



Further Education Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure – 2022-25

Lead Officer (Post):	Depute Principal
Responsible Office/ Department:	Quality
Responsible Committee:	Quality Assurance Committee
Review Officer (Post):	Quality Officer
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Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request. Please contact the Governance and Policy Officer on 01463 279000.

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Policy Summary

Overview	<p>Why is the policy required?</p> <p>This policy, together with the associated Academic Appeals Procedure, represents an appeals framework that ensures students can request a review of an assessment decision made by UHI Argyll where there are grounds to do so.</p>
Purpose	<p>What will the policy achieve?</p> <p>The purpose of the policy is to set out the circumstances in which a student may wish to appeal against a decision provided during an assessment process or against a decision about progress between levels (e.g. a decision by a progression board).</p>
Scope	<p>Who does the policy apply to?</p> <p>This policy applies to all further education courses (normally up to and including SCQF Level 6)</p>
Consultation	<p>Who has been consulted on the policy, and who will be notified?</p> <p>The policy was developed by a group of practitioners made up from across the UHI partnership. All relevant staff and students will be notified.</p>
Implementation and Monitoring	<p>Who will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy, and what resources/ costs will be incurred?</p> <p>Colleges will be responsible for local implementation of the policy. The policy is part of the business-as-usual function of the college.</p>
Risk Implications	<p>What are the risk implications of this policy?</p> <p>Failure to adopt a strong policy and follow the procedures would undermine the student experience and the academic reputation of the college.</p>
Link with Strategy	<p>How is this policy linked to University strategy?</p> <p>n/a</p>
Impact Assessment	<p>Equality Impact Assessment: 18/04/2022– Assessed as having no negative impact, some positive impact and some neutral impact.</p>
	<p>Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a</p>

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This policy and procedure, represents an appeals framework that ensures students can request a review of an assessment decision made by UHI Argyll, where there are grounds to do so.
- 1.2 The policy and procedure aims to ensure appropriate, fair and consistent treatment of all parties involved in any further education academic appeal across the partnership.
- 1.3 This policy and procedure applies to students enrolled on courses normally up to and including SCQF Level 6. There are a small number of Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) courses at SCQF Level 7 that are considered as Further Education courses for the purposes of the University of the Highlands and Islands partnership.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Academic appeal:** a procedure through which students may in certain circumstances ask for a review of a decision relating to their academic progress or award.
- 2.2 **Progression board:** a panel of staff from the College who consider and determine student awards and progression to a more advanced stage.
- 2.3 **Awarding body:** an organisation that designs, develops, delivers and awards the recognition of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) of an individual following an assessment and quality assurance process.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of the policy is to set out the circumstances in which a student may wish to appeal against a decision provided during an assessment process or against a decision about progress between levels (e.g. a decision by a progression board).
- 3.2 The procedure allows the student to raise an appeal at an informal level and, if the outcome of this is not satisfactory, to use the formal procedure.

The internal formal Further Education Academic Appeal Procedure should be followed before escalation to external awarding body appeals processes. Students will be signposted to relevant external awarding body appeal processes at the start of their programme of study.
- 3.3 External appeals procedures vary, depending on the type of qualification for which the appeal is being made and the awarding body. The overriding principle is that all appeals will be treated fairly and objectively.

- 3.4 Without prejudice to the outcome of an appeal, a student may continue to attend classes and make use of the facilities of the college whilst their appeal is being heard.
- 3.5 Students who have completed their programme, who have grounds to appeal an award decision or programme progression board, will be unable to receive their award until the matter has been fully resolved.
- 3.6 The timescales set out in the Further Education Academic Appeal Procedure must be followed. Students and staff should note where there may be variations between awarding bodies.

4. Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to students enrolled on courses normally up to and including SCQF Level 6 (see Section 4.2 for variations to this criteria).
- 4.2 There are a small number of Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) courses at SCQF Level 7 that are considered as Further Education courses for the purposes of the UHI Partnership. This policy applies to these students.
- 4.3 **Grounds for Appeal**

Appeals against an assessment decision will normally only be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

 - 4.3.1 That a student's performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors. The student must have been unable to, or have a valid reason not to, divulge the information to their lecturer prior to assessment. In the case of a progression board, the information must have been unavailable at the time the determination was made. In these cases, the appeal must be accompanied by documentary evidence to the relevant member of staff (see Further Education Academic Appeal Procedure).
 - 4.3.2 Evidence of college academic assessment administrative error or that an assessment was not conducted in accordance with the college's specific assessment policies/procedure.
 - 4.3.3 That evidence is produced that some other material irregularity has occurred.

