

Appeals: Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is an appeal?

Students have the right to make representations against any progress decision that had a negative effect upon them. Appeals are submissions by students seeking the amendment, or reversal of, a decision taken by the Board of Examiners as a consequence of their academic performance. Extenuating Circumstances are submissions by students to their School, drawing attention to circumstances which may affect, or have affected, their academic performance, submitted prior to meetings of the relevant Board of Examiners.

2. Do I need to submit an appeal?

If you are unclear why a progress decision has been made you should discuss the situation with your School and/or personal tutor. Please note that if your Extenuating Circumstances have already been considered by your School, the same circumstances cannot be considered through the appeals process.

3. Can I use the appeal process to request to be changed from external to internal student status?

If you are due to repeat modules as an external student (repeating assessments only, no access to teaching, non-fee paying), but wish to return instead as an internal student (attending teaching, paying fees) please speak with your School prior to submitting your appeal. There is a School-level process that can be used for this request instead of the appeals process. Please note that, if it is too late in the semester to return as an internal student immediately, you may have to wait until the next academic year to return, to enable you to access all the teaching for which you will be paying. In this situation, you may be placed on a Leave of Absence until you return to attending teaching.

4. Where can I get help and advice?

A range of sources of help and advice are available to you including those listed at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/students_ervices/conduct/help/index.aspx. [Guild Advice](#) in the Guild of Students has experienced staff that will be able to provide advice and support on the appeals process.

5. Can I appeal if I disagree with the marks I have received?

Your results are a reflection of your achievements as determined by the examiners. You cannot appeal on the grounds that you are dissatisfied with your results and that you believe that you deserve higher marks. The appeals process is not a method of circumventing or setting aside the professional academic judgement of your examiners on your performance.

6. When should I appeal?

You can appeal after your marks have been ratified by the Board of Examiners and your results are available for you to view on the Student Gateway. This is also where you will find your progress decision.

If you take exams in January the marks from your assessments will be provisional and your progress decision or award will not have been confirmed. Appeals submitted before your results are formally released to you cannot be accepted.

[7. What is my progress decision?](#)

Your progress decision is the decision made by the Board of Examiners. After your assessments take place the Board of Examiners will meet to ratify your marks. For UG students this is usually after the main summer exams and again after the supplementary exams. For PGT students this usually takes place in late October. After this has taken place your results along with your progress decision will be formally released to you on the Student Gateway (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/digital-services/index.aspx>). Your appeal cannot be accepted until your final marks and current progress decision are available to you on the Student Gateway. It is not possible to appeal against any provisional marks that are released early.

For PGR students you will receive an email from Registry with details of your progress decision. The date that your progress decision is released to you is the date from which your appeal deadline will be determined.

[8. What can I appeal against?](#)

You may appeal on either or both of the following grounds:

- i. There were circumstances unknown to the Board of Examiners that affected your academic performance and you can present good reason for these circumstances not being made known prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners.
- ii. There was an administrative irregularity or failure in procedure giving rise to a reasonable doubt as to whether the progress decision would have been different if it had not occurred.

Postgraduate Research students can also appeal on a third ground:

- iii. That there has been bias in the assessment of your thesis on the part of one or more of the examiners.

Note that the University's definition of bias is: An apparent prevention of objective judgement by one or more of the examiners. This means that bias only exists where there is a material and negative connection between the examiner and the student which, in the opinion of a fair-minded person, prevents the examiner from exercising objective judgement.

For a full outline of the grounds for appeal please read section 4 of the [Code of Practice on Academic Appeals](#).

[9. What are the chances of my appeal being successful?](#)

Unfortunately, it is not possible to say what the outcome will be. Each case is dealt with individually.

[10. What is the deadline to submit my appeal?](#)

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students

You will receive your results on the Student Gateway and should ensure that you check this regularly. Your deadline to submit an appeal will be *10 University working days* from the 'results release date' of your marks (not the date that any provisional marks are available).

Postgraduate Research Students

You will receive an email from Registry confirming your progress decision and clearly stating a personal appeal deadline. Your deadline to submit an appeal will be *10 University working days* from the date of the email.

