

Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures

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Important Notice

Due to vacancies in key roles, the following adjustments to the Policy and Procedures will be made until vacancies are filled:

- All instances of Head of Registry will become Academic Registrar.
- All instances of Academic Registrar will become Registrar.

Introduction

1. This Policy sets out the definitions, grounds and procedures for an appeal against the decision of a Progression and Award Board (PAB) for all programmes awarded by Northeastern University London (the University). For Mobility students, appeals are made against a decision of a Course Assessment Board (CAB).
2. For the purposes of this document, the term 'Board' refers to both a Progression and Award Board (PAB) for all programmes awarded by Northeastern University London and a Course Assessment Board (CAB) for mobility students.
3. The University defines an appeal in this context 'as a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards.'
4. This Policy and Procedure applies to all registered students on the following programmes and may be accessed without concern that they may be treated less favourably as a result of an appeal:
 - 4.1. Mobility courses
 - 4.2. Undergraduate double degrees programmes
 - 4.3. Postgraduate taught programmes (from 2023-24)
 - 4.4. Degree apprenticeship programmes (from 2023-24)
5. For students registered on other programmes being delivered by the University, please refer to the policy on Canvas.
6. For Postgraduate research students, please refer to your programme handbook and the University of Kent policy.

Other Policies and Procedures

7. This Policy does not cover matters that are addressed in the following:
 - 7.1. [Academic Misconduct Policy](#)

- 7.2. [Academic Engagement Policy](#)
 - 7.3. [Complaints Procedure for Students](#)
 - 7.4. [Disciplinary Procedure for Students](#)
 - 7.5. [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#)
 - 7.6. [Support to Study Policy](#)
 - 7.7. [Undergraduate Student Attendance Policy](#)
8. Where an appeal is deemed to fall under the separate policies and procedures listed above, the University will inform the student that they have appealed under the wrong policy and that the matter will be referred to the correct policy. The student will be informed to which policy their appeal is being referred.
 9. The University takes appeals seriously and expects students to submit an appeal in a responsible manner. Where the University receives a frivolous or vexatious appeal, this will be referred under the Disciplinary Procedure for Students.
 10. An appeal can only be lodged by the student and cannot be made by a third party, other than in circumstances where, at the time allowed for the appeal to be lodged, the student is suffering from such physical or mental incapacity as to prevent the student acting for themselves.
 11. Where students receive their formally published results and are unclear on any terminology or the impact of these results, they should in the first instance contact [Registry](#), who can advise students on their results. Where they remain dissatisfied, students have the right to submit an academic appeal based on the [Grounds for an Academic Appeal](#).

General Principles

12. The University is committed to having in place fair, effective and timely procedures for handling academic appeals.
13. The procedure will be conducted in a timely, fair, and reasonable manner, and have due regard to any applicable law.
14. The University will ensure that appropriate action is taken following an appeal to communicate decisions to all parties and ensure that these are acted upon in a fair and timely manner.
15. The University will ensure that appropriate guidance and support is available for students making an academic appeal.
16. The University shall ensure that suitable briefing and support is provided for all staff and students involved in handling or supporting appeals.

Grounds for an Academic Appeal

17. The University defines academic judgment as ‘a decision about scholarship that only a suitably experienced academic can make’, similar to the definition used by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). There is no right of appeal by students against the academic judgments of academic staff or of recognised committees of Academic Boards, including PABs and CABs, i.e., a student cannot appeal a mark or grade given for an assessment except where there has been an irregularity in the assessment process.
18. A student may appeal the decision of a Board where:
 - 18.1. New, relevant, written extenuating circumstances are presented, supported by appropriate evidence, that for good reason were not originally made available to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel under the Extenuating Circumstance Policy, and therefore were not considered at the time of the decision of the Board.
 - 18.2. Marking and/or moderation processes were not conducted in accordance with current approved policies and procedures, or other irregularity concerned with the assessment process.
 - 18.3. There has been a material and significant error in the recording and/or processing of assessments/results.
 - 18.4. There has been a procedural error in the calculation of the award/progression decision.
 - 18.5. There is evidence of bias.
19. In making an academic appeal, the burden of proof is on the student to show that one of the matters listed above applies.
20. The standard of proof in academic appeals is on the ‘balance of probabilities’ rather than ‘beyond reasonable doubt’.

Academic Appeal Procedure

Stage 1: Academic Appeal Review

21. A student wishing to appeal the decision of a Board must submit an [Academic Appeal Form](#) to the [Head of Registry](#) within 14 calendar days of the date of the publication of results. Where an appeal is received outside of this deadline, it will be considered on a discretionary basis by the Academic Registrar.

