

Student Assessment Appeals Procedure

QUA 2

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This document can also be produced in alternative formats upon request.

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Please also refer to the following documents on the [Student Hub](#):

Student Assessment Appeals Flowchart

Student Assessment Appeals Form

Student Assessment Appeals Procedure

1. Purpose

At the start of a programme of study, students must be made aware that any results provided to them before certification by the Awarding Organisation, should be considered as provisional. Before results are shared with an Awarding Organisation, the College holds a series of Exams Boards. These usually occur in the middle and towards the end of each academic year. The aim of this document is to ensure a fair and consistent procedure is available to students who have grounds to appeal an Exam Board decision.

If a student is unhappy with their progress and/or assessments **before** an Exam Board, they should discuss their concerns with their Lecturer, Assessor or Course Coordinator. The College provides various mechanisms of support which may be available to assist students in such situations – details are accessible at <https://www.nrc.ac.uk/college-life/supporting-students> .

If a student is aware of extenuating circumstances **before or during** assessment i.e. events or situations out of their control which may adversely affect their academic performance; the student should discuss these with their Lecturer, Assessor or Course Coordinator. The College has procedures for [Extenuating Circumstances and Special Consideration](#); this is accessible on the Student Hub and may be referred to, and used, at any time during the duration of a course.

If a student is unhappy with the content or delivery of their course, or any other aspect of the College's services, the student should refer to the College's [Customer Complaints Policy](#). This is also accessible on the Student Hub.

Please note that the College's procedure for Student Assessment Appeals may need to be reviewed and alternative processes put in place as a result of unprecedented circumstances. In such cases, the College will follow national, regulatory and Awarding Organisation guidance. The College will inform students of these alternative procedures through the normal College channels.

2. Scope

This procedure is for all students studying at Northern Regional College who wish to appeal an **Exam Board decision**. Students should be reminded that grades/marks can go up, go down or remain unchanged after an appeal.

This Student Assessment Appeal procedure also applies to the **Ulster University's AROW Board process**. Ulster University students identified as 'at risk of withdrawal' (i.e. AROW) at an Exam Board (e.g. where a student has more than 100 credits failure or failure at 3rd attempt) will have an opportunity to provide written representation (e.g. via submission of an ARW1 Form) within 5 working days of the notification of the Exam Board decision.

An AROW Board will make a decision as to whether the student should remain on their course of study. Possible decisions include defer, resit, repeat, Leave of Absence or withdraw. Should a student fail to make representations to the AROW Board, they will be withdrawn (with an exit award if appropriate). Post AROW Board a student will still have the normal rights of appeal using the process in this document. Please contact your Course Co-ordinator for information about the AROW Board process.

Students who wish to appeal a grade/mark for work marked externally **i.e. work marked by the Awarding Organisation** such as an exam or online test, should refer to the awarding organisation processes. See Section 7 of this document.

Please note that private candidates should contact the Awarding Organisation directly with any issues or concerns regarding their grades or marks.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Student

If a student is unhappy with his/her assessment or progress during the course, it is the student's responsibility to discuss this directly with the Lecturer, Assessor or Course Coordinator as soon as possible. On receipt, if a student is unhappy with an Exam Board decision, they may complete an Appeals Form (LAF) and pass this to their Course Coordinator within 7 working days of receiving the Exam Board decision. The student should keep a copy of the LAF and any other documentation submitted to support their Appeal.

3.2. Lecturer/Assessor

The Lecturer/Assessor has the responsibility to consider the student's concerns about their progress or assessments, and give feedback to the student, within the rules and regulations provided by the Awarding Organisation.

3.3. Course Coordinator

The Course Coordinator has the responsibility to consider the student's and Lecturer/Assessor's concerns about the student's progress or assessments and action accordingly. On receipt of a student's Appeals Form (LAF), the Course Coordinator must immediately notify the Quality Manager and his/her Curriculum Area Manager (CAM).

3.4. Curriculum Area Manager

The Curriculum Area Manager has responsibility to acknowledge receipt of the student's LAF and set up an Appeals Panel within 5 working days of receipt of the LAF. The Appeals Panel should be scheduled to meet within 5 working days of the date of the acknowledgement being sent to the student.

