

## HE Academic Appeals Procedure

**TYPE:** Procedure

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**PURPOSE:** To outline the procedure for students to appeal against an Assessor/Tutor's decision with regards to assessment.

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**SCOPE:** All students

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**RESPONSIBILITY:** Assistant Principals are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the appeals procedure within their areas. Heads of School are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the appeals procedure. All teaching and assessment staff are responsible for informing learners of the procedure and for its effective operation within their programmes. Overall responsibility lies with the Head of Higher Education and Research.

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**LEGAL CONTEXT:** The College disclaims all responsibility for any financial or other implications relating to the appellant, or any party acting on his/her behalf, in consequence of a decision, properly made, by the Assessment Board or the operation of these regulations for Appeals in academic assessment.

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**PUBLICATION:**

**Staff Hub/Intranet:** Y  
**Website:** Y  
**Student Hub:** Y

Reviewed By	Created	Last Reviewed	Next Review Date	Total Pages
Head of Higher Education & Research	15-01-21	March 2018 March 2020 January 2021 September 2022 February 2024	July 2026	6

# Academic Appeals Procedure

## 1. Purpose

The following details the procedure to follow when a student disagrees with assessment outcomes or progression and wishes to appeal against the Assessor/Tutor's decision. This Procedure applies to all programmes/courses.

## 2. Responsibility

Assistant Principals are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the appeals procedure within their areas. Heads of School are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the appeals procedure. All teaching and assessment staff are responsible for informing learners of the procedure and for its effective operation within their programmes. Overall responsibility lies with the Dean of Higher Education and Research

## 3. Scope

- 3.1 The policy applies to any assessment made by the College. This includes at entry to a programme (assessment of prior knowledge and experience), during a programme, or at the end of a programme.
- 3.2 The procedure does not include appeals against the results of examinations/courses, where the awarding body is responsible for the grades awarded to candidates. For validated and franchised partners, Higher Education (HE) students will need to refer to the Academic Infrastructure of their awarding university.
- 3.3 Disagreement with the academic judgement of the examiners assessing the merits of an individual piece of work, or in reaching any decision based on the marks, grades and other information relating to a candidate's performance, does not in itself constitute grounds for a request for reconsideration by a candidate.
- 3.4 Those involved in consideration of an appeal at all stages will not attempt to re-examine the student, nor to appraise the professional judgement of the examiners, but to consider whether the decision of the Board of Examiners was fair and whether all relevant factors were considered.
- 3.5 This procedure applies to appeals on academic matters only. If a student is dissatisfied with regard to any other matter they should utilise the relevant College policy, for example, the College's Complaints Procedure.
- 3.6 An academic appeal differs from a complaint and therefore appeals and complaints are considered under different procedures. A complaint is defined as a formal expression of dissatisfaction made by a student about either:
  - The provision of their programme of study or related academic service/facility.
  - Any other service provided by the College.

Therefore, the Academic Appeals Procedure should not be used to bring complaints.

- 3.7 An appeal is a formal request for a decision regarding student progression, assessment or awards to be reviewed and may only be based on one or more of the following grounds:

