



**KING
GEORGE V
COLLEGE**



Academic Appeals Procedure Academic Year 2019-20

Author:	Name	J Kelly	
	Job Title	Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality	
Date procedure reviewed.	16/08/19	Date procedure to be reviewed	16/08/20
Equality Impact assessed by:	J Kelly	Date impact assessed:	16/08/19
GDPR Impact assessed by:	J Kelly	Date impact assessed:	16/08/19
Procedure approved by:	CET	Date approved:	05/09/19

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The rationale for the Academic Appeals Procedure is the need to ensure that assessments awarded to learners are fair and that the college meets its obligation to assure assessment practice is in accordance with national standards, awarding body requirements and partner institutions (for higher education).
- 1.2 Robust mechanisms exist at the College to ensure that assessment is fair and appropriate. Your tutors will assess the quality of your work according to agreed criteria and standards and without regard to your individual circumstances and samples are checked by External Examiners who oversee the assessment process. However, the academic appeals procedure may be instigated if a student wishes to appeal against an assessment decision based upon their academic achievement or progress.
- 1.3 The College aims to deal with any academic appeal as quickly and confidentially as possible and ensure that students are supported in this process, with decisions made being clearly communicated. In undertaking these procedures the College expects all parties to act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the processes themselves with respect. Taking part in the College's Academic Appeals Procedure does not in any way affect any statutory rights you may have in relation to your assessment.
- 1.4 The academic appeals procedure is communicated to all students as part of their induction process and is available via the College website and the VLE. The College works in partnership with the Universities of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and the University of Cumbria; as such students must be informed of their right to access the partner universities' respective academic appeals procedures which are available from the following links:
- University of Cumbria: my.cumbria.ac.uk/media/MyCumbria/Appendix-5.pdf
 - UCLan: www.uclan.ac.uk/students/study/examinations_and_awards/academic_appeals.php

2 Scope

- 2.1 In line with the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education, academic appeals must be addressed “through fair and transparent procedures which are accessible to all students.”¹
- 2.2 The College’s Academic Appeals Procedure is open to anyone who is or was recently a registered student and is intended to be flexible where a student raises issues which fall under more than one process.
- 2.3 Students studying on HE programmes which are awarded by partner institutions must follow the academic appeals procedures of the relevant institution. Southport College works in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and the University of Cumbria and their respective procedures are available for download (see 1.2).
- 2.4 An appeal will be considered if there is evidence to support your belief that one or more of the following reasons apply:-
- Extenuating circumstances, i.e. your performance in an assessment was affected by illness or other personal factors that you were unable, or for valid reasons, unwilling to share with a member of staff beforehand;
 - there was a material, administrative or other error;
 - the assessment was not carried out within the regulations;
 - you have been treated unfairly;
 - there is a perception of bias.
- 2.5 Grounds for academic appeal are not normally considered in relation to academic judgment or decisions made on the quality of work or the criteria being applied to marked work. Other matters of dispute shall be termed “complaint” and are subject to the College’s Complaints Procedure.
- 2.6 For the purpose of this document, assessment is taken to include all college-assessed work, which contributes towards external awarding body decisions. The academic appeals procedure does not cover outside public examinations where the examining boards’ own procedures will apply.
- 2.7 For academic appeals in respect of GCSE controlled assessments and GCE coursework units specific guidance is provided in Appendix 1 of this policy.

¹ Core Practice listed on page 2 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance for Concerns, Complaints and Appeals

3 Academic Appeals Process

3.1 The academic appeals procedure involves three stages:

1. Early Resolution stage;
2. Formal Stage, *and*;
3. Review stage.

3.2 As soon as you become concerned about your results, talk to your Lecturer or your Progress, Academic or Pastoral Tutor informally, explaining your concerns, to try and resolve the matter quickly. If you prefer, talk to any other of your tutors, a Student Engagement Officer, a Student Guidance Officer or any member of the Quality and Support department.

3.3 Early Resolution Stage

3.3.1 If you are not satisfied with the response from your tutor, you should complete the Academic Appeal form (Appendix 2) within 10 working days of receipt of your results or grade. The completed form can either be emailed to learnervoice@southport.ac.uk or submitted via the Information Centre.

3.3.2 Special attention will be given to identifying academic appeals that may require particularly swift action. These may include, but are not limited to cases where:

- the impact of the issues raised has detrimental consequences for the student's mental health or where the student displays significant distress;
- external time limits apply, for example in meeting regulatory requirements for the completion of professional courses.

3.3.3 On receipt of the Academic Appeal form the Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality will undertake an initial evaluation to check that the academic appeal is submitted under the correct procedures, falls within the grounds upon which an appeal may be made, is submitted within any deadline, and is in the required format. This process may result in:

- the student being referred to a different procedure;
- the academic appeal proceeding to formal consideration;
- the academic appeal being rejected because it is not made under the permissible grounds. Where some parts of the student's academic appeal fall outside the permissible grounds, this will be explained to the student.

