

RDI QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 24 – ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCESS

PRINCIPLES AND GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

1. An appeal is a process by which a student requests that an Examination Board reconsider a decision or mark awarded for assessment or a decision on unfair practice.
2. RDI will only consider appeals on the following grounds:

APPEALS AGAINST ASSESSMENT DECISIONS OF THE EXAMINATION BOARD

- 2.1 An assessment mark contains an arithmetical or other error of fact;
- 2.2 Defects or irregularities that were not known to the Examination Board occurred in the assessment process, or the assessment, in whatever format, was not conducted in accordance with current regulation, or some other irregularity has occurred; and such defects or irregularities are shown to have adversely affected student performance;
- 2.3 There are exceptional personal circumstances that were not known to the Examination Board, where the student can show good reason why circumstances could not be made known prior to the relevant meeting of the Examination Board.

APPEALS FROM STUDENTS FOUND GUILTY OF UNFAIR PRACTICE/ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE

- 2.4 Defect or irregularities in the conduct of the unfair practice/assessment malpractice investigation process (this point applies only to appeals by student found guilty of unfair practice/assessment malpractice)
 - 2.5 There are exceptional mitigating circumstances that were not known to the Examination Board, where the student can show good reason why circumstances could not be made known prior to the relevant meeting of the Committee of Enquiry.
- 3 Disagreement with the academic judgement of an Examination Board in assessing an individual piece of work or in reaching a decision on a student's progression or on the final level of award, based on the marks, grades and other information relating to a student's performance, cannot in itself constitute grounds for a request for reconsideration by a student.

4. The acceptance of an award does not limit the student's right to pursue an appeal within the provisions of these regulations.

PROCESS

APPEALS AGAINST ASSESSMENT DECISIONS OF THE EXAMINATION BOARD

5. This is a two-stage process consisting of an initial verification stage and a formal appeal stage.

INITIAL VERIFICATION

6. In the event that a student has a concern about an assessment decision then she/he will be offered the opportunity to resolve this via an initial verification process.
7. The student's request for verification will be made in writing and will be submitted, along with the necessary documentary evidence, to the Quality Manager.
8. Requests for verification will be considered by the Chair of the Examination Board, or his/her nominee, who will take the necessary steps to verify the facts to which the request for verification refers. The Chair of the Examination Board, or his/her nominee, will take the following actions:
 - 8.1 If the verification process shows there to be no error, or defect/irregularity in the assessment process (as set out in point 2.2. above), or that exceptional circumstances have already been considered, the Chair of the Examination Board will notify the Quality Manager that no remedial action is required.
 - 8.2 If the verification process identifies there has been an arithmetical error in the assessment grade or defects or irregularities in the assessment process (as set out in point 2.2 above), the Chair of the Examination Board, or his/her nominee, shall arrange for the Examination Board to reconsider the student's assessment performance.
 - 8.3 If the verification process identifies that there were exceptional mitigating circumstances of which the Examination Board was not aware and that may have affected the student's performance, the Chair of the Examination Board, or his/her nominee, shall refer the case to the Student Affairs Committee for consideration and the outcome presented to the Examination Board through the normal mitigating circumstances arrangements.

9. The Quality Manager, or his/her nominee, will notify the student of the outcome of the verification process and any action taken (if applicable), normally within 14 days of receipt of the request for appeal.
10. In the event that the verification process does not bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion, the student has the right to submit an appeal by which the formal appeal process below will be followed.

FORMAL APPEAL

11. Appeals must be made in writing to the Quality Manager within ten working days of dispatch of the Examination Board decision. In exceptional cases the appeal may be accepted later, but there is an absolute limit of three months. The written appeal must clearly state the grounds for appeal and must be accompanied by relevant documentary evidence.
12. The Quality Manager, or his/her nominee, will acknowledge receipt of the appeal normally within five working days. Where appropriate, the Quality Manager may consult with the Chair of the Examination Board or the relevant department head to obtain evidence of facts relating to the appeal.
13. The appeal will then be passed to the Academic Director or his/her nominee, who is responsible for hearing the appeal.
14. The Academic Director will hear the appeal within 21 days unless there are exceptional circumstances. In such a case the appellant will be advised in writing of the reasons for the delay.
15. If it is decided by the Academic Director that there is a *prima facie* case to be considered, he/she will normally refer the case back to the next meeting of the Examination Board for further consideration. Where such a delay would seriously disadvantage the student then, exceptionally, an Examination Board may be reconvened. In such a case the written advice of the external examiner must be sought. The decision of the Examination Board will be final.
16. The student will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any decision to refer the matter to the Examination Board, within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. Full reasons for the decision on the appeal must be provided in the outcome letter.
17. Where applicable, following a successful appeal the Quality Manager, or his/her nominee, will take all necessary steps to ensure the student's record is amended to reflect the decision of the Examination Board.

APPEALS BY STUDENTS FOUND GUILTY OF UNFAIR PRACTICE/ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE

18. Appeals against decisions of a Committee of Enquiry must be made in writing to the Quality Manager within ten working days of dispatch of the unfair practice outcome notification. In exceptional cases the appeal may be accepted later, but there is an absolute limit of three months. The written appeal must clearly state the grounds for appeal and must be accompanied by relevant documentary evidence.
19. The Quality Manager, or his/her nominee, will acknowledge receipt of the appeal normally within five working days. Where appropriate, the Quality Manager may consult with the Chair of the Committee of Enquiry or Head of Operations to obtain evidence of facts relating to the appeal.
20. The appeal will then be passed to the Academic Director or his/her nominee, who is responsible for hearing the appeal.
21. The Academic Director will not accept or consider appeals that are based on information that was already known and has been considered by the Committee of Enquiry or that the student could have made available to the Committee prior to the relevant meeting.
22. If it is decided by the Academic Director that there is a *prima facie* case to be considered, he/she can either:
 - 22.1 refer the case to the Committee of Enquiry to review the penalty imposed in light of new evidence;
 - 22.2 refer the case back to the next meeting of the Examination Board to reconsider the case.
23. The decision of the Committee of Enquiry or Examination Board will be final.
24. The student will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any decision to refer the matter to the Committee of Enquiry or to the Examination Board, within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. Full reasons for the decision must be provided in the outcome letter. A copy of this letter should be sent to the Chair of the Examination Board.
25. Where applicable, following a successful appeal the Quality Manager, or his/her nominee, will take all necessary steps to ensure the student's record is amended to reflect the outcome of the appeal.