



LANCASTER UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL STUDY CENTRE
ACADEMIC APPEALS REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES
2025-26
APPLICABLE FROM SEPTEMBER 2025

CONTENTS

INAA 1	PRINCIPLES	2
INAA 2	APPLICATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROCEDURE.....	3
INAA 3	THE PROCEDURE.....	4
INAA 3.1	STAGE 1 – THE FORMAL APPEAL.....	4
INAA 3.2	STAGE 2 – THE REVIEW STAGE.....	6
INAA 4	OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR	7

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INAA 1 PRINCIPLES

- INAA 1.1 Matters relating to a mark or grade for any assessment, or an overall result shall be subject to the authority of Lancaster University, and Lancaster University International Study Centre academic staff acting on its behalf, in reaching academic judgements. The University, exercising its authority under its Statutes, acting through the decisions of boards of examiners as confirmed by the Committee of Senate, has sole authority to determine whether an International Foundation Certificate or International Graduate Diploma should be awarded to a particular Lancaster University International Study Centre candidate.
- INAA 1.2 However, it is recognised by the University and Lancaster University International Study Centre that there are non-academic elements to assessment judgments which might have adversely affected the outcome and that there are occasions where students may wish to appeal against an assessment outcome on such grounds: an academic appeal.
- INAA 1.3 Lancaster University has delegated the responsibility for Stage 1 of the academic appeal process for Lancaster University International Study Centre students to Lancaster University International Study Centre. These regulations and procedures set out how Lancaster University International Study Centre will manage the academic appeal process at Stage 1 and the responsibilities of all parties. These regulations and procedures also provide details of when academic appeals will be referred to Lancaster University for Stage 2 consideration as the awarding body for Lancaster University International Study Centre awards, and the opportunity for external scrutiny should students remain dissatisfied with University's decisions.
- INAA 1.4 These regulations and procedures apply to all current students registered on a Lancaster University International Study Centre programme leading to the award of an International Foundation Certificate or International Graduate Diploma.
- INAA 1.5 Students will not be hindered in making a reasonable academic appeal. All parties will act without bias or prejudice and in a sensitive, fair and prompt manner.
- INAA 1.6 The objective of the procedure is to establish the facts and come to a reasonable and just resolution, which is both relevant and proportionate.
- INAA 1.7 No student will be disadvantaged for making an academic appeal in good faith, and all reasonable academic appeals will be taken seriously and dealt with according to the agreed procedures. However, if it is established that academic appeals are frivolous or spurious, then they will not be considered reasonable, and the University may take disciplinary action.
- INAA 1.8 All academic appeals will be dealt with confidentially so far as is able, and it is expected that all parties involved will honour this approach.
- INAA 1.9 All reasonable measure will be taken to ensure that no student is disadvantaged within these processes due to location, requirements associated with protected characteristics, etc.

- INAA 1.10 Meetings may be conducted face-to-face or online, where appropriate. Technology will be used, as appropriate, to facilitate these procedures.
- INAA 1.11 Students who want to appeal and are eligible to do so in accordance with INAA 1.13 and INAA 1.14 must appeal within 15 calendar days of the formal publication of results. Exceptions to this timescale will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Academic Director, or designated alternate nominated by the Academic Director.
- INAA 1.12 The University and Lancaster University International Study Centre, through its academic staff and assessment mechanisms, ensures that proper academic judgement is used in all assessment and moderation (see the Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures [General Regulations for Assessment and Award](#)). Academic judgement thus stands outside of these procedures and cannot be subject to appeal.
- INAA 1.13 The right of appeal is available to all students who:
- (a) have failed to qualify for the award of the degree for which they were registered;
 - (b) have been judged by an appropriate Lancaster University International Study Centre body to have committed academic malpractice.
- INAA 1.14 A *prima facie* case for appeal will be deemed to exist if there is evidence of one or more of the following, which, for good reason, could not be brought to the attention of boards of examiners at the relevant time and which could have influenced their recommendations had the information been available at that time:
- (a) material administrative error or irregularity in the conduct of assessment which adversely affected the student's performance and results;
 - (b) significant exceptional circumstances which adversely affected the student's performance and results;
 - (c) unfair treatment or discrimination, outwith the exercise of academic judgement.
- AA 1.15 Advice on how to use these procedures is available from the Lancaster University International Study Centre.