3.3.4 Where the Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality finds there are no grounds for academic appeal, they will provide the justification for this decision in writing within 5 working days and will advise as to whether it falls within scope of other college policy or procedures, such as the complaints procedure.

3.3.5 If the appeal satisfies the criteria (2.4) the Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality will convene a meeting between the student and the Head of Department. It should normally be possible to make an appointment within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.

3.3.6 As a consequence of this meeting one of the following findings must be agreed.

- The student is content *not* to continue with their appeal *or*
- The student wishes to *proceed* to the formal stage

3.3.7 You will be notified of the decision in writing within a specified time limit of 15 working days, from the initial submission of the academic appeal.

3.4 Formal Stage

3.4.1 If your appeal is not resolved at the Early Resolution stage and you wish to proceed to the Formal stage you will be able to put your case to a specially convened panel. The Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality will set up the appeals hearing, usually within 10 working days of your Early Resolution meeting, comprising of three staff including two staff at Head of Department level or above. This panel will not include any of members who have previously been associated with your appeal. You will be notified of the panel's membership in advance of the hearing and may bring a friend or student representative with you to the hearing. The panel will consider the evidence put before it.

3.4.2 You will be provided with a written outcome at the conclusion of the Formal stage. The outcome(s) of a successful appeal will depend on the circumstances. Possible outcomes include one or more of the following:

- your tutor will be asked to reconsider the original mark or grade;
- you will receive another opportunity to complete the assignment, examination or other assessment;
- a mark or grade will be recorded which more adequately reflects other evidence of your ability;
- you will be offered the chance to submit additional evidence of your ability or competence.

3.4.3 You will be notified of decision of the panel in writing within a specified time limit of 15 working days from the initial submission of the formal academic appeal.

3.5 Review Stage

3.5.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal stage, you can request a review. A request for a review may be on limited grounds, including but not confined to:

- a review of the procedures followed at the formal stage;
- a consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances;
- new material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

3.5.2 The review stage will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation. An academic appeal must have been considered at the formal stage before it can be escalated to the review stage.

3.5.3 You must submit a request for review in writing, by email to learnervoice@southport.ac.uk or by letter to the Assistant Principal Curriculum and Quality, within 10 days of receipt of the written outcome of your appeal.

3.5.4 The College will allocate the request for review to a designated senior member of staff, not involved at any previous stage. If the student's expectations appear to exceed the scope of

the review stage, the student will be advised of this as soon as possible in writing in order to manage expectations about possible outcomes.

3.5.5 The reviewer will consider whether:

- the relevant procedures were followed during the formal stage;
- the outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances;
- the student received clear reasons as to why the academic appeal was rejected at the formal stage;
- new material evidence has been provided which has the student given valid reasons for not supplying this earlier.

3.5.6 At the end of the investigation the senior manager will make a final decision and the complainant will be informed of the outcome through the issue of a decision letter. The reviewer may overturn the outcome of the formal stage, refer the appeal back to the formal stage for reconsideration or decide that the appeal is not upheld.

3.5.7 If the academic appeal is not upheld, the outcome of the review stage will be communicated to you in writing by issuing a Completion of Procedures letter as soon as possible and within 15 working days. This will include a clear explanation and will outline the reasons for the decision.

3.5.8 Where an academic appeal is upheld, the College will provide you with a written outcome, and explain how and when it will implement any remedy, within 15 working days. A Completion of Procedures letters will also be issued if requested.

3.5.9 If you are a further education student the decision letter will also advise you about:

- your right to submit a complaint to the relevant awarding body
- the time limit for doing so;
- where and how to access advice and support.

Once the review stage has been completed, further education students are entitled to ask the relevant awarding body to review their complaint about the outcome of the College's academic appeals process.

3.5.10 If you are a higher education student the decision letter will also advise you about:

- your right to submit a complaint to the Office of the Internal Adjudicator (OIA) for independent external review;
- the time limit for doing so;
- where and how to access advice and support.

Once the review stage has been completed, higher education students are entitled to ask the OIA to review their complaint about the outcome of the College's academic appeals process. The complaint should normally be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

4. Annual review and reporting of academic appeals

- 4.1 Academic appeals and complaints data are reported to the governing board's Standards Committee each semester. Appropriate action is taken on issues identified and information gathered will be used to improve services for students and the student experience.
- 4.2 The academic appeal procedure is reviewed annually, at the end of the academic year. The aim being to ensure the academic appeal procedure continues to meet developments in FE and HE and addresses any issues identified. The academic appeal report contributes to and complements other quality assurance systems informing, where relevant, any improvements required to enhance the student experience.
- 4.3 Lead Student Representatives are invited to review and contribute to any decision making in relation to changes to the procedure.
- 4.4 Anonymised appeals summary reports will be published and made available to Governors, staff and students with a view to improving awareness of the procedures themselves; but also to enhance the confidence and understanding of students and staff in the effectiveness of the academic appeals procedures.

