

## ACADEMIC APPEALS – POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### 1. Guiding Principles

- 1.1 Through the *Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure*, the University aims to investigate appeals in a timely, transparent and fair manner.
- 1.2 Registry will keep confidential records of all appeals lodged.
- 1.3 The effectiveness of the procedure will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Senate.
- 1.4 Queries from staff and students in respect of the procedure should be addressed to Registry.

### 2. Who can appeal?

This procedure applies to any student who wishes to appeal an **academic** decision made by Boards of Examiners, Heads of Department, Research Officers or Research Examining Teams in relation to progression, assessment or awards.

This procedure does not cover:

- MBChB Undergraduate Medicine appeals: for MBChB undergraduate medical school students, please refer to the *MBChB General Regulations and Appeals Policy*.
- Academic Misconduct Appeals: for students seeking a review of a decision in relation to an academic misconduct sanction in coursework, a thesis or the examination hall, please refer to *Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures*
- Enforcement Process Appeals; for students seeking a review of a decision in relation to an enforcement process sanction, please refer to *General Regulations for Students of the University, Regulation 10. Enforcement Process Appeals*
- Student Complaints; please refer to the *Student Complaints Policy and Procedure* for complaints regarding non-academic matters or matters not associated with progression, assessment or awards.

### 3. Grounds for appeal

3.1 The only legitimate grounds for appeal are as follows. Any appeal should satisfy one or more of them:

- a) that grades have been incorrectly recorded or incorrectly aggregated; or the procedure for collation of grades has been incorrectly followed;
- b) that there has been an irregularity in the conduct of the examinations or other forms of assessment, which has adversely affected performance;
- c) that there have been circumstances which affected performance which the candidate could not or did not, for valid reasons, divulge prior to the meeting of the relevant Examinations Board in accordance with the Regulations;
- d) that the student has demonstrable reason to believe that one or more of the examiners was prejudiced or unreasonably biased.

3.2 Disagreement with the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners will not be considered grounds for appeal.

### 4. Procedure

4.1. A student wishing to appeal against the decision of a Board of Examiners should do so in writing to their Head of Department/Programme Director (taught students) or Research Officer (research students) using the Academic Appeals Form as soon as possible and not normally later than **one week** after the publication of their confirmed results. The student's submission must be accompanied by any relevant evidence in support of the appeal, including medical evidence if appropriate.

4.2 The Head of Department/Programme Director/Research Officer will check the eligibility of the appeal to ensure that:

- a) The Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure is applicable; and
- b) That any of the grounds as listed above in Paragraph 3 are met; and
- c) That the appeal has been submitted in time; and
- d) That appropriate evidence has been provided to support the appeal.

4.3. Following receipt of the documentation referred to in paragraph 4.1, the HoD/PD/RO will assess the documentation and will seek additional information if necessary. Where there may be a conflict of interest, a nominee who is a Senior Academic may be appointed.

#### **Ineligible Appeals**

4.4 Ineligible appeals may be directed to a more appropriate procedure or dismissed completely with sign off by the Dean/Chair of University Research Committee. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued by the Registry Officer if the appeal is dismissed.

#### **Eligible Appeals**

4.5 If the grounds of the appeal fall under paragraph 3c above, the HoD/PD/RO shall consult with Students First if appropriate.

4.6 The student may be given the opportunity to make representation in person or in writing.

4.7. The HoD/PD/RO must complete the appropriate sections of the Academic Appeals Form and submit this, together with a copy of the student's examination grid and any relevant medical or other evidence to the Dean for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students, or the Chair of University Research Committee for postgraduate research students. The form should be completed as fully as possible, and the HoD/PD/RO shall make a recommendation as to the action that should be taken in response to the appeal.

4.8. The Dean/Chair of University Research Committee will review the documentation and consider the recommendation of the HoD/PD/RO. The Dean/Chair of University Research shall either approve the recommendation or amend it, as he/she considers appropriate, taking account of all evidence submitted.

4.9. Authority vested in the Dean/Chair of University Research Committee includes:

- a) approval of requests for permission to re-sit/re-submit for capped marks, for honours marks, or to resit as if for a first attempt;
- b) approval of requests to progress to the next stage of study, notwithstanding a decision not to allow a student to proceed until certain conditions are satisfied;
- c) approval of requests to re-start an academic stage
- d) approval of minor variations to the programme of study (not requiring the approval of the Chair of the ULTC) [*not applicable to postgraduate research students*]; consideration of special programmes designed for individual students; subject to the approval of the Chair of the ULTC [*not applicable to postgraduate research students*].

4.10 If the appeal is upheld, the positive outcome will be communicated to the student and the student's HoD/PD/RO by the Dean/Chair of University Research Committee two weeks after the date of the appeal submission deadline. Any delays should be communicated to the student.

4.11 . In the case of an appeal which is supported by the Dean/Chair of University Research Committee and affects a degree classification, then the paperwork must be forwarded to the Chairman of Examination Senate for ratification of the award. Following ratification, the outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the student (and the student's HoD/PD/RO) by the Dean/Chair of Research Committee two weeks after the appeal submission deadline.

4.12. If the recommendation is to reject the appeal, the student will be informed in writing by the Dean/Chair of University Research Committee two weeks after the appeal submission deadline. The student will be given the opportunity to request a review of this decision within 5 days if unsatisfied with the original outcome.

4.13. If the student requests a review of the decision, the appeal paperwork will be considered by a Review Panel consisting of an Independent Dean from another School and an Academic Services Representative. The function of the Review Panel is to review the decision in a timely manner and, in the interest of fairness to the student, to ensure that appropriate procedures have been followed in respect of considering the appeal. The student should expect an outcome two weeks after the date of the review submission deadline.

4.14. If the decision of the Review Panel supports the original decision taken by the Dean/Chair of University Research Committee, then no further approval is required and the decision is considered

final. The outcome of the review will be communicated to the student (and the student's HoD/PD/RO) by the Independent Dean

4.15. If the decision of the Review Panel is to uphold the appeal (and thereby overturns the original decision made by the Dean/Chair of University Research Committee) then the paperwork must be forwarded to the Chairman of Examination Senate or nominee for a final decision. The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the student (and the student's HoD/PD/RO) by the Chairman of Examination Senate or nominee.

4.16 Copies of all appeal paperwork and correspondence must be forwarded to Registry once proceedings have concluded for the purposes of maintaining the student record.

4.17 If the appeal is not upheld, the Registry Officer will issue a Completion of Procedures letter automatically when the student's case has exhausted the University's procedures. The letter will summarise the outcome of the appeal and inform the student of his/her right to request a review of their case by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The letter will be issued within 28 days of procedures being completed.

4.18 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student appeals and complaints once all internal procedures have been completed. The University is a member of this scheme. If you are unhappy with the outcome you may be able to ask the OIA to review your appeal. You can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

November 2019