

**QuEST**

Quality Enhancement and Standards Team

# **UWS Student Appeals Procedure**

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WEST *of* SCOTLAND

**UWS**

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# Introduction

An academic appeal is defined as a request to review a decision of an academic body charged with decisions on student engagement, assessment, progression, awards, withdrawal from programme and student disciplinary cases. [See Chapter 6 of the Regulatory Framework.](#)

This covers an academic appeal made by a student against a decision of:

- The Senate Disciplinary Committee
- A Fitness to Practise Committee
- A School Plagiarism Panel
- A School Assessment Board (SAB)
- A School Board of Examiners (SBE)
- An Extenuating Circumstances Submission (ECS) Deadline
- A Research Progression & Awards Board (PAB)
- The Research Degree Examiners
- A School (for engagement/attendance)
- Any other Committee, Board or Panel of the University which is empowered to make decisions on the matters listed in 1 above.

An academic appeal may be made only by the student directly affected; it may NOT be lodged by a third party such as a parent or other representative. The only exception to this would be a student with permanent or temporary disabilities which prevents them from submitting the appeal independently.

The privacy and confidentiality of a student will be respected at all stages of the appeals process. The circulation of personal or medical evidence provided by a student submitting an appeal will be restricted to staff directly involved in the appeal decision process.

Where an academic appeal also contains within it a complaint and vice versa, it is possible for the appeal or complaint to be reclassified either by the student or the University (at whatever stage they may have reached) and processed under the most relevant regulation or procedure if this is likely to lead to a more appropriate outcome for the person(s) appealing or complaining.

An academic appeal may not be lodged after the conferment/receipt of a University award. This is in line with the [UWS Regulatory Framework, Chapter 6.](#)

# Grounds for an Appeal

A student can appeal a decision and/or penalty from:

- The Senate Disciplinary Committee
- A Fitness to Practise Committee
- A School Plagiarism Panel

on the following grounds:

Grounds for an appeal	Details
New evidence	There is new substantial information directly relevant to the case, which was for good reason not available when the original decision was made.
Excess of jurisdiction	The decision was made in excess of the jurisdiction conferred on one of the committees/panel noted above.
Defect in procedures	There was a defect in the procedures employed by one of the committees/panel noted above such as to render the decision unfair.
Unreasonable decision	The decision made by one of the committees/panel noted above was unreasonable, in that the committee/panel in reaching a decision took into consideration something which they ought to have disregarded or disregarded something which they ought to have considered.
Excessive or unreasonable penalty	The penalty levied by one of the committees/panel noted was excessive or unreasonable.

**A student can appeal a decision of a School Assessment Board (SAB) or School Board of Examiners (SBE) on the following grounds:**

Grounds for an appeal	Details
Defect in procedures	There is evidence that there has been a computational or administrative error in the recording or processing of their marks.
	An examination or assessment related to the decision was not conducted in accordance with the University's recognised procedures.

The following will NOT be considered grounds for an appeal against a decision of a SAB or SBE:

- A student questions the academic or professional judgement of the examiners.
- A student is disappointed with a result where marks have been accurately recorded, assessment regulations correctly followed and there is no evidence of material irregularity.
- An academic appeal may NOT be lodged against a 'Defer' decision of an SAB or a 'Defer Chair' decision of a SBE since this is not a final decision on progress or status.

**A student may submit an appeal against an ECS deadline prior to the sitting of the School Assessment Board (SAB):**

Grounds for an appeal	Details
New evidence	A student may submit an appeal against an ECS deadline prior to the sitting of the School Assessment Board (SAB) (in line with Regulation 3.36-3.38) - if a valid reason for not meeting this deadline and evidence is provided to support the appeal.

**A student can appeal a decision from a Research Progression & Awards Board (Research PAB) on the following grounds:**

Grounds for an appeal	Details
New evidence	There is new substantial information directly relevant to the case, which was for good reason not available when the original decision was made.
Defect in procedures	There was a defect in the procedures employed by the Research PAB such as to render the decision unfair.

**Please note that, where a student is not able to attend scheduled sessions, they are expected to take responsibility for making arrangements to catch up with missed work and/or to consider whether they wish to request a period of interruption until they are fit to resume their studies.**

**The following will NOT be considered grounds for an appeal against a decision of a Research Progression & Awards Board:**

- Any complaint or grievance made by the candidate for alleged inadequacy in the supervision or other arrangements during the period of registration shall not constitute grounds for appeal, since procedures exist for such complaints and grievances which should be instigated during the period of registration and before submission.

**A student can appeal a decision from the Research Degree Examiners on the following grounds:**

<b>Grounds for an appeal</b>	<b>Details</b>
New evidence	There were circumstances, such as illness or other factors, adversely affecting the candidate's performance of which the examiners were unaware at the oral examination and which the candidate was unable, or for valid reasons, unwilling to divulge before the examiners reached their decision. The candidate's appeal must be supported by relevant documentary evidence.
Defect in procedures	There is evidence of administrative, procedural or other irregularity in the conduct of the examination of such a nature as to cause doubt as to whether the result might have been different had there not been such irregularity.

