# Academic Appeals Policy

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<th>SP006</th>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Academic Appeals Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsible committee and officer</td>
<td>Head of Quality and Regulation Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Original author:</td>
<td>Single Policy Framework</td>
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<td>Current revision author: (if applicable)</td>
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## Approval

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date approved</th>
<th>Approving committee</th>
<th>Individuals/groups to be notified (if relevant)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12/03/19</td>
<td>Board of Management</td>
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## Purpose/change

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| **Overview** | This policy, together with the associated Academic Appeals Procedures, represents an appeals framework that ensures students can request a review of an assessment decision made by Lews Castle College UHI, where there are grounds to do so. |
| **Purpose** | The purpose of the policy is to set out the circumstances in which a student may wish to appeal against a decision provided during an assessment process or against a decision about progress between levels (e.g. a decision by a Progression Board). |
| **Scope** | This policy applies to all Further Education courses (normally up to and including SCQF Level 6) |
| **Consultation** | The policy was developed by a group of practitioners made up from across the University of the Highlands and Islands partnership. All relevant staff and students will be notified. |
| **Implementation and Monitoring** | Colleges will be responsible for local implementation of the policy. The policy is part of the business-as-usual function of the college. |
| **Risk Implications** | Failure to adopt a strong policy and follow the procedures would undermine the student experience and the academic reputation of the College. |
| **Link with Strategy** |  |
|  | Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a |
1 Policy Statement

1.1 This policy, together with the associated Academic Appeals Procedures, represents an appeals framework that ensures students can request a review of an assessment decision made by Lews Castle College UHI, where there are grounds to do so.

1.2 The policy aims to ensure appropriate, fair and consistent treatment of all parties involved in any further education academic appeal across the partnership.

2 Definitions

2.1 Academic Appeal: a procedure through which students may in certain circumstances ask for a review of a decision relating to their academic progress or award.

2.2 Progression Board: a panel of staff from the College who consider and determine student awards and progression to a more advanced stage.

2.3 Awarding Body: an organisation that designs, develops, delivers and awards the recognition of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) of an individual following an assessment and quality assurance process.

3 Purpose

3.1 The purpose of the policy is to set out the circumstances in which a student may wish to appeal against a decision provided during an assessment process or against a decision about progress between levels (e.g. a decision by a Progression Board).

3.2 The procedure allows the student to raise an appeal at an informal level and, if the outcome of this is not satisfactory, to use the formal procedure.

The internal Further Education Academic Appeals Procedure should be followed before escalation to external Awarding Body appeals processes. Students will be signposted to relevant external Awarding Body appeal processes at the start of their programme of study.

3.3 External appeals procedures vary, depending on the type of qualification for which the appeal is being made and the awarding body. The overriding principle is that all appeals will be treated fairly and objectively.

3.4 Without prejudice to the outcome of an appeal, a student may continue to attend classes and make use of the facilities of the College whilst their appeal is being heard.
3.5 Students who have completed their programme, who have grounds to appeal an award decision or programme progression board, will be unable to receive their award until the matter has been fully resolved.

3.6 The timescales set out in the Procedures must be followed. Students and staff should note where there may be variations between awarding bodies.

4 Scope

4.1 This policy applies to students enrolled on courses normally up to and including SCQF Level 6 (see Section 4.2 for variations to this criteria).

4.2 There are a small number of Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) courses at SCQF Level 7 that are considered as Further Education courses for the purposes of the UHI Partnership. This policy applies to these students.

4.3 Grounds for Appeal

Appeals against an assessment decision will normally only be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

4.3.1 That a student’s performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors. The student must have been unable to, or have a valid reason not to, divulge the information to their lecturer prior to assessment. In the case of a Progression Board, the information must have been unavailable at the time the determination was made. In these cases, the appeal must be accompanied by documentary evidence to the Head of Quality.

4.3.2 Evidence of College academic assessment administrative error or that an assessment was not conducted in accordance with the College’s specific assessment policies/procedures.

4.3.3 That evidence is produced that some other material irregularity has occurred.

5 Exceptions

5.1 This policy does not apply to Higher Education students, e.g. normally those students studying courses at SCQF Level 7 and above (see Section 4.2 for variations to this). These students should refer to the UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations.

5.2 Appeals that question the academic judgement of a member of staff or an academic assessment body will not be considered.

5.3 Students undertaking non-regulated qualifications (NQs), have no further right of appeal against internal assessment decisions. The final decision rests with the academic partner. External awarding bodies will not accept internal assessment appeals.
5.4 Appeals will not normally be permitted from third parties on behalf of a student.

5.5 SQA Post-results Services for National Qualifications and other external assessments. Please refer to relevant Awarding Body Guidance for further details.

