

## APPEALS PROCEDURE

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We regularly review and update our regulations and policies, including this procedure. Accordingly, the following changes have been made from the Appeals Procedure in place during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Clause(s)	Description
2.9	Amendment of timescale for Step 2 consideration and confirmation of outcome to 30 working days from date of receipt of appeal.
3.5 and 5.2	Information about when you can request a Completion of Procedures letter at Step 3, and clarification about when Completion of Procedures letters will be issued.

### Key facts

You should familiarise yourself with the entirety of this procedure, and we would particularly draw your attention to the following elements:

Clause(s)	Description
1.1	Before deciding whether to lodge a formal appeal, you should discuss your concerns with a relevant member of staff. This informal discussion often leads to a better understanding why a certain decision was reached and/or whether you have valid grounds upon which to make an appeal.
1.2	You are strongly advised to discuss concerns with a member of the Students' Union, for impartial advice and support.
2.2	Step 2 appeals must be submitted within twenty (20) working days of the Assessment Board results release or confirmation of the outcome of another University decision-making body.
2.3	Appeals may be made on the following grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) That there has been a material error or irregularity in the formal conduct of the process in reaching the decision; and/or</li> <li>b) That your performance was adversely affected by extenuating circumstances which you were unable, or for valid reasons, unwilling to divulge before the decision concerned was reached.</li> </ul>

Key facts continued

Clause(s)	Description
2.4	<p>An appeal against an Assessment Board outcome may not always be resolved before the start of the next study block or level of study. If you are appealing against a decision that prevents you from continuing your studies into the next study block or level, you may be permitted to provisionally continue with your studies while your appeal is under consideration on the clear understanding that this is without prejudice to the outcome of the appeal.</p> <p>If you wish to request to provisionally continue with your studies pending the outcome of your appeal, please include this information in your appeal form. The request will be considered by QAE in consultation with your course team and you will be informed about whether your request to provisionally progress is approved within ten (10) working days from receipt of your appeal.</p>
2.9	<p>You will normally be notified of the Step 2 outcome (with reasons for the decision) within thirty (30) working days of the applicable appeals deadline. However, this period may need to be extended depending on the nature and complexity of the review required.</p>
3.1	<p>If you are dissatisfied with the outcome at Step 2 you may request a review of the procedure undertaken at Step 2, on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a material error or irregularity in the conduct of Step 2 of the Appeals Procedure; and/or</li> <li>• you have material new evidence that has become available since the commencement of Step 2 that you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide by the original Step 2 appeals deadline</li> </ul>
3.12	<p>You will be notified of the Step 3 Review outcome with reasons for the decision within ten (10) working days of the meeting of the Appeals Review Board]</p>
5.1	<p>Falmouth University subscribes to an independent scheme for the review of student complaints provided by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). If, following receipt of your Completion of Procedures letter, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal, you may be able to apply to the OIA for a review of your case.</p>

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the [Appeals Policy](#).

This procedure applies to any student and any qualification of Falmouth University, whether offered solely by the University or in conjunction with any academic, professional or other institution in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, irrespective of the mode of study, excepting Research degree students. Research degree students are considered at Assessment Boards at the University of the Arts London, or Plymouth University according to registration. Consequently, students registered on these courses wishing to appeal should request further information by contacting the [Research & Development Support Officer](#).

The procedure applies equally to Foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Definitions:

- **You/Your** means a student or graduate (where applicable) of Falmouth University
- **We/Us/Our/The University** means Falmouth University

The Appeals Procedure is managed by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) team, which is responsible for the effective development, implementation and management of the University's policies, procedures and processes. QAE may be contacted at [QAE@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:QAE@falmouth.ac.uk).

Please note that you can get free, impartial and confidential advice on this procedure from the Students' Union: [advice@thesu.org.uk](mailto:advice@thesu.org.uk) | 01326 255 861 | drop in at the SU reception.

