

ACADEMIC APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Amendment History:

Version Number:	Effective Date:	Summary of Amendments:	Author:
1.1	8 th October 2020	Addition of legal representation (2.3.4)	Helen Collinson, Registrar, Academic Registry
1.2	16 th July 2021	Updating of job titles for Head of Registry and Quality (now Registrar and Secretary) and Director of Student Affairs (now Director of Student Life). Updating of typo to 'appeal' instead of complaint in 2.4.3. Addition of 'apprentices'	Sophie Pegum, Student Administration Assistant, Registry
1.3	26 th November 2021	Removal of 'Level 4 only' from 3.10.v to bring in line with Lancaster University Appeals policy.	Helen Collinson, Registrar, Academic Registry
1.4	1 st December 2021	Add to 2.4.1 time limit of 20 working days fship Awarding organisations. Add to Stage 3 review route to Awarding Organisations (for apprenticeship provision) 3.20-3.22 Update appendix 5.1 to include AO.	Helen Collinson, Registrar, Academic Registry
1.5	20 th March 2023	Add reference to qualifications delivered by external bodies Routine updating (eg. updated job roles)	Julie Canavan-Price, Assistant Registrar, Registry
1.6	20 th July 2023	Scheduled review: Routine updates	Julie Canavan-Price, Assistant Registrar, Registry

1.7	2 nd July 2024	Scheduled review: Routine updates for clarity of procedure.	Julie Canavan-Price, Assistant Registrar, Registry
2.0	1 st May 2025	Scheduled review: Routine updates	Julie Canavan-Price, Assistant Registrar, Registry

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy and procedure sets out how academic appeals will be managed, the responsibilities of all parties, and the opportunity for external scrutiny.
- 1.2 This policy and procedure also provides details of when academic appeals will be referred to Lancaster University for consideration as the awarding body for UA92 awards.
- 1.3 This policy and procedure also provides details of when academic appeals will be referred to an external EPAO (AAO) or where UA92 is the EPAO will be referred to Lancaster University for consideration as the awarding body for UA92 awards.

2. Scope

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy and procedure, an academic appeal is defined as: “A request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards”.
- 2.2 An academic appeal relates to the outcome of an assessment or examination, or a student’s progression or award.
- 2.3 A student can submit an academic appeal only after the outcome of a Progression or Award Board. Where a student experiences an issue with an individual assessments or module, the Extenuating Mitigating Circumstances (EMC) Policy may be applicable.
- 2.4 An academic appeal may only be submitted on the grounds:
- i. a procedural irregularity in the assessment process which adversely affected the student’s performance and results;
 - ii. unfair treatment or discrimination, outside the exercise of academic judgement (which includes bias or perception of bias);
 - iii. mitigating (extenuating) circumstances where, for good reason, UA92 was not made aware of a significant factor relating to the assessment of a student when it made its original decision.
- 2.5 In relation to the above grounds, a prima facie case for appeal will be deemed to exist if there is evidence that for good reason the issue could not be brought to the attention of the Board of Examiners at the relevant time and which could have influenced their recommendations had the information been available at that time.
- 2.6 The following cannot be subject to an academic appeal:

- i. Questioning the exercise of academic judgment. That is the decision made by academic staff on the quality of the work itself or the criteria being applied to mark the work, which is subject to internal and external moderation;
- ii. Disagreeing with the conclusions reached by the individual or panel which considered extenuating circumstances.

This policy and procedure does not apply to dissatisfaction about:

- i. Other matters governed by the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.

2.7 On occasion, an academic appeal may raise other matters which fall within a number of different student procedures. Where that is the case, and with the agreement of the student, we may decide to deal with it collaboratively across different teams and/or procedures. Depending on the nature of the matters raised, it may be appropriate to suspend one procedure pending the completion of another. This will be discussed with the student at the relevant time.

2.8 This policy and procedure applies to all current students registered on a UA92 programme. A student who has left UA92 can also invoke this procedure within one month of the end of their registration. Any exceptions to this will be determined on an ad hoc basis and at the discretion of UA92 by the Academic Appeals Coordinator.

2.9 The right of appeal is available to all students who:

- i. have failed to qualify to proceed from one stage of their programme to the next;
- ii. have failed to qualify for the award for which they were registered;
- iii. wish to challenge, on procedural grounds, the classification of an award;
- iv. have been judged by UA92's related procedure to have committed academic malpractice.

2.10 A student has the right to be accompanied and supported at any meeting by one person and may be represented where they have expressly authorised in writing, in advance, a third party to act on their behalf.

