

Academic Appeals Procedure

Approving committee:	Academic Board
Minute reference:	A/7/19/4.3
Document owner:	Academic Services - Education Policy and Quality
Key Contact(s):	Stuart Bell; Hilary Glover
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	22/10/2019
Equality Impact Assessment Outcome:	No impact
Latest review date:	25/04/2022
Next review date:	31/07/2026

1. Purpose and scope

1.1. The purpose of this procedure is to provide an appeal mechanism for all students studying programmes leading to ICR awards who have received the following decisions:

- a) an academic decision of an Examination Board;
- b) the outcome of a thesis examination;
- c) the outcome of a transfer viva.

1.2. Before raising an appeal, students should seek advice from a member of Registry and where there are concerns or questions about a decision these should be discussed with an appropriate academic staff member.

1.3. A student may raise an appeal on the following grounds:

- a) a substantive procedural irregularity within the examination or assessment process;
- b) evidence of bias or the perception of bias within the examination or assessment process;
- c) mitigating circumstances where, for good reason, the examiners or assessors were not made aware of a significant factor relating to the assessment of a student when it made its original decision.

1.4. An appeal made outside of these grounds shall not be considered under this procedure. This includes appeals questioning the academic judgment of the examiners or assessors, which is not permitted under any ICR procedure.

1.5. A student is bound by and shall comply with the original decision referred to in paragraph **1.1.** until the result of the appeal is known.

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1.6. The ICR shall consider all eligible appeals in accordance with this procedure within a reasonable timescale, normally within 90 calendar days. In exceptional circumstances, normally by student request, the time taken to consider an appeal may be expedited. If for good reasons, the ICR needs to extend the timeframe, the student will be notified and kept updated as to the progress of the appeal.

1.7. Where relevant, reasonable adjustments shall be made to the procedure. Students are encouraged to make the ICR aware of any disability at the earliest opportunity to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made. Where necessary, reasonable adjustments may include the student corresponding through an authorised representative.

1.8. All parties are expected to act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the processes themselves with respect. This applies in relation to all correspondence and when attending formal hearings. Any unreasonable or malicious behaviour may lead to a disciplinary investigation. If an appeal is terminated on any such grounds, the student shall receive a Completion of Procedures letter. A student shall not be disadvantaged for submitting an appeal based on genuinely held beliefs. Any evidence of recrimination as a result of this process should be brought immediately to the attention of the Academic Registrar.

1.9. Any reference to a named role-holder includes a deputy appointed by that role-holder to exercise the functions assigned to that role-holder within this procedure.

1.10. All decision-makers within this procedure shall not have had any previous involvement in the matter, or be reasonably perceived by the student to be biased, and shall not have had any involvement with the decision being appealed.

1.11. Appropriate and proportionate written records will be kept by the 'Case Handler' (a senior member of Academic Services' staff providing administrative support) throughout the process and stored confidentially in accordance with the ICR's policies on record retention and data protection legislation.

1.12. The ICR shall only share information and evidence submitted in an appeal with staff where it is strictly necessary in order to process, investigate and consider the appeal. All information shall be treated in accordance with the ICR's Student and alumni privacy notice. An annual summary report on appeals shall be considered by Academic Board.

2. Appeal submission and consideration

2.1. An appeal and all relevant evidence shall be submitted by the student on an [Academic Appeal Form](https://nexus.icr.ac.uk/Lists/ICR%20Policies/DispForm.aspx?ID=594) to studentcasework@icr.ac.uk within 2 months of receiving written formal notification of the decision. Appeals or evidence received after this deadline shall not be accepted unless there is an evidenced valid reason for delay.

2.2. An appeal shall be considered for eligibility by a Case Handler, appointed by the Academic Registrar (or, in their absence, the Chief Research & Academic Officer). Providing an appeal is eligible to be considered under this procedure, the student shall receive an acknowledgement letter, normally within 7 calendar days of submitting the appeal. The Case Handler will provide the student with indicative timeframes and signpost to the support available to them as appropriate (see section 4). The student will be provided with the contact details of the Case Handler who they can contact with any queries about the progress of the case.

