

## University of the Arts London

### Assessment Regulations

### University Appeals Procedures

## The review of and appeals against a decision of an examination board<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

1. The University has clear procedures for dealing with student appeals which form part of its quality assurance system and reflect current best practice. The procedures governing appeals against assessment outcomes are treated seriously without negatively affecting student rights or impartial judgement on academic progress.
2. Appeals may be submitted within the boundaries set by these regulations when a student believes he or she has a significant concern related to the assessment process.
3. **University Secretary and Registrar.** The Regulations and Procedures are approved by the Academic Board and managed by the Office of the University Secretary and Registrar. It is the University Secretary and Registrar who has the final responsibility for the procedures together with the authority to make adjudication upon any questions raised by a student, the Students' Union or member of staff in relation to any aspect of the procedure.
4. **Students' Union.** A student appellant may obtain representation from the Students' Union. The Students' Union can also advise on the operation of the procedures, or in relation to any aspect associated with an appeal.
5. **Disability.** Disabled students who require reasonable adjustments in order to make an appeal should contact the University Secretary and Registrar's Office directly. Reasonable adjustments will be arranged in consultation with the student and where necessary the Central Disability team, Mental Health Adviser or College Disability Officers. Students may be asked to provide a copy of their Needs Assessment Report in order to inform the process.

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<sup>1</sup> Appeals may only be made against decisions that have been confirmed by an Examination Board, a Reconvened Board, a Progression Sub-Board or a Unit Sub-Board. In the case of further education courses where the final award is conferred by an external awarding body, the procedures shall apply, but the final outcome of any appeal shall be referred to the relevant awarding body by way of a recommendation.

## **Grounds for requesting review of examination board decision**

6. Requests for review of an examination board decision may be made on the grounds that:
  - (i) there was a material administrative error or other material irregularity in the conduct of the assessment (including accommodated assessment/reasonable adjustment for disabled students) or the application of the University's academic regulations;
  - (ii) extenuating circumstances, which for valid reasons, had not been made known to the examination board which had they been referred might have led the examination board to reach a different decision;
  - (iii) any other matter which in all the circumstances ought properly to be considered by a University Appeals Body in the interests of fairness.

## **Issues excluded from the review**

7. Requests for review may not be based on the following:
  - (i) disagreement with the examiner on the grounds of academic judgement, specifically, disagreements on the merit of individual assessments in relation to marks, grades or other measures of performance;
  - (ii) requests from students enrolled at another institution on a programme or course leading to a University of the Arts London award, unless:
    - (a) specific provision has been made within a collaborative agreement that those students may appeal directly to the University;
    - (b) the student is also enrolled at University of the Arts London on the same programme of study. Such requests should be referred by the student to the institution concerned.
  - (iii) Alleged inadequacy of supervision for Research Degree Students will not normally constitute grounds for appeal unless the student provides a valid reason for not making the issue known prior to assessment.
8. In exceptional circumstances a student may submit both a complaint and a separate appeal and include common issues in each which link the two together. Under these circumstances the complaint should be investigated

and concluded within the timelines specified by the complaints procedures. The appeal will be processed and considered after the complaint has been investigated and concluded in order that any evidence uncovered through this more extended investigation can feed in to consideration of the appeal if appropriate.

## **The Procedure**

### **STAGE 1 APPEAL**

9. Stage 1 Appeals must be received within 15 working days of the publication of results.
10. Appeals should be submitted for consideration to the University Appeals Unit using the Stage 1 Appeal Form and a full explanation of the reason for appealing must be included.
11. Following scrutiny of the appeal and investigation as necessary, if the University Appeals Unit considers the appeal to be vexatious, frivolous or without substance or merit it shall have the authority to reject it summarily and inform the appellant of the decision in writing within 10 working days.
12. Following scrutiny of the appeal and investigation as necessary, if the University Appeals Unit decides that the appeal falls into any one or more of the above categories in section 7, then it shall write to the student informing the student of its decision within 10 working days of receipt.
13. The student may appeal against the University Appeals Units rejection by writing to the University Secretary and Registrar within 10 working days. The University Secretary and Registrar may decide to overturn the University Appeals Units decision, accept the appeal and refer it to the Exam Board for review. If the University Secretary and Registrar upholds the University Appeals Unit's rejection of a request a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued.
14. If the University Appeals Unit considers the appeal has sufficient and valid grounds, it shall forward the appeal to the Chair of the Examination Board, or for Research Degrees to the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee. The Chair shall conduct a review of the decision and decide, in the light of the review, either to confirm the original decision or to overturn it and put in place a new decision. The review should include consultation with the full board, including external examiners where appropriate. The Academic Registrar should be consulted on matters associated with the application of the University's academic regulations. The Chair should respond to the student within 10 working days of receipt.

15. If the University Appeals Unit considers that a clear administrative error has been made, the matter may be referred to the Academic Registrar who has the authority to approve a change of exam board decision on non-academic matters.

