



## **Higher Education Student Academic Appeals Procedures**

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## Student Academic Appeals Procedures

### 1. Purpose

These procedures are designed to:

- Ensure that the student has a clear understanding of how to make an appeal
- Protect the interests of the applicant making an appeal
- Provide scope and a definition of types of appeals
- Enable College staff to manage appeals effectively

### 2. Scope

2.1 The Post Results Services information relates to all Higher Education (HE) students who are studying a **Higher National BTEC** course at the College. The related procedures are relevant to these Higher Education students and to the College staff administering them. Please refer to:  
<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/post-results-services.html#tab=Appeals>

2.2 If the course is delivered by the College but is in partnership with a university, then academic appeals need to be directed to the partner university.

**In the first instance, speak with your teacher or Course Leader to try and resolve the matter informally.**

2.3 For Staffordshire University, please refer to their Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures: <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/legal/policies/award-board-student-appeal.jsp>

2.5 Appeals should be completed by the applicants themselves. Letters, e-mails, phone calls and other correspondence from others will not be considered unless the College has received written and signed authorisation from the applicant that the third party intends to act on their behalf.

2.6 All correspondence should include the applicant's full details including; name, address, contact details and student number.

2.7 Below is a list (not exhaustive) of examples where the college need to make sure that public information is accurate, accessible, and clear.

1. Web site and web page information
2. Unistats
3. Higher Education Prospectus and course information sheets
4. Course information contained in Course handbooks AND Module handbooks
5. Enrolment forms
6. Application forms

7. Admissions letters (including conditional or unconditional offer or rejection letters) to prospective students
8. Up to date list of applications including offers and rejections and dates of interviews (held centrally by Admissions)
9. Complaints Policy
10. HE Policies and Procedures

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

- 3.1 Applicants are expected to familiarise themselves with Section 3 before using the procedures.
- 3.2 The following staff roles have responsibilities within the appeals procedures:
  - The Course Leader will deal with informal verbal appeal, in the first instance;
  - The Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development will investigate the written appeal in conjunction with relevant Head of School.
  - The Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development, Head of School, Course Leader will assess the validity of the written appeal and take appropriate action;
  - The Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Quality will make a decision on outcome of the appeal;
  - The Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Quality will inform, in writing, the outcome of the appeal to the applicant, requesting a response from the applicant;
  - The HE Coordinator or a nominee will log the appeal;
  - The Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development will inform Pearson BTEC of the outcome;
- 3.3 Applicants will not be disadvantaged in any way because they have used these procedures.

### **4. Higher Education Procedures and Regulations for the Review of Decisions of Assessment Boards (Academic Appeals)**

#### 4.1 Scope and definition

These procedures may be used by students who wish to appeal against a final decision of an Assessment Board which affects a student's academic status or progress in the College.

This includes the following:

1. The mark awarded for any unit of assessment;
2. The overall outcome of a programme of study;
3. Failure at any stage of a programme of study;
4. A decision that the student interrupts her or his studies on the grounds of unsatisfactory progress due to personal issues, or failure to meet academic or professional requirements;
5. A decision that the student be withdrawn from the course on the grounds of unsatisfactory progress or failure to meet academic or professional requirements, or arising from unsatisfactory work and attendance.

## 5. Grounds for submitting a written Academic Appeal

5.1 Students may submit an Academic Appeal on the following grounds:

1. That circumstances affected the student's performance of which, for good reason, the Assessment Board may not have been made aware when the decision was taken and which might have had a material effect on the decision (Note: **if students wish to appeal on such grounds, they must give adequate reasons with supporting documentation why this information was not made available prior to the decision being made**);
2. That there was a material administrative error or procedural irregularity in the assessment process;
3. That there is evidence of prejudice or bias or lack of proper assessment on the part of one or more of the assessors.

5.2 An appeal which questions the academic or professional judgement of those with the responsibility for assessing a student's academic performance or professional competence may not necessarily be accepted; however, if there are circumstances beyond the control of the student, that they want taking into account, then a student can appeal.

## 6. Submitting a written Academic Appeal

6.1 Students should submit Academic Appeals on the forms provided by the College and within **7 working days of receiving assessment results**. Academic Appeals that are submitted after 7 days will not normally be considered. However, if there are circumstances beyond the control of the student, that they want taking into account, then a student can appeal.