3.5. Assessment Appeals Panel

The Assessment Appeals Panel has responsibility to:

- 3.5.1. consider the LAF and any evidence presented by the student;
- 3.5.2. if required, interview the staff and student involved with the Appeal as part of their decision-making process;
- 3.5.3. record/minute their meeting and record the outcome on the LAF;
- 3.5.4. the Chair of the Panel, normally a Curriculum Area Manager, (or for higher education the Head of HE) is responsible for communicating the decision of the Panel to the student within 5 working days;
- 3.5.5. if the Appeal is upheld due to a procedural error or irregularity, the Chair of the Panel is also responsible for contacting the applicable staff associated with the procedural irregularity/ error.

4. Assessment Appeals Process

Before being provided to students, all final grades/marks for internally marked work must be formally confirmed at an Exam Board meeting. Even after an Exam Board, students MUST be informed that Exam Board decisions are provisional until officially certified by the Awarding Organisation. For OU, results must be conferred by MRAQCP and are provisional until ratification by OU.

- 4.1. If a student wishes to appeal an Exam Board decision, the student can only make an appeal if there is evidence of:
 - 4.1.1. a procedural error/irregularity; or
 - 4.1.2. extenuating circumstances that were not known at the time of the Exam Board; or
 - 4.1.3. incorrect College decisions in relation to access arrangements and special consideration.
- 4.2. If a student is appealing due to 4.1.2. above, the [Extenuating Circumstances and Special Consideration](#) must be consulted to ensure the student is aware of what constitutes an 'extenuating circumstance'.
- 4.3. Academic judgements of lecturers cannot be appealed and will not be considered within an Appeal.
- 4.4. If the circumstances outlined at 4.1. above apply, within 7 working days of receiving the Exam Board decision, the student should:
 - complete an Appeals Form (LAF) available on the [Student Hub](#); and
 - submit it with any evidence to the Course Coordinator.

Note: Students submitting an Appeal should keep a copy of their LAF and any evidence submitted.
- 4.5. On receipt, the Course Coordinator must immediately forward the student's Appeal to:
 - 4.5.1. the Quality Manager; and
 - 4.5.2. their Curriculum Area Manager.
- 4.6. The Curriculum Area Manager must:
 - 4.6.1. Acknowledge the Appeal within 5 working days.
 - 4.6.2. Set up an Assessment Appeals Panel within 5 working days of the acknowledgement being sent (see Section 5).

5. The College Assessment Appeals Panel

- 5.1. The Curriculum Area Manager (or for higher education the Head of HE) normally acts as Chair of the Panel and will appoint two members of staff who have not been directly involved in the decision-making process for the final grade/mark. Staff selected for the Panel may be from support and/or curriculum departments.
- 5.2. The role of the Panel will be to consider the student's Appeals Form (LAF) and:
 - 5.2.1. consider new evidence associated with extenuating circumstances, and/or
 - 5.2.2. investigate all evidence/allegations of procedural error/irregularity.
 - 5.2.3. consider if decisions relating to access arrangements and special consideration were correct.
- 5.3. Panel members may request to interview staff directly involved with the decision-making process.
- 5.4. A student is not entitled to be heard in person, although the Panel may request to interview the student making the Appeal.
- 5.5. The Panel will not make academic judgements regarding a piece of work i.e. they will not remark work nor award new grades/marks.
- 5.6. The Panel will decide if the Appeal is upheld or not upheld.
- 5.7. If the student's Appeal is **upheld**, the student may be permitted to complete, take, or repeat the assessment – depending on the awarding organisation's regulations.
- 5.8. If the student's Appeal is **not upheld**, the Exam Board decision will stand, and the College will not prejudice any further participation in the course of study.
- 5.9. Appeals may not be upheld if:
 - 5.9.1. there are no grounds for an Appeal;
 - 5.9.2. the student has not completed all sections on the LAF;
 - 5.9.3. it is determined that there is no new information regarding extenuating circumstances;
 - 5.9.4. there is no independent evidence to support extenuating circumstances;
 - 5.9.5. the student has not provided a satisfactory reason/explanation for the failure to supply the information to date;
 - 5.9.6. the Appeal is late with no acceptable reason.
- 5.10. The decision of the Panel will be final and no further appeals will be permitted.
- 5.11. The decision of the Panel must be communicated to the student by the Chair within 5 working days.
- 5.12. The decision of the Panel must also be communicated to Quality within 5 working days.