2.3. If the Case Handler considers an appeal is not eligible to be considered because: the reason for delay is not evidenced or valid; it has not been made within the permitted grounds; it is malicious or vexatious; or for some other reason, then the appeal shall not be considered under this procedure. The student shall be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter or be referred to an alternative procedure, for example, the Student Complaints Procedure.

2.4. Eligible appeals shall be sent to the Chair of the Examination Board, examiners or assessors, or where there is no Chair, the lead or all examiners or assessors who shall be asked to provide the Case Handler with a factual response to the appeal along with relevant evidence, normally within 14 calendar days. The factual response may be compiled in consultation with others.

2.5. The appeal shall be considered by an Academic Appeals Committee appointed by the Academic Registrar (or, in their absence, the Chief Research & Academic Officer), or the Academic Dean; 3 members of academic staff, 1 of whom shall be Chair, and at least 1 of whom shall have experience of examining at the level of the course the student is studying or higher. The Academic Appeals Committee should also include a student representative as nominated by the student president, where independence from the case is possible. The Academic Registrar or alternate appointer must assure themselves that all members of the committee have sufficient training on internal principles and procedures to participate fully and fairly. The student who raised the appeal shall be notified of the appointments and given an opportunity to raise any objection to these, which will be considered by the Case Handler.

2.6. The Case Handler shall organise a meeting of the Academic Appeals Committee, normally within 21 days of receiving the factual response to the appeal. The student (accompanied if requested, by an ICR colleague or student representative) shall only be invited to attend the Academic Appeals Committee meeting at the Chair's discretion and in exceptional circumstances. Where the student has been invited, the Chair may also invite other relevant persons. The Case Handler will be responsible for keeping a written record of proceedings setting out who attended, a brief outline of the proceedings, and the reasons for the decisions taken.

2.7. The Academic Appeals Committee shall consider the student's appeal and the factual response and make one of the following decisions:

- a) to uphold the appeal, on the basis that it has met at least one of the permitted grounds;
- b) To dismiss this appeal, on the basis that it has not met any of the permitted grounds.

2.8. Where an appeal is upheld, the Academic Appeals Committee shall refer the appeal back to the Examination Board, examiners or assessors for re-consideration. In doing so, the Academic Appeals Committee shall specify whether:

- a) the examiners or assessors shall be the same or different to the ones who made the original decision;
- b) a further examination shall be permitted to take place;
- c) any previous decision is rescinded;
- d) the original examination, thesis or assessment shall be re-considered, or that the student is permitted to submit a revised version;
- e) the examiners or assessors shall have access to any of the appeal paperwork when conducting the re-consideration.

2.9. Normally, within 7 calendar days of the Academic Appeals Committee reaching a decision, the Case Handler shall communicate in writing to the student the decision of the Academic Appeals Committee, the reasons for the decision, and a copy of the factual response to the appeal.

3. Review and End of Procedure

3.1. Where the student is dissatisfied with the Academic Appeals Committee's decision, a request for a review of the decision can be submitted via the Final Student Review Procedure. If the student does not request a review within the timeframe required, a Completion of Procedures letter may be issued upon the request of the student although this will note that the full internal procedure was not completed.

3.2. Once a decision has been reviewed via the Final Student Review Procedure, a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued.

3.3. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints about a final decision of a higher education institution's disciplinary or appeal bodies provided that the complaint to the OIA is eligible under its rules. More information about making a complaint to the OIA, the complaints it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right if something has gone wrong can be found here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>

4. Advice and Support

4.1. The ICR offers a range of support services – including a free 24-hour counselling service, support from the Registry team, the Employee (and Student) Assistance Programme and student wellbeing advisers. Find out more about these services on the [Student Welfare and Wellbeing page](#) on Nexus.

Annex I

Academic Appeal Application Form

 [Application Form - Academic Appeals.docx](#)
