

Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure

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Audience:	Students, Tutors, Assessors, Module Leaders, Internal Verifiers and Programme Leaders.

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1 Introduction

The College recognises that there may be disputes regarding assessment decisions. This policy sets out the principles and processes that enable students to make appeals against assessment decisions. The policy and procedures offer students reassurance that they can make appeals without suffering disadvantage or recrimination as a result of making an appeal in good faith. The College desires to ensure that the assessment process is carried out in accordance with the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The policy also sets out to ensure that appeals are considered in an equitable, open and expedient manner and that they are resolved as early in the procedure as possible. All parties are required to act with impartiality and identify any actual or potential conflict of interest.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to support students and staff to appropriately deal with any appeal effectively. A student shall have the right to appeal once against a single decision of the Assessment Board. The procedures allow students to appeal against the decision of the Assessment Board if it is believed that an error occurred under the grounds outlined in Section 6 below.

3 Scope

This policy and procedures are applicable to all students and staff at all College campuses. A student is considered to be anyone who has signed a Student Declaration (a written statement outlining the terms of an agreement) with Oxford Business College, and all students at any of the College's campuses are covered by this Academic Appeals Procedure and Policy

This policy is related to student appeals regarding one or more assessment outcomes. To be the subject of an appeal, the assessment must appear on the assessment plan of a module, unit or course, and may be instigated at any level of study that the College offers.

4 Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to operate a speedy, fair and evidence based appeals system with the following main

objectives.

- To ensure that students are fully informed throughout their studies and especially after assessment decisions that they have the right to appeal against assessment outcomes.
- To treat academic appeals seriously and make sure no student is disadvantaged or faces recrimination as a result of making an appeal in good faith.
- To ensure student understand the grounds for an academic appeal

5 Definition of an Academic Appeal

For the purpose of this procedure, and in line with the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (UK Quality Code), an academic appeal is defined as: 'a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progression, assessment and awards.' At Oxford Business College this relates to the board of examiners of the colleges university partners.

6 Grounds for an Academic Appeal

6.1 Early Resolution & Results Surgery

Students cannot appeal against assessment decisions because they do not agree with the academic judgement of the assessor. However, students may request for an early resolution on procedural irregularities, withdrawals and other non-academic matters.

Students are required to seek an early resolution by making an informal Academic Appeal, which can be carried out verbally or by email to the Tutor/Assessor, Programme Coordinator, Head of Exams or Head of Programme. If a student wishes to proceed further with a formal Academic Appeal, they should make the appeal directly to the College's university partner in accordance with the partner's Academic Appeals Policy.

A student may only make an appeal against assessment decision on the following grounds:

6.2 Procedural Irregularity

At some point during the assessment process there was a procedural irregularity which placed the student at a disadvantage. For example, if the student was only given 2 hours to complete a 3 hour exam. This may also include an administrative error during the conduct of the assessment that has materially affected the approved grade or mark awarded. For example, if the wrong result was accidentally recorded by the assessor. This appeal may only apply where a student is seeking to have an assessment/exam or progression board decision amended.

6.3 Adverse Circumstances

At the time of the assessment, there existed circumstances which adversely affected the student's performance and which the student was unable to communicate to their Tutor, Assessor, Internal Verifier, the College assessment/exam or progression board before the assessment decision had been taken. In making such a case, the student shall provide valid documentary evidence where appropriate. The student also needs to provide valid reasons explaining why the student was not able to make the College assessment/exam or progression board aware of the adverse circumstances when it reached its original decision. Retrospective medical certification will not be accepted as valid.

6.4 Prejudice or Bias

The student is able to provide evidence of prejudice or bias that affected the decision-making of the assessment/exam or progression board.

7 Appeals and Communication to External Bodies

Student will always have the right to appeal directly to the external bodies depending upon which programme they are enrolled on. Students should only raise an appeal to an external body after they have exhausted all the options available to them through the College's internal processes as detailed above. For students studying on programmes that OBC delivers in partnership with universities, students must make formal Academic Appeals to the university partner after they have sought early resolution informally at OBC.