## **1 Step 1 – Early resolution**

- 1.1 Before deciding whether to lodge a formal appeal, you should discuss your concerns with a relevant member of staff. This informal discussion often leads to a better understanding why a certain decision was reached and/or whether you have valid grounds upon which to make an appeal.
- 1.2 You are strongly advised to discuss concerns with a member of the Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union, for impartial advice and support.

## **2 Step 2 – Formal appeal**

- 2.1 If you are unable to resolve your concerns through Step 1, you may make a formal appeal using the Appeals Form, which must be submitted to Quality Assurance & Enhancement (QAE) along with supporting evidence.
- 2.2 Step 2 appeals must be submitted within twenty (20) working days of the Assessment Board results release or confirmation of the outcome of another University decision-making body.

2.3 Appeals may be made on the following grounds:

- c) That there has been a material error or irregularity in the formal conduct of the process in reaching the decision; and/or
- d) That your performance was adversely affected by extenuating circumstances which you were unable, or for valid reasons, unwilling to divulge before the decision concerned was reached.

2.4 An appeal against an Assessment Board outcome may not always be resolved before the start of the next study block or level of study. If you are appealing against a decision that prevents you from continuing your studies into the next study block or level, you may be permitted to provisionally continue with your studies while your appeal is under consideration on the clear understanding that this is without prejudice to the outcome of the appeal.

If you wish to request to provisionally continue with your studies pending the outcome of your appeal, please include this information in your appeal form. The request will be considered by QAE in consultation with your course team and you will be informed about whether your request to provisionally progress is approved within ten (10) working days from receipt of your appeal.

2.5 Once received by QAE, you will normally be sent an email acknowledging receipt of your appeal within five (5) working days.

2.6 Your Step 2 appeal will be reviewed by a QAE Officer. The QAE Officer may determine in the first instance that your appeal does not warrant a full investigation, according to the following criteria:

- **Early resolution:** The QAE Officer has determined that your appeal is based on an administrative error (or similar) that can be rectified with immediate effect. In such cases, the appeal is considered as being referred back to Step 1 – Early resolution: the issue will be corrected, and your appeal will be closed.
- **Incorrect use of the Appeals Policy and Procedure:** The QAE Officer has determined that your request does not fall under the Appeals Policy and Procedure. You may be directed to the appropriate alternative policy/procedure through which to pursue your request.
- **Out of time:** The QAE Officer may determine that your appeal does not meet the timeframe requirements and you have not provided a valid reason for the delay. Your appeal will not be investigated further and will be closed. The original decision will stand, and you will be issued a Completion of Procedures letter (see section 4).

2.7 All eligible appeals will be investigated by a QAE Officer to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to prove your grounds for appeal. The outcome of your Step 2 appeal will be either:

- **Upheld:** Your appeal demonstrates valid grounds, and the original decision will be reviewed in light of your successful appeal; or
- **Not upheld:** Your appeal does not demonstrate valid grounds, and the original decision will stand.

2.8 The QAE Officer responsible for your appeal acts with delegated authority from the University's Academic Board and is authorised to make decisions on behalf of an Assessment Board and/or other University decision-making body. Where your appeal is upheld, new decisions will be made within the context of the University's regulations, policies and procedures.

2.9 You will normally be notified of the Step 2 outcome (with reasons for the decision) within thirty (30) working days of the applicable appeals deadline. However, this period may need to be extended depending on the nature and complexity of the review required.

### 3 Step 3 – Review

3.1 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome at Step 2 you may request a review of the procedure undertaken at Step 2, on the following grounds:

- a material error or irregularity in the conduct of Step 2 of the Appeals Procedure; and/or
- you have material new evidence that has become available since the commencement of Step 2 that you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide by the original Step 2 appeals deadline

3.2 You should make your request for a Step 3 Review by completing a [Review Request Form](#), to be submitted to QAE within ten (10) working days of the completion of Step 2. Review requests which do not use the standard form will not be considered.

3.3 Once received by QAE, you will normally be sent an email acknowledging receipt of your Step 3 Review request within five (5) working days.