If your submission reaches the office after the advertised deadline then unless you can evidence why your appeal is late your submission will not be accepted. The decision of the Board of Examiners will stand.

[11. Can I send in a late appeal?](#)

Please contact SCCA if you require an extension to your deadline. This may be waived in exceptional circumstances. If you intend to submit a late appeal please get in touch with SCCA for advice.

[12. Do I need to submit evidence?](#)

The appeals process is an evidence based process and it is important that any circumstances that you mention in your appeal are supported by independent, third party evidence. Evidence must show the impact on you of the circumstances cited in your form and must be contemporaneous, that is it must be relevant to the date or period of time of the circumstances cited. All evidence should be submitted in English. If your evidence is provided in a foreign language it is your responsibility to have it translated before submission. Appeals based on medical grounds must be accompanied by signed medical certificates or statements/letters written on headed paper.

All evidence should be listed in Section 5 of your form and must be submitted with your form by the deadline date.

Appeals without supporting evidence are likely to be declared ineligible and will not be processed.

If your evidence is not available in time for you to meet your deadline then do not delay in submitting your form. Please ensure that you identify in your covering email any evidence that is missing and when it is going to be available. If your evidence is not received within a reasonable timeframe, your appeal can be processed at the discretion of SCCA with part of your evidence. If there is no evidence available, it will be deemed ineligible.

Evidence will be shared with employees of the University who will process and review your submission. If at the conclusion of these processes you choose to submit a Complaint to the OIA, information may also be shared with that body. You should therefore ensure that where evidence relates to third parties you have their permission for this information to be disclosed.

[13. How do I complete the form?](#)

Written submissions on the appropriate form are required in all cases. Forms can be found at <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/complaint-appeal/appeals/appeal.aspx>

The written submission form must clearly identify:

- i. The decision that you are appealing against. (Your progress decision should be visible by visiting the Student Gateway (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/digital-services/index.aspx>) . Postgraduate research decisions should be clearly stated in your letter from Registry. If the decision is not clear, please contact your School.)

- ii. The outcome that you desire if your appeal is successful. (Taught students should consider the notes in [Appendix A](#) when thinking about the outcome that you desire.)
- iii. The grounds upon which your appeal is made.
- iv. Full details of your case, in chronological order. You should ensure that you include the module(s)/assessment(s) that have been affected and the date(s) on which the incidents occurred.

If you are appealing on the grounds that there were circumstances unknown to the Board of Examiners, please ensure that you include details of why you did not bring this information to the attention of the Board of Examiners through the extenuating circumstances process.

You should ensure that you make direct reference to the grounds that you are appealing on and ensure that you only give information that is relevant to your case.

- v. A summary of your case in no more than 200 words (300 words for Postgraduate Researchers). This summary must be completed as the Academic Appeal Committee uses the information in your summary as a starting point in considering your Academic Appeal. Your form will only be processed if a summary is provided in Section 5 of the submission form.

[14. What should I check before submitting my form?](#)

Before submitting your appeal, you should ensure that:

- i. Your form is completed in full.
- ii. You have attached all evidence you wish to be considered.
- iii. That you are submitting your form by your deadline.

If your appeal submission is not complete it may not be accepted. If it is not accepted you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter. Please see the [Next steps](#) document for an explanation of the Completion of Procedures letter and the options available to you.

[15. Where do I submit my appeal?](#)

Once you have completed the form in full and have gathered your evidence your appeal submission should be submitted by email to appeals@contacts.bham.ac.uk

If you have any problems submitting your form or evidence by email please contact SCCA. You will receive confirmation of the receipt of your appeal submission by email within three working days.

[16. I now wish to withdraw my appeal what should I do?](#)

You will need to put this in writing by email to appeals@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

[17. Can I continue with my programme whilst awaiting the outcome of my appeal?](#)

You may be permitted to continue in temporary attendance on your programme, depending on the circumstances of the particular programme. If you wish to do this you must consult with your School. Any such arrangement is at the discretion of the School.

Full time Undergraduate students must achieve at least 100 credits in any year of study for immediate progression into the next year of study. Where less than 100 credits have been achieved, a student will be required to undertake any further assessments that might be awarded as the result of a successful academic appeal prior to continuing onto the next year of studies.