5. Exceptions

- 5.1 This policy does not apply to Higher Education students, e.g. normally those students studying courses at SCQF Level 7 and above (see Section 4.2 for variations to this). These students should refer to the UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations.
- 5.2 Appeals that question the academic judgement of a member of staff or an academic assessment body will not be considered.

- 5.3 Students undertaking non-regulated qualifications (NQs), have no further right of appeal against internal assessment decisions. The final decision rests with the college. External awarding bodies will not accept internal assessment appeals.
- 5.4 Appeals will not normally be permitted from third parties on behalf of a student.
- 5.5 SQA Post-results Services for National Qualifications and other external assessments. Please refer to relevant awarding body guidance for further details.
- 5.6 Exceptional Circumstances Considerations: please refer to relevant awarding body guidance for further details.

6. Academic Appeal Stages

- 6.1 Students receive information about their ability to invoke the appeals process as part of their induction process. As it is likely an informal discussion with the relevant member of staff will represent the informal stage of the process – it is the responsibility of the staff member to highlight to the student at this time the stages of the appeals process.

Stage 1: Informal Procedure

- 6.2.1 A student who is dissatisfied with the conduct of an assessment/s should in the first instance discuss the matter with the relevant Lecturer or Student Advisor. This should be done within ten working days of receipt of the outcome of the assessment.
- 6.2.2 This initial discussion will not alter the student's right to follow the formal procedure (detailed below) but will represent an early opportunity for ambiguities to be resolved and circumstances taken into account prior to decisions being taken on the assessment.
- 6.2.3 The relevant Lecturer or Student Advisor will ensure that an informal record of the discussion is captured.
- 6.2.4 It is expected that this stage of the process will not take the maximum timeframes specified in the flowchart in Appendix 1.

Stage 2: Formal Procedure

- 6.3.1 If the matter is not resolved through the informal procedure, a student who wishes to appeal should do so in writing using the appropriate form setting out the reasons for the appeal within twenty-five working days of receipt of the outcome of the assessment.
- 6.3.2 Documentary evidence should support the grounds on which the appeal is being made. This may include but is not limited to letters from medical professionals,

communications with college staff, details of the process which is thought to have been followed incorrectly. Appeals must be sent to the Head of Curriculum. The Head of Curriculum will consider the appeal and respond with the outcome to the student (in writing) within ten working days of the appeal being received.

Stage 3: Appeals Panel

- 6.4.1 If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, they may appeal directly to the Depute Principal. At this stage appeals may only be made on the grounds of administrative irregularity.
- 6.4.2 The Depute Principal will convene a panel of three members to consider the appeal. The panel members will not have been involved in previous stages of the appeal. The panel shall consider the written evidence, interview appropriate people and recommend either that the appeal be rejected or that the decision at Stage 2 be annulled.
- 6.4.3 The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final.
- 6.4.4 The chair of the Academic Appeals Panel will communicate the appeal outcome to the student (in writing) within thirty working days of the appeal being received.
- 6.4.5 This stage of the process represents the final stage of the college's own processes.

7. External Right of Appeal

- 7.1 The awarding bodies have their own appeal procedures. They are usually used once the college appeals procedure has been exhausted. It should be noted that there is usually a fee payable to the awarding body for the use of this service.
- 7.2 Students and staff should be aware that some Awarding Bodies specify clear timeframes which include the date of the assessment as part of the timing for the receipt of an appeal. Please refer to Appendix 2 for relevant information.
- 7.3 Students should note that some awarding bodies will not consider appeals of internal assessments. Guidance can be provided to students about options for appeal available to them.
- 7.4 Students who are undertaking regulated qualifications have an additional stage of appeal open to them. These are:
 - a) An appeal to SQA (or other awarding body) once Stages 1 – 3 above have been exhausted.
 - b) An appeal to SQA Accreditation or Ofqual if they feel an appeal has not been dealt with appropriately. Students should be aware that an appeal of this