7.1 University and College Partners

Students may make a formal appeal to the university or college partner that is relevant to their programme of study. Students may obtain the relevant contact details from our website, or they may request the contact details of the relevant partner from the College's academic or administrative staff.

7.2 Pearson Awarding Body

Students attending the College's BTEC HND courses may appeal directly to an External Body Edexcel/ Pearson- academic appeals (in the case of courses where the outcome is a BTEC HNC or HND) by following the link below.

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees/Enquiries_and_Appeals_on_Pearson_Vocational_Qualifications.pdf

8 Precedence

The Academic Appeal Policy and Procedures of awarding bodies (e.g., Pearson) and OBC's university or college partner(s), will take precedence over this policy and procedures where the following applies:

- The appeal relates to a student on a course leading to a qualification by a recognised awarding body (e.g., Pearson) or one that is being delivered by OBC in partnership with a university or college such as Bucks New University (BNU), the University of West London (UWL) or Ravensbourne University, London (RUL) or any other university of college that OBC is in partnership with.
- The relevant awarding body or partner university or college requires OBC to follow their Academic Appeals policy rather than the OBC policy provided here.
- Students on courses leading to awards from the University of West London should use the University's appeals procedures here: https://www.uwl.ac.uk/sites/uwl/files/2021-10/Academic%20Regulations%20AY%2021-22%20-%20Appeal%20Regulations.pdf?_ga=2.50162534.1764371552.1633943022-1860804823.1631526074

- Students on Buckinghamshire New University programme should refer to the following regulations: https://bucks.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/9551/Academic-Appealsprocess.pdf
- Students on Ravensbourne University programme should refer to the following regulations: <https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/about-us/statutory-legal-and-policies/academic-appeals#:~:text=The%20Ravensbourne%20academic%20appeals%20procedure,or%20achievement%20as%20a%20student.&text=This%20should%20be%20submitted%20within%2015%20working%20days%20of%20the%20decision%20appealed.>

9 Appeals and Complaints

If a student is dissatisfied with teaching, supervision, academic advice or other service provision during their programme of study, they may submit a complaint under the Student Complaints Policy. Students must raise such concerns as and when they occur, as these cannot be considered later as grounds for an academic appeal. If a student submits an appeal which the Head of Academics would be more appropriately dealt with as a complaint, then the College may decide to follow the complaints procedure instead of, or as well as, the appeals procedure, depending upon the nature of the issues raised.

An appeal may or may not be connected with perceived grounds for a complaint. A complaint refers to behaviour a student feels they have experienced, or not experienced, which they believe has affected them negatively. In certain cases, these two separate issues may be combined e.g. if a student feels they have been unfairly graded because of a personal issue with the assessor, and the student wishes to simultaneously appeal against the grade and raise a complaint against the behaviour of the assessor. If a student is not sure if a concern is best processed as an appeal or a complaint, then they are advised to discuss this with the Head of Academics or other member of staff before proceeding.

It is recognised that some cases can involve a combination of concerns. The College will assess each concern individually. In these circumstances, the student will be informed which issue will be considered under which procedure and they will be directed to the alternative procedure as appropriate to allow all issues to be considered. Students will be advised of the effects, if any, of following two procedures at once, particularly where one procedure may be suspended until the

other is completed.

Where there is significant overlap, the College may decide to consider matters together if the student agrees to this. For example, if an appeal includes matters that could also be dealt with under other procedures, such as the Student Complaints procedure, a joint investigation may be carried out. In such cases, the student will be informed where responsibility for the overall investigation lies and who will issue the final decision.

10 Who can Appeal?

The procedure may be used by anyone who is, or was recently, an enrolled student at the College. Section 12 below of this procedure outlines specific timescales within which appeals should be lodged by students.

The College will only accept academic appeals from the student and not from someone else on the student's behalf.

At any stage of the procedure, students have the right to be accompanied, supported or advised by another member of the College community, which is a person who is a currently enrolled student at OBC, or an OBC member of staff.

