

Management Procedure for Complaints and Appeals

Complaints Procedure

1. Purpose/Goals/Objectives

- To provide a structured method for students to express and resolve non-academic concerns related to the quality of services, facilities, teaching experiences, or student support.
- The objective is to address issues promptly and improve services based on feedback.

2. Responsibilities

- **Informal Stage:** The **Head of Department** manages initial, informal complaints. Students are encouraged to raise concerns directly with the relevant staff or department head for quick resolution.
- **Formal Complaint (Stage 1):** Managed by the **Vice-Principal**, who assigns an independent investigator. The Vice-Principal oversees the investigation and response to formal complaints.
- **Appeal:** If the student is unsatisfied with the formal response, the **Principal** reviews the complaint and issues a final institutional decision.

3. Steps for Managing Complaints

1. **Informal Complaint:** The student discusses the issue with the Head of Department or the relevant staff member. This informal resolution stage encourages direct and prompt responses.
2. **Formal Complaint:** If unresolved, the student files a formal written complaint with the Vice-Principal, who appoints an investigator. Within 20 working days, the student receives a written response detailing the outcome.
3. **Appeal to Principal:** If dissatisfied with the formal resolution, the student may escalate the complaint to the Principal. The Principal reviews the case and responds within 10 working days with a final institutional decision. After this step, students may pursue further options with the accrediting body if needed.

Academic Appeals Procedure

Informal Stage (Pre-Appeal Discussion)

Before submitting a formal academic appeal, students are encouraged to address concerns through an informal process. In this stage, the student may discuss their exam evaluation with their **Program Leader** to gain deeper feedback on their academic performance. This informal discussion aims to clarify assessment details, help the student understand their results, and potentially resolve any misunderstandings about grading before pursuing a formal appeal.

- **Program Leader's Role:** The Program Leader is responsible for organizing and facilitating meetings with the student to discuss feedback in detail. They act as a communication bridge between the student and academic staff, providing guidance on assessment criteria and explaining the basis of evaluation.
- **Reporting and Documentation:** The Program Leader must document all meetings, feedback discussions, and interactions with the student. This record, including relevant communications with examiners, should be forwarded to the Head of Department. This ensures that, if a formal appeal is later submitted, there is a clear record of the informal steps taken to resolve the issue.

1. Purpose/Goals/Objectives

- To address student concerns about academic decisions, including assessment results, degree classifications, or academic progression.
- The aim is to ensure fair consideration of academic grievances and uphold academic standards and transparency in academic decisions.

2. Responsibilities

- **Stage 1 Formal Appeal:** The **Dean of Faculty** is responsible for reviewing the formal appeal submission, assessing its validity, and, if necessary, involving a panel for review.
- **Stage 2 Appeal Committee:** Managed by the **Vice-Principal**, who convenes an Academic Appeal Committee to review escalated appeals. The committee provides the institution's final decision.

3. Steps for Managing Academic Appeals

1. **Stage 1 Formal Appeal:** Within five working days of receiving an academic decision, the student submits an appeal form with supporting documents to the Dean of Faculty. The Dean reviews the appeal, and if there is a valid basis, the case may be reviewed by a panel. A response is issued within 21 working days.
 - **Grounds for Formal Appeal: When submitting a formal academic appeal, the student must demonstrate specific grounds that justify a review of the academic decision. According to the Academic Appeals Procedure, valid grounds for appeal may include:**
 - i. **New or Material Circumstances:** The student can present significant new information or extenuating circumstances that were not known to the examiners at the time of assessment. The student must also explain why this information was not available previously.
 - ii. **Procedural Irregularities:** The student may appeal on the basis that the exam or assessment process did not follow standard procedures, leading to a potential impact on their academic outcome.
 - iii. **Evidence of Bias or Prejudice:** If the student believes that the assessment was conducted with prejudice or bias from examiners or markers, they can submit evidence to support this claim.
 - iv. **Unreasonable Decision:** The appeal may assert that no reasonable body, given the available information and standard criteria, would have arrived at the academic decision in question.
2. **Stage 2 Appeal Committee:** If the student remains dissatisfied, they may escalate to Stage 2. The Vice-Principal leads an Academic Appeal Committee composed of academic staff not directly involved with the student's module or year. The committee's decision, communicated within five working days, is final within the institution.
3. **Completion:** Upon completion of the internal process, students may, if desired, seek further review from the accrediting body, using the institution's confirmation of "completion of processes".

Stage	Complaints Procedure	Academic Appeals Procedure
Informal Stage	Head of Department: Manages initial informal complaints, encourages direct discussion with relevant staff to resolve issues quickly.	N/A – No informal stage for academic appeals; students may consult their Program Leader for advice.
Stage 1 Formal Complaint	Vice-Principal: Receives and reviews formal written complaints. Assigns an independent investigator and ensures resolution within 20 working days.	Dean of Faculty: Receives formal appeal submission, assesses validity, and, if necessary, involves a panel to investigate and review. Responds within 21 working days.
Stage 2 (Appeal)	Principal: Reviews unresolved formal complaints. Provides a final decision within 10 working days.	Vice-Principal: Leads the Academic Appeal Committee to review escalated appeals. This committee provides the final institutional decision on the appeal within five working days of the meeting.