22. The Head of Registry shall compile the documentation, seeking clarification where required, and determine if there are [Grounds for an Academic Appeal](#).
23. The Head of Registry will investigate the appeal and will provide a written response within 14 calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

Stage 1 Review Outcomes

24. Following the investigation, the Head of Registry has the following options:
 - 24.1. Where no evidence or insufficient evidence is submitted, or where it is determined there are no grounds for an appeal, the student will be issued a written response informing them that their appeal has been dismissed.
 - 24.2. Where it is determined that there are grounds for the appeal, the Head of Registry can:
 - 24.2.1. New extenuating circumstances evidenced: refer the new evidence to the Chair of the relevant Board for consideration.
 - 24.2.2. Processes not conducted in accordance with approved policies and procedures: refer the appeal to the Academic Appeal Panel.
 - 24.2.3. Material error in procedure: refer the error to the Chair of the relevant Board and correct the administrative error.
 - 24.2.4. Evidence of bias: refer the appeal to the Academic Appeal Panel.
25. Where the appeal is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may request that their appeal is considered by the Academic Registrar within 14 calendar days of the receipt of the Head of Registry's written notification.
26. The request for the appeal to be reviewed by the Academic Registrar, must be made by the submission of an email to [Appeals](#) clearly stating the [Grounds for an Academic Appeal](#), accompanied by any necessary supporting evidence.
27. Where a request for the appeal to progress to the Academic Registrar is received outside of these deadlines, it will be considered at the discretion of the Academic Registrar.

Stage 2: Escalated Review

28. The Academic Registrar shall assess whether there are valid grounds for an escalated review.
29. Following the Academic Registrar's investigation, the Academic Registrar has the following options:
 - 29.1. Where no evidence or insufficient evidence is submitted, or where it is determined there are no grounds for an appeal, the student will be issued a written response informing them that their appeal has been dismissed.
 - 29.2. Where it is determined that there are grounds for an academic appeal, the Academic Registrar can:
 - 29.2.1. New extenuating circumstances evidenced: refer the new evidence to the Chair of the relevant Board for consideration.
 - 29.2.2. Processes not conducted in accordance with approved policies and procedures: refer the appeal to the Academic Appeal Panel.
 - 29.2.3. Material error in procedure: refer the error to the Chair of the relevant Board and correct the administrative error.
 - 29.2.4. Evidence of bias: refer the appeal to the Academic Appeal Panel.

Academic Appeal Panel

30. The composition of each Academic Appeal Panel (AAP) shall be:
 - 30.1. Academic Registrar (Chair) or their delegate
 - 30.2. Two senior academic leadership, understood to be an Associate Dean, Head of Faculty, Associate Head of Faculty, Programme Director or Associate Professor
31. All members must be independent of any Faculty to which the appeal relates.
32. No panel member should be directly involved in the teaching or assessment of the student in the academic year in which the appeal occurs or to have been involved in any capacity in any previous appeal.
33. A member of Academic Services will serve as the Secretary of the AAP to advise the panel on procedural issues and record the decisions of the panel.

Outcome of an Academic Appeal Panel

34. The AAP has the following options:

- 34.1. Dismiss the appeal.
- 34.2. Uphold the appeal on the following grounds:
 - 34.2.1. Processes were not conducted in accordance with approved policies and procedures.
 - 34.2.2. There was evidence of bias.
- 34.3. Suspend the process to gather more information regarding the case.
35. In the case where the appeal is upheld, the AAP can make the following decision:
 - 35.1. Allow the student to resit the assessment element with the mark uncapped.
 - 35.2. Allow the student to resit the assessment element with the mark capped.
36. The Secretary of the AAP will write to the student, within seven calendar days, informing them of the AAP's decision.
37. The Secretary will write to the Chair of the relevant Board and Registry, informing them of the outcome of the Panel. The Chair of the relevant Board is required to accept the decision.
38. **The decision of the Academic Appeal Panel is final and this marks the end of the University process. Registry will provide the student with a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter.**

External Examiners

39. The appropriate Award External Examiner will be informed of any changes to Board decisions made as a result of an academic appeal.

Reporting, Monitoring, and Reviewing

40. The Academic Registrar will report to Academic Board statistical information relating to academic appeals on an annual basis.
41. Academic Board will monitor the data and make recommendations as appropriate.
42. Academic Board will review the Policy and Procedures for their effectiveness.

Version History

Title: Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures				
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23.4.1	September 2023	September 2023	Academic Registrar	May 2024
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Referenced documents	Disciplinary Procedure for Students; Complaints Procedure for Students; and Extenuating Circumstances Policy, Academic Appeals Form			
External Reference Point(s)	UK Quality Code Theme: Concerns Complaints and Appeals; Office of the Independent Adjudicator			