3.4 Step 3 Review requests received by the deadline will be considered by the next available Appeals Review Board. If you submitted your request outside of the specified deadline, and have not provided a valid reason for the delay, your Step 3 Review request will be considered out of time, and you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter (see section 5)

3.5 If you decide you do not have grounds to proceed with a Step 3 Review you can request a Completion of Procedures letter from the University within forty (40) working days of the Step 2 outcome notification.

#### 4 Appeals Review Board

4.1 The purpose of an Appeals Review Board is to consider your appeal review request and determine whether you have presented sufficient evidence to warrant a reconsideration of the Step 2 outcome, taking into account the statements in your form and documentary evidence provided.

4.2 The Appeals Review Board is a delegated authority of the University's Academic Board and is authorised to make decisions on behalf of an Assessment Board and/or other University decision-making body. Where your appeal is upheld, please note that all new decisions will be made within the context of the University's regulations, policies and procedures.

4.3 The Appeals Review Board will normally meet within forty (40) working days of the applicable appeals deadline, subject to staff availability. However, this period may need to be extended in line with University vacations and/or depending on the nature and complexity of the review required.

4.4 The membership of an Appeals Review Board shall comprise:

- The Provost (or nominee), who shall act as Chair
- three Directors of Department (or nominees)
- The Students' Union Falmouth President (or nominee)
- Head of QAE (or nominee), who shall act as Secretary.

Quorum for the Appeals Review Board shall be the Chair, Secretary and one Director of Department (or nominees). Staff who were involved in either the original decision-making process of the appeal cannot be included in the membership of the Appeals Review Board.

4.5 The Appeals Review Board decision in each case shall be either:

- **Upheld:** Your review request demonstrate valid grounds, and the Step 2 decision and/or the original decision being appealed against will be reviewed in light of those grounds; or
- **Not upheld:** your review request does not demonstrate valid grounds, and the Step 2 decision and the original decision being appealed against will stand.

4.6 You will be notified of the Step 3 Review outcome with reasons for the decision within ten (10) working days of the meeting.

## **5 Completion of Procedures letter**

- 5.1 The completion of Step 3 marks the conclusion of the University's internal processes and you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.
- 5.2 A Completion of Procedures letter will also be issued in the following circumstances:
- Where your Step 2 appeal was submitted outside of the specified deadline and you were unable to evidence a valid reason for missing the deadline; **or**
  - Where your Step 3 Review request was submitted outside of the specified deadline and you were unable to evidence a valid reason for missing the deadline.
  - Where you decide that you do not have grounds to proceed with a Step 3 Review and request a Completion of Procedures letter within forty (40) working days of the Step 2 outcome notification.
  - Where your appeal has been deemed to be malicious, dishonest and/or vexatious

In the last two cases the letter will confirm that the University's procedures have not been completed.

## **6 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)**

- 6.1 Falmouth University subscribes to an independent scheme for the review of student complaints provided by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). If, following receipt of your Completion of Procedures letter, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal, you may be able to apply to the OIA for a review of your case.
- 6.2 Should you decide to raise your case with the OIA, you must do so within 12 months of receipt of your Completion of Procedures letter, using the OIA's complaint form. The OIA will normally only consider cases which have been through the University's own procedures first.
- 6.3 Further details can be found on the OIA website at [www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk). The OIA's contact details are: Office of the Independent Adjudicator, Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57 – 75 Kings Road, Reading RG1 3AB, Tel: 0118 959 9813 Email: [enquiries@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@oiahe.org.uk).

**VERSION CONTROL**

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PURPOSE/CHANGE	AUTHOR	DATE
Updates to the below clauses following approval at AQSC: 1.1, 1.2, 2 (all clauses), 3 (all clauses), removal of 5.2 and 5.3	QAE	04/07/2018
Updates to the below clauses following approval at AQSC: 2.4, 4.2	QAE	04/07/2019
Extensive rewrite (plain English and student-facing language) and changes to the below clauses following approval at Academic Board: 2.3, 2.5, 2.7, 3.7, 3.10	QAE	22/07/2020
New clause 3.5 and updates to clauses 2.9 and 5.2	QAE	21 July 2021