Some programmes of study may have additional pre-requisite requirements for progression into the next year, such as the successful completion of assessments relating to professional practice requirements on externally accredited programmes.

[18. Can I still attend my graduation ceremony if I am appealing?](#)

If you wish to appeal against your degree classification, by default you will still graduate under your existing award even if your appeal has not been resolved. If your appeal is successful and you have a change of degree classification, you will be required to return the certificate and transcript that you receive at your congregation ceremony (or you received after the ceremony if conferred in Absentia) before the updated documents will be forwarded to you.

You can choose to defer your graduation provided that the ceremony date for your programme has not yet passed. If you wish to defer your graduation until after your appeal has been resolved, please contact Student Services through [Student Help](#). Please note that it will then not be possible for you to have your degree conferred until the next congregation period. If you defer your summer graduation the next opportunity to graduate is December. Further information can be found on the [Congregation and Awards](#) office web pages.

[19. How long does the appeals process take?](#)

During the main summer appeals period (July – October), the appeals process usually takes 10 - 12 weeks from the date that your submission form and all supporting evidence is sent in. Your appeal cannot be processed until all documentation is received.

[20. What happens next?](#)

Your appeal form and evidence will be forwarded to your School for with a request to provide a response back to SCCA. When a School response is received and processed your appeal will go forward to be considered by the Academic Appeal Committee.

An Academic Appeal Committee is a small group of experienced academic staff and a student representative who consider all appeals. To avoid a conflict of interest, the members of the Committee will not be from your School.

The Academic Appeal Committee can confirm the support of your School, reject your appeal or refer your case to an Academic Appeal Committee hearing if they determine that further information is required.

It will take at least 8 weeks from the date on which you submitted your appeal until you will hear an outcome or an update if your case is referred to a hearing. The outcome of the AAC will be communicated via email to the personal address provided on your submission form.

[21. What happens at an Academic Appeal Committee hearing?](#)

An Academic Appeal Committee hearing is a panel of 3 academic members of staff and a student representative. If your case is referred to an Academic Appeal Committee hearing, you will be invited to attend and a representative from your School will also be invited to attend.

A 'friend' can accompany you to your hearing. A Friend means a member of the staff of the University, a registered student of the University, a Sabbatical Officer of the Guild of Students or a Guild Advisor of the Guild of Students. Please contact [Guild Advice](#) in the Guild of Students if you wish to be accompanied by a Sabbatical Officer or Guild Advisor. Please let us know at least one working day in advance of the hearing who you wish to bring with you. Further information about the role of a friend during a hearing can be found in Appendix D.

The procedures followed by the Academic Appeal Committee hearing are outlined in Appendix A of the [Code of Practice on Academic Appeals](#). The hearing may take place in person or virtually online.

[22. What if I cannot/do not wish to attend the Academic Appeal Committee hearing?](#)

If you are unable to attend the hearing you may consider the following options:

- I. The hearing may go ahead in your absence;
- II. You may send a statement to be read out at the hearing;
- III. You may send a friend to make a statement on your behalf. Your friend must be a registered student or member of staff of the University, or a representative from the Guild of Students;

[23. Can I choose a date for my hearing?](#)

No, unfortunately this is not possible. You will be notified by email of the date of your hearing at least two weeks before the hearing takes place.

[24. Will my I.D. card still work?](#)

If you cease to be a registered student you may experience problems in trying to use University facilities. Your student record will not be amended until the outcome of the appeal is known.

[25. I am due to take re-sits but I have not heard the outcome of my appeals, should I still revise?](#)

You should not delay any preparations for re-sit examinations.

[26. How will I find out the outcome of my appeal?](#)

You will receive notification of the outcome of your appeal by email. Your outcome letter will be sent to you by email to the email address you have indicated in Section 1 of your appeal submission form.

[27. If I am dissatisfied with the outcome of my appeal, what are my options?](#)

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal you may wish to consider the options

available to you as outlined in the Next Steps document.

