

ACADEMIC APPEALS GUIDANCE



The following guidance will help you to understand the appeals process so that you can judge whether a formal appeal is the best way forward for you. Please read and consider this guidance and the College regulations carefully before submitting an appeal.

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Pages 6 – 8 of this guidance contain specific information in relation to each type of appeal

Sources of further information:

[Academic Appeals webpage](#)

[College Regulations](#)

Which decisions may I appeal against?

You may submit an academic appeal against a number of decisions made by the College:

- ❖ A DECISION MADE BY THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
- ❖ A PENALTY IMPOSED UNDER THE REGULATIONS ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT
- ❖ THE TERMINATION OF YOUR REGISTRATION THROUGH THE FORMAL WARNING PROCEDURE
- ❖ A DECISION MADE BY A FITNESS TO PRACTISE PANEL:
- ❖ A DECISION MADE IN RELATION TO ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT

What is the appeal deadline?

You must submit your appeal by the deadline which is:

15 working days from the date you were notified of the decision you are appealing against

Late appeals are unlikely to be considered by the College. However, if you are unable to obtain evidence before the appeal deadline, you must still submit your form **before the deadline** and explain why you are unable to include evidence, and when you expect to be able to provide it.

What are the grounds of appeal?

There are several different grounds of appeal, which depend upon the type of appeal you are making. Please ensure that you identify the relevant ground of appeal in your appeal form. Pages 6 – 8 of this guidance provide further information about the grounds specific to each type of appeal.

When completing your appeal form please ensure that you also explain the circumstances of your appeal and provide as much relevant background as possible. Unless there is a need to clarify facts, the Officer investigating your appeal will not normally contact you as part of the investigation, so please include anything relevant to your appeal in your appeal form as are unlikely to have a further opportunity at a later date. You will also need to provide documentary evidence to support your appeal.

What evidence should I include?

It is very important that you submit documentary evidence to support your appeal. Without documentary evidence your appeal is very unlikely to be upheld. Please include all documents with your appeal as the College may not accept further documentation submitted later in the process.

If your evidence is not in English, please submit a certified translation alongside the original.

To allow students to submit their appeal via email, we accept scanned copies of the evidence. However, we reserve the right to ask for the original of any document and if you are unable to produce it, the College may not take the document into account when considering your appeal.

Where can I get advice?

The [Advice and Support Centre](#) at the Students' Union is able to provide support and advice in relation to academic appeals. If you have any questions please contact the [Student's Union](#).

If you have any questions about the appeals procedure, please contact the [Student Services Centre](#).

Can someone act on my behalf?

In general, students are expected to act on their own behalf. However, there may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a friend or family member to deal with your appeal on your behalf. If so, you must still complete and sign the appeal form but you should provide details of your representative in the appropriate section of the form. If you do appoint a representative you must be sure that s/he knows about your appeal and is able to devote sufficient time to it. Please note that it is not considered appropriate to appoint someone from the legal profession on a professional basis to act on your behalf as this is an internal process.

How should I submit my appeal?

Appeals against a decision of the Board of Examiners should now be submitted using the [online form](#).

All other appeals (including requests for reconsideration of access arrangements for assessment) must be submitted on the appeal form to appeals@royalholloway.ac.uk **within 15 working days** of the date on which you were formally notified of the decision against which you are appealing.

Checklist before submitting your appeal. Have you:

- ❖ Read this guidance and the information on the [Academic Appeals](#) webpage?
- ❖ Identified the deadline for submitting your appeal?
- ❖ Identified the type of appeal you are making and the ground(s)?
- ❖ Completed the Academic Appeals form in full?
- ❖ Provided documentary evidence to support your appeal?

What happens next?

We will acknowledge your appeal within five working days of submission.

Your appeal will be investigated by an Investigating Officer from Student Administration, who will decide in the first instance whether the issues you have raised fall within the remit of the appeals procedure, and whether you have presented reasonable grounds and provided sufficient evidence in support of your claims. Where there are inadequate grounds for an appeal or insufficient evidence, your appeal may be dismissed without further investigation. In certain circumstances it may be more appropriate for your concerns to be investigated under the [Complaints Procedure for Students](#), or another College procedure. We will inform you if we believe this is the case and will provide further guidance at that stage.