All enquiries in relation to these procedures should be addressed to: Assistant Principal – Curriculum and Quality

5. Related policies, procedures and guidelines

- 5.1 The following documents should be read in conjunction with this policy and are available via the College website:
- Assessment Policy
 - Higher Education Assessment Policy
 - Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
 - Malpractice and Administration Policy
 - Complaints, Comments and Compliments Procedure
- 5.2 Supporting information for academic appeals in relation to awards made by the College's partner higher education institutions are available here:
- University of Cumbria: my.cumbria.ac.uk/media/MyCumbria/Appendix-5.pdf
 - UCLan: www.uclan.ac.uk/students/study/examinations_and_awards/academic_appeals.php
 - Higher National programmes – Student Handbooks

6. Regulatory References

- 6.1 In respect of Higher education programmes this policy addresses:
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2018: Core Practice: The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible for all students.
 - Guiding Principle 2: procedures are accessible and inclusive

- Guiding Principle 6: procedures are fair and impartial²
- Office for the Internal Adjudicator Good Practice Framework - Handling Complaints And Academic Appeals

6.2 This policy is also written in reference to the Joint Council for Qualifications' Guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals>

² Page 3 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance for Concerns, Complaints and Appeals

Appendix 1: Appeals against internally assessed marks for GCSE controlled assessments and GCE coursework units

The College is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff mark candidates' controlled assessment/coursework this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.

Candidates' work will be marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skill, and who have been trained in this activity. Southport College is committed to ensuring that work produced by candidates is authenticated in line with the requirements of the awarding body. Where a number of subject teachers are involved in marking candidates' work, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency of marking. If a candidate believes that this may not have happened in relation to his/her work, he/she may make use of this appeals procedure.

N.B: an appeal may only be made against the assessment process and not against the mark submitted to the awarding body.

1. Appeals should be made as early as possible, and no later than two weeks before the last timetabled examination in the series (e.g. the last GCSE written paper in the June GCSE examination series).
2. Appeals must be made in writing by the candidate's parent/carer to the examinations officer.
3. The Principal will appoint a senior member of staff to conduct the investigation. The senior member of staff will not have had any involvement in the internal assessment process for that subject.
4. The purpose of the appeal will be to decide whether the process used for internal assessment conformed to the awarding body's specification and subject-specific associated documents.
5. The appellant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any relevant correspondence with the awarding body, and any changes made to internal assessment procedures.
6. The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the Principal and will be logged as a complaint. A written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request. Should the appeal bring any irregularity in procedures to light, the awarding body will be informed.

After candidates' work has been internally assessed, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency in marking between centres. The moderation process may lead to mark changes. This process is outside the control of Southport College and is not covered by this procedure. *All enquiries in relation to these procedures should be addressed to the Assistant Principal – Curriculum and Quality.*

Appendix 2: Academic Appeals Form

1. Personal Details			
Student Name:			
Address:			
Telephone number:			
2. Course Information			
Course:			
Year of Study:	Year 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Year 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Assessment Information			
Date of receipt of assessment outcome under appeal:			
Name of assessor:			
Name of moderator:	(for office use only)		
Assessment outcome under appeal			
4. Grounds for Academic Appeal			
Appeal Stage?	Early Resolution <input type="checkbox"/>	Formal Stage <input type="checkbox"/>	Review Stage <input type="checkbox"/>
Date appeal received:	(for office use only)		
Received by:	(for office use only)		
Investigating Officer:	(for office use only)		
Please explain the grounds for academic appeal:			
Evidence for consideration (this should be attached):			
Student Declaration			
Please ensure you are in agreement with the following points before signing below:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I declare that the information provided on this form and accompanying documentation is valid.</i> <i>I give consent that the information provided in this application form be disclosed to the relevant parties involved with the investigation of my academic appeal.</i> <i>I understand that the anonymised data provided in this form will be used for review and made available in publicised reports in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.</i> <i>I confirm that I have read the Academic Appeals Procedure.</i> 		
Student Signature:			
Date:			

5. Outcome of appeal (for office use only)			
Evidence considered:			
Rationale for Outcome: <i>Is marking in accordance with the stated criteria and weightings? Have any issues been identified, if so how have these been resolved?</i>			
Is the appeal to be justified?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In part <input type="checkbox"/>
Response to Appellant:	<u>THIS MUST BE WRITTEN IN LETTER FORMAT</u>		
Is there anything that can be learnt following the appeal?			
Action Taken			