

Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures

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Introduction

1. This Policy sets out the definitions, grounds and procedures for an appeal against the decision of a Progression and Award Board (PAB) or Progression Board (PB) for all programmes awarded by Northeastern University London ('the University').
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 Progression Boards (PB). 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'.
3. This Policy and Procedure applies to all registered taught students on the following programmes, who may access it without concern that they may be treated less favourably as a result of an appeal:
 - 3.1. Mobility courses
 - 3.2. Undergraduate double degrees programmes
 - 3.3. Postgraduate taught programmes (from 2023-24)
 - 3.4. Degree apprenticeship programmes (from 2023-24)
4. For students registered on other programmes being delivered by the University, please refer to the policy on Canvas.
5. For doctoral students, please refer to your programme handbook and [AQF17](#).

Other Policies and Procedures

6. This Policy does not cover matters that are addressed in the following:
 - 6.1. [Academic Engagement Policy](#)
 - 6.2. [Academic Misconduct Policy](#)
 - 6.3. [Complaints Procedure for Students](#)
 - 6.4. [Disciplinary Procedure for Students](#)
 - 6.5. [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#)
 - 6.6. [Student Disability Policy](#)
 - 6.7. [Support to Study Policy and Procedure](#)
 - 6.8. [Undergraduate Student Attendance Policy](#)

7. 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 which policy their appeal is being referred to.
8. 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](#).
9. 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, there is evidence to support that the student is suffering from such physical or mental incapacity as to prevent the student acting for themselves.
10. Where students receive their formally published results and are unclear about any terminology or the impact of these results, they should in the first instance contact either [Registry](#) or their [Academic Adviser](#), who can advise them about their results. Where students remain dissatisfied, they have the right to submit an academic appeal based on the [Grounds for an Academic Appeal](#).

General Principles

11. The University is committed to having in place fair, effective and timely procedures for handling academic appeals.
12. The procedure will be conducted in a timely, fair and reasonable manner, and have due regard to any applicable law.
13. The University will ensure that appropriate action is taken following an appeal to communicate decisions to all parties and that these are acted upon in a fair and timely manner.
14. The University will ensure that appropriate guidance and support is available for students making an academic appeal. Students may obtain support and advice from the Students' Union and/or Academic Advisors. Students wishing for support should contact the Students' Union and/or their Academic Advisor directly, to request it.
15. The University will ensure that suitable briefing and support is provided for all staff and students involved in handling or supporting appeals.

Grounds for an Academic Appeal

16. The University defines academic judgement 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 judgements of academic staff or of recognised committees of Academic Boards, including PABs and PBs, 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.
17. A student may appeal the decision of a Board where:
 - 17.1. 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 Circumstances Policy](#), and therefore were not considered at the time of the decision of the Board;
 - 17.2. Marking and/or moderation processes were not conducted in accordance with current approved policies and procedures, or where another irregularity concerned with the assessment process has occurred;
 - 17.3. There has been a material and significant error in the recording and/or processing of assessments/results;
 - 17.4. There has been a procedural error in the calculation of the award/progression decision;
 - 17.5. There is evidence of bias.
18. In making an academic appeal, the burden of proof is on the student to show that one of the matters listed above applies.
19. The standard of proof in academic appeals is on the ‘balance of probabilities’ rather than ‘beyond reasonable doubt’.

Academic Appeal Procedure

Stage One: Academic Appeal Review

20. A student wishing to appeal the decision of a Board must submit an [Academic Appeal Form](#) to the [Student Regulatory Resolution Office](#) 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 permission of the Academic Registrar where there is evidence that the student was unable to submit the appeal within the prescribed timeline.

21. The Head of the Student Regulatory Resolution Office will review the appeal form and evidence, seeking clarification where required, and will determine whether or not there are [Grounds for an Academic Appeal](#).
22. The Head of the Student Regulatory Resolution Office will inform the student of the initial outcome as set out in Stage One below within 14 calendar days of receipt of the appeal.

Academic Appeal Review Outcomes

23. Following the initial review, the Head of the Student Regulatory Resolution Office has the following options:
 - 23.1. Where no evidence or insufficient evidence is submitted to support the grounds for appeal, 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;
 - 23.2. Where it is determined that there are grounds for the appeal, the Head of the Student Regulatory Resolution Office can:
 - 23.2.1. In the light of new extenuating circumstances evidence, refer the new evidence to the Chair of the EC Panel and the Chair of the PAB for consideration;
 - 23.2.2. Where processes have not been conducted in accordance with approved policies and procedures, refer the appeal to the Academic Appeal Panel;
 - 23.2.3. Where there has been a material error in procedure, refer the error to the Head of Registry and the Chair of the relevant Board, and correct the administrative error;
 - 23.2.4. Where there is evidence of bias, refer the appeal to the Academic Appeal Panel.
24. Where the appeal is not resolved to the student's satisfaction at Stage One, the student may request that their appeal be considered by the Academic Registrar within 14 calendar days of the receipt of the Head of Student Regulatory Resolution Office's written notification.
25. The request for the appeal to be reviewed by the Academic Registrar must be made by email to [Appeals](#), clearly stating the reason they are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage One and accompanied by any necessary supporting evidence.