5.6 Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service. Please refer to relevant Awarding Body Guidance for further details.

6 Notification

6.1 All staff members will be notified of changes to the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures through the normal channels.

6.2 Teaching staff and staff advising students should have a detailed knowledge of the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures.

6.3 Any changes to awarding body regulations will be reflected in the annual review process of this policy and associated procedures.

6.4 Students will be made aware of the policy within four weeks of commencing their course.

6.5 The policy will be publicly available on the College’s website.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Board of Management is responsible for approving the policy and ensuring that it is followed.

7.2 The Senior Management Team is responsible for operational compliance with the policy set by the Board of Management, and making recommendations to the Board about updates to the policy. The Senior Management Team is also responsible for ensuring the operational effectiveness of the policy and making provision for training for relevant staff.

7.3 The Further Education Academic Appeals Policy Ownership Group is responsible for overseeing annual updates to the Policy and Procedures.

7.4 Line managers are responsible for ensuring staff participate in training and follow the policy in their day-to-day role.

7.5 All relevant staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the policy and procedures.
8 Legislative Framework

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulations

9 Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

9.1 This policy is aligned with the following legislation:

- Academic Standards and Quality Regulations
- Further Education Academic Appeals Procedure
- Lews Castle College UHI Access and Inclusion Strategy
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Positive Learning Environment Policy and Disciplinary Procedure
- Fitness to Study Guidelines
- Learner Support Policy and Procedures
- Progression Board Guidance
Lews Castle College UHI:
Further Education Academic Appeals Process

Overview
This procedure aims to provide a fair, accessible and timely process for students who wish to request a review of an assessment decision, where there are grounds to do so. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Further Education Academic Appeals Policy.

These procedures apply to students enrolled on courses normally up to and including SCQF Level 6. There are a small number of Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) courses at SCQF Level 7 that are considered as Further Education courses for the purposes of the UHI Partnership.

As per Section 4.3 of the Further Education Academic Appeals Policy, appeals will normally only be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

1) That a student’s performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors. The student must have been unable to, or have a valid reason not to, divulge the information to their lecturer prior to assessment. In the case of a Progression Board, the information must have been unavailable at the time the determination was made. In these cases, the appeal must be accompanied by documentary evidence to the Head of Quality.

2) Evidence of college academic assessment administrative error or that an assessment was not conducted in accordance with the college’s specific assessment policies/procedures.

3) That evidence is produced that some other material irregularity has occurred.

As per Section 5.2 of the Further Education Academic Appeals Policy, appeals will not be considered on the following grounds:

1) Appeals that question the academic judgement of a member of staff.

2) Appeals that question the academic judgement of an awarding body.

All assessment decisions are subject to external verification by the relevant Awarding Body.

Academic Appeal Stages
Students receive information about their ability to invoke the appeals process as part of their induction process. As it is likely an informal discussion with the relevant member of staff will represent the informal stage of the process – it is the responsibility of the staff member to highlight to the student at this time the stages of the appeals process.
Stage 1 – Informal Procedure

a) A student who is dissatisfied with the conduct of an assessment/s should in the first instance discuss the matter with the relevant Lecturer or Personal Academic Tutor (PAT). This should be done within ten working days of receipt of the outcome of the assessment.

b) This initial discussion will not alter the student’s right to follow the formal procedure (detailed below) but will represent an early opportunity for ambiguities to be resolved and circumstances taken into account prior to decisions being taken on the assessment.

c) The member of staff will ensure that an informal record is communicated to the Course Leader.

It is expected that this stage of the process will not take the maximum timeframes specified in the flowchart in Appendix 1.

Stage 2 – Formal Procedure

a) If the matter is not resolved through the informal procedure, a student who wishes to appeal should do so in writing using the appropriate form (Appendix 3) setting out the reasons for the appeal, within twenty-five working days of receipt of the outcome of the assessment. Documentary evidence should support the grounds on which the appeal is being made. This may include but is not limited to letters from medical professionals, communications with College staff, the process which is thought to have been followed incorrectly. Appeals must be sent to the relevant Head of Department.

b) The relevant Head of Department shall consider the appeal and respond with the outcome to the student (in writing) within ten working days of the appeal being received.

Stage 3 – Appeals Panel

a) If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, s/he may appeal directly to the Head of Quality, Catherine Barron catherine.barron@uhi.ac.uk This should be done within ten working days of receipt of the outcome from Stage 2 – Formal Procedure. At this stage appeals may only be made on the grounds of administrative irregularity.

b) The Head of Quality will convene a panel of three members to consider the appeal. The panel members will not have been involved in previous stages of the appeal. The panel shall consider the written evidence, interview appropriate people and recommend either that the appeal be rejected or that the decision at Stage 2 be annulled.
c) The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final.
d) The Head of Quality will communicate the appeal outcome to the student (in writing) within 30 working days of the appeal being received.
e) This stage of the process represents the final stage of the College’s own processes.

