

Student Academic Appeals Procedure

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Student Academic Appeals Procedure

This Procedure applies to appeals received on or after 1 August 2023.

Who needs to know about the Student Academic Appeals Procedure?

- Registered Students, including those studying with Collaborative Partners and Apprentices
- Recent Graduates or students if it is within **10 working days** of notification of results or withdrawal
- Staff
- Students' Union

Purpose of the Student Academic Appeals Procedure

The Student Academic Appeals Procedure outlines the University's approach to addressing appeals raised by registered University students or recent graduates of the University. The Procedure informs students, staff, and the Student's Union of the Stages within the Procedure. It is a formal mechanism for students to request reconsideration of Board of Examiners decisions, and it is designed to ensure that students have access to a fair and transparent process to address matters related to their academic progression, assessment, and award.

Contacts

The Directorate of Student Resolution and Student Protection is responsible for the operation and management of the Student Academic Appeals Procedure. The Early Resolution & Case Handling Team can be contacted for procedural advice and guidance to students and staff by emailing casehandling@canterbury.ac.uk

The Students' Union can provide support, advice, and advocacy for students at the University's home campuses that wish to make an Appeal. The Students' Union Advice Centre can be contacted by emailing: advice@ccsu.co.uk

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Procedure sets out how a student at Canterbury Christ Church University can appeal against a Board of Examiners decision about student progression, assessment, or award.
- 1.2 Registered students at Canterbury Christ Church University (including degree apprentices, students who are on approved periods of interruption, temporarily withdrawn, or temporarily suspended) can submit an appeal within **10 working days** from the official publication of the relevant Board of Examiners decision.
- 1.3 Students at a collaborative partner where Canterbury Christ Church University is the awarding body can submit an appeal within **10 working days** from the official publication by the awarding body.
- 1.4 The University will process information in accordance with its [Student Privacy Notice](#). Information submitted in relation to an appeal will be dealt with confidentially and will only be shared with relevant staff as necessary to consider the appeal. Where information disclosed raises a safeguarding concern, the University reserves the right to liaise with the appropriate professionals.

2. Appeals Received from a Third Party

- 2.1 An Academic Appeal submitted by a third party on a student's behalf may be accepted in exceptional circumstances where:
 - The student has given written authorisation and valid reasons with evidence where necessary for the person to act on their behalf. The University may agree such arrangement to take account of the requirements of individual students.

3. Timescales for Submitting an Academic Appeal

- 3.1 In this Procedure, all days referred to are **working days**.
- 3.2 A student may also find it helpful to contact the Early Resolution & Case Handling Team for procedural guidance and information. Students at the University's home campuses can also contact the Students' Union Advice Service (CCSU). It is important to do this quickly because an Academic Appeal will only be accepted if it is received within **10 working days** of the official publication of results.
- 3.3 An Academic Appeal will be handled as quickly as possible and within **20 working days**. Occasionally there will be circumstances where extension of timeframes will be necessary. Where this is the case, a Student Case Handling Officer will notify the student and keep them informed of progress and the expected date they will receive their outcome.

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4. The Grounds for an Academic Appeal

4.1 An Academic Appeal must be received within **10 working days** of the official notification of that decision, and provide specific, independent written evidence. If a student does not provide written evidence at the time the appeal is submitted, the Student Case Handling Officer will decide based on the student's application. A student can appeal on one (or more) of the following grounds:

a. There is new evidence of Exceptional Circumstances (ECs), which, for good reason, was not previously available to the Board of Examiners.

A claim for late Exceptional Circumstances (EC) under this procedure refers to issues being raised after the Board of Examiners have made a decision (and not raised via an EC form). It requires evidence that demonstrates why the student was unable to submit a request at the appropriate time, through the relevant route, as well as the evidence of the impact of the circumstance itself.

b. Administrative or procedural irregularity/error.

There is evidence that the University did not act in accordance with the relevant Academic Regulations and/or Board of Examiners Procedures.

c. Prejudice or bias (or a reasonable perception of bias) which can be proven.

There is evidence of prejudice or bias in the assessment process. The reasons should be clearly set out by the student.

5. The Stages of Academic Appeal

Early Resolution

5.1 Early Resolution is a helpful way to check understanding of this Procedure. Where a student is unclear about a Board of Examiners decision, why it was made or the regulations or procedures which apply to their studies, they should raise a query with their Personal Academic Tutor, Module Leader, or Course Director quickly to seek clarification. This is referred to as Early Resolution in this Procedure.

5.2 If a student would find it helpful to speak to someone outside the Faculty, they can choose to speak to the Early Resolution & Case Handling Team casehandling@canterbury.ac.uk to check their understanding of this Procedure. Students at the University's home campuses can also speak to the Students' Union advice@ccsu.co.uk.

5.3 A student will be contacted using their University email address unless an alternative email address has been specified.

