



Higher Education Academic Appeals

Version	Purpose/Changes	Author	Date
1.0	Initial Approval of HE Academic Appeals	Dr F. Keissaran	Feb 17
1.1	Flowchart added to illustrate the step-by-step appeals procedure for students and staff	Dr F. Keissaran	Feb 19
2	Updated Academic Appeals Procedure to include Stage 3: Awarding Body Process	Dr F. Keissaran	Feb 21
2.1	Updated Academic Appeals Procedure to include indicative timescales for each stage	Dr F. Keissaran	May 22
2.2	Additional timescales specified to provide clarity on submission deadlines, response periods, and escalation timelines	Dr F. Keissaran	Nov 22
2.3	Updated to include timelines for the formal stages of the Academic Appeals Review.	Dr F. Keissaran	Feb 25
3	Scope extended to include apprentices; language simplified for clarity; administrative ownership moved to the Apprenticeship Operations Team; timelines refined for realistic and timely resolution; formal Appeals Panel composition clarified for transparency and confidence.	J.Simpson	Sept 25

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1. Introduction

The Academic Appeals Policy has been produced following consideration of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) good practice framework: Handling complaints and academic appeals.

An academic appeal differs from a complaint and therefore appeals, and complaints are considered under different procedures. A complaint is defined as formal expression of dissatisfaction made by either a single student, apprentice or group thereof about the programme of study or related academic service or facility or any other service provided by Ada, The National College for Digital Skills, therefore the Appeals Procedure cannot be used to bring complaints. See Ada, The National College for Digital Skills's HE Student's Complaint policy.

Students and apprentices have no right of appeal in matters of academic judgment. Disagreement with academic judgment does not constitute valid grounds for appeal. Academic judgment, as defined by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, is a judgment made in situations where only the opinion of an academic expert is appropriate.

Consequently, decisions regarding the quality of work or the assessment criteria applied by academic staff are final and not subject to appeal. This means in practice that you cannot submit an appeal because you are unhappy with your results or think you deserved a higher mark.

2. Scope

An academic appeal is a request for a review of a decision-making body defined as the assessment Board, academic misconduct panel, recognition or prior learning

panel or extenuating circumstances panel.

The purpose of this procedure is to establish the facts and come to a reasonable and just resolution, which is both relevant and proportionate. A prima facie case for appeal will be deemed to exist if there is evidence of one or more of the following:

- A material administrative error or irregularity in conduct of assessment which has affected the student's result and/or classification.
- The production of significant new evidence concerning extenuating circumstances request, Recognition of Prior Learning or Academic Misconduct Panel.
- Prejudice or bias on the part of one of more of the examiners where unfair treatment or discrimination is alleged which is outside the exercise.
- For all cases, evidence should not have been available to the relevant assessment board or panel and will therefore not have influenced an outcome.

3. Appeals Process

Appeals should be received by the Apprenticeship Operations Team on the College Academic Appeals form within 10 working days of a student or apprentice being notified of the decision against which they wish to appeal. The link to the Academic Appeals form is here: [Ada HE Academic Appeals Form](#)

- ***Stage 1 - Informal Stage***

The Apprenticeship Operations Team will on receipt of an appeal, arrange a meeting between the student or apprentice and an relevant person who is closely connected

to the case to discuss the circumstances.

To better support the student or apprentice, this meeting may take place virtually or over telephone. This should usually occur no later than 10 working days from the date of appeal being submitted by the student.

As a consequence of this meeting one of the following outcomes must be agreed:

- The student or apprentice is content not to continue with their appeal.
- Process to the formal stage.

Any student or apprentice wishing to proceed with their appeal to Stage 2, the formal stage should inform The Apprenticeship Operations Team within 5 working days of receiving the outcome letter containing the decision of Stage 1.

- ***Stage 2 - Formal Stage***

Where a student or apprentice wishes to continue with their appeal the Apprenticeship Operations Team will convene an Appeals Panel to hear the formal stage of appeal.

To avoid any conflict of interest, the chair of any appeals panel must not have been part of any preceding decision must not have initiated the appeal:

The Panel will consist of the following:

- Director of Degree Apprenticeship
- Higher Education Quality and Standards Lead
- Head of Apprenticeship Operations
- Academic Lecturer (Independent of the module in question)

The Apprenticeship Operations team is responsible for providing the following documentation to the appeals panel:

- Appeal Pro-forma
- Student assessment detail report

Additional documentation deemed relevant to the circumstances may be submitted by a member of staff, student or apprentice in question where either party believes it may assist the panel in their deliberations. All documentation must be provided to the Apprenticeship Operations Team for distribution to all parties prior to the meeting.