## **STAGE 2 APPEAL**

16. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 Appeal they may submit a Stage 2 Appeal to the University Appeals Unit within 10 working days of notification of the Stage 1 Review decision.
17. Stage 2 Appeals should be submitted to the University Appeals Unit using the Stage 2 Appeal Form and a full explanation of the reason for appealing against the Stage 1 decision must be included. The student should include appropriate evidence in support of the appeal and indicate the remedy that they assert is fair, reasonable and appropriate.
18. If the University Appeals Unit considers the Stage 2 Appeal to be vexatious, frivolous or without substance or merit it shall have the authority to reject it summarily and inform the appellant within 10 working days.
19. Otherwise the University Appeals Unit will request a response to the Stage 2 Appeal from the Chair of the Examination Board or the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee on Form B2. The University Appeals Unit will consider this response together with the statement from the student appellant.
20. If the University Appeals Unit considers, based on the response from the Chair, that there are no grounds for further appeal it shall reject the Stage 2 Appeal and inform the student within 10 working days.
21. If the University Appeals Unit decides to accept the Stage 2 Appeal a University Appeals Committee meeting will be convened as soon as possible.
22. **Early resolution of Stage 2 Appeals** In exceptional circumstances the College may be provided with the opportunity to put in place a new Exam Board decision without the requirement for a University Appeals Committee meeting. This will require the student's specific agreement. If the student does not agree with the proposed resolution a University Appeals Committee meeting will be held.
23. The student may appeal against the University Appeals Units rejection of its Stage 2 Appeal by writing to the University Secretary and Registrar within 10 working days of notification of the decision. The University Secretary and Registrar may decide to accept the Stage 2 Appeal and convene a University Appeals Committee meeting. If the University Secretary and Registrar

upholds the University Appeals Units rejection of a Stage 2 Appeal a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued.

## **The University Appeals Committee**

24. The membership of the University Appeals Committee shall be approved by the University Secretary and Registrar acting in his/her sole discretion. The University Secretary and Registrar has the sole discretion to exclude any member of the committee if he/she considers it fair and reasonable so to do in all the circumstances, including but not limited to any committee member who it may be perceived has too close a personal or professional relationship with the appellant or to a member of the examination board, or members from the same department, school or other area of the University as the student submitting the appeal.
25. The University Appeals Committee will consider representations of the student appellant and the Chair of the Examination Board or the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee in deciding whether to accept or reject an appeal. The decision of the University Appeals Committee will be communicated to the student and the Chair of the Examination Board or the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee within 10 working days of the meeting.
26. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the University Appeals Committee they may appeal in writing to the University Secretary and Registrar. This appeal must be submitted to the University Appeals Unit within 10 working days of notification of the University Appeals Committee decision. The decision of the University Secretary and Registrar' is final and will be issued in the form of a Completion of Procedures Letter.

## **Outcomes of the University Appeal Committee**

27. The University Appeals Committee may make a decision it considers fair, reasonable and appropriate in all the circumstances of the case as follows:
  - (i) That the Appeal is ACCEPTED
  - (ii) That the Appeal is DEFERRED pending receipt of further relevant documentation
  - (iii) That the Appeal is REFERRED to Academic Board and/or the University Secretary and Registrar
  - (iv) That the Appeal is REJECTED
28. If the University Appeals Committee decides to accept an appeal the Chair of the Examination Board or the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee will be asked to review its original decision in line with the decision and recommendation of the UAC. The Chair will be asked to carry out this review within a specified period of time which will normally be within seven working days of notification of the UAC decision. The Chair will write to the student

confirming the outcome of this review. If the student is unhappy with the outcome they may submit an appeal in writing to the University Secretary and Registrar within 10 working days. The decision of the University Secretary and Registrar is final and will be issued in the form of a Completion of Procedures Letter.

29. If the University Appeals Committee decides to reject an appeal the student may appeal against this decision to the University Secretary and Registrar within 10 working days.
30. The University Appeals Committee may also do any of the following:
  - (i) Annul the previous decision of the Examination Board if it is not possible to reconvene the Board. In this event the University Appeals Committee shall refer the matter to the Academic Board. Upon receiving a referral the Vice Chancellor shall convene an Academic Board Sub-group on Student Appeals. The Academic Board Sub-group on Student Appeals shall consider the representations of the Examination Board and the University Appeals Committee in reaching a final and binding decision on the appeal.
  - (ii) In exceptional circumstances where the Examination Board is in disagreement with the decision or recommendations of the University Appeals Committee, the Chair of the Committee will refer the appeal to the Academic Board. Upon receiving a referral the Vice Chancellor shall convene an Academic Board Subgroup on Student Appeals. The Academic Board Sub-group on Student Appeals shall consider the representations of the Examination Board and the University Appeals Committee in reaching a final and binding decision on the appeal.
  - (iii) Make whatever recommendations are deemed to be necessary to the assessment process to avoid a recurrence.
  - (iv) For Research Degrees, request the Research Degrees Sub-Committee to appoint a new examination panel and recommend a first examination
31. Upon receipt of a Completion of Procedures Letter the student may seek adjudication from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.