5.4 A student should not delay in submitting a Formal Appeal within **10 working days** of receiving the formal notification of the Board of Examiners decision and should be mindful of this timeframe when seeking clarification under Early Resolution.

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5.5 The student must submit a Formal Appeal using the online form.

6 Stage 1: Formal Academic Appeal

6.1 An appeal must be submitted in writing on the prescribed online Appeal Form completing all relevant sections including full name and student number.

6.2 The form requires a student to set out:

- The decision they are appealing.
- the 'grounds' for the Appeal ([Section 4](#))
- A statement about the circumstances

6.3 The student at the University's home campuses can get advice on completing the form from SU advice@ccsu.co.uk and, if relevant, procedural guidance from the Early Resolution & Case Handling Team casehandling@canterbury.ac.uk

6.4 Acknowledgement and Consideration of a Formal Appeal

- 6.4.1 The student will receive an automatic response as acknowledgment of receipt.
- 6.4.2 If an Academic Appeal is not eligible (meaning it does not meet the requirements set out in this Procedure) a Student Case Handling Officer will provide an outcome with the reasons in writing and the student may request a Review of this decision.
- 6.4.3 The Academic Appeal will be considered by a Student Case Handling Officer who has had no previous involvement in the appeal.
- 6.4.4 They will consider each appeal against the grounds in section 4 in addition to the criteria listed above. An appeal that does not meet the requirements shall be deemed invalid.
- 6.4.5 They will consider each valid appeal on the basis of the student's written statement and supporting evidence. All supporting documents must be provided in English.

6.5 The Outcome of a Formal Academic Appeal

- 6.5.1 The Student Case Handling Officer will communicate the outcome of the appeal by email as soon as possible and usually within **20 working days** of receiving the formal appeal.
- 6.5.2 There are three possible outcomes:
 - The Academic Appeal is upheld or partially upheld. The Student Case Handling Officer will notify relevant Faculty and Professional Service areas that the student will be provided with an appropriate academic outcome, in accordance with the Academic Regulations.

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- The original decision is withdrawn, and a new decision will be determined, or
- The Academic Appeal is not upheld. The student will receive reasons for the outcome and confirmation that the original decision of the Board of Examiners stands.

7 Stage 2: Final Review

7.1 If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Formal Appeal, they may request a Review within **10 working days** of the date of the outcome email.

7.2 The Review is not a reconsideration of the claim, it will consider whether the appropriate Procedures were followed and that the decision to not uphold the appeal was reasonable.

7.3 Submitting a request for final review

7.3.1 A Stage 2 Final Review form must be received within **10 working days** of the date of the Formal Appeal outcome being sent to the student.

7.3.2 The student must demonstrate one or more of the following:

- There is evidence that the procedure was not followed at the Formal Appeal stage.
- The Formal Appeal outcome did not take into consideration all the circumstances.
- There is new material evidence that, for valid reasons, was not provided when the Formal Appeal form was submitted that could have affected the outcome of the Appeal.

7.3.3 Students at the University's home campuses can get advice on their appeal from the SU Advice Centre throughout the process by emailing (advice@ccsu.co.uk).

7.3.4 The Final Review will not consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation. For this reason, it is not usually necessary for the Reviewer to meet with a student. The review will be considered based on the students' Academic Appeal file.

7.3.5 The Final Review is undertaken by the Head of Early Resolution & Case Handling (or nominee).

7.3.6 The Head of Early Resolution & Case Handling (or nominee) will communicate the final decision in writing, with reasons, usually within **20 working days** from receiving the request for a Review.

7.4 The Outcome of a Final Review

7.4.1 There are four possible outcomes:

- The Academic Appeal is upheld in whole or in part, and the outcome sought by the student will be implemented where possible in accordance with relevant Regulations and/or Procedures.

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- The Academic Appeal is upheld in whole or in part, and an alternative outcome(s) will be implemented in accordance with relevant Regulations and Procedures. A student can request a Completion of Procedures letter if they remain dissatisfied with this outcome.
- The Academic Appeal is not upheld. The Reviewer will give the reason for the outcome with a Completion of Procedures letter.
- If a Final Review upholds or partially upholds an appeal which was terminated for being vexatious or frivolous, the Academic Appeal will be considered at Stage 1.

7.5 When an Academic Appeal is Frivolous or Vexatious

7.5.1 Academic Appeals will be given careful consideration and treated seriously in line with this procedure. However, the University may decide at any stage of the appeal process to terminate an appeal if it considers the appeal to be frivolous or vexatious. Where an appeal is considered frivolous or vexatious, the appeal will be sent to the Director of Student Resolution and Student Protection. A decision will be made by the Director of Student Resolution and Student Protection.