**External Right of Appeal**

Awarding bodies have their own appeal procedures. They are usually used once the College appeals procedure has been exhausted. It should be noted that there is usually a fee payable to the Awarding Body for the use of this service.

Students and staff should be aware that some Awarding Bodies specify clear timeframes which include the date of the assessment as part of the timing for the receipt of an appeal.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for relevant information.

Students should note that some awarding bodies will not consider appeals of internal assessments. Guidance can be provided to students about options for appeal available to them.

Students who are undertaking regulated qualifications have an additional stage of appeal open to them. These are:

1. An appeal to SQA (or other awarding body) once Stages 1 – 3 above have been exhausted.

2. An appeal to SQA Accreditation or Ofqual if they feel an appeal has not been dealt with appropriately. Students should be aware that an appeal of this nature will not overturn academic decisions; it may investigate the effectiveness of the process concerned.

**Responsibilities**

**Student** – a student is responsible for adhering to the relevant conditions of assessment including submission deadline and fulfilling the parameters of the assessment brief. A student is responsible for ensuring they make full use of the support processes available to them at the time of assessment if there is a need to do so. When submitting an appeal ensuring they meet the required deadline.

**Assessor** – where a student raises an informal query regarding their assessment the assessor is obliged to refer the assessment decision to the internal verifier for moderation. The assessor is responsible for informing the student's PAT of all informal assessment appeals they receive.
Internal Verifier – where a student raises an informal query through their assessor or PAT, the Internal Verifier will review the information objectively and communicate the outcome to the PAT and the assessor.

Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) is responsible for logging all informal academic assessment appeal requests. Where a student has previously discussed their informal appeal with their assessor, or comes direct to the PAT, the PAT is responsible for providing advice and guidance to the student on their assessment query. Where the PAT feels the student has a case to be answered that can be informally resolved, the PAT will refer the assessment decision to the assessor and the relevant IV for moderation.

The relevant Head of Department is responsible for investigating a formal assessment appeal at Stage 2 and ensuring that the student concerned and all relevant staff have been notified of the outcome of the appeal.

Panel members will be drawn from the management team of the College.

The centre will supply evidence of appeals heard to the relevant Awarding Body if this represents part of their quality assurance criteria and if requested to do so.

**Record Retention**

Please refer to the University of the Highlands and Islands Records Retention Schedule for further information.
Stage 1

Student dissatisfied with conduct of assessment

Within ten working days of receiving assessment outcome

Student discusses with relevant member of staff. Student will be provided with overview of Appeals Procedure

Within five working days of receiving query from student

Relevant member of staff responds to student and records outcome on local register

Stage 2

Student dissatisfied with Stage 1 and wants the matter considered further

Within twenty-five working days of receiving assessment outcome

Student submits appeal using appropriate form, including supporting documentary evidence

Within ten working days of receipt of appeal

Head of Department considers the appeal and responds in writing to the student

Stage 3

Student disagrees with Stage 2 outcome, has grounds for administrative irregularity

Within ten working days of receiving Stage 2 Outcome

Student submits appeal to Head of Quality, outlining the evidence for administrative irregularity

Head of Quality convenes three person panel to consider appeal

Within thirty working days of receiving Stage 3 Appeal

Head of Quality responds in writing to the student

External Right of Appeal

Awarding bodies have their own appeal procedures. Please refer to Appendix 2: External Awarding Bodies Appeals for further information.
## Appendix 2 External Awarding Bodies

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<tr>
<td>British Computer Society</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland</td>
<td><a href="https://www.rehis.com/">https://www.rehis.com/</a></td>
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<td>Royal Yachting Association</td>
<td><a href="https://www.rya.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx">https://www.rya.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
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<td>Student ID</td>
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<td>Course:</td>
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1. I wish to appeal against the following academic decision:
   Please give the unit title, the unit number, the assessment and the name of the lecturer.

2. I base my appeal on the following grounds:
   Explain why you are appealing the assessment decision.

3. I have suffered the following disadvantage as a consequence of the academic decision indicated in Section 1 above:
   Explain how you think you have been disadvantaged.

4. I am submitting the documentary evidence listed below to support my appeal:
   This may include any additional a note from your doctor or other evidence of medical or personal circumstances.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Signed:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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This form should be submitted within **twenty five working days** of the date of receiving the result of the original assessment decision.

Appeals should be sent to the appropriate Head of Department by email:

- Health: donald.macdonald@uhi.ac.uk
- Humanities: michael.smith@uhi.ac.uk
- Technology: roddy.ferguson@uhi.ac.uk