

# Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure for Taught Programmes

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<b>Summary/Description:</b>	This document outlines the principles and procedures for the consideration of an academic appeal applicable to taught programmes and the mechanisms by which such decisions are reached.

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## 1. Principles

- 1.1 You have a right of appeal against the outcome of an Extenuating Circumstances claim or decisions made by a Progression and Award Board or an Assessment Offences Panel that affect your academic progress. These procedures set out the grounds that allow your appeal to be considered and the process we use when making decisions. We also include the reasons when an academic appeal is not allowed or considered.
- 1.2 Academic appeals come under the authority of Academic Council. Academic Council has appointed others to act on its behalf when considering academic appeals. This procedure explains how academic appeals should be submitted, and who will consider them on behalf of Academic Council.
- 1.3 Academic appeals will be treated in line with our procedure, fairly and with confidentiality, but you should understand that those considering an academic appeal will normally need to see the evidence and documentation submitted with the appeal to reach an informed decision.
- 1.4 Academic appeals will be given careful consideration and treated seriously as well as impartially. You will not suffer any disadvantage or negative reaction from the University as result of making an appeal.
- 1.5 However, we will not accept or investigate an academic appeal which we consider to include false allegations or evidence. If an academic appeal includes any allegations, evidence or documentation we believe may be false, we will pass the case to be investigated under the University's Disciplinary Policy.
- 1.6 Academic appeals procedures are internal to a university and do not have the same degree of formality as a court of law. As such, legal representation in meetings is considered neither necessary nor appropriate for a student or the University during the appeals process.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure covers all forms of assessment for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including relevant taught elements of research awards. It can only be used to challenge:
  - an Extenuating Circumstances (EC) claim
  - a Progression and Award Board (PAB) decision
  - an Assessment Offences Panel (AOP) outcome
- 2.2 If you have been withdrawn from your studies under the [Student Engagement Policy](#), you may appeal that decision using the appeals process detailed in the Student Engagement Policy.
- 2.3 The decision that you are appealing against will stand until your appeal has been fully considered and an outcome sent to you. You are expected to prepare for and complete any scheduled assessments, including resits, while you are waiting for the outcome of your appeal.

If your academic appeal is unsuccessful and you have not followed the instructions from the original PAB or AOP, your progression on your programme may be affected. If you proceed to book accommodation or make other arrangements in anticipation of a positive outcome, you do so at your own risk.

- 2.4 If you have declared a disability, we will endeavour to ensure that information is available at all stages of the procedure in appropriate formats, and that any reasonable adjustments are made to support you throughout the process.
- 2.5 You may withdraw your academic appeal at any time.
- 2.6 This Procedure only applies to academic appeals which fall under the grounds we have listed. If we consider that you have raised issues in your academic appeal that should be dealt with under the *Student Complaints Procedure*, we will confirm the procedure and the order in which the issues raised will be dealt with.
- 2.7 If we think that your academic appeal has no serious purpose or is intended to cause disruption or annoyance, we may decide to end consideration of the appeal. Examples include:
- where the basis for the appeal has already been considered and an outcome has been issued
  - where the basis for the appeal is something which a fair-minded person would consider to be trivial
  - where you are pursuing your appeal in a way that is having a seriously negative effect on our staff or work

If we decide to stop our consideration of your academic appeal, we will write to you explaining why we are doing this. You will be advised of your right to request a review of this decision under the Final Review Procedure (see Section 9).

### 3. Timescales

- 3.1 All timescales referred to in this document are measured in 'calendar days'.

Calendar days means every day of the week including Saturdays and Sundays, except for university closure days such as public holidays and Christmas closures. Full details of term dates and university closures can be found here <https://docs.gre.ac.uk/rep/sas/term-dates>.

