

ACADEMIC APPEALS

Introduction

This policy sets out the terms under which students may appeal against a decision of the Subject Assessment Board for their academic programme. It follows the precepts and guidance contained in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, specifically *Chapter B9 – Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*.

A student on a university accredited course must follow the procedures for academic appeals by following the university process.

Scope

This policy applies to students undertaking HE qualifications at Grantham College except where the regulations of the awarding body or validating institution take precedence.

Definitions

An academic appeal is defined as a request for a review of a decision of the Subject Assessment Board, which makes decisions on student assessment, progression (i.e. progress from one stage or level of a programme to the next) and awards. An appeal is not a complaint; a complaint concerns the provision of a programme of study or related academic service and is the subject of a separate policy. A request for a review of a decision of the Subject Assessment Board may be made if the student has reason to believe that:

- There has been an arithmetical or other factual error;
- There has been a procedural irregularity relating to the assessment which the Board has not taken into account;
- The Board has failed to give proper consideration to extenuating circumstances or other information presented to it.
- The student has extenuating circumstances which they did not disclose to the Board. In this instance the student will be required to demonstrate that there were good reasons why the circumstances were not disclosed at the time of the Board.

An appeal may **not** be made regarding the academic judgement of the examiners/assessors concerning the outcome of an assessment or the level of award recommended or granted.

Stage one

Appeals must be made within 30 working days of the publication of the decision of the Subject Assessment Board; the publication date being the date of the letter of notification.

Appeals must be made in writing and addressed to the Course Leader or their nominee. The appeal must state clearly the grounds on which it is being made. The appellant must give their explicit consent for information that they provide in connection with the appeal to be disclosed to relevant third parties. The College will not disclose such information to any persons unconnected with the consideration of the appeal.

Where the appeal is being made on the grounds of extenuating circumstances the appellant must provide corroborating evidence from a third party in order to establish the reasons why they were not disclosed to the Subject Assessment Board. The Course

Leader will provide impartial advice on the preparation of an appeal or direct the student to the appropriate source of such advice.

The Course Leader will forward the appeal to the Vice Principal: HE and IoT who will decide whether there are grounds for an appeal. If it is decided that a case has been established, they will forward the appeal to the relevant Course Leader for comment.

Stage Two

If the Vice Principal: HE and IoT does not believe that there is a case for appeal, they will inform the Course Leader of the reasons for their decision. The Course Leader will respond in writing to the appellant stating the outcome and the reasons for the decision and indicating that they may appeal against the decision to the Vice Principal: HE and IoT within 20 working days. Such an appeal must take the form of a letter stating clearly the grounds for seeking to overturn the decision of the Vice Principal: HE and IoT. The Vice Principal: HE and IoT will, after considering the written evidence, advise the appellant in writing of the outcome and the reasons for their decision. A copy of this letter will be sent to the Course Leader. If the Vice Principal: HE and IoT agrees that a case has not been established a completion of procedures letter indicating that the internal process has been exhausted will be issued and the student advised that he or she may pursue the matter with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Information on how to make a complaint to the OIA can be found here:

<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/> and full guidance on the OIA rules can be found here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/about-us/our-scheme/our-rules/guidance-on-the-rules/>

If the Course Leader agrees that the appeal is well founded, they will advise the Vice Principal: HE and IoT who will arrange for the appropriate action to be taken and inform the Head of Curriculum accordingly. The Course Leader will advise the student in writing of the outcome and of the action that has been taken. In certain circumstances, for example where extenuating circumstances need to be considered, it will be necessary to convene a sub-committee for this purpose. The sub-committee will normally consist of the Vice Principal: HE and IoT, the Course Leader and one other member. The outcome of the sub-committee will be reported to the next full meeting of the Subject Assessment Board. The Course Leader will inform the student in writing of the decision of the sub-committee of the Subject Assessment Board and, if the student's case is not upheld, advise that they are entitled to lodge a further appeal against the decision of the sub-committee if they so wish.

Where a case has been established, but the Course Leader does not agree that the appeal is well founded the Vice Principal: HE and IoT will inform the Course Leader who will arrange for an appeal panel to be convened. The appeal panel will consist of three members of academic staff unconnected with the appellant's programme, one of whom shall act as the Chair. The Course Leader will make arrangements for the panel to meet and will advise the appellant of the date of the meeting.

The appellant may attend the meeting to present their appeal in person to the appeal panel. They may be accompanied at the meeting by a person of their choosing but must inform the Course Leader in advance of the identity of the person who will be present. That person should not be a parent or legal representative. The appellant will be given at least five working days' notice of the time and date of the meeting. The student may seek a postponement of the meeting only provided that evidence of extenuating circumstances is supplied. In other cases, where a student does not attend, the panel will proceed in his or her absence.

The appeal panel will examine the evidence and call witnesses as appropriate. It will not unreasonably refuse to hear evidence from persons accompanying the appellant.

After considering the evidence, the panel will reach a decision in the absence of the appellant but may elect to communicate the decision orally immediately following its deliberations. In any event, the student will be advised of the outcome in writing within five working days of the meeting and of the action to be taken. If the student's appeal has not been successful a completion of procedures letter will be issued indicating that the internal process has been completed and any further appeal must be addressed to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

The Course Leader will arrange for the meeting of the panel to be minuted and a report will be produced which provides a summary of:

- The grounds for the appeal;
- The evidence considered by the panel;
- The evidence provided by those attending the meeting;
- The panel's deliberations and conclusions.

Internal Monitoring

The Course Leader will maintain a record of:

- The nature of each appeal;
- How the matter was dealt with and the time taken for each stage;
- The outcome of the appeal;
- The ethnic origin and gender of applicants and all such data required by the College's other policies that appellants have disclosed for this purpose.

The Vice Principal: HE and IoT will provide a summary of information relating to appeals received during the previous year to the autumn meeting of the Subject Assessment Board. In addition to the information above the report should include an assessment of:

- The adequacy of advice, guidance and support mechanisms for students;
- The adequacy of staff development and support for those operating the
- appeals procedure;
- The level of understanding among staff and students of the procedures;
- The overall effectiveness of the procedures.

The Subject Assessment Board will identify whether any changes are required to the appeals procedure and take steps to ensure that any issues commonly giving rise to successful appeals are addressed.

Information relating to appeals within each academic programme will be included in the key statistical indicators supplied to academic programme leaders for the purpose of Annual Monitoring.

Quality Assurance – version control			
Review period	2 yearly	Review carried out by	Vice Principal – HE and IoT
Approved by	S. Peacock	Date approved	03/11/22
Equality Impact Assessment	May 22	Last review date	November 22