nature will not overturn academic decisions; it may investigate the effectiveness of the process concerned.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.1 Student – a student is responsible for adhering to the relevant conditions of assessment including submission deadline and fulfilling the parameters of the assessment brief. A student is responsible for ensuring they make full use of the support processes available to them at the time of assessment if there is a need to do so. When submitting an appeal ensuring they meet the required deadline
- 8.2 Assessor – where a student raises an informal query regarding their assessment the assessor is obliged to refer the assessment decision to the internal verifier for moderation. The assessor is responsible for informing the Curriculum Lead and Quality Officer of all informal assessment appeals they receive.
- 8.3 Internal Verifier – where a student raises an informal query through their assessor or Student Advisor, the internal verifier will review the information objectively and communicate the outcome to the assessor, Curriculum Lead and Quality Officer.
- 8.4 The Curriculum Lead is responsible for logging all informal academic assessment appeal requests. Where a student has previously discussed their informal appeal with their assessor, or comes direct to the Student Advisor, this should be passed to the Curriculum Lead who is responsible for providing advice and guidance to the student on their assessment query. Where the Curriculum Lead feels the student has a case to be answered that can be informally resolved, the Curriculum Lead will refer the assessment decision to the assessor and the relevant internal verifier for moderation.
- 8.5 The Head of Curriculum is responsible for investigating a formal assessment appeal at Stage 2 and ensuring that the student concerned, and all relevant staff have been notified of the outcome of the appeal.
- 8.6 The centre will supply evidence of appeals heard to the relevant awarding body if this represents part of their quality assurance criteria and if requested to do so.
- 8.7 UHI Argyll Board of Management are responsible for approving the policy and ensuring that it is followed. Board of Management are also responsible for ensuring the strategic effectiveness of the policy.
- 8.8 Principals / Senior Management Teams are responsible for operational compliance with the policy set by the Board of Management and making recommendations to the Board about updates to the policy. Principals / Senior Management Teams are also responsible for ensuring the operational effectiveness of the policy and making provision for training for relevant staff.

- 8.9 The Further Education Academic Appeals Policy Ownership Group is responsible for overseeing periodic updates to the policy and procedure.
- 8.10 Line Managers are responsible for ensuring staff participate in training and follow the policy in their day-to-day role.
- 8.11 All relevant staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with the policy and procedure.

9. Notification

- 9.1 All staff members will be notified of changes to the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure through the normal channels.
- 9.2 Teaching staff and staff advising students should have a detailed knowledge of the Further Education Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- 9.3 Any changes to awarding body regulations will be reflected in the annual review process of this policy and associated procedure.
- 9.4 Students will be made aware of the policy within four weeks of commencing their course.
- 9.5 The policy will be publicly available on the college's website.

10. Legislative Framework

- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulations](#)

11. Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

- UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Student Conduct Policy and Student Disciplinary Procedure
- Support to Study Procedure
- Learner Support Policy and Procedure
- Progression Board Guidance