4. Panel Process

Right to be Accompanied: Students or apprentices have the right to be accompanied at the Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel: any person accompanying a student or apprentice is present to support a student and as such should not contribute to the meeting unless at the behest of the student and only when invited to do so by the Chair. There is no right for a student or apprentice to have legal representation at an Academic Appeals Panel.

Attendance at the Panel: The timing of the panel will be arranged to try to ensure the student or apprentice can attend. If the student does not attend the Academic Appeal Panel, the Panel may continue to consider the appeal in the student's or apprentice's absence. The Panel may, if it wishes, adjourn the meeting if reasonable grounds for non-attendance have been provided (e.g. sickness absence).

The Apprenticeship Operations team will convene the appeal panel. The panel will receive copies of the appeals pro-forma and the student or apprentice assessment detail report alongside any other evidence submitted in relation to the appeal. All reports available to the panel must also be made available to the student or apprentice.

A short meeting will take place before the panel meeting with panel meetings only to familiarise members with the case. The student or apprentice and academic colleagues will then be asked to join the meeting to present their case to the panel.

Once the panel has heard the evidence and asked for any further questions of clarification, the student or apprentice, academic colleagues and anyone accompanying them will be asked to leave the meeting. The panel will then discuss the case and use the regulation guidelines for appeals to inform their discussion and decisions. Once a decision has been reached, the student and academic colleagues will be invited to re-join the meeting.

The decision of the Panel shall normally be communicated verbally to the student or apprentice, and to the academic colleagues, by the Chair on the day of the hearing. Formal written notification of the outcome, including the reasons for the decision and any further rights of appeal, shall be provided to the student or apprentice within 10 working days of the Panel meeting.

All documentation and proceedings relating to an Academic Appeal are to be treated as strictly confidential. Information shall be shared only with those individuals directly involved in the consideration and determination of the appeal, or as required by law or regulatory obligation. The handling of all personal data shall be undertaken in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy and the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

5. Possible Outcomes

Following consideration of all evidence presented, The Academic Appeals Panel may determine one of the following outcomes:

Upheld in Full: The Panel may decide to uphold the appeal in full and direct that the student's academic record is amended accordingly. Where an appeal relates to a procedural error in the marking process, the Panel may determine that the work is remarked. In cases where the appeal concerns extenuating circumstances, the Panel may also take appropriate remedial action, such as adjusting assessment deadlines, granting reassessment opportunities, or applying alternative mitigation measures consistent with the College's Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

Partially Upheld: The Panel may decide in part and direct that the student's academic record be amended accordingly, to the extent supported by the evidence. Where extenuating circumstances are involved, the Panel may implement partial remedial measures, consistent with the severity and impact of the circumstances presented.

Dismissed: The Panel may decide to dismiss the appeal, in which case no amendments to the student's academic record shall be made.

The Apprenticeship Operations team is responsible for ensuring that the student or apprentice is informed in writing of the Outcome of Investigation/Panel (COIP), normally within 10 working days of the appeal panel being held. Where appropriate, the COIP will also advise the student or apprentice of their right to escalate the matter if they remain dissatisfied and will provide guidance on the procedures and mechanisms available for doing so.

6. Awarding Body Review

If a student or apprentice remain dissatisfied with the decision of the College's Appeal Panel, they are entitled to submit an appeal to the College's awarding body, The Open University (OU), Such an appeal must be lodged within 28 calendar days from the receipt of the College Outcome of Investigation/Panel (COIP).

The review of appeals at this stage (Stage 3) will be undertaken and managed by the Senate Academic Appeals Review Panel at the OU. The OU formal complaints and appeals procedures are set out in Section H page 42 the [Open University Handbook for Validated Awards September 2025](#).

In accordance with requirements of the Office for Independent Adjudicator (OIA), the formal and review stages of the review stages of the appeal process (stage 2 and 3) should normally be completed within 90 calendar days from the student or apprentice submitted their formal appeal to the College.

The OU will consider an appeal if all of the following criteria are met:

- The appeal relates to a decision of an institutional body, such as an Exam Board, and concerns one or more of the following:
 - The aware of a final qualification
 - Progression from one stage or level of the programme ot the next
 - Assessment outcomes on the programme
 - Admissions to the programme
- You can demonstrate that you have exhausted all appropriate interal procedures available to you at the College.
- You can provide evidence that the College's internal procedures and regulations for handling appeals were not applied correctly or fairly.