INAA 2 APPLICATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROCEDURE

- INAA 2.1 The Academic Appeals procedure only applies to appeals initiated by an individual student or group of students. A group of students wishing to appeal collectively will need to provide reasons as to why they should be considered collectively. These will be subject to consideration and judgement by the Academic Director whose decision will be final (a decision to not consider an appeal collectively does not preclude students from pursuing individual appeals). Where a collective appeal has been agreed, the group will nominate a spokesperson for communication.
- INAA 2.2 An appellant has the right to be accompanied and supported at any meeting by one person, and may be represented where the appellant expressly authorises, in writing, a third party to act on their behalf. Reasonable adjustment will be made to the processes as necessary to meet requirements related to protected characteristics.

- INAA 2.3 Lancaster University International Study Centre will make every reasonable effort to complete academic appeal procedures in a timely manner and aims to complete all aspects of the appeals process within ninety calendar days. If Lancaster University International Study Centre is unable to comply, on reasonable grounds (for example, in factually complex matters involving a number of individuals, etc.), it will provide the appellant with an explanation and inform them of the timeframe in which the procedure will be completed.
- INAA 2.4 In this procedure any reference to named members of Lancaster University International Study Centre or Lancaster University staff also includes reference to their nominee and named staff may delegate their responsibilities to other appropriate members of staff without invalidating the procedure. The identity of nominees or members of staff to whom responsibilities are delegated will be notified to the appellant.
- INAA 2.5 The Academic Appeals procedures, as set out, act to fulfil Lancaster University's obligations under Ordinance 7 in relation to appeals. As outlined in INAA 1.3 responsibility for Academic Appeals Stage 1 has been delegated to Lancaster University International Study Centre.
- INAA 2.6 The Academic Director will oversee this process and provide advice. Any evidence of breaches of the principles as set out in INAA 1.5-INAA 1.15 above should be brought to the attention of the Academic Director for investigation.
- INAA 2.7 Should a student wish to register a concern about the actions of the Academic Director, it should be sent to the Centre Director.
- INAA 2.8 Lancaster University's Academic Standards and Quality Committee is responsible to both Council and Senate for monitoring appeals and agreeing institutional actions via an annual report on academic appeals. The annual Teaching Quality Assurance report made to Council will include this report and any associated actions.

INAA 3 THE PROCEDURE

Academic appeals follow a two-stage procedure.

INAA 3.1 STAGE 1 – THE FORMAL APPEAL

- INAA 3.1.1 In order for an academic appeal to be considered formally, the appellant must put the appeal in writing using the Academic Appeal form (available for online submission and in hard copy) and send it to the Academic Director.
- INAA 3.1.2 Should the issue be immediately resolvable (for example, a simple recording error), the Academic Director will draw this to the attention of the relevant Exam Board Chair who will agree amendments by Chair's action. If this is not the case, the Academic Director will consider the appeal and decide whether there is a *prima facie* case for appeal against the criteria set out in INAA 1.14. Where there is no *prima facie* case the Academic Director, will either:
- (a) refer the appellant to an alternate more appropriate procedure;
 - (b) enter into a discussion with the appellant, and other parties as appropriate, as to how best to take forward the concerns (e.g. in cases where the concerns

involve a number of elements which cross Lancaster University International Study Centre procedures); or

- (c) provide an explanation to the appellant as to why no action can be taken along with information on the appellant's right to challenge the decision via Lancaster University. Normally, Completion of Procedures letters that set out their right to refer the matter to the Office for the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and describes the means to do so will only be issued to students by Lancaster University following completion of the final review stage. A student studying the level 6 International Graduate Diploma may however, request a Completion of Procedures letter from Lancaster University International Study Centre following the *prima facie* stage.