2.11 Students should not require legal representation as proceedings will remain as informal as possible. If a student does wish to employ legal representation, requests made in advance will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In such instances, UA92 will also reserve the right to legal representation.

2.12 Where students want to appeal as a group, they must provide reasons as to why their appeals should be considered collectively. These will be subject to consideration and judgement by the Registrar, or a delegate, whose decision will be final. A decision to not consider an appeal collectively does not preclude students from pursuing individual appeals. Where a group appeal has been agreed, the group must nominate a spokesperson to speak on behalf of the group. The spokesperson will be responsible for all communication with UA92 and attending any meetings arranged as part of the appeal. All students should email academicappeals@ua92.ac.uk from their student email address to confirm that they give their consent for the spokesperson to speak on their behalf.

Definitions (where required).

Student	For the purposes of this policy and procedures, the term 'student' includes anyone enrolled on a UA92 programme, including apprentices. Where qualifications are awarded by an external organisation, the student may be required to use the third-party's policy and procedure where appropriate.
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3. Responsibilities

Role	Responsible for
Academic Registry	Department with overall responsibility for the effective and compliant handling of student cases.
Lead Officer	Day-to-day responsibility for the operationalisation of this policy and procedure
Joint Academic Group	Responsible for reviewing cases on an annual basis and approving amendments to the policy and procedure as required.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 The objective of the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure is to establish the facts and come to a reasonable and just resolution which is both relevant and proportionate, and is underpinned by the following overriding principles:

- i. Students will not be hindered in making a reasonable academic appeal;
- ii. All parties will act without bias or prejudice and in a sensitive, fair and prompt manner;
- iii. No student will be disadvantaged for making an academic appeal in good faith, and all reasonable academic appeals will be taken seriously and dealt with according to the agreed procedures. However, if it is established that academic appeals are frivolous or spurious, then they will not be considered reasonable, and UA92 may take disciplinary action;
- iv. All academic appeals will be dealt with confidentially so far as it is possible, and it is expected that all parties involved will honour this approach;
- v. All reasonable measures will be taken to ensure that no student is disadvantaged within these procedures;
- vi. Meetings may be conducted face-to-face or via video link where appropriate;
- vii. Technology will be used, as appropriate, to facilitate these procedures.

4.2 A UA92 Student Procedures Panel will meet on an annual basis to review all Academic Appeals. This panel will agree an annual report which includes recommendations for action or amendments to this Policy and Procedure by UA92. It will also capture learning to ensure that decisions have been made consistently and at the right level. The Academic Committee of UA92 will receive this report and is responsible to both Lancaster University and the UA92 Board for monitoring Academic Appeals. Lancaster University's Academic Quality and Standards Committee will also receive the report for information.

4.3 UA92 uses a three-stage appeals procedure:

- Stage 1: Formal stage;
- Stage 2: Review stage;
- Stage 3: Independent review.

4.4 Stage 1 – The Formal Stage

4.4.1 For the appeal to be considered formally, the student must put the Academic Appeal in writing using the online Academic Appeal Form. Should another format be required due to accessibility requirements, please contact academicappeals@ua92.ac.uk.

4.4.2 Should the issue be immediately resolvable (for example, it is discovered that there has been a simple recording error), the Academic Appeals Coordinator, or nominated colleagues, will draw this to the attention of the relevant Assessment Board Chair, who will agree amendments by Chair's action. If this is not the case, the Academic Appeals Coordinator will consider the appeal and decide whether there is a case for appeal against the criteria set out in section 2.9.

4.4.3 Where there is no case, the Academic Appeals Coordinator will either:

- i. refer the student to an alternate more appropriate procedure;
- ii. enter into a discussion with the student, and other parties as appropriate, as to how best to take forward the concerns (e.g. in cases where the concerns involve a number of elements which cross UA92 procedures); or
- iii. provide an explanation to the student as to why no action can be taken along with a Completion of Procedures letter, which sets out their right to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and describes the means to do so.

4.4.4 Students have the right to challenge the decision not to allow the appeal. In these cases, the decision will be reviewed by the Registrar or Assistant Registrar.

4.4.5 If a case for an academic appeal is determined, the Academic Appeals Coordinator will convene an Academic Appeal Panel. An Academic Appeal Panel will consist of three members of staff. Panels will be made up of two members of academic staff from a subject domain that is different to the student's programme of study, one of whom will act as Chair, and a member of the Academic Registry team, who will provide administrative support and guidance on the procedure. In each case, the panel shall have the right of access to detailed marks in the candidate's assessments to date. In addition, all details of cases where the Board of Examiners have permitted a student to be reassessed as first attempt candidates will be available to the panel.

