

**SOUTH ESSEX COLLEGE OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

**ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCEDURE 2019-20**

September 2019

## 1. Purpose and Scope

South Essex College of Further and Higher Education (SEC) academic appeals procedure is informed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) and QAA Quality Code **Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Part B Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints.**

### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to allow SEC students on higher education programmes to raise concerns about their assessment results and the outcomes of Boards and Panels which make decisions on progression, awards and classifications. Such concerns are taken very seriously by the College and its validating partners and awarding bodies.

The Procedure is designed to enable a student's concerns to be considered fully and addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.

The academic appeals procedure will be published on the College website and communicated to all HE students as part of their induction process.

### 1.2 Scope

Robust mechanisms exist at SEC to ensure that assessment is fair and appropriate. Marking is conducted carefully and is subject to internal moderation and samples are checked by External Examiners who oversee the assessment process. However, the SEC academic appeals procedure may be instigated if a student wishes to make an appeal against an assessment decision based upon their academic achievement or progress.

1.2.2 In line with the QAA Quality Code Part B Quality Chapter B9 Academic Appeals and Student Complaints, an academic appeal may be defined as:

*'A request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards'*.

An academic appeal differs from a complaint and therefore appeals and complaints are considered under different procedures. In line with the QAA Quality Code, a complaint may be defined as: *'The expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of a student's learning opportunities'*. For example: a formal expression of dissatisfaction made by either a single student or group of students about the provision of their programme of study or related academic service or facility or any service provided by the College and therefore the Appeals Procedure should not be used to raise complaints.

## 2. The Right of Appeal

### 2.1 Our commitment

Any student who submits an appeal under this Procedure will not be disadvantaged for having done so.

### 2.2 Grounds for academic appeal may include:

1. Irregularities in the assessment process;
2. Perception of bias;
3. Error in the recording of marked work.
4. Extenuating circumstances that you could not make known to the Assessment/Examinations Board.

Grounds for academic appeal are not normally considered in relation to:

<sup>1</sup>Academic judgment or decisions made on the quality of work or the criteria being applied to mark work.

2.3 Other matters of dispute shall be termed "complaint" (see 1.2.2 and are subject to the South Essex College Compliment and Complaints Procedure<sup>2</sup>.

In the event of justifiable grounds for both appeal and complaint, the relevant Programme Leader and Programme Partnership Manager will confirm the method by which both the appeal and complaint shall be resolved. This shall be determined in consultation with the appellant/complainant.

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<sup>1</sup> An academic judgment is an opinion that can only be given by an academic expert.

<sup>2</sup> The SEC Compliments & Complaints procedure is available in both paper and digital formats and published on the College website.

*In the case of handling both complaint and appeal it may be that one procedure is suspended, pending the completion of the other.*

### **3. The appeals procedure: Making an Appeal**

3.1 Any student who believes he/she has grounds for appeal should email [appeals@southessex.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@southessex.ac.uk) . Advice and guidance on the process and which Appeals form to use will be provided by HE student support. Or students can visit HE student support services in the Forum [hesupport@southessex.ac.uk](mailto:hesupport@southessex.ac.uk).

#### **3.1.1 Informal Stage**

The informal resolution stage seeks to resolve straightforward concerns swiftly. At any meeting the student has the right to appoint a representative to accompany them.

If your appeal relates to a grade you have received during the year please contact your programme leader and raise your concerns in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied with the response please email [appeals@southessex.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@southessex.ac.uk) and provide a summary your grounds for appeal.

If your appeal relates to the decision of an Examination/Awards Board please email [appeals@southessex.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@southessex.ac.uk) and provide a summary of your grounds for appeal. You will be provided with the opportunity to attend an appeals surgery to discuss the formal appeals process and the process for appeal. If you are unable to attend a surgery you will be provided with this advice by email/telephone.

The outcome of the informal stage should be one of the following outcomes.

1. The student is content not to continue with their appeal.
2. Proceed to formal stage

#### **3.1.2 Formal Stage**

South Essex College works in partnership with the University of Essex, University of East Anglia, The Open University and the University of Arts London and also delivers Pearson HN awards. Following the informal stage you will be informed of your right to access the partner universities respective academic appeals procedures. These procedures are provided on the College Website Higher Education page which is also linked to students Canvas pages.

The table below summarises the appeals procedure for each of the College's validating universities and awarding bodies.