INAA 3.1.3 Students have the right to challenge the *prima facie* decision, and, in these cases, the decision will be reviewed by the Academic Quality, Standards and Conduct team at Lancaster University.

INAA 3.1.4 If it is deemed that a *prima facie* case exists within the scope of this procedure, the appellant will be referred to an appropriate Academic Appeal Panel. It is expected that the student will have provided full information with accompanying evidence as required in their Academic Appeal form. The Academic Appeal Panel will take into account all evidence submitted. Once the appeal is in progress, no new issues can be added to the appeal. The Academic Director will appoint an Investigator to determine the facts of the appeal. A report of the Investigator's findings will be shared with the Academic Appeal Panel members and the appellant, in advance of the meeting, to inform their decision-making.

INAA 3.1.5 An Academic Appeal Panel will consist of a minimum of three persons. The Academic Director will appoint panel members from a pool of appropriately trained academic and/or professional services staff. The panel will include at least one academic member of staff, and the panel must not contain any member of staff previously involved in an Exceptional Circumstances committee or Examination Board that considered the student(s) in question. A note-taker will also be in attendance throughout for all panels.

INAA 3.1.6 The Panel shall have the right of access to detailed marks for the appellant's assessments. In addition, all details of cases where the board of examiners have permitted a student to be reassessed as first attempt candidates will be available to the Panel. The appellant may attend the event, although it is not required and failure to attend would not stop the proceeding. If present, the appellant will be invited to make a short personal statement to further elucidate the submitted materials. The panel will be allowed, through the Chair, to question the appellant. It will not normally be permissible to call witnesses as part of the panel hearing; however, the Chair may allow it at their discretion. The appellant will be given the opportunity to sum up their position. The burden of proof will be on the appellant, albeit within a recognition of the responsibilities of Lancaster University International Study Centre. Following the proceeding, the panel will deliberate in private using the balance of probability as the standard of proof and reach a decision. A representative from the INTO or Lancaster University International Study Centre senior management team will be available to provide advice on the scope of actions/remedies available to the Panel.

INAA 3.1.7 An Academic Appeal Panel which has been convened to consider an appeal against a judgement of academic malpractice shall review that judgement and all the evidence pertaining to it and shall decide one of the following:

- (a) The original finding and penalty are confirmed; or
- (b) The original finding is upheld but the penalty is varied (according to the available penalties set out in the Academic Integrity regulations). The penalty imposed by the Panel can be no greater than that imposed by Academic Integrity Panel; or
- (c) The original finding and penalty are removed (and the student's record amended accordingly).

INAA 3.1.8 The potential options for outcomes available to the Academic Appeal Panel will differ depending on the nature of the case (noting that the outcomes relating to appeals against a judgement of academic malpractice are defined in clause INAA 3.1.7). In general terms the following options apply:

- (a) Exclusion.
- (b) Confirmation of failure.
- (c) The granting of permission to be reassessed on the relevant assessment element(s) and/or module(s) via external reassessment as an external siter.
- (d) Reconsideration of candidate in accordance with the regulations relating to exceptional circumstances, as detailed in the INTO LU Exceptional Circumstances Policy
- (e) Agreement to allow the student to retake the entire programme (subject to visa conditions).
- (f) Agreement to temporarily exclude the student allowing a reassessment the following year without attendance as an external siter.

INAA 3.1.9 The appellant will receive a written decision that addresses the points they have made and gives reasons for the conclusion reached. The letter will also advise the appellant of their right to refer the matter to Stage 2 and describe the means to do so.

INAA 3.2 STAGE 2 – THE REVIEW STAGE

INAA 3.2.1 If the appellant feels their appeal has not been resolved by Lancaster University International Study Centre under Stage 1, they may apply for a formal review to Lancaster University via the Head of Student and Programme Administration within two weeks of the date of the Stage 1 written decision. They should explain why they feel dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and what remedy they seek. Requests for Stage 2 consideration can only be made on the following grounds:

- (a) that there exists evidence that could not reasonably have been made available at Stage 1; or
- (b) that there exists evidence of a material procedural irregularity in Stage 1; or
- (c) that there exists evidence that the judgement at Stage 1 did not meet the expectations of natural justice.