7.5.2 Examples of frivolous or vexatious Academic Appeals include:

- Obsessive, harassing, or repetitive appeals.
- Insistence on pursuing unreasonable appeals and/or unrealistic, unreasonable outcomes.
- Insistence on pursuing reasonable Academic Appeals in an unreasonable manner or by the adoption of inappropriate behaviour.
- Academic Appeals designed to cause disruption or annoyance or demands for resolution lacking any serious purpose or value.

7.5.3 If a student's Appeal is rejected because it is considered vexatious, and it can be demonstrated that this was unfair or unjustified, they can submit a Stage 2: Final Review.

8 Consideration of Late Appeals or Requests for Final Review

8.1 The University may only consider a late Academic Appeal or request for a Review in exceptional cases where the submission is accompanied by detailed reasons and supporting evidence for the late submission. For instance:

- The evidenced incapacity of a student due to illness (physical or psychological).

8.2 A Student Case Handling Officer will consider whether the late Academic Appeal is eligible under this Procedure. The decision with reasons shall be confirmed within **10 working days** of receiving the late submission.

8.3 The Head of Early Resolution or nominee will consider whether the Final Review request is eligible under this Procedure. The decision with reasons shall be confirmed within **10 working days** of receiving the late submission.

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8.4 If a student's request for a Review has not been permitted, a Completion of Procedures letter will be sent to the student.

9 Reasonable Adjustments

9.1 The University will make reasonable adjustments when operating this Procedure where necessary. Where a student is unable for any justifiable reason to use the online form to submit an appeal, the University will accept submissions made on an alternative form provided by the Directorate of Student Resolution and Student Protection. It is the student's responsibility to inform a Student Case Handling Officer about any reasonable adjustments they need as soon as possible. The Student Case Handling Officer will discuss these with them and agree on reasonable adjustments as appropriate. Where necessary, the Student Case Handling Officer may consult with Student Wellbeing Services.

9.2 Students at the University's home campuses can access support from the University's Student Wellbeing Services at any time studentwellbeing@canterbury.ac.uk

10 Relation to Other Procedures

10.1 If an Academic Appeal includes issues that fall within the remit of other procedures such as the Student Complaints Procedure, students will normally be informed of this and any additional action they should take in relation to the other procedure. Occasionally students may submit both a complaint and an appeal at the same time, when this happens it may be necessary to pause one process until the other is completed. In this situation a decision will be made by a Student Case Handling Officer and the student will be informed of the decision made.

11 Completion of Procedures (COP)

11.1 The decision taken by the Reviewer at the Review stage completes the University's internal Academic Appeals Procedure.

11.2 The University subscribes to the Office of Independent Adjudicator (OIA) scheme. Should a student remain dissatisfied after finishing the internal procedure, they have the right to submit a complaint to the OIA. The student should refer to the OIA website to establish whether their complaint is something that the OIA would consider under its Rules. The OIA will normally only review issues after a student has completed the University's internal Appeals Procedure.

11.3 Full details regarding the OIA's rules and guidelines are available on their [website](#).

12 Records and Monitoring

12.1 The University is committed to continuous improvement in appeals handling.

12.2 The Directorate of Student Resolution and Student Protection monitors Academic Appeals (on an anonymised basis) to identify trends, areas of good practice, and improvements to processes.

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12.3 The University will ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) when sharing anonymous data with internal and external parties.

13 Alternative Format

13.1 Please contact the Early Resolution & Case Handling Team to receive this Procedure in an alternative format.

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14 Definitions

Academic Appeal	Defined as a request for reconsideration of a decision by an academic body that makes decisions on student progress, assessment, and awards (but it does not include decision-making relating to Exceptional Circumstances, Academic Misconduct or Low-level Concerns and Fitness to Practise).
Academic Judgement	Defined as a judgment that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential. A decision made by academic staff on the quality of the work itself or the criteria being applied to mark the work. So, for example a judgment about marks awarded, research methodology, whether feedback is correct or adequate, and the content or outcomes of a course will normally involve academic judgment. There can be no appeal against academic judgement on the quality of work, the criteria applied to mark the work and the qualification awarded.
Board of Examiners	The primary decision-making body for student progression, award, and classification decisions.
Exceptional circumstances	Usually serious or significant circumstances which are beyond a student's control and could significantly impair their academic performance in one or more assessed activities, possibly over a short period of time. Exceptional circumstances may include medical matters, bereavement, jury service, etc.
Early Resolution	Is designed to address straightforward questions about the assessment or results quickly, for example at school or faculty level, before a student makes a formal appeal.
Professional Judgement	Professional judgment is a decision about professional standards that only an experienced professional can make. Whether a student has reached the required standards to pass a practice placement or whether they are fit to practise is likely to be a matter of professional judgment. There can be no appeal against the professional judgement on the quality of work, the criteria applied to mark the work and the qualification awarded.
Student	Anyone who is registered on a course for a University award, or one conferred by the University.

Student Academic Appeals Procedure

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