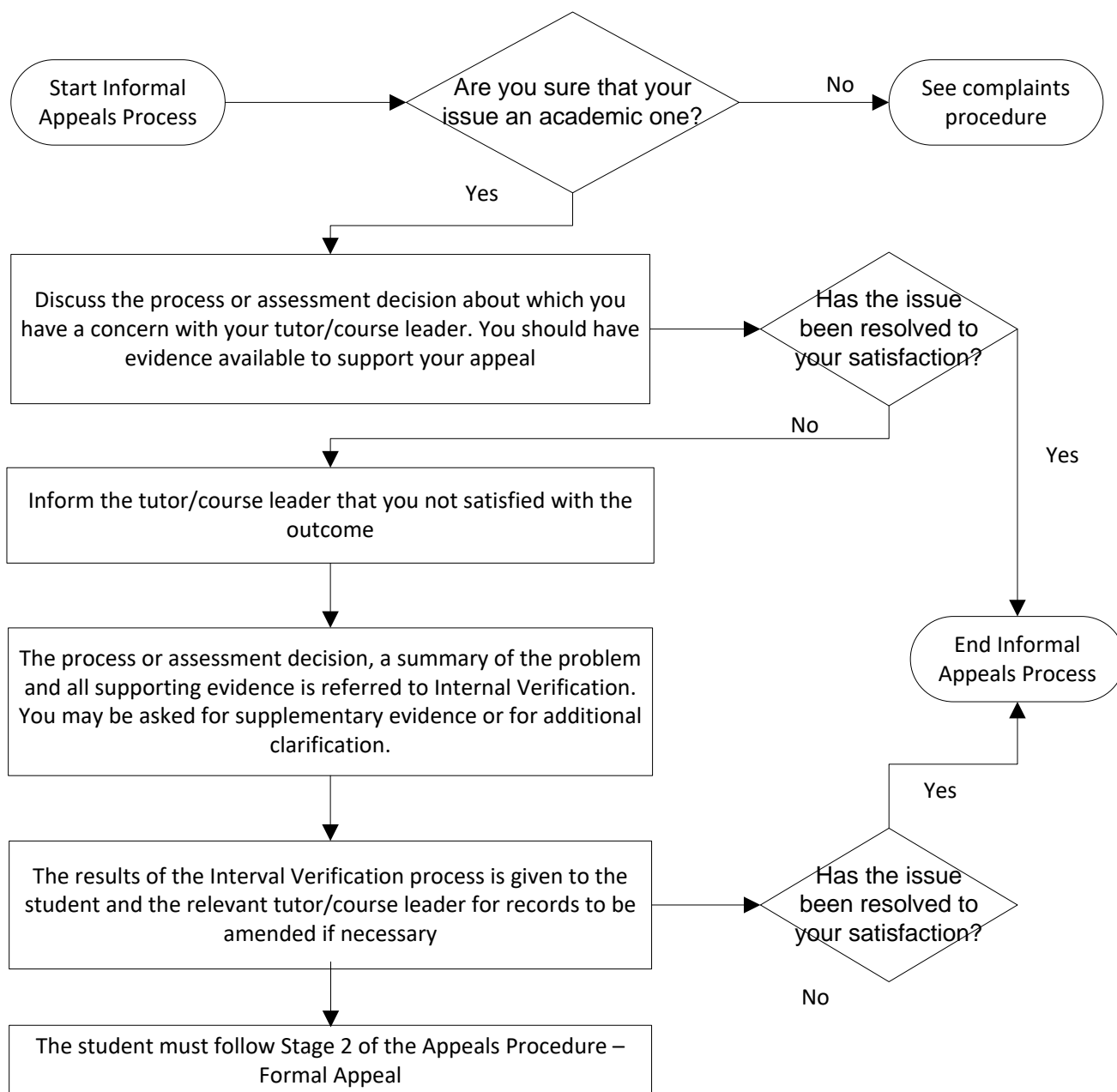
- Your performance was affected by factors outside your control, for example, sickness or accident (known as “extenuating circumstances”) which you do not consider to have been sufficiently, or fairly, taken into account.
  - There has been an administrative error, examinations were not conducted according to regulations, or there has been some other material irregularity in conduct of assessment which has affected the student’s results and/or classification.
  - Other grounds where unfair treatment or discrimination is alleged which is outside the exercise of academic judgement and which for good reason had not been brought to the attention of the boards of examiners.
- 3.8 Please note that disagreement with the academic judgement of a member of College staff or examination board does not constitute valid grounds for appeal. Academic judgement is defined by the OIA as “a judgement that is made about a matter where only the opinion of an academic expert is sufficient”. For example the final grading of assessment, subsequent to the adherence to clear marking and moderation procedures, is an academic judgement.
- 3.9 An appeal against a grade cannot be made following the outcome of the final Examination Board, unless the appeal is based upon extenuating circumstances or an administrative error.
- 3.10 An independent member of College staff will be made available to support and advise students through the Formal Appeals Procedure. Students can obtain contact details on request from the Quality Department ([quality.mailbox@solihull.ac.uk](mailto:quality.mailbox@solihull.ac.uk)).
- 3.11 An appeal can be made about a decision to permit entry on a course. See the HE Admissions Policy with regards to this type of appeal.

