals, on their own behalf.
- 1.3 If, for good reason, you are unable or reluctant to make your appeal yourself, you can submit a request for a third party to represent you. We would need you to send us an e-mail from your University of London e-mail address to this effect.
- 1.4 In certain exceptional circumstances we may allow an academic appeal from a group of students about the same matter if they have all been directly affected by it. In such cases the group should nominate one student to act as its representative, who will submit the initial request and then act as the main point of contact during the process if it is accepted. The group's representative must provide a list including the names, email addresses and student numbers of all signatories.

## **2. Who cannot make an academic appeal using this procedure?**

- 2.1 MPhil or PhD students in the School of Advanced Study (SAS) should consult the School's Quality Assurance Framework. SAS has a separate appeals procedure for postgraduate research students.
- 2.2 Students studying at the University of London Institute (ULIP) at Paris, should seek advice from ULIP about how to make an appeal. Currently ULIP uses the procedures of Queen Mary University of London.
- 2.3 Students registered for their studies with other higher education providers, including the University of London's federation members, should use the procedures of the provider they are registered with.

## **3. What is the timeframe for submitting an academic appeal?**

- 3.1 An academic appeal should be made as soon as possible. This would usually be 4 weeks (28 calendar days) after your release of results. After that period, the basis of any appeal shall normally be deemed to have lapsed.

## **4. What can you make an academic appeal about?**

- 4.1 An academic appeal is a challenge to, or request for reconsideration of a decision by, an academic body – normally an exam board – that makes decisions on student progress, assessment and awards. This may include a request to change marks, progress decisions, or final award classifications.

4.2 We can only consider an academic appeal when it relates to:

- a. **Serious mitigating circumstances** (a) which the Board of Examiners was not aware of when making their decision, and (b) which you were, for valid reasons, unable or unwilling to submit earlier. Your mitigating circumstances and reasons for not submitting them by the original deadline must be valid and should normally be substantiated with evidence. You cannot self-certify for illness after the mitigating circumstances deadline has already passed.
- b. **Procedural irregularities**, such as administrative errors that meant the University did not correctly follow its assessment, marking or examination procedures. Appeals will only be considered if there is a substantiated concern that the Board of Examiners' decision might have been different had the error(s) not occurred.
- c. **Evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of the examiners**, including the reasonable perception of bias during your assessment and/or the consideration of your progress by the Board of Examiners. Appeals will only be considered if you have provided a full account of how you have been treated unfairly.

5. **What can you not make an academic appeal about?**

- 5.1 You may not appeal against a matter of academic judgement. Academic judgement refers to the determination of a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential. This means, for example, that simple disagreement with the mark awarded to you is not valid grounds for appeal.
- 5.2 You may not appeal against an assessment outcome that has not yet been confirmed by the Board of Examiners (for example, mid-term results).
- 5.3 You may not use this Procedure to appeal the final conclusions reached by the individual or panel which considered your mitigating circumstances or any reasonable adjustments you requested for your assessment(s) or study.
- 5.4 This Procedure also does not cover the following:
  - a. Representations regarding administrative decisions we have made, the application of the regulations, matters of academic provision, or the services we offer. These are covered by the *Student Complaints Procedure*.
  - b. Appeals concerning allegations of academic misconduct. These are covered by the *Procedure for the Consideration of Allegations of Assessment Offence*.
  - c. Appeals concerning allegations of non-academic misconduct, where students do not behave in the ways we expect in contexts other than assessment. These are covered by *Ordinance 17: Code of Student Discipline*.
  - d. Appeals against admission decisions. These are covered by the *Admissions Appeals Procedure*.

## **6. How do you make an appeal?**

- 6.1 You should email [A&C@london.ac.uk](mailto:A&C@london.ac.uk) to request an academic appeal submission form. The process is initiated by the submission of a completed form.
- 6.2 You are invited to write clearly and concisely, identifying what you see as the core issue(s) and telling us what your desired outcome is. It is also important that if you have any documentary evidence you provide it to us as at the point of submission.
- 6.3 If you require any reasonable adjustments to enable engagement with any part of the process, please let the Student Resolution and Casework team know as soon as you are able by emailing [A&C@london.ac.uk](mailto:A&C@london.ac.uk).

## **7. How will your appeal be handled?**

### **7.1 General points**

- a. We have given some indicative timings for each stage below. In total, we will aim to ensure that the process takes no longer than 90 days from receiving your appeal to the end of Stage 3.
- b. We will do our best to act more quickly where, for example, the impact of the issues raised might have detrimental consequences for your health or where you are feeling significant distress.
- c. We advise you to make progression decisions (for example, by entering for re-sits or meeting registration deadlines) based on your confirmed results whilst you await the outcome of an academic appeal. If your appeal is upheld and requires any corrective action we will take any appropriate steps to ensure you are not financially or academically disadvantaged.
- d. Making the appeal will not have a negative impact on your standing with the University unless it is deemed to be vexatious in the context of other issues and behaviours, in which case a referral may be made to the University's disciplinary procedures.
- e. We will treat your appeal confidentially and information from it will only be securely shared with those involved in the process and only to the extent it is relevant to their involvement.

