Academic Appeals: A Guide for Students

IS AN APPEAL RELEVANT TO ME?

Who can use the academic appeals procedure?

The right of appeal is available to all students who:

a) have failed to qualify to proceed from one stage of a degree programme to the next; or
b) have failed to qualify for the award of the degree for which they were registered; or
c) wish to challenge, on procedural grounds, the class of degree to be awarded; or
d) have been judged by an appropriate University body to have committed academic malpractice.

What are the grounds (reasons) for an appeal?

An appeal can be made if you can provide evidence of one or more of the following situations, and have good reason why you did not raise the matter in advance of the Examination Board:

a) There was a material administrative error or irregularity in the conduct of assessment which adversely affected your performance and results. For example, there was an administrative error which led to a mark you received being incorrectly recorded, leading to you being awarded a 2:2 rather than a 2:1.

b) There were significant exceptional circumstances which adversely affected your performance and results. For example, serious illness affected your studies and assessment performance. Whilst exceptional circumstances should normally be considered by the Exceptional Circumstances Committee (which meets in advance of the Exam Boards), there may be occasions in which a student had good reasons for being unable to make an exceptional circumstances submission at the appropriate time, in which case an academic appeal is relevant. If you cannot demonstrate good reason why you did not submit exceptional circumstances at the appropriate time, your appeal will be rejected. It is strongly recommended that you use the Exceptional Circumstances process instead of submitting an appeal.

c) There was unfair treatment or discrimination, out-with the exercise of academic judgement. This could be evidence of bias or prejudice by an assessor.

I don’t feel any of the above apply to me, but I deserve a better mark/classification – can I appeal on these grounds?

No, not being happy with your mark/classification is not a valid reason for appeal. In matters of academic judgement, only the opinion of academic experts are relevant. As there is a process in place to ensure that academic judgements are sound, it is not possible to appeal on such grounds.

A number of my cohort were affected by the same issue - can a group/collective appeal be made?

Yes, a group appeal can be made. You would need to provide reasons why a group appeal should be considered and nominate one student as a spokesperson.
I have failed to progress because I have failed too many credits following the August assessments – can I still appeal?

If your August assessments were first attempts at work from the 2019-20 academic year, you are entitled to a resit in May/June 2021. You cannot appeal until you have completed those reassessments. If you have any exceptional circumstances that might have affected your performance in the August assessments, you must submit these to your department by **Wednesday 26th August** for consideration before the exam boards.

If your August assessments were resit opportunities or deferred assessments from the previous academic year, you have no further assessment opportunities and will be deemed as withdrawn from the University. If you believe that you have been affected by Exceptional Circumstances, you should submit a claim by the **26th August**. Following the formal publication of your results on the 14th September, if you believe you still have grounds for an appeal, then you will be entitled to submit an appeal to the University as explained in this guide. If your exceptional circumstances have already been considered by your department, we cannot reconsider the same circumstances through the appeals process.

I have left the University – can I still appeal?

Yes, if you have left the University you can use the appeals procedure, but you must submit your appeal by the deadline of xx September 2020.

**WHAT IS THE APPEALS PROCEDURE, HOW DO I MAKE AN APPEAL AND WHO CAN HELP?**

What is the academic appeals procedure?

There are two stages to the academic appeals procedure. In the first stage, a student submits an appeal and, if it is agreed that there are legitimate grounds for the appeal, the case will be considered by an Academic Appeals Panel. The Panel may accept (agree with) or deny (disagree with) the appeal. In situations where the Panel denies the appeal, the student can, under some circumstances, choose to move to stage 2 of the procedure. In stage 2, the appeal is considered by a Review Panel (comprising different staff to the Academic Appeals Panel) and a final decision is made.

A diagram setting out the appeals procedure in more detail can be found in Appendix 1.

Where can I find more details of the appeals procedure and who can I ask if I have questions about it?

The full detail of the academic appeals procedure is set out in the [Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures (MARP)](https://example.com). Please ensure you read and fully understand this in advance of making an appeal. If you have any questions about the procedure you should contact [ug.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:ug.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk) if you are an undergraduate student, or [pg.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:pg.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk) if you are a postgraduate student.

What documentation do I need to complete in order to appeal?

You need to complete the relevant stage 1 academic appeals form, either:

- [Stage 1 Appeal Form](https://example.com) for appeals about progression or
**Stage 1 Degree Classification Appeal Form** for appeals about your degree outcome.

