

Procedure for Academic Appeals Pearson Higher Nationals 2023-24

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Author of Policy/Procedure	Matthew Twitchett
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Next Review Date	August 2024

South Essex College Group

Executive summary

Procedure for Academic Appeal Pearson Higher Nationals

This procedure outlines the process for internal academic appeals against internal assessment 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 requirement.

The procedure states that learners must be informed of the appeals process as part of the induction process/welcome to College. 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.

The document then outlines the stages of the appeal process which are listed below. It is anticipated that most appeals will be resolved at stage 1.

- Stage 1 Course Team Level
- Stage 2 School Level
- Stage 3 College Level

Significant changes following review

11th August 2023

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Page Number or Heading Name	Details of significant change	Changes made by
Throughout document	Change to staff titles	Matthew Twitchett
7	Removed the appeals process which related to COVID-19 as this is no longer in place.	Matthew Twitchett
Throughout document	Changes to staff titles	Sharon Dunphy
4 and 5	Equality Impact Assessment Added	Sharon Dunphy

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 college. 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.	11 th August 2023
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	Sharon Dunphy
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	Head of Quality and Compliance
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change	Students and Staff
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 its 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 one 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		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 College.	Students with an identified disability can seek support from a Carer/Parent or Guardian and the College 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 for internally for additional time to appeal a decision in accordance with awarding organisation requirements. The College 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 College will accept an appeal if a student is impacted by a religious holiday and provides evidence.	College 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. As part of the policy approval process 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 risk are significant. If the policy is approved the EIA is also approved

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Assessments at the College are undertaken both internally by College staff and externally by examiners working under the auspices of Awarding Organisations. In the case of internal assessments, the College will make provision to ensure systems for quality assurance/verification are in place in line with College policy. In the case of external assessments, the College will ensure that all assessments and examinations are carried out in accordance with the regulations laid down by the awarding organisations.

The Academic Appeals procedure allows College students an opportunity to appeal against any assessment decision where they feel that the assessment procedures have not been properly conducted or where they believe that the decision is unfair.

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

Students will be informed of the Appeals Procedure as part of their course induction/welcome to College and further information will be available on Moodle and in programme handbooks (if applicable).

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.

Appeals will be considered for procedural irregularities, extenuating circumstances and challenge to assessment grades. The student must state clearly the reason the appeal is being made and cite or point to evidence to support the appeal.

In the first instance 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.

Where the assessment being appealed against has already been sent to or agreed by an External Quality Assurer/Verifier or Examiner, then move straight to Stage 3 of these procedures, as a formal process with the relevant awarding organisation must be used by the College. Where an internal assessment has not yet reached that part of the assessment process, then Stages 1 and 2 can be used.

When a learner considers that a decision continues to disadvantage her/him after the internal appeals process has been exhausted the Executive Director of Quality, teaching and learning will forward this to the awarding organisation.

Records of appeals will be held for a minimum of 18 months for inspection by the awarding body.

The Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality will monitor appeals to inform quality improvement to protect the interest of learners and the integrity of the qualification.

Stage 1 – Informal - Course Team Level

- A student who wishes to appeal should firstly try to resolve the issue at course team level by discussing it with their assessor/ tutor.
- Any student wishing to question an assessment decision should bring the matter to the attention of the assessor/tutor as quickly as possible and certainly within one working week of receiving the assessment decision.
- If agreement cannot be readily reached, the assessor should bring the situation to the attention of the Course Team Leader who will discuss the matter with a manager within the department.
- At this stage the Manager will request that the work is internally verified if it has not been.
- 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

- This should take place within one week of the original decision being questioned.
- If having completed all the above, the student believes that there are still grounds for appeal then the Course Team Leader should be informed in writing and the formal procedure described in Stage 2 should be invoked.

Stage 2 – School Level

- The student can request a further review completed by the Head of School
- This request must be put in writing (see appendix 1) to the appropriate Head of School, including the reasons why the student wants an appeal to be considered. These might be:
 - Extenuating Circumstances
 - That some other procedural irregularity relevant to the assessment had occurred. That the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the Awarding Organisation's approved programme regulations and/or assessment methods.
 - That the student wishes to Challenge the assessment decision
- It is important to include all the relevant evidence and reasons at this stage. Should the appeal be rejected and subsequently 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.
- The Head of School will review the assessment process that has been followed in the light of all the available evidence and will advise the student of any change in the assessment outcome as a result of the review.

This review will normally take place within one working week. The outcome of the review will be:

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.

Stage 3 - College Level

- The student must request an appeal under Stage 3 in writing to the Executive Director of Quality, Teaching and Learning. The student is not allowed to introduce any further evidence where an assessment decision has already been subject to an earlier stage of the process.
- The Executive Director of Quality, Teaching and Learning will review the documentation provided with the Head of Quality and Compliance and can ask to meet with the student and any relevant staff as part of the investigation.

There are two possible outcomes from the review meeting:

1. the appeal should not be upheld and assessment outcomes remains the same. The matter shall be regarded as closed, and the student will have no further right of appeal through the College process.

- 2 Up held and the assessment 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.
- The decision of the stage 3 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.
 - 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.
 - A student has a final right of appeal to Pearson, but only if the procedures in place at the College 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.
 - 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.

Appendix One

Academic appeal form for students studying for Pearson Higher National AWARDS at South Essex College

Appeal against the decision of an internal Assessment decision

Name:	
Student ID No.	
Correspondence Address:	
Telephone no:	
Personal Email address:	
School:	
Programme of Study:	
Year: (1st, 2nd)	

Please indicate here which grounds apply and then give full details of your appeal on the following sheet. *(Please mark the appropriate box)*

(1) Extenuating circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) Procedural irregularities	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) Challenge of assessment decision	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please justify your appeal below

Name	
Signature:	
Date:	

Please complete this form, print it out and sign it and submit it by email to appeals@southessex.ac.uk and to your tutor.

1. GROUNDS FOR APPEAL - EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES:

"Extenuating circumstances of 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."

The following grounds for appeal will NOT be considered:

"The retrospective reporting of extenuating circumstances which a student might reasonably have been expected to disclose to the Assessment Board before their meeting."

2. GROUNDS FOR APPEAL - PROCEDURAL IRREGULARITIES

"Procedural irregularities in the conduct of the Assessment/ 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."

3. 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 body's assessment criteria and requirements. They must be able to provide evidence that the assessor has not applied the criteria accurately.