If the Investigating Officer decides to proceed with the investigation, this will normally be carried out through email correspondence. **Please note: Staff in your department may be shown all or part of your appeal submission and be asked to comment in writing.** Exceptionally the Investigating Officer may decide to meet with one or more individuals as part of the investigation, in which case a written record will be kept of the meeting, including anything discussed which is relevant to the investigation and which may influence the outcome.

We will try to reach a decision on your appeal as quickly as possible. However, a thorough investigation takes time, and there are times of year when the volume of appeals received within a short period of time mean that there can be delays. We aim to provide **an initial response within two months**, but if this is not possible, either because of the volume of appeals being dealt with or because your appeal is complex, we will write to you to let you know and provide an estimate of the time for our response.

Although we try to prioritise appeals which are time-sensitive, we cannot guarantee when you will receive an outcome. You should therefore make plans irrespective of your appeal. For example, you should register and

prepare for examinations (including summer resits) at the appropriate time. You can seek advice on this from the [Student Services Centre](#).

Outcome of your appeal against a decision of the Board of Examiners

The Investigating Officer will write to you to let you know the outcome of their investigation. This letter will set out the background facts, basis of your appeal, the findings of their investigation and their conclusion.

The Investigating Officer may decide not to uphold your appeal, in which case the original decision will stand.

If your appeal is partially or fully upheld, the Investigating Officer will normally make recommendations about how to rectify the position before informing you of the initial findings. For example, your extenuating circumstances may be reviewed, or the Board of Examiners (also known as the Department Assessment Board) may be asked to reconsider its original decision.

If procedural irregularities are discovered, but the irregularities do not cast doubt over the original decision, your appeal will not be upheld. However, this may still result in College processes being reviewed and changed in the future.

Review stage

If you are dissatisfied with the decision reached you may **request a review** of the initial findings. In order to do so you must submit a [Request a Review](#) form within **10 working days** of the date of the Initial Findings letter.

There are specific grounds on which you may request a review:

- fresh evidence can be presented which you could not with reasonable diligence have been submitted with your initial appeal and which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of that decision;
- there is evidence of a failure to follow the procedures set out in the Regulations which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of the decision;
- the decision was perverse given the evidence which was available at the time .

A review of the decision will be undertaken, but this will not normally involve a reinvestigation of your case. We aim to complete reviews within one month of submission, and once the Director of Student Administration is satisfied that the investigation and review are complete, you will be sent a **Completion of Procedures** Letter confirming the College's final decision on your appeal.

Outcome of your appeal against other College decisions

You will be sent a **Completion of Procedures** letter confirming the College's final decision on your appeal.

If your appeal is not upheld the original decision will stand. If your appeal is partially or fully upheld, the Investigating Officer will normally make recommendations on what should be done to correct the situation before informing you of the outcome. For example, if your appeal is against termination of registration, recommendations may be made about whether, and under what conditions, you might be permitted to return to College.

This is the final stage of the College procedures and there is no review stage for this type of appeal. This is because an investigation into the circumstances has been carried out at an earlier stage in the procedure (i.e. before the penalty for academic misconduct was imposed; before the decision to terminate your registration under the Formal Warnings Procedure; or during the Fitness to practise procedure).

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

The [OIA](#) is an independent body which reviews student complaints. Once a final decision has been reached on your appeal the College will issue a Completion of Procedures letter and will not act on any further requests to investigate the matter. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may be able to ask for your case to be reviewed by the OIA. The Completion of procedures letter will explain how to contact the OIA to request a review of the decision and you will have twelve months from the date of the letter in which to refer your case to the OIA.

Final points to note when making your appeal

The College will not investigate appeals:

- For which there is no supporting evidence, including unsubstantiated allegations of bias or prejudice on the part of the examiners;
- Against the academic judgement of the marker of an assessment;
- Of an unspecific or general nature;
- Which are not submitted in writing;
- Which are submitted after the deadline without an acceptable reason;
- From third parties without the written consent of the student concerned.

If an appeal is considered to be frivolous or malicious, you may be liable for disciplinary action under the [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#)

APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION MADE BY THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Please read the following section if you are intending to appeal against the following:

- ❖ Assessment results (including a module mark) and award classifications;
- ❖ Failure to progress to the next stage of your studies;
- ❖ Decision of the Board of Examiners regarding resits or repeats of failed modules;
- ❖ Termination of registration by the College Board of Examiners owing to academic failure;
- ❖ In the case of Research Degree students, failure in a formal upgrade review or the outcome of the final examination.

