

## University College Birmingham Assessment Appeals Procedure

### Introduction

If you are unhappy with the outcomes of an assessment and believe your published result is unfair or if there are extenuating circumstances that for good reasons were not submitted to the Examination Board or if you believe the outcome to a Stage Three decision of the Code of Practice on Student Reasonable Diligence is unfair, then you should refer to this Assessment Appeals Procedure. For other complaints of a service related nature then the Student Complaints Procedure is the most appropriate way to resolve your concern.

For more information about the best way to make a complaint or appeal and which procedure may be more appropriate, you may refer to the Academic Registry, Student Services or the Guild of Students for advice. A key principle is to identify what you are seeking as an outcome to your complaint; if you are seeking a reconsideration of a mark for a particular assessment then this Assessment Appeals Procedure should be used.

The definition of an assessment (or academic) appeal for the purposes of this Assessment Appeals Procedure is:

*'A request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards. (QAA)'*

The Assessment Appeals Procedure is available to all students enrolled at UCB.

A student has the right of appeal against an assessment decision to the Assessment Appeals Committee (of the Academic Board). An appeal that questions academic judgement in awarding a mark is not eligible. The basis of an appeal may only be made on one or more of the following grounds:

- i. That the student's performance was affected by illness or other factors which they were, for valid reasons, unable to divulge before the assessment decision, or the Examination Board's decision was taken. An appeal must be supported by medical certificates or other documentary evidence acceptable to the Assessment Appeals Committee.
- ii. That there is new and relevant evidence not previously taken into account.
- iii. That the correct procedures for determining the student's case had not been followed, resulting in an unfair decision having been made.

FE students wishing to appeal against an assessment decision should, in the first instance, speak to their Year Manager or Programme Manager. If still unhappy, they may use this Assessment Appeals Procedure.

### **Early Resolution Process**

In the first instance where relevant, you should discuss your concerns with your assessor who will explain the reasons for the assessment decision or with your year manager or Head of Department who will advise on whether extenuating circumstances may be applicable. It is the expectation of UCB that its staff will deal thoughtfully and sympathetically with your problem so that the majority of student concerns are resolved successfully at this stage, minimising the extent to which referrals are made to the formal process. You may also contact the Academic Registry or Guild of Students for help and advice in making an assessment appeal.

### **Formal Student Assessment Appeals Procedure**

#### **Stage One**

Put your appeal in writing using the Assessment Appeal Form and forward this to the Deputy Registrar (or the Local Administrator for programmes delivered away from UCB) within 7 days of the notification of the decision stating the grounds for the appeal. A full justification for the appeal should be given, including detailed information which supports the grounds for the appeal. Evidence to support the appeal should also be attached to the Form or included as a separate attachment.

On receipt of the student's completed Assessment Appeal Form and evidence, the Deputy Registrar shall consider the case and decide whether the minimum requirements for reconsideration of the decision have been established. If so, the Deputy Registrar will convene a meeting of the Assessment Appeals Committee at the earliest opportunity (normally within 10 working days).

The Assessment Appeals Committee may confirm the original decision, or if they decide that the appeal is justified, request the Board of Examiners or other relevant body to reconsider the original decision.

The Assessment Appeals Committee may confirm the Stage Three decision under the Code of Practice on Student Reasonable Diligence or in the case of a student withdrawal it may suspend the withdrawal decision with the requirement that the student complies with a time-limited condition of improvement. If this requirement is not met, the student has no further right of appeal to Stage Two of this Procedure.

The student has the right to appear and state their case at the Assessment Appeals Committee meeting. Students may appoint a representative from within the UCB student community to support, advise and jointly represent them during any stage of the formal assessment appeals procedure. This representative may be a Guild Officer or a fellow student; their identity and role must be made known to the Deputy Registrar.

## **The Assessment Appeals Committee**

### **Membership**

- i. An Executive Dean (who shall Chair the meeting) and Deputy Dean (Quality and Student Experience) not from the School concerned.
- ii. The Deputy Registrar
- iii. The Committee may co-opt a fourth member if it recognises that the meeting would benefit from a person with a particular specialism.

No person will be allowed to be a member of the Committee who has been involved in the original assessment decision or has any significant acquaintance with the student concerned.

No member of UCB staff shall be allowed to sit on the Committee where matters concerning their own subject area are to be considered.

No Committee shall include more than one member who is inexperienced in the hearing of appeals.

The Deputy Registrar shall present the relevant information to the Committee and shall advise on Regulations.

### **Terms of Reference**

The role of the Assessment Appeals Committee is:

- i. To consider appeals against the decision of the Board of Examiners that a student has failed to meet the minimum requirement to continue on the programme. In this case the Committee may uphold the appeal and recommend to the Chair of the Board of Examiners that the original decision to withdraw the student is reversed or it may reject the appeal finding that no grounds for the reconsideration of the decision have been established.
- ii. To consider appeals against assessment or Board of Examiners' decisions. In this case the Committee may uphold the appeal and recommend to the Chair of the Board of Examiners that the original assessment decision is reconsidered. In appropriate circumstances the decision may be to repeat the assessment with a different assessor. The Committee may reject the appeal finding that no grounds for the reconsideration of the decision have been established.
- iii. To consider appeals against leave of absence (deferral) decisions. The Committee may uphold the appeal and reverse the original decision or may reject the appeal finding that no grounds for the reconsideration of the decision have been established.
- iv. To consider appeals against a Stage Three decision of the Code of Practice on Student Reasonable Diligence.

## Stage Two

A student may appeal against the decision of the Assessment Appeals Committee to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning) if they can identify that some procedural irregularity has occurred in the handling of the appeal by the Assessment Appeals Committee.

The student must make an appeal in writing within 7 days of the notification of the decision of the Assessment Appeals Committee to the University Secretary and Registrar who will, if appropriate, convene a meeting with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning) at the earliest opportunity (usually within 10 working days) to hear the appeal.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Curriculum, Teaching and Learning) may uphold the appeal and require the Assessment Appeals Committee to review the original decision, or they may reject the appeal, finding that no grounds for the reconsideration of the original decision have been established.

Further Education Students may now have recourse to the Awarding Body for their programme via the External Verifier or direct to the Awarding Body. The Academic Registry will advise the student based on the relevant Awarding Body Regulations.

If the outcome of stage two is that your appeal is not justified, you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter which confirms that you have now exhausted the UCB Formal Assessment Appeals Procedure.

Following receipt of a Completion of Procedures Letter and, if your programme of study is a University of Birmingham (UoB) degree, you may then also refer your appeal to the relevant UoB office. Go to <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/complaint-appeal/index.aspx> for advice on which forms to complete.

Should you choose to, you still have recourse for an independent review of your Assessment Appeal by applying to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) within their stated time limit. You may obtain advice and information concerning the OIA from the Academic Registry, the Guild of Students or at the OIA website: [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

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