- 3.2 We aim to resolve academic appeals within 90 calendar days, including any review stages, from the date of submission of your academic appeal to the final appeal outcome. Specific timelines for individual stages of the procedure are detailed within the relevant sections.
- 3.3 If you provide evidence to support your academic appeal after the submission of your academic appeal form, the time between the submission of the academic appeal form and receipt of the evidence will not be counted towards the 90-day resolution time.
- 3.4 In some cases it can be necessary to exceed the 90-day resolution time, for example where:
- The complexities of the case warrant extended scrutiny.
  - A complaint is being considered simultaneously and it is considered in your best interests to await the outcome of the complaint before resolving the appeal.
  - Your appeal is submitted just prior to the Christmas holiday period when the University is closed.
- 3.5 Where there is a need to extend a stage of the procedure, we will communicate the reasons why.

## 4. Grounds for Appeal

### 4.1 Extenuating Circumstances

You may appeal against an Extenuating Circumstances (EC) claim outcome on one or more of the following grounds:

- a) your EC claim was rejected because it was submitted after the deadline;
- b) you were unable to provide evidence by the given deadline;
- c) evidence and/or information provided in support of your EC claim was not properly considered when the decision was reached;
- d) no explanation was provided for the EC decision.

If you appeal on ground a) you must show a good reason why you could not submit your claim within the timescales given in the [Extenuating Circumstances Procedure](#) and provide supporting evidence for the delay. Where you could have submitted the claim at the correct time, the appeal cannot normally be accepted.

If you appeal on ground b) you must show a good reason why the evidence to support your claim could not have been made available within the timescales given in the [Extenuating Circumstances Procedure](#) and where relevant provide evidence to support the delay. Where you could have made the information available at the correct time, the appeal cannot normally be accepted.

### 4.2 Progression and Award Board

You may appeal against a decision of a Progression and Award Board (PAB) on one or more of the following grounds:

- a) there were circumstances that significantly affected your assessment performance or your ability to undertake an assessment, but you did not submit an extenuating circumstances (EC) claim;
- b) one or more parts of the assessment procedure were not applied or were applied incorrectly, and the procedural error has had a significant negative impact on the decision reached.

If you appeal on ground a) you must show and evidence a good reason why you did not submit an EC claim. Where you could have made the claim at the correct time, the appeal cannot normally be accepted.

'Assessment procedure' covers all forms of assessment available within a module or programme structure including placement on programmes that entitle successful graduates to become registered members of regulated professions.

### 4.3 Assessment Offences Panel

You may appeal against a decision of an Assessment Offences Panel (AOP) on one or more of the following grounds:

- a) the Assessment Misconduct Procedure was not applied correctly or parts within it were applied incorrectly, and the resulting procedural error has had a significant negative impact on the decision made.
- b) substantial new evidence has come to light.
- c) the decision reached was unreasonable based on the available evidence.
- d) the penalty imposed was disproportionate.

If you appeal on ground b) you must show a good reason why this new evidence could not have been made available before the decision of the Assessment Offences Panel was made and provide supporting evidence. Where you could have made the evidence available before the decision of the Assessment Offences Panel was made, the appeal cannot normally be accepted.

- 4.4 You cannot submit an academic appeal on the grounds of questioning the academic judgement of a PAB or AOP. This means that you may be unhappy with an outcome but if that outcome was reached following the correct procedures, then being unhappy with the outcome alone is not grounds.

Academic judgement is a judgment that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential. For example: a judgment about marks awarded; degree classification; whether feedback is correct or adequate; and the content or outcomes of a module will normally require academic judgement.

- 4.5 You cannot submit an academic appeal on the grounds of dissatisfaction with the design, curriculum or delivery (teaching, feedback, Faculty support etc) of a module or programme, because these issues should be considered using the [Student Complaints Procedure](#).

## 5. How to Appeal

- 5.1 You must submit your academic appeal using the Academic Appeal Form. Procedures for submitting the Academic Appeal Form are outlined in the accompanying Guidance for Students.

- 5.2 The Academic Appeal Form must be submitted within 14 calendar days from the date of the decision you are appealing:

- a) Email notification of the extenuating circumstances claim final outcome
- b) Publication of your Progression and Award Board results in the Student Portal
- c) Email notification of the Assessment Offences Panel outcome

- 5.3 You will receive an email confirming that we have received your Academic Appeal Form. Appeals received after the 14-calendar day deadline will be recorded as out of time and will not normally be considered. You will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter including details of the OIA Scheme (see Section 11).

