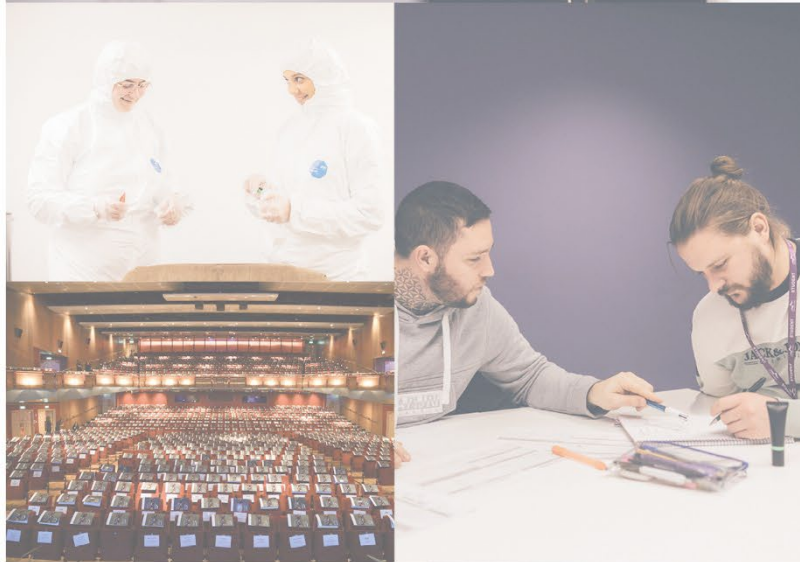




Procedure for Academic Appeals Higher Nationals

2025-26

1st September 2025



Senior Leadership Responsibility	Deputy Chief Executive - Curriculum and Quality- Adam Fahey
Policy Author	Executive Director Quality, Teaching and Learning) – Matthew Twitchett
Roles Responsible for Reviewing	Executive Director Quality, Teaching and Learning.
Issue date of current version	25-26 V1
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Type of Policy	Public

Significant changes following review of procedure – 1st September 2025

Page Number or Heading Name	Details of significant change	Changes made by
Throughout	Change of Job roles amended within document	Matthew Twitchett
Throughout	Policy updated to include additional types of Appeal	Dani Brookes, HE Examinations and Assessments Officer

Equality Impact Assessment

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to consider the equality implications of any new or amended policy, procedure, practice, project, function on different groups of staff, students and visitors to the University Centre. This EIA tool provides a simple framework that helps evaluate whether the change may inadvertently disadvantage protected characteristics and identify ways to proactively advance and promote equality.

You will need to consider each of the equations and provide information as to consideration and any changes made in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Date EIA completed.	25-7-24
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	Matthew Twitchett
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	Executive Director of Quality, Teaching and Learning
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change	Students and Staff employed
What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.	This is a yearly review and update required by awarding organisations

You will need to consider whether it's possible that the proposed new policy / change in policy / procedure / practice etc could discriminate or unfairly discriminate or disadvantage people. You should consider:

Who gets to participate	Who does not, or who now does not due to the changes proposed / made.
Who is at an advantage	Who is at a disadvantage, and again has this changed?
Who will benefit	Who will not benefit (or who did and now doesn't due to the changes proposed in policy).
Who can access the policy	Who cannot, or now cannot.

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with 1 being lowest impact and 5 being the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Age	1	None identified		
Disability	1	Some students may need support in understanding the policy and help in raising an Appeal. This will be provided by the student support teams in the University Centre.	Students with an identified disability can seek support from a Carer/Parent or Guardian and the University Centre in raising an Appeal.	As and when required
Gender (Sex)	1	None identified		
Gender Reassignment	1	None identified		
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	None identified		
Pregnancy / Maternity	2	A student may not be able to Appeal during pregnancy or maternity leave. Support and guidance will be provided to the student in this case to mitigate any negative impact.	Student will be able to apply internally for additional time to Appeal a decision in accordance with awarding organisation requirements. The University Centre will support this process within awarding organisation requirements.	As and when required
Race	1	None identified		
Religion or Religious Belief	2	Time frames for a student to lodge an Appeal could be affected by religious holidays.	Students should consider how a religious holiday could impact on an Appeal date. The University Centre will accept an Appeal if a student is impacted by a religious holiday and provides evidence.	University Centre will respond to student within 2 working days.
Sexual Orientation	1	None identified		
Any other element that needs to be considered.	1	None identified		

Note:

1. The terms stated under protected characteristics are the terminology used in the Equality Act 2010.
2. As part of the policy approval process the Executive Board will consider the EIA assessment and any potential barriers which we may not be able to overcome and whether the action proposed will mitigate sufficiently within legislation or whether we decide to not implement the new policy if the risks are significant. If the policy is approved the EIA is also approved.

Contents

1. Procedure for Academic Appeal Pearson Higher Nationals	6
2. Stage 1 – Informal - Course Team Level	9
3. Stage 2 – School Level	9
4. Stage 3 - University Centre Level	10

South Essex University Centres Group Executive summary

Procedure for Academic Appeals, Pearson Higher National Students

This procedure outlines the policy and process for internal academic Appeals against internal assessment or disciplinary decision. Learners are encouraged to go through the internal academic Appeals process before making any Appeal to an awarding organisation directly. External Appeals will be managed according to the awarding organisation regulations.