26. Where a request for the appeal to progress to the Academic Registrar is received outside these deadlines it will be considered at the discretion of the Academic Registrar, where there is evidence that the student was unable to submit the appeal at the proper time.

Stage Two: Escalated Review

27. The purpose of the Escalated Review is to allow for consideration of the handling of the appeal at Stage One, to ensure that the appeal was considered appropriately in accordance with the relevant regulations, policies and procedures. Students are not normally permitted to raise new grounds for appeal at this stage unless they are able to provide compelling evidence that they could not have raised the new grounds at Stage One.
28. The Academic Registrar shall assess whether there are valid grounds for an Escalated Review. The Academic Registrar will consider the appeal and evidence submitted by the student and may seek further information from the student, Registry or other relevant parties.
29. Following the Academic Registrar's consideration, 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 reconsideration of the outcome of the appeal at Stage One, the student will be issued a written response informing them that their appeal has been dismissed and that this ends the University's procedure;
 - 29.2. Where it is determined that there are grounds for the appeal to be reconsidered, the Academic Registrar can:
 - 29.2.1. Where there is new evidence of extenuating circumstances, refer this to the Chairs of the EC Panel and the PAB for consideration;
 - 29.2.2. Where processes have not been conducted in accordance with approved policies and procedures, refer the appeal to the Academic Appeal Panel;
 - 29.2.3. Where there is material error in procedure, refer the error to the Head of Registry and Chair of the relevant Board, and correct the administrative error;
 - 29.2.4. Where there is evidence of bias: refer the appeal to the Academic Appeal Panel.

Academic Appeal Panel

30. The composition of each Academic Appeal Panel (AAP) is:
 - 30.1. Academic Registrar (Chair) or their delegate
 - 30.2. Two senior faculty members, understood to be an Associate Dean, Faculty Director, Associate 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 have been involved in any capacity in any previous appeal by the student.
33. A member of the Student Regulatory Resolution Office will serve as the Secretary of the AAP to advise the panel on procedural issues and record the decisions of the Panel.
34. The Academic Appeal Panel will normally undertake a paper based review of the case. However, the Panel may, in exceptional cases and at its discretion, request to speak to the student and/or relevant faculty or staff in order to reach a decision.

Outcome of an Academic Appeal Panel

35. The AAP has the following options:
 - 35.1. Dismiss the appeal;
 - 35.2. Uphold the appeal on the following grounds:
 - 35.2.1. Processes were not conducted in accordance with approved policies and procedures;
 - 35.2.2. There was evidence of bias;
 - 35.3. Suspend the process to gather more information regarding the case.
36. In the case where the appeal is upheld, the AAP can make the following decision:
 - 36.1. Allow the student to resit, or resubmit the assessment element(s), with the mark capped or uncapped;
 - 36.2. Refer to the Chair of the PAB to consider and grant any other academic remedy available, based on the outcome and recommendation of the AAP.
37. The Secretary of the AAP will write to the student within seven calendar days of the Panel meeting, informing them of the AAP's decision.

38. The Secretary will write to the Chair of the PAB and the Head of Registry, informing them of the outcome of the Panel. The Chair of the relevant Board is required to accept the decision.
39. Stage two will be completed within 21 calendar days or as soon as practicably possible, dependent on panel members' calendars.
40. The decision of the Academic Appeal Panel is final and marks the end of the University process. The Student Regulatory Resolution Office will provide the student with a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter.

External Examiners

41. 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

42. The Academic Registrar, with support from the Head of Student Regulatory Resolution Office, will report to Academic Board statistical information relating to academic appeals, on an annual basis.
43. Academic Board will monitor the data and make recommendations as appropriate.
44. Academic Board will review the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures for their effectiveness.

Version History

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1.0	September 2020	September 2020	Registrar	May 2022
Referenced documents	Academic Appeals Form ; Academic Engagement Policy ; Academic Misconduct Policy ; AQF17: Academic Quality Framework ; Complaints Procedure for Students ; Disciplinary Procedure for Students ; Extenuating Circumstances Policy ; Student Disability Policy ; Support to Study Policy and Procedure ; Undergraduate Student Attendance Policy .			
External Reference Point(s)	UK Quality Code Theme: Concerns Complaints and Appeals ; Office of the Independent Adjudicator .			