Preliminary action you may need to take:

If you suspect that an administrative error has been made in calculating or recording your results, please contact your [School Admin team](#) in the first instance and ask them to check your results. Please do not submit an appeal for this reason until you have done so.

Appeal Grounds

Your appeal may **only** be made on one or more of the following grounds:

- Your performance in the assessment or review was substantially affected by circumstances of which the panel or examiners had not been made aware and which you could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed before the outcome had been determined.
You will need to explain why you did not know you were affected and provide evidence to support your explanation. It is not sufficient to explain that you did not realise at the time how much you were affected by particular circumstances.
- There were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the assessment or review, or administrative errors, which might cause reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome would have been the same if the irregularities or errors had not occurred.
Please identify the procedural irregularity, i.e. the procedure which has been incorrectly applied or not followed
- There is evidence of prejudice, bias or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners or panel members such that the outcome should not be allowed to stand.
You must submit evidence to support any allegation of prejudice or bias

Is there anything I cannot appeal against?

Academic Judgement

The College will not consider appeals against academic judgement, including requests for work to be re-marked. Robust mechanisms exist to ensure that marking standards are appropriate. If you are uncertain why you received a particular outcome or mark you may wish to discuss this with your Personal Tutor or the Module leader.

Accepted Extenuating Circumstances

If you have submitted an application for consideration of extenuating circumstances which has been accepted, the decision of the Board of Examiners in response to your circumstances is academic judgement, which cannot be appealed. However, if you think that there has been an error in the consideration of your application, you may appeal on the grounds of a procedural irregularity or administrative error.

APPEALS AGAINST A PENALTY IMPOSED UNDER THE REGULATIONS ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

You may appeal against a penalty imposed by a department/school Academic Misconduct Panel or by a Vice Principle (in cases of more serious misconduct). Section 9 of the [Academic Misconduct Regulations](#) set out the only grounds on which an appeal can be made:

- that there is evidence of a failure to follow the procedures set out in these regulations which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of the decision;
Please identify the procedural irregularity, i.e. the procedure which has been incorrectly applied or not followed
- that fresh evidence can be presented which the student could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed before the decision was made and which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of that decision;
You will need to explain why you could not have provided the evidence sooner.
- that the decision was perverse given the evidence which was available at the time
Please explain in what way you consider the decision to be 'perverse'

Please ensure that you provide documentary evidence to support your appeal.

APPEALS AGAINST TERMINATION OF REGISTRATION THROUGH THE FORMAL WARNING PROCEDURE

The Formal Warning appeal procedure is set out at section 26 of the [Undergraduate Regulations](#). Appeals may only be made on the following grounds:

- that there is evidence of a failure to follow the procedures set out in these regulations which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of the decision;
Please identify the procedural irregularity, i.e. the procedure which has been incorrectly applied or not followed
- that fresh evidence can be presented which the student could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed before the decision was made and which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of that decision;
You will need to explain why you could not have provided the evidence sooner.

Please ensure that you provide documentary evidence to support your appeal.

APPEALS AGAINST A DECISION MADE BY A FITNESS TO PRACTISE PANEL

[The Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures](#) set out the only grounds on which an appeal can be made:

- There is evidence of a failure to follow procedures which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of the Fitness to Practise Panel's decision
Please identify the procedural irregularity, i.e. the procedure which has been incorrectly applied or not followed
- Fresh evidence can be presented which the student could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed before the Fitness to Practise Panel's decision was made which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of that decision
You will need to explain why you could not have provided the evidence sooner.
- The panel's decision was perverse given the evidence which was available at the time.
Please explain in what way you consider the decision to be 'perverse'

Please ensure that you provide documentary evidence to support your appeal.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF A DECISION MADE IN RELATION TO ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT

The [Regulations on Access Arrangements for Assessment](#) set out the grounds on which a request for reconsideration may be made:

- There is new documentary evidence to be taken into account which s/he could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed at the time of the original application
You will need to explain why you could not have provided the evidence sooner
 - There is evidence of administrative or procedural errors, which might cause reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome would have been the same if the irregularities or errors had not occurred;
Please identify the procedural irregularity, i.e. the procedure which has been incorrectly applied or not followed
 - The original conclusion reached by the College Board of Examiners Executive Committee was unreasonable given the evidence with which it was presented
Please explain in what way you consider the decision to be 'unreasonable'
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