The procedure states that learners must be informed of the Appeal process as part of the induction process/welcome to University Centre South Essex. If a learner decides to Appeal against an internal assessment decision the Appeal must come directly from the learner and the reason for the Appeal must be clearly stated.

This document outlines the Stages of the Appeal process which are listed below. It is anticipated that most Appeals will be resolved at Stage 1 or 2.

- Stage 1 Course Team Level
- Stage 2 School Level
- Stage 3 University Centre Level

1. Procedure for Academic Appeal Pearson Higher Nationals

- 1.1** Assessments at the University Centre are undertaken both internally by University Centre staff and externally by examiners working under the auspices of Awarding Organisations. In the case of internal assessments, the University Centre will make provision to ensure systems for quality assurance/verification are in place in line with University Centre policy. In the case of external assessments, the University Centre will ensure that all assessments and examinations are carried out in accordance with the regulations laid down by the awarding organisations.
- 1.2** The Academic Appeals procedure allows students an opportunity to Appeal against any assessment or disciplinary decision where they feel that the assessment procedures or policies have not been properly conducted or where they believe that the academic or disciplinary decision is unfair.
- 1.3** All forms and guidance associated with these policies are available at: [HE Policies, Procedures and Downloads](#) under HE Key Information or Pearson BTEC Higher National Programmes (Level 4-5).
- 1.4** This applies whether the assessment event or decision is:

1. Formative or summative
 2. Graded or ungraded
 3. Made by an individual assessor or a course team with or without internal verification
 4. Made following a disciplinary procedure
- 1.5** Students will be informed of the Appeals Procedure as part of their course induction/welcome to University Centre and further information will be available on Moodle and in programme handbooks (if applicable).
- 1.6** Students must make the Appeal themselves. They cannot let another person Appeal on their behalf except for reasons of illness, disability or other such valid reason. In such circumstances, it is the student's responsibility to ensure they are adequately represented and that all relevant evidence is made available. HE Support may assist with guidance on the process and completing an application. They can be contacted at HESupport@southessex.ac.uk.
- 1.7** Appeals will be considered on the following grounds:

1. Procedural Irregularities

Procedural irregularities in the conduct of the Assessment or Assessment Board (including alleged administrative error) of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result might have been different had they not occurred.

2. Challenge To Assessment Grade

An Appeal can be made against a student's assessment grade if a student feels that an assessment grade has not been awarded fairly against the awarding bodies assessment criteria and requirements. They must be able to provide evidence that the assessor has not applied the criteria accurately.

3. Required Withdrawal From A Course

An Appeal can be made against a required withdrawal from a course following an internal disciplinary process by following the Stage 2 Appeal Process within **5 working days** of the outcome being issued. Students must be able to justify and provide evidence that the policy under which they have been withdrawn was not followed correctly.

4. A Penalty Applied In Respect Of Plagiarism And / Or Collusion

An Appeal can be made against a penalty applied in respect of plagiarism and/or collusion by following the Stage 2 Appeal Process within 5 working days of the outcome being issued. Students must be able to justify and provide evidence that the Academic Offences Policy and Procedure was

not followed correctly or consideration of mitigating circumstances were not fully taken into account.

5. Extenuating Circumstances (EC)

Extenuating Circumstances are those which the Assessor / Assessment Board was unaware and of which the student could not reasonably have been expected to inform the Assessment Board in advance.

Extenuating Circumstances are defined as: "Circumstances beyond a student's control which could cause him or her to perform less well in coursework or examinations than he or she might otherwise have been expected to do and which affect the student for a significant period of time."

You must submit a completed (EC) form as part of your evidence if Appealing on these grounds.

The retrospective reporting of Extenuating Circumstances which a student might reasonably have been expected to disclose to the Assessment Board before their meeting will NOT be considered

- 1.8** The student must state clearly the reason the Appeal is being made and cite or provide evidence to support the Appeal.
- 1.9** In the first instance for points 1 - 2 of section 1.7, all efforts should be made to resolve problems using the informal procedure described in Stage 1 in order to avoid the need to involve the formal procedure described in Stage 2 and 3.
- 1.10** For points 3-5 of section 1.7, efforts should be made to resolve problems using the formal procedure described in Stage 2.
- 1.11** Where the assessment being Appealed against has already been sent to or agreed by an External Quality Assurer/Verifier or Examiner, the process is to move straight to Stage 3 of these procedures, as a formal process with the relevant awarding organisation must be used by the University Centre. Where an internal assessment has not yet reached that part of the assessment process, then Stages 1 and 2 can be used.
- 1.12** When a learner considers that a decision continues to disadvantage them after the internal Appeals process has been exhausted the learner has a final right of Appeal to Pearson, but only if the procedures in place at the University Centre have been fully utilised or if the student is dissatisfied with the outcome
- 1.13** Records of Appeals will be held for a minimum of 8 years for inspection by the Office for Students (OFS).
- 1.14** The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality will monitor Appeals to inform quality improvement and to protect the interest of learners and the

integrity of the qualification.