4.4.6 Where the academic appeal involves an element of fitness to study, UA92's Head of Student Support, or a nominated colleague, will be invited to the hearing in an advisory capacity.

4.4.7 The student may attend the event, although it is not required and failure to attend would not stop the proceeding. If present, the student will be invited to make a short personal statement. The panel will be allowed, through the Chair, to question the student. It will not normally be permissible to call witnesses as part of the panel hearing; however, the Chair may allow it at their discretion. The student will be given the opportunity to sum up their position. The burden of proof will be on the student, albeit within a recognition of the responsibilities of UA92.

4.4.8 Following the proceeding, the panel will deliberate in private, using the balance of probability as the standard of proof, and reach a decision. A member of the Academic Registry team will be available to provide advice on the scope of actions/remedies available to the panel. In complex cases, the Chair may request that Lancaster University is consulted on the available remedies.

4.4.9 An Academic Appeal Panel which has been convened to consider an appeal against a judgement of academic malpractice shall review that judgement and all the evidence pertaining to it and shall decide one of the following:

- i. The original judgement and penalty are confirmed; or
- ii. The original judgement stands but the penalty is revised (according to the available penalties set out in the academic malpractice regulations); or
- iii. The original judgement and penalty are removed (and the student's record amended accordingly).

4.4.10 The potential options for outcomes available to the Academic Appeal Panel will differ depending on the nature of the case, particularly with regard to the level of the award. In general terms, the options available to the panel include, but are not limited to:

- i. Exclusion from UA92;
- ii. Agreement to temporarily exclude the student, allowing a reassessment the following year;
- iii. Confirmation of failure;
- iv. Confirmation of existing award classification;
- v. Readmission to level/year of study;
- vi. Agreement to allow the student to retake the entire year;
- vii. Agreement to allow the student to resit a specific assessment or assessment(s);
- viii. Condonation of failure and the granting of permission for external reassessment;
- ix. Reconsideration of results in accordance with the regulations relating to incomplete assessment and exceptional circumstances, as detailed in UA92's Academic Regulations;

- x. Amendment to the awarded classification;
- xi. For students who have been adjudged to have committed malpractice in assessments and excluded with no reassessment opportunity, the opportunity for reassessment for a Pass degree only.

4.4.11 Where the proposed outcome amends any previous decision of the Board of Examiners, this will need to be ratified by Lancaster University as the awarding body for UA92 courses.

4.5 Stage 2 – The Review stage

4.5.1 If the student remains dissatisfied following the outcome of Stage 1, they may apply to Lancaster University within two weeks of the date of the Stage 1 written decision requesting a formal review. They should explain why they feel dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 and what remedy they seek.

4.5.2 All appeals should be submitted to UA92 in the first instance. UA92 will then forward the appeal onto Lancaster University and will liaise with them to ensure that the appeal is considered in a timely manner.

4.5.3 Academic Appeals will be considered by Lancaster University in line with the procedure detailed in the Lancaster University Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures (MARP) <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/documents/student-based-services/asq/marp/Academic-Appeals.pdf>

4.5.4 Requests for Stage 2 Review can only be made on any or all the following grounds:

- i. that new evidence has come to light which could not reasonably have been made available at Stage 1; or
- ii. that there exists evidence of a material procedural irregularity in Stage 1; or
- iii. that there exists evidence that the judgement at Stage 1 did not meet the expectations of natural justice.

4.5.5 No new ground(s) of appeal may be requested at Stage 2, but further evidence may be submitted in support.

4.5.6 Completion of Procedures letters will be issued by Lancaster University and will advise the student of their right to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and describe the means to do so.

4.6 Stage 3 – Independent Review and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

4.6.1 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE or OIA) acts as an ombudsman for Higher Education institutions. Once all internal appeals procedures have been exhausted and following receipt of the Completion of Procedures letter, if the student is still dissatisfied, they have the right to take the case to the OIA for further review.

4.6.2 The application to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter.

4.6.3 Information about the OIA and its processes can be found at www.oiahe.org.uk.

4.7 For apprentices studying towards qualifications awarded by external Awarding Organisations, the Academic Appeals procedure will be managed by the Apprenticeships Team, with support from Academic Registry as required.

4.7.1 Reviews of appeals relating to apprenticeships that are not validated by Lancaster University will be conducted internally by UA92.