In exceptional cases only, a late appeal may be considered provided that the submission is accompanied by detailed and supported reasons for the late submission.

- 5.4 We usually expect you to provide evidence in support of an Academic Appeal.
- 5.5 If you cannot provide evidence when you submit your appeal, you must tell us why in section 7 of the appeal form. Where we agree to a delay in evidence being submitted, we will confirm the deadline that we expect you to provide the supporting evidence.
- 5.6 If you do not provide your evidence by this deadline then your academic appeal will be withdrawn and the original decision will remain.
- 5.7 All supporting documents must be provided in English.

## **6. Initial Consideration of the Appeal**

- 6.1 All academic appeals received within the deadline will be reviewed to consider if the grounds listed in section 4 have been met. Your appeal may be rejected at this stage if any of the following conditions apply:
- 6.1.1 your appeal disagrees solely with the academic or professional judgement of a PAB or AOP;
  - 6.1.2 you have not provided a valid reason explaining why you were unable to submit a claim of extenuating circumstances at the correct time;
  - 6.1.3 you have not provided a valid reason explaining why you were unable to provide supporting evidence by the given deadline;
  - 6.1.4 your appeal does not demonstrate or evidence why you believe your extenuating circumstances claim was not properly considered;
  - 6.1.5 your extenuating circumstances outcome provided the reason(s) for the decision reached.
- 6.2 If the appeal is rejected at this first consideration stage, you will be notified in writing normally within 14 calendar days explaining how that outcome was reached and given details on what next steps you can take.
- 6.3 All other appeals will move to Stage 1 for consideration.

## **7. Stage 1 – Consideration of the appeal**

- 7.1 An Appeals Investigation officer will consider your academic appeal. Information will be obtained from your Faculty and other relevant areas of the university as required.
- 7.2 The Appeals Investigation officer will conclude the Stage 1 consideration of your appeal normally within 28 calendar days by either accepting or dismissing your appeal.
- a) Where your appeal is accepted, an appropriate outcome will be provided as part of the final decision. You will be advised of your right to request a review of this final decision under the Final Review Procedure (see Section 9).
  - b) Where your appeal is dismissed, you will be issued with a Stage 1 outcome explaining the reasons why. You will be advised of your right to request a review of this decision under the Final Review Procedure (see Section 9).
- 7.3 If the Appeals Investigation Officer is unable to reach a conclusion based on the information available, the appeal will be referred to Stage 2.

## **8. Stage 2 – Academic Appeals Committee**

- 8.1 A meeting of the Academic Appeals Committee will normally be arranged within 28 days of the referral to consider your case in accordance with Appendix A.
- 8.2 The Academic Appeals Committee will conclude your appeal by reaching one of the following decisions:
- a) Your appeal is dismissed and the original decision stands.
- You will be notified of the Academic Appeals Committee decision in writing within 7 calendar days with reasons for the decision. This decision concludes the academic appeal process and you will be informed of your right to request a review of the academic appeal process under the Final Review Procedure (see Section 9).

- b) Your appeal is referred back to the relevant decision-making body to reconsider the original decision taking into account the findings of the Academic Appeals Committee.

You will be notified of the Academic Appeals Committee decision in writing within 7 calendar days with reasons for the decision.

The reconvened decision-making body will have the power to confirm or amend the original decision. You will normally be notified of the reconsidered decision within 21 calendar days of the Academic Appeals Committee.

The reconsidered decision will be final and you will be informed of your right to request a review of the academic appeal process under the Final Review Procedure (see Section 9).

## 9. Final Review Procedure

- 9.1. Where you have received a formal outcome at any stage of this procedure, you may request a final review of that decision using the University's [Final Review Procedure](#).
- 9.2. Requests for a final review must be submitted using the Final Review Form **within 14 calendar days** from the date you received the formal outcome. A Final Review request received later than the 14 calendar day deadline will not normally be considered.

