

REGULATIONS & PROCEDURE FOR ACADEMIC APPEALS

The University Academic Appeals procedure applies only to the decisions of Assessment Boards of the University. The University has no powers to review assessment which is considered externally.

The appeals procedure excludes the following, for which separate procedures exist:

- Complaints about course delivery, teaching and administration or other services provided by the University (<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/current-students/conduct-and-appeals/>)
- Complaints about harassment or bullying by a member of staff or other students (<http://www.wlv.ac.uk/Default.aspx?page=13245>)
- Appeals against decisions taken in relation to hearings for: Academic Misconduct, Disciplinary and Fitness to Practice <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/current-students/conduct-and-appeals/>

Valid Grounds for Academic Appeals

A student has the right to appeal against the decision of an Assessment Board if there is evidence of one or more of the following:

- The published grades are incorrect.
- There has been a material irregularity in the assessment process which casts reasonable doubt on the validity of the result.
- Performance in assessment was affected by exceptional factors which could not (for valid reasons) be notified to the Award Board prior to its meeting.
- There has been an error in the application of University regulations in a decision of the Award Board relation to continuation, progression, completion or conferment.
- There has been a material error in the calculation of an award classification.

There is no right of appeal against the academic judgement of the Assessment Board. For example:

An appeal against a grade awarded for a module, where the marking has been externally moderated.

PROCEDURE PRIOR TO A STAGE ONE APPEAL:

Students who believe that they have evidence on which to base an appeal are advised to seek advice from the Student's Union Welfare and Advice Centre (<http://www.wolvesunion.org/advice/>)

Students are encouraged to seek a resolution by contacting the Faculty directly prior to commencing formal procedures. This does not prevent students from making a subsequent Formal Appeal.

Suspected errors in the recording of grades

If a student believes that a mistake has been made in the recording of grades for an individual assignment or overall result, the matter should be raised in writing with the member of academic staff responsible for their course as soon as possible after the publication of the results.

In such circumstances the evidence presented by the student will be considered. If an error has occurred the Chair of the Assessment Board will be notified in order that a Chairs Action can be taken to rectify the error. Written confirmation of the action taken will be sent to the student and the Faculty. If no error is found, the student will be informed in writing.

This does not prevent the student from making a subsequent formal appeal.

Where the above process is not appropriate or the outcome unsatisfactory students are advised to follow the following Formal Academic Appeal process:

STAGE ONE APPEAL

A stage one formal appeal must be submitted the Conduct and Appeals Unit within 20 working days of the publication of the relevant decision/result.

Submissions should be made using the Academic Appeals Form available at <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/current-students/conduct-and-appeals/>

An appeal received more than 20 working days of the publication of the decision/results will only be considered where there is evidence that either:

- The student was prevented from submitting the appeal for exceptional reasons such as sudden illness, or
- Any previous investigation of the appeal was delayed through no fault of the student

An initial review will be conducted by the Conduct and Appeals Unit.

When it is clear that there are valid grounds for appeal the matter will be resolved at this stage.

The result of the investigation will be reported to the Chair of the Assessment Board and if appropriate, Chairs Action will be taken and the Faculty will be informed. The student will be informed in writing of the outcome.

The appeals procedure is not an emergency remedy and particularly complex cases may take up to 3 months to conclude. However students can normally expect a substantive response in no more than 30 working days. Where this is not possible students will be kept updated on the progress of their appeal and given an indicative response date.

APPEAL AGAINST THE OUTCOME OF STAGE ONE

Where the student is not satisfied that the matter has been resolved at Stage One they may submit a written request for a review to the Conduct and Appeals Unit.

The grounds for appeal against the outcome at stage one are:

- That an administrative error or material irregularity has occurred in the conduct of the investigation.
- That there were undisclosed personal circumstances which the student believes would have affected the decision taken at Stage One .The student must have a good reason not to have disclosed these circumstances at Stage One of the appeal.

The request for review must be made within 20 working days of receiving the result of the Stage one investigation. The request must clearly state the grounds for appeal, provide any and all appropriate evidence and should be made in writing to:

The Conduct and Appeals Unit
Registry
University of Wolverhampton
MX Building, Camp Street Campus
Wolverhampton
West Midlands. WV1 1AD

The Head of the Conduct and Appeals Unit or the Academic Registrar will review the request for an appeal to determine whether or not the student has demonstrated legitimate grounds to challenge the Stage One decision. If it is determined that the student has demonstrated a valid case for an appeal then the matter will be referred to a Stage Two appeals panel. If this is not found to be the case a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued, in accordance with the format prescribed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.¹

An appeal review by the should normally be completed in no more than 30 working days.

STAGE TWO HEARING

The membership of a Stage Two Panel will be:

- A Dean of Faculty other than that to which the student belongs
- A senior member of academic staff from another Faculty

¹Further details of the review scheme operated by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) are available at their website: www.oiahe.org.uk

- A Students' Union representative.

An officer of the Conduct and Appeals Unit will act as note taker to the panel. No member of the panel may come from the Faculty directly involved in the appeal.

The student must be given written notice, at least 7 working days prior to the hearing, of the date and place of the hearing. This will include a copy of the University's Academic Appeals procedure, drawing attention to the appellant's rights under the procedure.

At least 5 working days before the hearing, members of the Panel and the student will be provided with the appropriate documentation. This may include Assessment Board minutes and copies of any relevant correspondence.

The student has the right to appear before and be heard by the Stage Two panel. They may be accompanied by a friend (the student shall be responsible for notifying the Conduct and Appeals Unit of the identity of the friend or witness not less than 2 working days prior to the hearing). The role of the friend can be either to provide support (in which case they would not be expected to speak) or to act as a representative (in which case the student would attend but the representative would speak on their behalf).

The Student would normally be expected to attend the Stage Two hearing. If the student fails to attend the meeting without a valid reason then a decision will be taken in their absence.

Both the student and the Faculty may call witnesses to appear before the panel.

The panel can question:

- The student
- Any representative of the Faculty
- Any further witnesses which the Faculty or student wishes to call

Both parties to the appeal will remain in the room during the proceedings but will be required to withdraw whilst the panel reaches its decision. The panel will either direct the Award Board to reconsider its original decision or will confirm that the Award Board decision should stand.

The decision of the appeals panel is final.

The Conduct and Appeals Unit will inform the student in writing of the decision within 7 working days. The letter will provide a clear explanation of the decision and where appropriate, will include guidance on how and when any remedies will be implemented. A Completion of Procedures letter will also be issued to the student, in accordance with the format prescribed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator¹.

¹Further details of the review scheme operated by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) are available at their website: www.oiahe.org.uk