4.7.2 Once all internal procedures are exhausted, an apprentice has the right to appeal to the Awarding Organisation (AO). The AO will have its own appeals policies and procedures for candidates who are dissatisfied with a decision. At this point the training provider (UA92) will provide a letter of completion for the apprentice.

4.7.3 The application to the AO must be made within their set frameworks which could be as short as 20 working days or up to 12 months depending on the AO.

4.7.4 Details of the Awarding Organisation will be provided in the Completion of Procedures letter as they will differ depending on the apprenticeship programme.

4.8 Where qualifications completed at UA92 are awarded by an external body, students may use that body's own appeals policy should they be dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal.

4.9 Time Limits and indicative timescales

4.9.1 All academic appeals must be submitted within one month of the publication of results.

4.9.2 UA92 will not routinely extend time limits for making academic appeals. Where a student has exceptional reasons for a late submission, at its discretion, UA92 may extend a time limit for submission. Any request must be supported by evidence to support the reasons for making a late academic appeal.

4.9.3 UA92 will make every reasonable effort to complete the academic appeals procedure in a timely manner. We aim to consider academic appeals within the following time limits, with the aim of completing Stage 1 and Stage 2 within 90 days of receipt of the academic appeal in writing:

- i. Stage 1: formal stage: we aim to complete this stage and notify the outcome within 30 calendar days of the date we receive the written academic appeal.
- ii. Stage 2: review stage: we aim to complete the review and notify the outcome within 36 days calendar days of receiving the request for review.

4.9.4 UA92 wants to resolve academic appeals quickly but recognises that this is not always possible and sometimes we may be unable to complete our investigations in line with the indicative timeframes. Where there is a delay, we will write to students with an explanation and inform them of the timeframe in which the procedure will be completed. UA92 will provide progress updates to students as appropriate.

4.9.5 Reasonable adjustments will be made in the procedure as necessary to meet requirements related to protected characteristics or where the students have additional support needs. This could include extending deadlines or providing documents in a different format. Students should discuss these matters with UA92 when making their appeal or at any time during the consideration of their academic appeal to enable us to make any reasonable adjustments.

4.9.6 In this policy and procedure, any reference to named members of UA92 staff also includes reference to their nominee and named staff may delegate their responsibilities to other appropriate members of staff without invalidating the procedure. The identity of nominees or members of staff to whom responsibilities are delegated will be notified to the student.

4.9.7 Advice on how to use this procedure is available from the academic appeal coordinator via academicappeals@ua92.ac.uk.

4.9.8 The academic appeal coordinator will oversee this Policy and Procedure and provide advice to all parties, both students and those subject to the appeal on the procedure. They are not, however, an advocate for either party. They play an advisory role in appeal reviews and will act as the primary liaison with the Office for the Independent Adjudicator.

4.9.9 UA92 will keep a record of Academic Appeals made and evidence collated as part of the investigation into the Academic Appeal. Students are advised to also keep their own records. Records will be retained in line with the UA92 retention policy.

4.9.10 Academic Appeals panels will be composed of individuals from UA92 who are independent of the situation.

5. Implementation, Communication and Training (where required)

5.1 UA92's Academic Registry team has overall responsibility for this policy and its related procedures.

5.2 All formal communications relating to this policy will be conducted via email and correspondence will be made exclusively with UA92 student email addresses unless by agreed exception in circumstances where this is not possible.

5.3 Academic Appeals will be reviewed annually through UA92's annual Student Cases Report. This will include recommendations for actions or amendments to continuously improve both the academic and non-academic experience at UA92. Learning will be captured to ensure that decisions have been made consistently and at the correct level. The report will be received by UA92's Joint Academic Governance Committee and key findings will be fed into an annual quality report that is received by UA92's Board and Lancaster University.

5.4 This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed annually by the Academic Registry team, with any proposed changes submitted to UA92's Joint Academic Governance Committee for consideration and approval.

5.5 This policy document will be made available to students via Microsoft Teams and published on the UA92 website.

5.6 Training for panel members will be facilitated as required.

6. Associated Policies and Documents

Lancaster University Academic Appeals Procedure

<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/documents/student-based-services/asq/marp/Academic-Appeals.pdf>

Lancaster University Guide to Academic Appeals

<https://portal.lancaster.ac.uk/ask/complaints-appeals/>

BCS Appeals procedure:

7. <https://www.bcs.org/media/3274/learner-appeals-policy.pdf> **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – academic appeal flowchart