### **7.2 Stage 1 – Initial screening**

- 7.21 You should submit an academic appeal within 28 days (4 weeks) of the formal publication of your assessment results. If you submit your appeal after this period, it will be at the discretion of the Student Resolution and Casework team as to whether it will be accepted.
- 7.22 The Student Resolution and Casework team will review your appeal and reach a view on whether or not it meets eligibility criteria and the grounds for appeal set out in section 4 above. You will normally be informed of this decision within 14 days of receiving your appeal.

- 7.23 If it is determined that it would be more appropriate to treat your submission, or part of it, as a complaint you will be referred to the relevant procedure.
- 7.24 If it is deemed that your appeal submission is insufficiently evidenced and does not meet the grounds for appeal in its current form, you will be contacted and given 14 days to challenge the decision and provide any further information. If you do not make a further submission, the matter will be considered closed.
- 7.25 If your submission is still deemed to be insufficiently evidenced after revision, you will be informed and the matter will be considered closed. The University will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter advising on how you can make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education.

### **7.3 Stage 2 – Formal consideration by Chair of Board of Examiners**

- 7.31 If your submission meets the grounds for appeal, the Student Resolution and Casework team will carry out the necessary initial investigations and will compile a case file. The file will then be sent to the Chair of the Board of Examiners for review.
- 7.32 The Chair of the Board of Examiners may engage in additional consultation, including with External Examiners and other members of the Exam Board, at their discretion, in order to reach a decision. The Chair of the Board will decide whether your appeal should be upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.
- 7.33 You will receive a letter from the Student Resolution and Casework team informing you of the outcome, normally within 21 days of the start of Stage 2. The outcome letter will set out the reasons for the decision and any actions that will be taken.

### **7.4 Stage 3 – Review by the Representations Panel**

- 7.41 If you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 2, you can escalate the matter to Stage 3 for further review on one or more of the following grounds:
- a. that the procedure set out in Stages 1 and 2 was not followed properly;
  - b. That new evidence, which could not reasonably have been made available during Stage 1 or Stage 2, has come to light and that it might have had a bearing on the decisions we took earlier;
  - c. that the outcome at Stage 2 was unreasonable.
- 7.42 To be considered at Stage 3 you must first request a submission form from [ac-stage3@london.ac.uk](mailto:ac-stage3@london.ac.uk) and then submit a fully completed copy of the form and any supporting evidence within 14 days of the date on your Stage 2 outcome letter.
- 7.43 Your case will be referred to the Chair of the Representations Panel who will determine whether one or more of the criteria (noted at 7.41) are met.

- 7.44 If the Chair determines the criteria are not met, you will receive an outcome letter, normally within 10 working days. A Completion of Procedures letter will follow from the University Secretary or appropriate delegate.
- 7.45 If the criteria are met, the full Representations Panel will be convened. The Panel will normally meet within 28 days of the case being received at Stage 3. It will normally conduct its business either in person or by electronic means. However, in exceptional circumstances it is open to the Chair to decide that its business can proceed by correspondence if there is a clear reason for doing so.
- 7.46 The Representations Panel, appointed by the University Secretary or an appropriate delegate, will consist of:
- Chair
  - Secretary
  - A member of academic staff from with appropriate expertise
  - A student member
- 7.47 No member of the Representations Panel will have a personal or other significant interest in the case to be considered.
- 7.48 The Representations Panel will be presented with all documentary evidence relating to your case, including records of consideration at Stages 1 and 2 and your Stage 3 submission, in order to make a decision. You will be provided with a copy of the documentation that will be considered by the panel.
- 7.49 You are entitled to present your case to the Representations Panel in person or through online video conferencing arrangements, depending on the format of the meeting, or by providing a written statement. You will be informed of the date of the meeting and the arrangements for attending.
- 7.50 You may be accompanied by a companion in a support capacity, but this person will not be a legal representative and will not normally be permitted to present on your behalf.
- 7.51 If you do attend the meeting, the Panel will be permitted to ask you questions and seek clarifications relating to your written and verbal submissions. You will not be able to take part in or observe the deliberations of the Panel.
- 7.52 The Panel may decide *either* to uphold your appeal *or* to reject it.
- 7.53 You will be informed in writing of the outcome within 10 working days of the meeting. A Completion of Procedures letter will follow from the University Secretary or appropriate delegate.
- 7.54 In exceptional circumstances, when the criteria are met and the validity of the case is manifestly clear, the Chair of the Representations Panel may uphold your case and decide on the outcome without referral to a full Panel. In such cases you will normally receive an outcome letter within 14 days of escalating your appeal to Stage 3.

## **8. What happens if you remain unhappy?**

- 8.1 If Stage 3 has been completed and you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may be able to take your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education.
- 8.2 For more information on the OIA, including how to make a submission, please refer to their website: [Can you complain to us? - OIA](#) and [How to complain to us - OIA](#).
- 8.3 Please note that the OIA will normally only accept your complaint (a) if you have a Completion of Procedures letter from us and (b) if you submit the complaint within one year of the decision you are complaining about.

## **9. Wellbeing support**

- 9.1 For University of London distance learning students, the [Wellbeing Hub](#) provides support through a range of articles and resources, including information on accessing our mental health app TalkCampus, a peer support network with access to a 24/7 crisis helpline, and providing routes for seeking help and support.
- 9.2 For School of Advanced Study students, please consult the [Health and Wellbeing](#) pages on the SAS website, which contains advice, links to support, appropriate contact details and information on seeking counselling.