30.1 APPEALS
POLICY, PROCEDURE AND GUIDANCE FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

APPEALS PROCEDURE

i. The University seeks to ensure that candidates for higher degrees are treated fairly at all times: this is particularly so with regard to the annual review, the progression viva, and with regard to the examination process, i.e. submission and examination of the final thesis and the oral examination. The Appeals procedure is set out below. The University and its officers should do everything they can to ensure that, at all times, the candidate is treated with consideration and sensitivity. The candidate can withdraw from the Appeals procedure at any stage. The following procedure reflects the general recommendations of the QAA Quality Code Chapter B11: Research Degrees.

ii. When a candidate has failed, or in the case of a PhD or MPhil student been awarded a degree lower than that for which they applied, or in the case of the annual review or progression viva been refused upgrade, the Registry Officer’s letter informing them of the result will also inform them of the right of appeal, and of their right to request to see the reports/full Examiners’ report. The candidate can request to see reports without it being part of an ‘intention to appeal’.

iii. If, after due consideration, the candidate decides to appeal, then the candidate will inform the Registry Officer in writing of his/her intention. This letter, informing of the intention to appeal, should be sent to the Registry Officer within two months of the receipt of the Registry letter.

iv. The candidate should consult, in as much detail as possible, with his/her supervisor(s). The supervisor should go carefully through the terms of the examiners’ report with the candidate or, in the case of the progression viva, the report on the viva.

v. The candidate shall state the exact grounds of the appeal in writing to the Registry Officer within three months of the examination. The candidate should be as specific as possible about the matters relating to which remedy is sought. The most obvious grounds for appeal are:
   a. procedural irregularities in the examination / viva
   b. circumstances affecting the student's performance of which the examiners were not aware when their decision was taken
   c. evidence of prejudice or of bias or of inadequate assessment

vi. The candidate’s letter of appeal and the examiners’ report/viva report are passed through to the Chairman of the Research Committee, who will act to follow through the subsequent investigation. (If there is a conflict of interest, the Chairman will inform the Vice-Chancellor, who may nominate another senior academic, not connected to the case, to follow through the investigation.)
vii. In investigating the case, the Chairman of the Research Committee should consult the supervisor(s), the internal and external examiners, the external AAC subject-specialist, and any other outside authorities whose views are considered relevant. The Chairman will invite the candidate to explain his or her case in person. This panel meeting will usually consist of the Chairman, another senior academic, the candidate, and a friend or advisor of the candidate's choice. All parties will have the right to speak at the panel meeting.

viii. The outcome of the Chairman's investigation, and any subsequent recommendation, will be communicated to the candidate. A reasoned statement of his/her decision will accompany this. The supervisor, and in some circumstances, the examiners will also be informed.

ix. If satisfied that the grounds of the appeal are just, the Chairman will recommend an appropriate course of action to the Dean of the relevant Board of Study.

x. A report of the outcome of the investigation will be given to the Research Committee at its next meeting.

xi. After going to the Board of Study, and to the Research Committee, the recommendation resulting from the investigation will go through to Senate for final authorisation.

APPEALS AGAINST DECISIONS ON DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

dii. The procedures set out for undergraduates will apply (see the latest edition of the Handbook. Copies are available from Registry upon request).