6.2 Students should submit documentary evidence in support of their Academic Appeal. This should normally be submitted with their Academic Appeal submission. However, where this is not possible due to circumstances outside of the student's control, (i.e. waiting for evidence from an external agency/organisation), the Academic Appeal should be submitted together with a clear statement that evidence has been requested by the student.

6.3 Appeals should be submitted electronically or handed in to the Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development. The Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development's contact details are: helen.london@riverside.ac.uk or 0151 257 2023. Where official documents form part of the evidence, the originals should normally be submitted in hard-copy. Students are advised to take copies of all documentation prior to submission.

6.4 The Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development (or a nominee) will normally acknowledge receipt of the Academic Appeal within five working days.

## 7. Consideration of a written Academic Appeal

7.1 On receipt of the Academic Appeal, the Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development (or a nominee) will consider whether the appeal is made on one or more of the grounds specified in section 5 above. The student will normally be notified **within ten working days of the appeal being received and the outcome of the appeal application**. If the appeal is considered 'not eligible' the student will receive this outcome with reasons given. The Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development (or nominee) will contact Pearson BTEC of the outcome. The student

will be informed that further correspondence regarding the appeal should be directed to Pearson BTEC:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/post-results-services.html#tab-Appeals>

- 7.2 If the Academic Appeal is considered by the Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development (or nominee) to have been made on one or more of the grounds set out in section 5 above, then the HE Coordinator (or nominee) will contact Pearson BTEC of the outcome.
- 7.3 Pearson BTEC will inform the College of any further outcomes, including any adjustments to be made to the student's mark profile on the college database.

## 8. Representation

- 8.1 Students are not always invited to attend Appeal meetings; however, if a student wishes to meet with the HE Coordinator to discuss the appeal, and they want to bring someone with them to help with the discussion, then please contact the HE Coordinator as soon after the appeal application has been submitted. A friend, a member of the Student Union, a fellow student, or a support worker is welcome to attend the meeting.

## 9. Stage Procedures

The procedures are as follows:

### Stage 1 – Informal Academic Appeal

1. The student should first consult with the tutor in an attempt to resolve the problem informally. If at this point, the student is not satisfied that the piece of work has been marked fairly and in accordance with the instructions of the awarding body, an informal appeal may be made to the Programme Area Leader/Lead Internal Verifier and the work will be re-marked by an appropriate member of staff. The deadline for internal appeals is **seven working days after the student is given their final mark**. The student must be made aware that the appeal may result in the mark staying the same, going up or going down. If the re-mark results in a different mark, there should be a dialogue between the two teachers involved and a final mark agreed. If the teachers cannot agree then an appropriate third party, usually the head of department, will arbitrate. The student should be informed of the result of the appeal within five working days of the investigation or re-marking of work.
2. If the situation is not resolved informally, the student is entitled to submit an official written academic appeal.

### Stage 2 – Consideration of a written Academic Appeal

1. A formal written academic appeal should be submitted electronically or handed to the Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development. Where official documents form part of the evidence, the originals should normally be submitted in hard copy. Students are advised to take copies of all documentation prior to submission.
2. The Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development (or a nominee) will normally acknowledge receipt of the Academic Appeal **within five working days**.
3. On receipt of the Academic Appeal, the Head of Higher Education and Teacher

Development will consider whether the appeal is made on one or more of the grounds specified in Section 5 above. The student will normally be notified within ten working days of the appeal being received and the outcomes of the appeal application.

4. If the appeal is considered to be 'not eligible' the student will receive this outcome with reasons given.
5. The Head of Higher Education and Teacher Development will contact Pearson BTEC of the outcome. The student will be informed that further correspondence regarding the appeal should be directed to Pearson BTEC.

#### Stage 3 – Pearson BTEC Appeal Outcome

1. Pearson will carry out its own appeal process and report back to the College and the student with the outcome.

#### **Office of the Independent Adjudicator**

Under the Higher Education Act 2004, Riverside College subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student appeals. Once the College's internal procedures for the review of a student appeal have been exhausted, the College will issue the student with a 'completion of procedures letter' to confirm that the College's procedures are complete and to advise the student to contact the OIA if they wish to have their appeal reviewed further (provided that it is considered eligible under the OIA's rules).

Equality issues have been taken into account during the development of these procedures and all protected characteristics have been considered.