



Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy

INTRODUCTION

1. This Policy is for the query and appeal against the decision of an Assessment Board for programmes delivered in collaboration with Southampton Solent University (the University)
2. The New College of the Humanities (the College) is committed to having in place fair, effective and timely procedures for handling student queries and academic appeals. This policy outlines a two-stage process. The first is facilitated by the College; the second stage is an academic appeal to the University should the query not be resolved to the satisfaction of the student.
3. The policy and procedure apply to all current students and may be accessed without concern that they may be treated less favourably as a result of a query or appeal.
4. Where a student raises new Extenuating Circumstances these will be treated in line with the College's Extenuating Circumstances Policy.
5. The procedure shall enable the process to be conducted in a timely, fair and reasonable manner, and have due regard to any applicable law.
6. The College will ensure that appropriate action is taken following a query/appeal to communicate decisions to all parties and ensure that these are acted upon in a fair and timely manner.
7. The College will ensure that appropriate guidance and support is available for persons making a query or an academic appeal.
8. The College will have effective arrangements, through its Academic Board, to monitor, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of its policy and procedure and to reflect on the outcomes for enhancement purposes. Any changes made to the policy and procedures must be approved by the University.
9. The College shall ensure that suitable briefing and support is provided for all staff and students involved in handling or supporting queries and appeals.

OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

10. The policy does not cover the following matters, for which separate procedures exist:
 - 10.1. The procedure for querying the marking and or grade of the NCH Diploma should be made by referring to the NCH Diploma Regulations;
 - 10.2. Disciplinary matters (NCH Student Discipline Policy);
 - 10.3. Complaints relating to the NCH Student Union (further information can be sought from the President of the NCH Student Union);
 - 10.4. Complaints of personal misconduct against a member of staff (refer to the NCH Student Complaints Policy);
 - 10.5. Complaints of specific concern or expression of dissatisfaction about the programmes, facilities or services provided by the College, or about actions or lack of actions by the College and its staff (see the NCH Student Complaints Policy).
11. Where a query or appeal at either stage of the process is deemed to fall under the separate procedures listed above, the College will inform the student that the matters raised have been referred to be dealt with under the appropriate procedure.
12. A query or appeal can only be lodged by the student and cannot be made by a representative of the student, other than in circumstances where, at the time allowed for the appeal to be lodged, the student is suffering from such physical or mental incapacity as to prevent the student acting for herself or himself.

GROUNDINGS FOR QUERY AND APPEAL

13. The College defines academic judgment as “a decision about scholarship that only a suitably experienced academic can make”. There is no right of query or appeal by students against the academic judgments of academic staff or of recognised committees of the College’s or University’s Academic Board, including programme committees and Course Assessment or Progression and Award Boards, i.e. a student cannot query or appeal a mark or grade given for an assessment except where there has been an irregularity in the assessment process.
14. A student may query/appeal the decision of a Board where:
 - 14.1. New, relevant, written extenuating circumstances are presented (see the Extenuating Circumstances Policy), supported by appropriate evidence, that for good reason were not originally made available to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, and therefore were not considered at the time of the decision of the Board;
 - 14.2. Processes were not conducted in accordance with current approved policies and procedures or other irregularity concerned with the assessment process;
 - 14.3. There has been a material and significant error in the recording and/or processing of assessments/results;

14.4. There has been a procedural error in the calculation of the award/progression decision;

14.5. Academic penalties were not applied in accordance with current approved policies and procedures.

STAGE 1 – MAKING A QUERY TO THE COLLEGE

15. A student wishing to query the decision of a Board must make a query in writing to the College Registrar within ten working days of the date of the results of publication.
16. The Registrar will review and then liaise with the Master to make a decision.
17. Where the decision is to recommend a change to the assessment board outcome, the query will be referred to the Chair of the University Assessment Board for approval.
18. Once a decision has been made, the Registrar will provide a written response within ten working days of receipt of the query.

STAGE 2 – ACADEMIC APPEAL TO THE UNIVERSITY

19. Where the College is unable to resolve the matter of query to the satisfaction of the student, an academic appeal may be made to the University through the office of the Head of Student Achievement, Academic Services.

The address is:

Office Manager, Academic Service, Room A101, Southampton Solent
University, East Park Terrace, Southampton, SO14 0YN

20. An appeal to the Head of Student Achievement must be made in writing within ten working days of receipt of the College outcome.
21. The Head of Student Achievement (or nominee) shall assess whether there are valid grounds for appeal.
22. Where the Head of Student Achievement (or nominee), on the basis of evidence, upholds the appeal, the College will be required to take Chair's action to amend the decision of the Board.
23. Where elements of the appeal relate to non-procedural matters, the Head of Student Achievement (or nominee) will consult with the College.
24. Where the Head of Student Achievement (or nominee), having reviewed the appeal, considers that there is ambiguity in the procedures or evidence an appeal panel will be convened, to which the appellant will be invited.
25. Where there are no grounds for appeal, the student will be informed and notified that this marks the end of the University's internal procedures.

THE APPEAL PANEL

26. The composition of each panel¹ shall be:
 - 26.1. Chair to be a Director of School or Director of Learning and Teaching Institute;
 - 26.2. One academic staff member, independent of the faculty to which the appeal relates;
 - 26.3. One member drawn from Academic Board or the Learning, Teaching and Student Achievement Committee (LTSAC); and
 - 26.4. The President of Solent Students' Union or a sabbatical or an elected officer of the Students' Union, nominated by the President.
27. A quorum for a panel shall be three members, one of whom must be the Chair.
28. A member of staff from Academic Services will serve as the Secretary of the Panel, and advise the Panel on procedural issues and record the decisions of the panel.

DECISION OF AN APPEAL PANEL

29. The panel shall make recommendations by majority vote. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a casting vote.
30. The Course Assessment Board or Progression and Award Board Chair is required to accept the decision of the appeal panel.
31. Where the appeal is rejected or not resolved to the student's satisfaction at the formal appeal stage, they will be informed in writing that this will mark the end of the University's appeals process.

EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

32. The appropriate External Examiner will be informed of any changes to Board decisions made as a result of a College query or academic appeal that result in a change to a progression or award decision.

END OF THE INTERNAL PROCEDURE RELATING TO AN ACADEMIC APPEAL

33. The University will provide the student with a 'Completion of Procedures Letter'. The letter will draw the student's attention to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education Student Complaints Scheme, to whom any final appeal can be made.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

SOUTHAMPTON SOLENT

¹ The Appeals Panel is made up of University staff. NCH staff are not present at the appeal.

34. Academic Services will maintain a record of appeal outcomes and ensure that appropriate action has been taken by the College in response to specific appeals.
35. Data on queries and appeals will be provided to the College for the purposes of annual Programme Review.
36. An annual report on queries and appeals will be provided to the University's Academic Board.

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37. The Registrar will maintain a record of appeal outcomes and ensure that appropriate action has been taken.
38. Any appropriate actions or outcomes from the appeals process should be recorded in the Annual Monitoring Review Reports.
39. An annual report on queries and appeals will be provided to the College's Academic Board.

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