2. Stage 1 – Informal - Course Team Level

2.1 A student who wishes to Appeal against the grounds of:

1. Procedural irregularities or
2. Challenge of assessment decision

should firstly try to resolve the issue at course team level by discussing it with their assessor or tutor. This request can be via email or put in writing using the Pearson Academic Appeal Form, available at: [HE Policies, Procedures and Downloads](#) Pearson BTEC Higher National Programmes (Level 4-5) if you wish.

2.2 Any student wishing to question an assessment decision should bring the matter to the attention of the assessor or tutor **within 5 working days** of receiving the assessment decision.

2.3 If an agreement cannot be readily reached, the assessor or tutor should bring the situation to the attention of the Course Team Leader who will discuss the matter with a Manager within the department.

2.4 At this Stage the Manager will request that the work is internally verified if it has not already been.

2.5 After the internal verification has taken place, a decision will be made to:

- (i) Accept the original decision.
- (ii) Modify the decision

Please Note: This process will adhere to the specific requirements of the awarding organisation in terms of grading of assessments.

2.6 Outcomes will be received in writing within five working days of the original decision being questioned.

2.7 If having completed all the above, the student believes that there are still grounds for Appeal, the formal procedure described in Stage 2 should be invoked.

3. Stage 2 – School Level

3.1 Following the outcome the Stage 1 Appeal Review, if a student remains unsatisfied and still believes that there are still grounds for Appeal they can request a further Appeal Review to be completed by the Head of School. This is known as a Stage 2 Appeal.

3.2 The Stage 2 Appeal process should be followed for points 3-5 under section 1.7, grounds for Appeal:

- a. Required withdrawal from a course
 - b. A penalty applied in respect of plagiarism and/or collusion
 - c. Extenuating Circumstances
- 3.3** Stage 2 Appeal requests must be put in writing using the Pearson Academic Appeal Form, and sent to Appeals@southessex.ac.uk and submitted **within 5 working days** of receiving the Stage 1 or disciplinary decision. The form is available at: [HE Policies, Procedures and Downloads](#) under Pearson BTEC Higher National Programmes (Level 4-5). Stage 2 Appeals will not be accepted in any other format.
- 3.4** All sections of your application must be completed in full and you should indicate the grounds on which you are Appealing as per section 1.7 above.
- 3.5** It is important to include all the relevant evidence and reasons at this Stage including communications regarding your Stage 1 Appeal. Should the Appeal be rejected and the student asks for it to be considered at Stage 3, the student will not be allowed to introduce new evidence or reasons at that Stage.
- 3.6** Students Appealing under point 5 of section 1.7, must submit a completed Extenuating Circumstances form and supporting evidence as part of their Appeal.
- 3.7** The Head of School will review the assessment or policy process that has been followed in the light of all the available evidence and will advise the student of any change in the assessment or decision outcome as a result of the review.
- 3.8** This review will normally take place within one working week but may be extended if required. The outcome of the Appeal will be communicated in writing. The outcomes from the Appeal Review will be one of the following:
- to uphold the Appeal
 - to reject the Appeal
 - to refer the Appeal to the Executive Director of Quality Teaching and Learning for consideration at Stage 3, where the decision needs further and independent consideration or investigation.

4. Stage 3 - University Centre Level

- 4.1** The student must request an Appeal under Stage 3 in writing to the Executive Director of Quality, Teaching and Learning.
- 4.2** The student is not allowed to introduce any further evidence, only what was provided at Stage 2.
- 4.3** The Executive Director of Quality, Teaching and Learning will review the documentation provided with the Deputy Executive Director - HE and

Quality and can ask to meet with the student and any relevant staff as part of the investigation.

There are two possible outcomes from the Stage 3 Appeal Review:

1. The Appeal is not be upheld and the assessment or disciplinary outcomes remains the same. The matter shall be regarded as closed, and the student will have no further right of Appeal through the University Centre process.
 2. The Appeal is up-held and the assessment or disciplinary outcome is changed which must be approved by the assessment board. The Executive Director Quality, Teaching and Learning will ensure that the student's assessment records are amended and will inform the Head of School of the decision together with any recommendations about the conduct of the assessment procedures.
- 4.4** The decision of the Stage 3 Appeal Review will be final and confirmed to the student in writing indicating the reasons for the decision, normally within five working days of the meeting.
- 4.5** Please note that any Appeal decisions based on assessment grades can be overruled by the final Assessment Board and the awarding organisation Pearson. All grades are not finalised until approved and certified by Pearson.
- 4.6** A student has a final right of Appeal to Pearson, but only if the procedures in place at the University Centre have been fully utilised or if the student is dissatisfied with the outcome. Further details are given on the Pearson website on how a student can send an Appeal.
- 4.7** If a student is not satisfied with the result after their Appeal through Pearson, they can request that the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator \(OIA\)](#) review their complaint. The OIA will not deal with complaints about academic judgment but will look at academic Appeals.

End of Procedure