If the circumstances above apply, you should follow the procedure outlined below:

## **4. Process**

### **4.1 Stage 1 – Informal Appeals Process**

An informal appeal against a grade must be within 7 working days after receiving a grade. Please follow the process outlined below:



4.1.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Informal Appeals Procedure outlined above, you should progress to Stage 2 – the Formal Appeals Procedure. Note that University programmes have their own Formal Appeals Procedures, and the Programme Handbook will contain further details about these.

4.1.2 The Programme Handbook and Course Moodle will include the Formal Appeals Procedure and will give more details of how to make a formal appeal. The Course Leader or Head of School can offer further advice.

## 4.2 Stage 2 – Formal Appeals Procedure

1. Complete a College Formal Appeal Form (page 7 of this policy) and attach relevant evidence documents within 5 working days of the informal appeal decision notification.
2. Email the Appeals Form to the Quality Team ([quality.mailbox@solihull.ac.uk](mailto:quality.mailbox@solihull.ac.uk)).
3. A date will be set for the Appeals Panel\* to meet within 10\*\* working days of receiving the Appeal Form.
4. Students will be notified when the Appeals Panel will meet and who will hear the appeal.
5. The Appeals Panel will give the opportunity to everyone involved in the assessment to present his or her account of the matter under appeal. This account can be given either verbally or in writing, whichever is preferred.
6. The Appeals Panel will notify you, the Assessor and the Internal Verifier (if appropriate) of its decision in writing within 5\*\* working days. The decision of the Appeals Panel is binding within College.
7. Records of the appeal decision will be filed by the Course Leader and made available to the External Examiner.
8. The appeals decision will be filed centrally and an annual report will be presented to the Higher Education Quality and Standards Board and the Senior Leadership Team.

*\*Note - The Appeals Panel will consist of three people, none of whom should have been involved with original assessment in any way, and will normally be chaired by the Assistant Principal for the qualification. One member of the panel will be an independent manager outside of the Curriculum Area. The Head of Higher Education and Research must be informed of the panel and of the outcome of the appeal for HE appeals, and the Quality Improvement Director must be informed of the panel and of the outcome of the appeal for FE appeals.*

*\*\* The College reserves the right to extend these timescales should the need arise. If this occurs the student will be informed of the delay. Circumstances that may cause delay include (but are not limited to) key members of staff being absent, incomplete appeal forms, or college closure days.*

### 4.2.1 Possible outcomes from the Appeals Panel:

- The appeal is upheld
- The appeal is declined with reasons and advice on what to do next
- That the original assessment decision is confirmed
- That the original work should be re-assessed by the original assessor
- That the original work should be re-assessed by a different assessor appointed by the panel

### **4.3 Stage 3 – External Provider**

- 4.3.1 If you are unhappy with the Appeals Panel decision you have the right to appeal to the Qualification Awarding Body. Details on who to contact and relevant procedures can be obtained from the Quality Department ([quality.mailbox@solihull.ac.uk](mailto:quality.mailbox@solihull.ac.uk)).
- 4.3.2 Students who remain dissatisfied may refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for review. Referrals to the OIA are only accepted when all the College and awarding body's internal procedures have been exhausted.

### **5. Impact of an academic appeal**

- 5. 1 Where a student is in the process of an academic appeal, they may still attend a graduation for the award that has been confirmed. If the outcome of the appeal is upheld and leads to a change in classification, an updated certificate will be issued.
- 5.2 No appeal, even if unsuccessful, will disadvantage the student.

## Formal Appeal Form



<b>Student Name</b>	
<b>Qualification Title</b>	
<b>Examination Board/Awarding Body</b>	
<b>Module Leader</b>	
<b>Internal Verifier or Internal Moderator</b>	
<b>HE Course Leader's Name</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Reason for Appeal (attach supporting evidence, assessment etc. as applicable)</b>	
<b>Student Signature</b>	
<b>Student Email Address</b>	

If you require help with completing this form or support during the Appeals Process, please contact the Quality Department ([quality.mailbox@solihull.ac.uk](mailto:quality.mailbox@solihull.ac.uk))

Please ensure that completed forms are returned to Liz Butler, Quality Assurance or emailed to [quality.mailbox@solihull.ac.uk](mailto:quality.mailbox@solihull.ac.uk)