11 How to Appeal

11.1 Formal (Written) Academic Appeal

If a student has attempted early resolution informally and feels they have grounds for a formal appeal, they can submit an academic appeal to the Head of Academics and Quality using the Appeals Form provided in Appendix 1. The Registrar or Head of Programme will consider the grounds for an appeal. The student must complete the form by providing a full statement of the grounds for appeal and provide appropriate supporting evidence. This may include copies of relevant email correspondence to and from staff concerning the issue, medical certification of health conditions affecting the student (if it is relevant to the issues raised). Students must avoid disclosing personal data of another person/s in their appeal unless they have been given permission by them to do so. Students should also state what remedy they are seeking to their appeal

The Registrar or Head of Programme will appoint a member of the College's academic team as an Investigating Officer (IO), who has no previous involvement in the matter, to investigate the appeal. If the IO believes there are no grounds for an appeal, the appeal will be denied. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they raise all relevant issues with the IO and that they provide all the necessary information and supporting documentation at the point of submission.

All matters pertaining to the assessment will be considered and the outcome determined, usually within 5 working days of receipt of the appeal. The Registrar or Head of Programme will communicate the result of the appeal to the student by completing the final section of the 'Appeals Form' (Appendix 1). Students should expect to receive an acknowledgement to their written appeal via email within 5 working days of receipt. If a student has not received an acknowledgement within 5 working days, they should contact the Registrar or Programme Leader to check that the appeal has been received.

There may be two possible outcomes following an appeal decision:

- The grounds for appeal will be accepted and the assessment decision amended with a written explanation to the student
- The grounds for appeal will be denied and the reasons for this will be explained verbally and/or in writing to the student.

Notification of the written appeal will be communicated to the student and the Chair of the assessment/exams board.

If the outcome includes a grade change to the benefit of the student, and the student accepts this change, the appeal will be considered resolved and will preclude the student from taking the Appeal to Stage Three: Review of an Appeal Outcome. If the student accepts the new grade given at this stage, they cannot take the appeal further or attempt a different result.

If the student is still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they may go to the Review of an Appeal Outcome below.

11.2 Review of an Appeal Outcome

If the appeal is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, a request for review of the appeal must be sent by the student in writing to the assessment/exams board within five working days of

the appeal decision.

The assessment/exams board will determine the assessment decision. Such decisions will be final and will be communicated to the student in writing. This will usually be within 5 days from receipt of the request for a review.

Any further appeals will need to be made to an external body such as the relevant Awarding Organisation or the OIAHE. See Section 14 on Appeals to External Bodies

11.3 Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE)

All students on Higher Education courses regardless of which course they are attending may contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) through the following link.

<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/how-to-make-a-complaint.aspx>

Where Students have exhausted the College's internal appeals procedure, they will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter by the College. If a student wishes to submit their appeal to the OIA for review, they must do this within 12 months of the receipt of their Completion of Procedures letter; the letter will confirm the deadline by which the student may refer their appeal to the OIA.

11.4 Office for Students

All students on Higher Education courses regardless of which course they are attending may contact the Office for Students through the following link.

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/contact/notifications-and-complaints/>

11.5 Quality Assurance Agency

All students on Higher Education courses regardless of which course they are attending may contact the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) with the following link.

www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/how-to-make-a-complaint

Appendix 1

Appeals Form

This form requires reasoning for the appeal . Displeasure with a grade without any rationale may lead to the appeal being unsuccessful. However, all appeals will be investigated once this form has been submitted. Examples of displeasure with an appropriate rationale include, but are not limited to:

- Desire for a higher grade (e.g. wanted a Merit or Distinction)
- Importance of a higher grade (e.g. needed it for University entry)
- Time management issues (e.g. If I had had more time, I would have done better)
- Effort expended (e.g. I worked hard so I should pass)

Name of Student:

Date:

Course:

Unit Number:

Assessment Title:

Assessor:

Internal Verifier:

Details of the Appeal and why you believe the original grade is incorrect:

Student Signature _____ Date: _____

Outcome of the Appeal:

Staff Signature _____ Role _____ Date: _____