

Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document has force and effect under the auspices of 3.10 of the College's [Regulations for Taught Programmes](#).
 - 1.2 Where there are valid grounds to do so, students enrolled on taught programmes are entitled to challenge the outcome of any academic assessment confirmed by a Board of Examiners or decision to terminate their registration on academic grounds. Students enrolled on postgraduate research programmes may also use these procedures to appeal the outcome from a Transfer of Registration panel, the extension of registration process, Special Academic Review and/or Research Degree Examination. This document sets out the mechanisms by which students can exercise this right.
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2 Principles

- 2.1 In its operation, the Academic Appeals Procedure will adhere to the principles of accessibility, clarity, fairness, independence, proportionality, confidentiality, timeliness and is intended to promote a positive student experience.
- 2.2 No student will suffer disadvantage or recrimination as a consequence of exercising their rights under this Procedure.
- 2.3 All reasonably practicable efforts will be made to ensure that no student is disadvantaged within the Procedure due to a protected characteristic.
- 2.4 Academic appeals will be processed with due care and attention. An appeal itself and other relevant information concerning an appellant student will be processed only to the extent required to operate the Procedure, safeguard academic standards at the College and enhance the student experience.
- 2.5 In its operation, and without prejudice to paragraph 2.1, the Academic Appeals Procedure will safeguard academic standards at the College.
- 2.6 The Quality and Standards Committee shall annually review the efficacy of the Academic Policy and Procedure as well as any material impact it may have on the academic standards at the College.
- 2.7 Where an academic appeal received is reasonably deemed to be frivolous or vexatious (with due regard being given to relevant guidance from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education), consideration of that academic appeal will be terminated.

3 Scope

- 3.1 The Procedure applies to decisions made by College Boards. The decisions which can be challenged through this Procedure are ratified decisions of College Boards.
- 3.2 If a student is dissatisfied with an aspect of their experience at the College or is unhappy with the provision of a service, they can raise a [Student Complaint](#). Where it is considered that an academic appeal raises issues that ought to be dealt with as a Student Complaint, an appellant will be consulted upon how the two matters will be resolved.
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4 When to make an academic appeal

- 4.1 Academic appeals against the decisions of a College Board must be submitted to the College within 21 days of the publication of the Transcript of Results on My Goldsmiths.
- 4.2 Academic appeals submitted to the College 21 days or more after the publication of the Transcript of Results will be deemed out of time. However, the College may exercise its discretion to consider academic appeals received out of time where an appellant provides, within the academic appeal, adequate reasons for the delayed submission along with supporting evidence.
- 4.3 Where an academic appeal is not considered because it is deemed to be out of time, a Completion of Procedures outcome will be issued to the appellant.
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5 Timescales for the resolution of academic appeals

- 5.1 It is intended that an academic appeal will be fully resolved (the Procedure has been completed) within 90 calendar days of the date of submission to the College. Timescales for the various stages of the Procedure are set out in relevant sections below.
- 5.2 In some cases, more than 90 days may be required to resolve an academic appeal. A non-exhaustive list of reasons why additional time might be required is that:
- The academic appeal is submitted immediately prior to or during a period of College closure
 - The academic appeal raises issues of particular complexity and requires unusual investigation and/or consideration

- The appellant has submitted a Student Complaint which touches on the same matters and is to be resolved prior to the academic appeal
 - The College has received unexpected volumes of academic appeals in a short period of time.
- 5.3 Appellants will be notified in writing of any delay which is foreseen or occurs in the resolution of any stage of the Procedure.
- 5.4 Days where the College awaits evidence upon which an appellant wishes to rely will not count towards the 90 days.
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6 Grounds of academic appeal

- 6.1 An academic appeal must demonstrate one or more of the following grounds:
- a) 'extenuating circumstances' which the appellant was unable to bring to the attention of their examiners within 7 days of the assessment(s) affected;
 - b) an administrative error or procedural irregularity in the assessment process that has materially impacted an assessment decision;
 - c) that the process of assessment was affected by bias or prejudice.
- 6.2 An academic appeal cannot be founded on a challenge of properly exercised academic judgement. Mere disappointment about or disagreement with an academic decision is not a valid ground of academic appeal.
- 6.3 Guidance for prospective appellants on the above grounds and academic judgement shall be maintained on the College's website.
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7 Making an academic appeal

- 7.1 Before making an academic appeal, students are encouraged to contact their Personal Tutor for a conversation. This is not a formal stage of the process, but it is an important and highly recommended step for students to take. The role of the Personal Tutor in this context is to talk with the student about why the outcome of an assessment is not what the student was expecting or hoping for. This can provide valuable feedback to students which will help in preparations for future assessments. The Personal Tutor will also be able to give the student guidance on whether their appeal is likely to demonstrate one or more of the grounds listed in 6.1 above.

- 7.2 The College will at all times maintain an accessible Stage One academic appeal form on its website.
- 7.3 To submit an academic appeal, appellants must complete the aforementioned form in accordance with the instructions contained within, and the guidance provided on the College's website.
- 7.4 The appellant must set out each ground of academic appeal within the submitted academic appeal form and particularise the academic appeal.
- 7.5 A list of the evidence relied upon in support of an academic appeal must be listed within the academic appeal form and the evidence itself submitted concurrently. Where evidence is to be relied upon which is not available at the time of submitting the form, the reasons for its unavailability and the timescales for its provision are to be set out within the academic appeal form.
- 7.6 An academic appeal should normally be submitted and pursued by the appellant themselves. However, it is recognised that there may be circumstances where this is not possible or appropriate and that an appellant would wish for a representative to act on their behalf within the academic appeal. Those seeking to have a representative act on their behalf must notify the Student Casework Team, provide details of their representative and give permission for the College to share information with the representative for the purposes of resolving the academic appeal. Once a representative has been authorised to act, in order to avoid any conflict or confusion in the pursuit of the academic appeal, the College will normally only correspond in respect of the academic appeal with the appellant's representative.
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8 Initial evaluation