No new ground of appeal may be requested at Stage 2, but the appellant may submit further evidence in support of their case (subject to point (a) above) or suggest a new remedy.

- INAA 3.2.2 The Head of Student and Programme Administration, or designated alternative nominated by the Academic Registrar, will consider the application and make a *prima facie* decision as to whether or not to instigate a review. Where a review is rejected, the Head will write to the appellant explaining the reasons for the decision and providing a Completion of Procedures letter that sets out their right to refer the matter to the Office for the Independent Adjudicator and describes the means to do so.
- INAA 3.2.3 Students have the right to challenge the *prima facie* decision, and, in these cases, the decision will be reviewed by the Complaints Coordinator, or designated alternate nominated by the Director of Strategic Planning and Governance.
- INAA 3.2.4 Where a review is deemed within the scope of the procedures, the Academic Registrar or nominee will appoint a senior staff member to undertake the review. The appointed reviewer will not have been associated with the appeal or the faculty or Lancaster University International Study Centre.
- INAA 3.2.5 The Head of Student and Programme Administration, or nominee, will act as clerk to the Review and will prepare the documentation. The Chair of the Stage 1 Panel will be invited to submit a statement addressing the appellant's submission. The appellant may submit additional material only if there are good reasons why they were not submitted at Stage 1 (see INAA 3.2.2 above). If the appellant presents either new evidence or alternate remedies, the Stage 1 Panel Chair will also be invited to comment on these.
- INAA 3.2.6 The Reviewer will restrict their considerations to those matters identified as the grounds for review; the Reviewer will not rehear the original appeal. The burden of proof will be on the appellant, and the standard of proof will be on the balance of probability. Following consideration of all information submitted, the Reviewer will determine their conclusions, including, as appropriate, any modifications and/or additions to the Stage 1 actions/remedies. Only in exceptional circumstances would a rehearing at Stage 1 be recommended. The Head of Student and Programme Administration, or nominee, will provide advice on the scope of actions/remedies available to the Reviewer.
- INAA 3.2.7 The appellant will receive a written decision that addresses the points they have made and gives reasons for the conclusion reached. They will also receive a Completion of Procedures letter which will also advise the appellant of their right to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and describe the means to do so.

INAA 4 OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR

- INAA 4.1 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education runs an independent scheme to review student complaints and appeals. Lancaster University is a member of this scheme and following a Stage 2 review (undertaken by Lancaster University) or Lancaster University reviews a *prima facie* decision where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal to the University they can ask OIA to review their case. Information is available from the [OIA](#) on making a complaint, what it can and cannot look at, and what it can do if something has gone wrong to put it right.

- INAA 4.2 Students should normally have completed Stage 2 or had a Lancaster University review of a *prima facie* decision before making a complaint to the OIA. Where the appeal has not been upheld by the University, a 'Completion of Procedures' letter will be automatically issued by the University to the student. Where an appeal has been upheld or partially upheld, the student can request a Completion of Procedures letter. Further information about Completion of Procedures letters and associated timeframes is available from [OIA](#).
- INAA 4.3 For students who have not completed Stage 2 or had a Lancaster University review of a *prima facie* decision, under Lancaster University International Study Centre's membership with the OIA, students studying the level 3 International Foundation Certificate who are not satisfied with the outcome are not eligible to refer the matter to the OIA.
- INAA 4.4 For students who have not completed Stage 2 or had a Lancaster University review of a *prima facie* decision, under Lancaster University International Study Centre's membership with the OIA, students studying the level 6 International Graduate Diploma who are not satisfied with the outcome are eligible to refer the matter to the OIA.
- INAA 4.5 The application to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter.