

Academic / Assessment Appeals Policy

Author: (Job title)	Heads of Teaching and Learning
Approved by:	GSMT
Date of Approval:	9 November 2022
Updated/amended and reason: (Legislative/cosmetic)	10 October 2022
Review Date:	10 October 2024

Contents

Informal Assessment Appeals Procedure	4
Use of the procedure	4
Stage 1 (FORMAL)	5
Stage 2 (FORMAL)	5
Stage 3 (REVIEW)	6
Higher Education – External Review.....	6
For learners enrolled on University - franchised and University - validated programmes	6
For learners enrolled on the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals.....	6
Recording Academic / Assessment Appeals / Following GDPR Guidelines	7

COLLEGE ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC APPEALS POLICY

Assessment appeal: an appeal against an assessment decision by a learner.

N.B. An academic appeal refers specifically to that of a Higher Education learner.

The policy will be updated in light of any changes required by Ofqual and Awarding Organisations.

This policy aims to enable the learner to enquire, question or appeal against an assessment decision and can be based on:

- A procedural irregularity in the assessment process.
- Bias or perception of bias.
- Mitigating (extenuating) circumstances where the Assessor / Assessment Board was not made aware of a significant factor relating to the assessment of the learner when the original decision was made.
- Failure to standardise and record any appeal to ensure openness and fairness.
- Failure to protect the interests of all learners, and the integrity of the qualification.

In order to do this each College will:

- Facilitate a learner's right of appeal where appropriate.
- Inform the learner at induction of the Academic / Assessment Appeals Policy and procedures and provide access to written information for later reference.
- Ensure that learners are aware of how to submit appeals.
- Forward the appeal to the Awarding Organisation when a learner considers that a decision continues to disadvantage them after the internal appeals process has been exhausted where appropriate.
- Keep appeals records for inspection by the Awarding Organisation according to their requirements.
- Use the stages in this procedure to structure appeals.
- Take appropriate action to protect the interests of other learners and the integrity of the qualification, when the outcome of an appeal questions the validity of other results.
- Monitor appeals to inform quality improvement.

Informal Assessment Appeals Procedure

It is expected that before using any stage of this procedure the learner will attempt to resolve the matter at a local level by talking to the teaching staff concerned as soon as feasibly possible.

Formal Assessment Appeals Procedure

A learner wishing to appeal against an assessment decision can use the following procedure to resolve the matter. The learner should put their appeal in writing, to the Curriculum / Programme Manager / Head of School within 10 working days of the event giving rise to the appeal.

Use of the procedure

Learners can use Stage 1 of this procedure to appeal against a teacher's assessment of their work if the issue cannot be resolved informally

- Learners can use Stages 1 – 3 of this procedure if they believe that assessment has not been conducted within the approved procedures.
- Before results have been reported to the Awarding Organisation, learners can use Stage 3 of this procedure if the overall result of their qualification was adversely affected by illness or other factors, for which evidence exists, but which they were unable to make known, for exceptional reasons, at the time and which have therefore not already been taken into account (Mitigating or Extenuating Circumstances).
- A learner disagrees with the outcome of the College internal appeals procedure (for example, a decision about assessment outcomes or reasonable adjustments) have the right to appeal to the respective Awarding Organisation.

Learners considering using this procedure should note that:

- All appeals will be considered on their merit, but the following are not considered to be legitimate grounds for appeal; any appeals based exclusively on one or more of these grounds will be rejected automatically:
 - Where an appeal appeals against the **academic judgment** of Internal or External Examiners
 - Appeals that are based on the informal assessment of a learner's work by members of academic staff
 - Where a learner disagrees with the conclusions reached by the individual or panel which considered mitigating (extenuating) circumstances
 - The retrospective reporting of mitigating (extenuating) circumstances that might have been reasonably made known at the time
 - Marginal failure to attain a higher class or level of award
 - Lack of awareness by the learner of the relevant procedure/regulations
 - Vexatious appeals

Appeals to Awarding Organisations may not be made until this procedure has been fully exhausted.

