

## **GUIDE TO ACADEMIC APPEALS**

If you are considering making an academic appeal, the Students' Union can offer advice and guidance. Please contact them at [bsusupportservice@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:bsusupportservice@brighton.ac.uk) or telephone 01273 642876 for a confidential conversation about your options. This does not commit you to bringing an appeal unless you decide to go ahead and any conversation can remain confidential.

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**What is an academic appeal?**

An **academic appeal** is a formal request to the University to ask an Exam Board to look again at its decision. This might concern your degree classification, a single piece of work or a whole module. It might also concern your "progression", which means a decision about whether you continue to the next stage of your degree, are asked to repeat a module or are asked to leave the University.

**Getting feedback**

Before you consider whether or not to appeal, the first thing you need to do is to get feedback i.e. get your results and discuss them with a member of staff. Schools may schedule "results meetings" whereby you may request to meet with a member of staff (normally your personal tutor or the course leader). This will help you understand how the mark was arrived at and may also give the school the chance to check that everything is in order or address your concern informally so you don't need to bring an appeal.

## **Grounds of appeal**

You can't just bring an appeal because you are unhappy with the mark you are given or because you are close to a degree classification borderline. You also can't appeal because you disagree with academic judgment. You can bring an appeal only on one of the following grounds:

### **Procedural irregularity**

Sometimes the University can just get things wrong! But when this affects the running of an exam, its marking scheme or just plain errors on the exam paper, you need to ask the University to look at this. It has to be something that actually had an effect on your result, so a mere technicality like an exam starting 10 minutes late is going to make any difference unless, of course, you didn't get time at the end to make up for it. On rare occasions it might also be possible that the Exam Board didn't actually consider the mitigating circumstances you put in, so this could be a ground of procedural irregularity that could potentially make a difference to your outcome or whether you are given the chance to repeat.

### **Mitigating Circumstances which you were unable to disclose before the Exam Board met**

Normally students are expected to raise any mitigating circumstances with the School as soon as they arise. If, however, there were very good reasons why you were unable to raise mitigating circumstances before the Exam Board met to consider your results, you may be able to raise them on appeal. You would need to show that you had very serious personal circumstances such as illness, accident, hospitalisation, death of close family or friends or another problem which had a direct effect on your ability to revise or sit exams or other assessments. It is very important that you explain to the university why you were unable to raise these matters earlier. Examples might be that you were taken ill on the day of an exam or that you were unaware of a serious medical condition which was not diagnosed until after the relevant assessment.

### **Arithmetical error**

Yes it is just possible that someone adds up your results incorrectly. If you suspect that is the case then it is important you get feedback from the school because they should be able to sort out any error. If not then this is the ground of appeal you might need to use.

### **Problems that should be raised as a Complaint and not an Academic Appeal**

If you have a problem with the service delivery of the University, whether this relates to quality of teaching and course materials, supervision or if you think you are a victim of bias or prejudice, then these are all matters that should be raised via the Complaints Resolution Procedure which will enable a proper investigation to be carried out. You should raise this in the first instance with one of your School Complaints Officers, but if the matter cannot be resolved within 7-14 days to your satisfaction then you should bring a formal Stage 1 Complaint.

Please see <https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/reg/acs/docs/Student-Complaints-Resolution.pdf>

## **How do I appeal?**

You must use the Stage 1 Form provided for this purpose which can be downloaded from the Student Contract web page:

<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-studies/student-policies-and-regulations/index.aspx>

Don't forget that you must appeal within 21 days of notification of your results. You need to follow the instructions on the front of the form carefully and don't forget to attach evidence in support of your appeal. If you are still awaiting evidence and cannot provide this within the deadline of 21 days you should submit your appeal form together with a note explaining what further evidence is awaited, and when it will be received.

**You should send the completed form and evidence to your School Office** (please contact your school for details of the relevant mailbox).

The form is also available on studentcentral (see Student Handbook), on the University's website under the "Student Contract" or from the Students' Union. An appeal must be submitted by you and won't be accepted from parents, friends or lawyers.

## **What happens next?**

If your form contains all the required information it will be forwarded to the school for a response and then assigned to a senior member of staff who will decide whether or not it should be upheld or rejected. If your appeal is upheld this means that the Exam Board will be asked to look again at its decision. Note that the University cannot impose an outcome on the Exam Board because only the Exam Board has the appropriate subject experts to consider your academic performance.

## **What if I am not happy with the outcome Stage 1 Appeal?**

If you are not happy with the outcome, you should read the Appeals Regulations carefully and get advice from the SU and see whether you have grounds to request a Stage 2 Review of the decision that was made on your appeal. Please see:

<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/my-studies/student-policies-and-regulations/index.aspx>

The Stage 2 Appeal Form is also available at the above web page.

**When complete please send also send this form to your School Office** (note that this differs from previously published arrangements) and they will collate relevant papers from Stage 1 and forward these to an independent Stage 2 Appeals Adjudicator nominated on behalf of the Secretary to the Academic board. He or she will have had no previous involvement in your case. Your School will ensure that you are advised of the outcome.

## **OIA**

Once the University has completed its internal processes you will receive a “Completion of Procedures Letter” (“CoP” letter for short). This will enable you to take your appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (“OIA”) for external review, but don’t forget that you must do this within 12 months of the university’s CoP letter. See [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

Students’ Union website: [www.brightonsu.com/goodavice](http://www.brightonsu.com/goodavice)

Appeals and Complaints Office email: [appealsandcomplaints@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:appealsandcomplaints@brighton.ac.uk)

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