6. Communication during the College's Appeal Process

- 6.1. Appeals will not be considered where a parent/guardian submits an assessment appeal for a student who is over the age of consent.
- 6.2. Students should be aware that while privacy and confidentiality will be maintained, evidence and information submitted will normally be made available to the Assessment Appeals Panel and may also be held on the student's records for the duration of the course.
- 6.3. An Appeal submitted by a student may contain sensitive information; hence staff dealing with Appeals should be sensitive and professional and consider the details as confidential.
- 6.4. Information related to the student's Appeal should not be communicated via e-mail; a shared folder should be developed by the Curriculum Area Manager and shared appropriately with Panel members. Access to the shared folder should be withdrawn on conclusion of the Appeals process.
- 6.5. It is the student's responsibility that the Appeals Form (LAF) is completed in full and that any evidence to support the appeal is provided. Appeals may be rejected if full information is not provided.
- 6.6. A student may be asked to attend an interview regarding their Appeal. A student cannot ask someone else to represent them.
- 6.7. If a student is called to interview, they may choose to be accompanied. The person accompanying the student must be a member of the College, and must not be related to the student.
- 6.8. If a student is called to interview by the Panel, it is the student's responsibility to make sure he/she and any accompanying person make arrangements to attend.
- 6.9. If a student is unable to attend a Panel interview on the date scheduled, the Panel will try to accommodate an alternative date.
- 6.10. The Panel will not consider student appeals which are deemed to be vexatious or frivolous.
- 6.11. If the Panel uphold the Appeal due to a procedural error, the Chair of the Panel must discuss the matter with the staff involved in the decision-making process.
- 6.12. The outcome of the Appeal will be communicated to the student by the Chair of the Panel within 5 working days of the Panel meeting.
- 6.13. On exhaustion of the College's internal Appeals process, it is the student's responsibility to pursue any further action. The student should check the Awarding Organisation's website.
- 6.14. Students may also contact the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) after internal College processes have been exhausted. For students who are studying an Open University qualification, they may also contact The Open University.

7. Post Results Services

- 7.1. Awarding Organisations normally offer an 'Enquiry About Results' (EARs) or post-results service for externally assessed assessments.
- 7.2. There is usually a strict deadline and fee to use such services and these will be set by each Awarding Organisation.
- 7.3. Usually only the College, as a Centre, can use these services and will need student consent before making any request. Please check the relevant Awarding Organisation's website for further details about these services or contact the College's Exams Office for further information.

8. Quality Assurance

Comments and complaints regarding this document will be handled through the College's comments and complaints mechanisms. If you have a comment or complaint, or require further information regarding the process, please e-mail quality.improvement@nrc.ac.uk.

This document will be monitored on an ongoing basis and subject to a full review at least every two years. It may also be updated if changes or improvements in processes or procedures are identified.

In monitoring and reviewing the document, the following may be taken into consideration:

- feedback regarding the content and format of the document;
- uptake and usage;
- comments or complaints regarding the document;
- Equality information and monitoring data.

9. Links to other Documents

Internal Documents:

- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Extenuating Circumstances and Special Consideration](#)

Supplements

Supplement 1 – Assessment Appeals Process Charts

Supplement 2 – Student Assessment Appeals Form

External Documents

Individual Awarding Organisation Appeals Information

- [JCQ General Regulations for Approved Centres](#)
- [JCQ Information: Post-Results Services](#)
- [QAA Quality Code](#)

10. Appendix 1: Assessment Appeals Panel Outcome Letter

NRC Ref NRC/LA/ [student's initials & date]

Student's Name
Student's Address
Student's Address
Student's Address

Today's Date,

Dear [Student],

RE: Student Assessment Appeals Panel Outcome

This letter aims to inform you of the outcome of your Assessment Appeal submitted by you on [first date on Appeals Form].

After the Assessment Appeals Panel reviewed your Appeal, the outcome is that it has [been upheld/not been upheld]

This outcome has been arrived at due to the following reasons:

-

If you are unhappy with this decision you may contact the Awarding Organisation. The College's Examinations Office will be able provide you with contact details. You also have the right to contact the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO). Information about NIPSO is accessible at www.nipso.org.uk. For students who are studying an Open University qualification, they may also contact The Open University.

Yours sincerely,

[Staff Name] [Staff Title]