Appendix A – Taught Programmes - Notes to consider when choosing your desired outcome

If you are submitting Extenuating Circumstances in order to have another attempt at a module that you have already passed, to try and improve your mark, you should be aware that if you achieve a lower mark, or a failed mark, this will be the mark that will be used to calculate your weighted mean mark and final degree classification. If you fail the module any previously achieved credit will not stand. You are strongly advised to discuss this with your personal tutor so that you understand the risks of repeating a module for which you have already achieved credit.

Internal student – If you wish to register as an internal student you will have full access to all campus facilities e.g. libraries, will attend all teaching and will pay fees (the amount you pay will depend on the number of modules you are taking.)

External student – If you wish to register as an external student you will have access rights to the library, and library e-resources and access to Canvas if required. You will not attend teaching and will not pay fees.

A 'sit or 'first attempt'	You will sit exam(s) or submit coursework as if for the first time (due to extenuating circumstances) at the next available examination period. The mark you obtain will not be capped at the pass mark.
A 're-sit'	You will sit exam(s) or submit coursework at the next available examination period. The mark obtained will be capped at the pass mark for the purposes of calculating degree classification; the full mark is shown on transcripts.
A 'repeat'	To repeat means that you will complete all of the assessments for a module (exams and coursework) and attending all teaching sessions. The mark may be capped (if the repeat is due to failure) or not (if the repeat is due to extenuating circumstances.)

Appendix B - Contact Details

Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Team

Registry

01214147684

appeals@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Appendix C – Useful webpages

Student Appeals main webpage

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/complaint-appeal/appeals/index.aspx>

Code of Practice on Academic Appeals Procedures

[Codes of Practice, Policies and Guidance \(birmingham.ac.uk\)](#)

Taught and Research Student Submission forms can be found here

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/complaint-appeal/appeals/appeal.aspx>

Senate Review details and submission form

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/complaint-appeal/appeals/senate.aspx>

Pastoral Support and Advice

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/student-services/conduct/help/index.aspx>

Appendix D – The Role of a Friend during an Academic Appeal Hearing

This guidance provides information for those who are acting as a Friend to a student who is participating in certain University processes. These processes could include:

- Appeals procedures
- Academic Integrity Meetings
- Student Conduct Meetings
- College Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committees
- University Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committees
- Meetings held under the Code of Practice on Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study
- The informal route of the Harassment and Bullying Policy

Who can be a Friend?

A Friend is defined in the University Regulations as:

- a member of staff of the University, or
- a registered student of the University of Birmingham, or
- a Guild Advisor at the Guild of Students, or
- a Sabbatical Officer of the Guild of Students.

However, a Friend cannot be someone who may be a witness to an alleged incident or who has some other involvement in the proceedings (for instance, a committee member or person who has another role within the meeting).

What is the role of a Friend?

The role of the Friend is to support the student participating in the University processes outlined above.

As a Friend you cannot answer questions on behalf of the student. The role of a Friend is to support the student but not to act as a representative or to put forward a case on their behalf.

Before a meeting

When attending a meeting, you should take your University ID with you so that it can be confirmed that you are eligible to act as a Friend.

If, as a Guild advisor or officer, you do not have University ID, you should ensure that the Guild confirms your identity with the meeting secretary (or in the absence of a secretary, the Chair) in advance of the meeting.

If you realise before the meeting that you cannot act as a Friend, you will need to tell the student you are supporting as soon as possible so that they can find another Friend to accompany them.

The University would not normally postpone a meeting due to the unavailability of a Friend.

During the meeting

The process for each meeting will normally be explained to you at the start of the meeting. You can take written notes on behalf of the student you are supporting, if you wish to do so, although for many of the processes outlined above, the student will be provided with notes or a report of the meeting shortly afterwards.

The proceedings are conducted in English and if you wish to speak with the student during the meeting, this should be in English. A Friend cannot translate questions or answers during the meeting. If the student is unsure about a question, they can ask a member of staff to repeat or rephrase the question.

During some proceedings you will normally be allowed to make statements and ask questions (via the Chair) on behalf of the student you are accompanying.

If making statements or asking questions is not expressly permitted within the appropriate Code of Practice or Guidance notes, the chair/staff member may allow you to make statements and ask questions (via the Chair) on behalf of the student you are accompanying.

All participants in a meeting are expected to behave reasonably, civilly and with courteousness throughout.