12. Record Retention

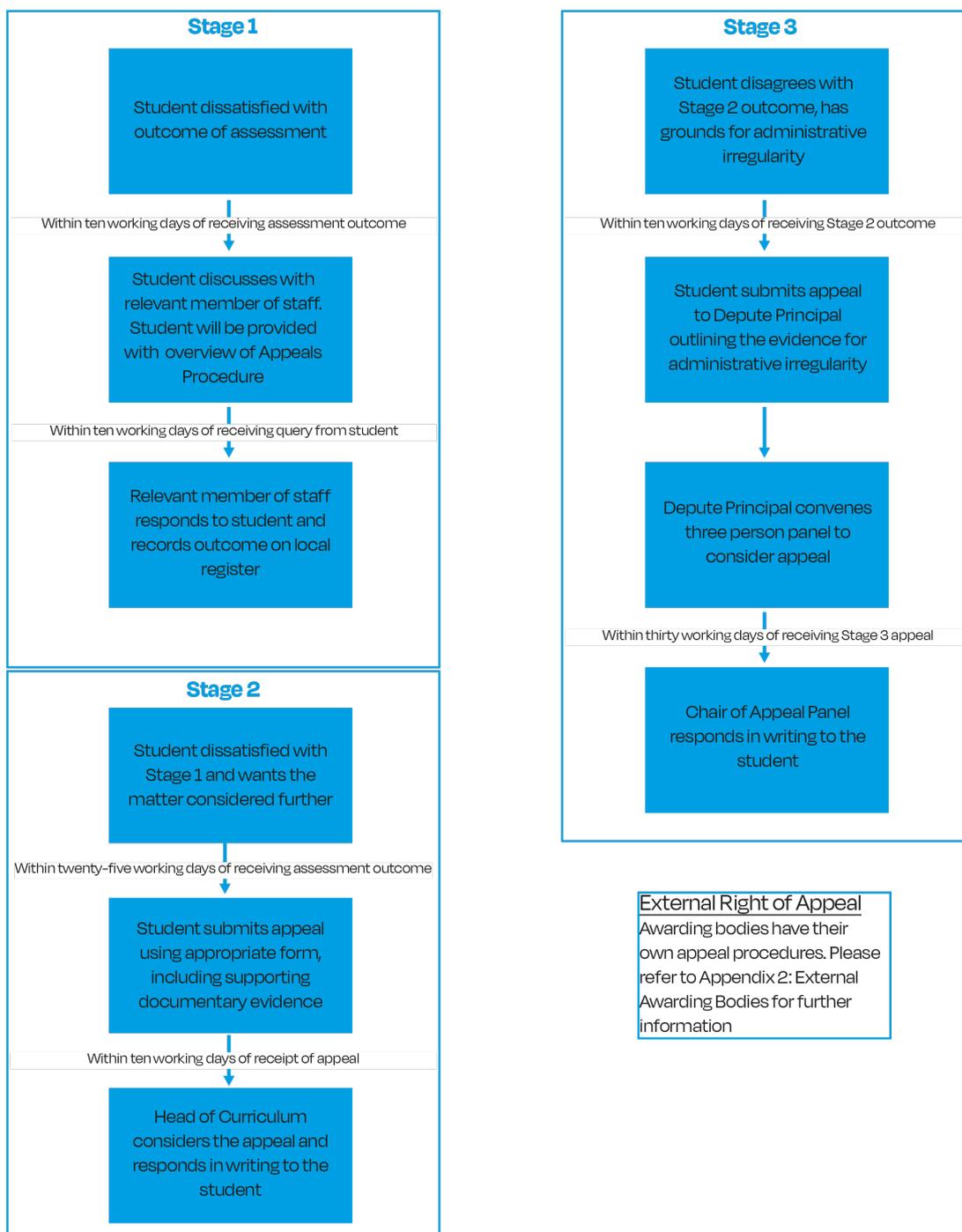
- 5.1 Please refer to the UHI Argyll FE Academic Records Management and Retention - policy and procedures for further information.

13. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Endorsed by	Amendment(s)	Author
0	January 2018	Partnership Council	New single policy.	FE Academic Appeals Policy Ownership Group
1	April 2022	n/a	Formatting changes and grammar corrections; changes related to UHI rebrand; 5.3: replaced 'academic partner' with 'college' for consistency; 7.3: replaced 'annual' with 'periodic' to reflect practice; 9: replaced 'Promoting a Positive Learning Environment Policy' with 'Student Conduct Policy and Student Disciplinary Procedure', replaced 'Fitness to Study Guidelines' with 'Support to Study Procedure'.	FE Academic Appeals Policy Ownership Group

14. Appendix 1 – FE Academic Appeals Procedure

UHI Further Education Academic Appeals Procedure: Appendix 1



15. Appendix 2 – External Awarding Bodies Appeals

The table below contains the details of qualifications used by UHI Argyll and the links to the relevant external appeal process.

Awarding Body	Link
SQA	Centre guide to SQA appeals procedures - SQA
Lantra	https://www.lantra.co.uk/sites/default/files/2018-07/Appeals%20Policy%20July%202018.PDF
City and Guilds / ILM	Vocational Education and Apprenticeships City & Guilds (cityandguilds.com)
RYA	RYA courses and qualifications
REHIS	Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland - REHIS
SCQF	https://scqf.org.uk/media/xmqdiwea/qam-complete-final-2020-1.pdf
MCA	https://www.sqa-mcaexams.org.uk/MCA/Candidates/Examination-Appeals-Procedures
EAL	file (eal.org.uk)
NUCO	Nuco Training Health & Safety, First Aid & Instructor Training Courses