- 8.1 Any academic appeal submitted will be evaluated by a member of the Student Casework Team to ensure that the academic appeal is valid -- namely, that it is made within time, that one or more of the grounds of academic appeal are properly pleaded, that the appeal does not (solely) challenge the proper exercise of academic judgement, and that the academic appeal is neither frivolous or vexatious.
- 8.2 If the Student Casework Team are satisfied that an academic appeal appears valid, it will progress to Stage One.
- 8.3 Where the Student Casework Team are not satisfied that an academic appeal, or any part of it, is valid, the appellant will be informed of this and the reasons for such decision in writing within 14 days of the submission of the academic appeals form. At the same time, they will be notified that they can request a review of this decision at Stage Two of the Procedure.

9 Stage One

- 9.1 The academic appeal will be presented to the Registry Operations team for consideration and determination. Consideration and determination will be based on the information and evidence contained within the academic appeals form, although Registry Operations may request that further or alternative evidence be provided by the appellant. Registry Operations will seek ratification from the relevant Board of Examiners, as required.
- 9.2 The Stage One outcome will normally be sent to the appellant within 35 days of acceptance of the academic appeals form (not including any days where evidence to be relied upon by the appellant is outstanding). The outcome will be one of the following:
- a) Upheld
 - b) Partially upheld
 - c) Dismissed
- 9.3 Where an academic appeal is determined to be “upheld” or “partially upheld”, the outcome will include detail of what is to be done to put things right and when that will happen.
- 9.4 Appellants may be dissatisfied with an aspect of the Stage One outcome as described in 10.1 below. If so, they can request a Stage Two review. Details of how they can do this will be set out within the Stage One outcome.
- 9.5 The College will at all times maintain an accessible Stage 1 academic appeal form on its website. To submit a request for review of the Stage 1 outcome, appellants must complete the aforementioned form in accordance with the instructions contained within and the guidance provided on the College’s website.

10 Stage Two

- 10.1 A request for a Stage Two review must make out one or more of the following grounds:
- a) There were procedural irregularities in the conduct in Stage One of the academic appeal;
 - b) Fresh evidence can be presented which could not reasonably have been made available with submission of the Stage One form;
 - c) The Stage One outcome of the academic appeal was not reasonable in all the circumstances.

- 10.2 The appellant must set out each ground of review within the submitted Stage Two academic appeal form and particularise the request for review.
- 10.3 A list of the evidence relied upon in support of a request for review must be listed within the Stage Two academic appeal form and the evidence itself submitted concurrently. Where evidence is to be relied upon, which is not available at the time of submitting the form, the reasons for its unavailability and the timescales for its provision are to be set out within the Stage Two academic appeal form.
- 10.4 A Stage Two academic appeal form must be submitted to the College within 21 days of date of the Stage One outcome.
- 10.5 Stage Two academic appeal forms submitted to the College 21 days or more after the date of the Stage One outcome will be deemed out of time. However, the College may exercise its discretion to consider a request for review received out of time where an appellant provides, within the Stage Two academic appeal form, adequate reasons for the delayed submission along with supporting evidence.
- 10.6 Any Stage Two request for review submitted will be evaluated by a member of the Student Casework Team to ensure that it is valid -- namely, that it is made within time and that one or more of the grounds of review are properly pleaded. Where the Student Casework Team are not satisfied that a Stage Two request for review, or any part of it, is valid, the appellant will be informed of this and the reasons for such decision in writing within 14 days of the submission of the Stage Two appeal form. If the Stage Two request for review is entirely invalid, a Completion of Procedures outcome will be automatically issued.
- 10.7 Where the grounds of a Stage Two request for review is based on procedural irregularity in the conduct of the Stage One appeal, the Stage Two will be presented to senior staff in Registry Operations, who previously did not consider the Stage One, for consideration and determination. Consideration and determination will be based on the information and evidence contained within the Stage Two form and relevant materials generated at Stage One, although Registry Operations may request that further or alternative evidence be provided by the appellant. Registry Operations will seek ratification from the relevant Board of Examiners, as required.
- 10.8 The Stage Two review outcome will normally be sent to the appellant within 90 days of acceptance of their Stage One academic appeal form (not including any days where evidence to be relied upon by the appellant is outstanding). The outcome will be one of the following:
 - a) Upheld
 - b) Partially upheld

c) Dismissed.

10.9 Where a Stage Two review is determined to be “upheld” or “partially upheld”, the outcome will include detail of what is to be done to put things right and when that will happen. Appellants will be notified of their right to be sent a Completion of Procedures outcome.

11 Completion of Procedures

11.1 A Completion of Procedures outcome informs an appellant that the College’s academic appeals procedure has been exhausted and enables them to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of an academic appeal.

11.2 A Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued in the following circumstances:

- a) Where the submission of any academic appeal form is deemed to be out of time
 - b) Where a Stage 2 review has been determined to be invalid
 - c) Where a Stage 2 review has been determined to be “not justified”
 - d) Upon the request of an appellant following the outcome of a Stage 2 review.
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12 Independent adjudication

12.1 Appellants may be able to complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (the “OIA”) if they are dissatisfied within the outcome of an academic appeal. Information about the OIA and whether appellants can complain is here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/>.

12.2 A complaint to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the date of a complaint’s outcome.

13 Advice and support

13.1 Advice and support around making an academic appeal will be provided by the Student Casework Team.

13.2 Goldsmiths Students’ Union provides a confidential, non-judgemental and free advice service to its members: <https://www.goldsmithssu.org/advice/>.

Document history

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