At any stage of the Assessment Appeals procedure the learner should put the appeal in writing. This should include the following information:

- Full name and address, programme and year of study.
- Details of the decision which is the subject of the appeal.
- The name(s) of the teacher(s) who made the decision.
- Full details of the reasons for the appeal (including supporting evidence e.g. medical certificates, reports by professionals, financial information or witness statements).

Stage 1 (FORMAL)

- The learner should put their appeal in writing, to the Curriculum / Programme Manager / Head of School within 10 working days of the event giving rise to the appeal.
- An appropriate manager will investigate the appeal. This may result in a special standardisation exercise or reassessment if it is deemed appropriate.
- The learner will receive a written statement of the outcome within 10 working days of the receipt of the appeal.

Stage 2 (FORMAL)

- If Stage 1 does not produce an acceptable resolution the learner should put their appeal in writing to the Head of School for their programme within 5 working days of receiving the outcome from the Curriculum / Programme Manager / Head of School, informing them that they have done so.
- An appropriate Head of School will convene and chair an Academic Appeals Panel to review the appeal within 10 working days of receiving it from the learner.
- The panel will consist of a Head of School /Assistant Principal.
- The Programme Manager / Head of School and/or the relevant teacher(s) are expected to attend to give evidence. In addition, panel members will include staff who are not involved with the learner.
- The learner, who can be accompanied, will be invited to attend to present their case.
- The learner will receive the written decision of the Academic Appeals Panel, from the Assistant Principal within 5 working days of the panel meeting.

Stage 3 (REVIEW)

- If Stage 2 does not produce an acceptable resolution to the learner, or if the procedure is being initiated at this stage as it relates to the overall final result of the qualification, the learner should write to the Director of Quality and Compliance copying in the Vice Principal within 5 working days of receiving the outcome of Stage 2 or from receiving their overall award result, informing the Director of Quality and Compliance that they have done so.
- If there is new evidence [and valid reasons for not providing this earlier] or improper procedures, these are conditions that can be considered.
- The Director of Quality and Compliance and the Vice Principal will review all the available evidence relating to the appeal and the processes previously used to investigate it, and will respond to the appeal within 10 working days sending the learner a Completion of Procedure letter.

Appeal to the Awarding Organisation

- If a learner is still dissatisfied after exhausting the College appeals process they may appeal to the Awarding Organisation. The learner should discuss the process with the Vice-Principal/ Director of Quality and Compliance. A fee may be levied by the Awarding Organisation.

Higher Education – External Review

For learners enrolled on University - franchised and University - validated programmes

Learners on a University-**franchised** or University-**validated** programme must follow that University's Academic Appeals Procedures outlined in the academic regulations and in their learner handbooks.

For learners enrolled on the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals

Learners must first complete the College internal academic appeals process before pursuing the matter further. They may raise the matter with Pearson, the awarding organisation, as well as escalation to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

If HE learners (BTEC Higher Nationals, University-validated/franchised programmes) remain unsatisfied with the outcome of their appeal they have the right to ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) to review their complaint about the outcome of College Academic Appeals process and/or that of the partner University or Pearson. **The complaint should be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.**

The OIA looks at issues such as whether the College followed its procedures, whether these procedures were reasonable, and whether the College final decision was reasonable

in all the circumstances. The College will respond to any OIA enquires in line with OIA timeframes.

The OIA cannot normally look at complaints:

- Where the learner has not progressed through all stages of the College Appeals Procedures or complied with the partner university's processes.
- Where the Completion of Procedures letter is received outside the twelve-month time limit.
- Where matters have been or are being considered in court.

Recording Academic / Assessment Appeals / Following GDPR Guidelines

The College records all Academic / Appeals at the formal and review stages so that data can be used for analysis and management recording. Personal information about learners will be removed and care taken that learners are not identifiable.

The analysis of management reports detailing concerns, complaints and academic / appeals performance will help to ensure that any trends or wider issues are quickly identified and addressed. Reports will be shared with the appropriate College committees.