## 10. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

- 10.1 The Academic Registry will maintain a database of academic appeals for each academic session and provide an annual report to Academic Council.
- 10.2 It will be the responsibility of the Academic Registry to review the Academic Appeals Procedure and its effectiveness and to make recommendations for changes, where appropriate, to be considered by the Academic Council.

## 11. External Adjudication

- 11.1 If you have been issued with a Completion of Procedures letter and you remain unhappy with the final decision of the University, you may be able to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.
- 11.2 You will need to send a Scheme Application Form to the OIA within **twelve months** of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter. A Scheme Application Form can be downloaded from the OIA website <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

## 12. Advice and Support

Free independent advice and advocacy is available from the Greenwich Students' Union. Further information is available from <https://www.greenwichsu.co.uk/advice>.

## 13. Related Procedures

- [Extenuating Circumstances Procedure](#)
- [Final Review Procedure](#)
- [Student Engagement Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Academic Regulations for Taught Awards](#)
- [Assessment Misconduct Procedure](#)

## Appendix A

### Academic Appeals Committee

#### 1. Membership

1.1 The Academic Appeals Committee will normally comprise:

- Pro Vice-Chancellor or nominee (Chair)
- Two members of Academic Council or its sub-committees
- A representative nominated by the Students' Union (or nominee)

1.2 The quorum for any meeting of the Academic Appeals Committee is three and must include a Students' Union representative.

1.3 No Committee member should work in the School/Department within which your programme of study resides.

Any member from your Faculty will be asked to declare any perceived interest which could give rise to conflict at the beginning of the meeting, which will be recorded in the minutes. If deemed appropriate by the Chair, the member will absent themselves from any relevant areas of discussion.

1.4 No member will have had any previous involvement with the student in matters directly relating to the appeal.

1.5 The Appeals Investigation Officer will act as Secretary to the Academic Appeals Committee. The Secretary is not a member but will be present throughout to advise on regulatory matters and take an accurate record of the meeting.

#### 2. Procedures

2.1 You will normally be given a minimum notice period of 14 calendar days of the date and time and manner of the meeting. The notice of the meeting will be accompanied by copies of all documentation to be used in consideration of the appeal.

2.2 The meeting will take place by the most appropriate method, either on campus or by videoconferencing via Teams.

2.3 You will have the right to be heard in person by the Academic Appeals Committee.

2.4 You may be accompanied by a friend or supporter of your choice or a representative of the Students' Union. You must inform the Secretary of the name of the person accompanying you in writing in advance of the meeting.

Your supporter will be able to advise you of any points that you may wish to raise or to assist you with your responses to questions. They will not normally be permitted to speak on your behalf.

2.5 You may invite witnesses in support of your case providing that you have informed the Secretary at least 5 calendar days in advance of the meeting.

2.6 The Committee may deal with your case in your absence if you fail to appear without reasonable excuse or notify the Secretary that you do not wish to appear. The Chair will

determine what constitutes a reasonable excuse.

2.7 A representative of the Faculty in which you are studying will be invited to present a response to the appeal. The Faculty may also invite witnesses providing that they have informed the Secretary at least 5 calendar days in advance of the meeting.

2.8 During the hearing:

- The Chair will outline the procedure of the meeting to both parties
- The Chair will ask you to present your case in support of your appeal and to introduce any witnesses in support. In certain circumstances the Chair may permit your supporter to speak on your behalf.
- Members of the Committee may ask you or your witnesses questions
- The Chair will ask the Faculty representative to respond to the appeal
- Members of the committee may question the Faculty representative
- You will be given the opportunity to respond to comments from the Faculty representative
- All parties will be asked to leave the meeting and the Committee will consider the evidence in private

2.9 The Committee may request supplementary information from you or the Faculty within a given deadline before reaching a decision, which will be confirmed in writing. On consideration of such supplementary information, the Committee will determine its final decision within 7 calendar days of the receipt of the supplementary information.