Nature of appeal	Form to be completed	Managed by	Reason for appeal
<p>Informal stage prior to publication of results – Contact programme leader or manager responsible for provision.</p> <p><i>Note: for University of Essex Marking Policy has provision for requesting a remark subject to certain conditions (section 3)</i></p>	-	Programme Leader	Dissatisfaction with the result for an individual piece of assessed work.
<p>Informal stage following publication of results. Contact <a href="mailto:appeals@southessex.ac.uk">appeals@southessex.ac.uk</a></p>	-	Programme Leader	
<b>Students studying Higher National Programmes</b>			
Formal Stage	College appeals form published on website	Head of HE Strategic Quality and Outcomes (Interim)	Procedural irregularity or extenuating circumstances which could not be made known.
Appeal	Evidence College's appeals procedure has been utilised	Pearson Vocational Quality Standards team. <a href="mailto:qualitystandards@pearson.com">qualitystandards@pearson.com</a>	<p>Dissatisfaction with the outcome of College's appeal procedure.</p> <p>Appeal will consider whether the College:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>used procedures that were consistent with Pearson requirements</li> <li>applied the procedures properly and fairly in arriving at judgements</li> </ul>
Appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)	Letter to the OIA	OIA	Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the College Appeals Procedure
<b>Students studying on University of Essex Programmes</b>			
Appeal to the Appeals Officer	See Appeals Procedure for Students Studying	South Essex College	Procedural irregularity/ extenuating circs which could not have been made know following Exam board

Consultation on Progress Decisions	University of Essex Awards at South Essex College - Use the Appeals Form	Dean or Deputy Dean of Partnerships	decisions i.e. requirement to withdraw permanently, repeat the year, repeat individual modules, resit exams).
Full Appeals	See appeals procedure for students studying University of Essex awards at South Essex College published on the website – use appeal form	Partnership Appeals Officer	Procedural irregularity/ extenuating circs which could not have been made know
Appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)	Letter to the OIA	OIA	Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the University of Essex Academic Appeals Procedure

### University of the Arts London

Stage 1 Request for Review of an Exam Board Decision	Stage 1 request for review form	University Appeals Unit	Procedural irregularity/ extenuating circs which could not have been made know
Stage 2 Appeal against Exam Board Chair's Decision	Appeal form	University Appeals Unit	Procedural irregularity/ extenuating circs which could not have been made know
Appeal to Secretary/Registrar	Letter to University Secretary/Registrar	University Secretary/Registrar	Procedural irregularity/ extenuating circs which could not have been made know
Appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator	Letter to the OIA	OIA	Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the University of Arts London Academic Appeals Procedure

<b>University of East Anglia</b>			
Stage 1 Request for Review of an Exam Board Decision	Stage 1 form	Appeal/ Complaint Reviewer	Procedural irregularity/ extenuating circs which could not have been made know
Stage 2 Appeal against Exam Board Chair's Decision	Stage 2 Form	Appeal/ Complaint Reviewer	Procedural irregularity
Appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator	Letter to the OIA	OIA	Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the University of East Anglia Academic Appeals & Complaints Procedure

<b>Open University</b>			
Stage 1 Request for Review of an Exam Board Decision	Stage 1 form	Appeal/ Complaint Reviewer	Procedural irregularity/ extenuating circs which could not have been made know
Stage 2 Appeal against Exam Board Chair's Decision	Stage 2 Form	Appeal/ Complaint Reviewer	Procedural irregularity
Appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator	Letter to the OIA	OIA	Dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Open University Academic Appeals & Complaints Procedure

## **4. Academic appeals procedure – further information and deadlines**

4.1 There are deadlines for appeal – please see the HE Assessment Year Planner for deadlines.

At the formal stage decisions are made by the relevant validating university/awarding body and the appellant will be notified by the awarding body.

At each stage of an appeal you will be advised of the next stage of appeal or review. Once you have exhausted the appeals procedure of the College/Validating University a Completion of Procedures letter should be provided to you within 21 working days and you will be advised of how you can appeal to the OIA, the independent ombudsman service, following the academic appeal review stage. Guidance will be provided on rejection of appeals processes.

Academic Appeals will consider at each stage whether:

- the original decision was procedurally correct;
- the original decision was taken on the basis of the correct information;
- there is new, additional information to be considered;
- there is valid reasons for this information not being presented for consideration previously;
- the appellant has been treated fairly.

## **5. Annual review and publication of academic appeals**

5.1 The academic appeal procedure is approved and reviewed annually by the HE Committee. As part of this review a report on appeals is considered by the HE Committee. The aim being to ensure the academic appeal procedure continues to meet developments in the HE environment and positively contributes to and complements other quality assurance systems informing, where relevant, any improvements required to enhance the student experience.

5.2 The HE Student Union President is invited to attend the annual review and contribute to any decision making in relation to changes to the procedure.

5.3 Anonymised appeals summary reports will be considered at HE Committee, made available to Governors and to validating university committees as required.