The completed form, along with all supporting evidence, should be emailed to the relevant contact:

Undergraduate appeals: [ug.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:ug.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk)

Postgraduate appeals: [pg.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:pg.appeals@lancaster.ac.uk)

Once submitted, no further evidence at Stage 1 will be accepted.

**What do I need to include in my appeal submission?**

Your submission needs to provide evidence of the grounds for your appeal. You also need to clearly set out the reasons why the situation could not have been brought to the attention of the Examination Board at the appropriate time.

**When do I need to submit an appeal?**

The deadline for progression appeals is 24th September 2020 if you have exhausted all opportunities for reassessment and have been deemed withdrawn from the University. We will still review progression appeals received after this time, up to the 14th October 2020. Please note, however, that if you do not appeal until after the 24th September, even if your appeal is upheld, you may not be able to progress directly into the 20-21 academic as you will have missed too much of the teaching.

Degree classification appeals should be received within the usual timeframe, which is 10 days from the formal publication of results for the MBChB programme, who received their qualification in April 2020, or 30 calendar days for all other UG degree programmes, so no later than 14th October 2020 following the publication of post-August assessment results on 14th September 2020.

**Where can I get advice and support for making an appeal?**

The [Students’ Union](mailto:students.union@lancaster.ac.uk) can advise on the appeals procedure and provide help and advice on preparing evidence and supporting documentation. They may also be able to offer support and/or representation for any appeals meetings you attend. Your academic tutor, [Student Wellbeing Services](mailto:wellbeing.services@lancaster.ac.uk) or college advisory/welfare staff can also be asked for help and/or support.

**How long will the appeals procedure take from beginning to end?**

Usually the appeals procedure (stage 1 and stage 2) will be completed within 90 calendar days. However, if your case is particularly complex, we may need a longer timeframe, in which case we will inform you of the likely timeframe.

**WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I HAVE SUBMITTED MY APPEAL?**

**When will I hear whether the University has deemed there to be grounds for my appeal?**

You will be normally about your appeal submission, within 14 calendar days of submitting your appeal form and documentation. If there are deemed to be grounds for your appeal, an Academic Appeals Panel will hear your case. If there are not deemed to be grounds for your appeal, you will receive a Completion of Procedures letter and your case will not be considered further by the University.
If my appeal is taken forward at stage 1, do I have to attend an Academic Appeals Panel?

This will depend on the case. In some situations it may be possible to resolve an appeal without you being asked to attend. However, in other situations, you may be asked to attend when the Academic Appeals Panel considers your case.

If I’m asked to attend an Academic Appeals Panel, can I bring someone with me?

Yes, you have the right to be accompanied and supported by one person. You may wish to contact the SU to see whether one of their representatives can attend with you to advise and provide support.

What happens if I’m asked to attend an Academic Appeals Panel but I choose not to?

In this situation, the proceedings will go ahead without you.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF MY APPEAL IS UNSUCCESSFUL?**

What happens if I’m told that my appeal has been unsuccessful at stage 1, but I’m unhappy with this outcome?

You cannot request a review of Stage 1 simply because you are dissatisfied with the outcome. However, if any of the following are relevant, you can request a stage 2 review:

a) There exists evidence that could not reasonably have been made available at Stage 1;

b) There exists evidence of a material procedural irregularity in Stage 1;

c) There exists evidence that the judgement at Stage 1 was perverse or biased.

How do I instigate stage 2 of the appeals procedure?

Within 14 calendar days of receiving your stage 1 outcome letter, you would need to complete and submit the stage 2 appeals form.

What happens if I’ve reached the end of the Academic Appeals Procedure but I’m still unhappy?

If the internal appeals procedure has concluded and you feel dissatisfied at the outcome, you can take your case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) for further review. The application to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the issue of the University’s Completion of Procedures letter.
Appendix 1: The 2 Stages of the Academic Appeals Procedure

Stage 1

Appeal Submission

University determines whether there are grounds for appeal

No
Completion of Procedures letter issued to student

Yes
Academic Appeals Panel

Appeal accepted
Letter with actions/solutions

Appeal denied
Letter with reasons

Stage 2

Review Form Submission

University determines whether there are grounds for review

No
Completion of Procedures letter issued to student

Yes
Review Panel

Review accepted
Letter with actions/solutions

Review denied
Letter with reasons