**The following will NOT be considered grounds for an appeal against a decision of the Research Examiners:**

- Any complaint or grievance made by the candidate for alleged inadequacy in the supervision or other arrangements during the period of registration shall not constitute grounds for appeal, since procedures exist for such complaints and grievances which should be instigated during the period of registration and before submission.
- Any disagreement with the academic judgement of the examiners in assessing the merits of the thesis and the programme of supervised research, or in reaching any assessment decision based on the candidate's performance in the oral or approved alternative form of examination.



**A student can appeal a decision of a School to remove them from a module or programme for non-engagement on the following grounds:**

<b>Grounds for an appeal</b>	<b>Details</b>
New evidence	<p>They can provide additional extenuating circumstance information which was not originally available to the School.</p> <p>Where a student could have reported this additional information to the School prior to its meeting, the extenuating circumstances cannot then be cited as grounds for appeal unless there is a compelling reason why these were not disclosed in the first instance.</p>
Defect in procedures	<p>There is evidence of a procedural irregularity in relation to the implementation of the University's Academic Engagement Procedure.</p>

**The following will NOT be considered grounds for appeal against a decision of a School:**

- A student has not achieved the minimum level of engagement set out in the University's Academic Engagement Procedure and the student cannot provide extenuating circumstances evidence.
- A student has not responded to any of the University's attempts to contact them regarding poor engagement, as set out in the University's Academic Engagement Procedure.



# Submission of an Appeal

A student must submit their academic appeal in writing on the relevant form within 10 working days from the notification date which informed them of the decision against which they are appealing. The form can be obtained [on-line here](#) or from the Student Link/Hub on any campus.

The student should complete the Appeal Form. They should indicate on the form:

- If they will be attending the Appeal meeting.
- If they are attending the Appeal meeting they should also give details of the name and status of any representative, or witnesses who will also attend.

A student must submit their appeal electronically to [appeals@uws.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@uws.ac.uk), including any evidence or documents supporting their appeal

The operation of any penalty decided by one of the committees/panel noted above may be suspended pending the determination of the appeal. The student will be notified in writing if the penalty is to be suspended.

An academic appeal submitted in one term must relate to a decision from one of the committees/panels noted above from the same or the previous term.

If a student fails to submit an academic appeal within the timescale noted above, the appeal may exceptionally be considered at a later date. (Provided there are compelling reasons why it could not be submitted on time and these are detailed in full with supporting evidence at the time of submission).

## Advice

Any student intending to lodge an appeal against a decision of one of the committees or panels noted above, can obtain appropriate advice and counselling within the University. In particular, a student can seek signposting to appropriate support from [The Hub](#) or advice from the [Students' Union](#).





# The Senate Appeals Committee

The Senate Appeals Committee will have the constitution, terms of reference and standing orders set out in the University Committee Handbook.

## Status of a Student during an Academic Appeal

If a student submits an academic appeal part way through the level or year, they may be permitted to continue provisionally until such time as a decision has been reached. This is to ensure that the student is not academically disadvantaged if the appeal is subsequently upheld. Continued attendance on placements will be at the discretion of the relevant School.

If a student submits an academic appeal at the end of a level or year of study:

- The student may be permitted to enrol on the next level but only on a conditional basis. If their appeal is subsequently upheld, the student's enrolment would be confirmed. If their academic appeal is not upheld the student's enrolment may be terminated immediately.

If a student is deemed to be eligible for an award and they subsequently submit an appeal they will be permitted to graduate and to receive the award agreed by the appropriate School Board of Examiners. If the student's appeal is successful and results in achieving a different award, they will be required to return any degree parchment before the new award is sent to them.

An appeal cannot be submitted after a student has graduated, either in person or in absentia.

## Records and Publication

The Secretary to the Senate Appeals Committee will keep a record of all appeals.

## The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

All students of The University of the West of Scotland are entitled to refer cases to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman when the UWS appeals procedure has completed.

Title	
Procedure Author	Academic Conduct Officer
Procedure Owner	Head of QuEST
Parent Policy Statement	Student Experience Policy Statement
Public Access or Staff Only Access	Public
Version Number & Date	Version 5, March 2021
Changes and Reason for Changes	Minor changes to terminology and changes to Academic Engagement procedure. Change of Owner, Student now allowed to progress to honours with deficit – section stating not permitted removed.

# Appendix A – Procedures for each stage of the Appeal process

Procedure	Senate Appeals Committee
<b>Informing the student(s)</b>	A student will be given at least 5 Working Days' notice (can be earlier at student's request) by e-mail (normally UWS student email account) of the date and time at which their appeal will be dealt with by the Senate Appeals Committee.
<b>Location of the meeting</b>	The meeting of the Senate Appeals Committee will usually be held virtually via Teams.
<b>Additional support requirements</b>	If a student is participating in an Appeal meeting and they have any additional support requirements, they should arrange additional suitable representation at the meeting, e.g. arranging a BSL Interpreter if they have hearing problems.
<b>Notes of the meeting</b>	The Secretary to the Senate Appeals Committee will produce a summary of the proceedings for the Chair's approval.
<b>Staff attending the meeting</b>	The University may be represented by the Chair (or nominee) from the committee/panel which made the original decision which the student is appealing – this person will hereafter be referred to as the University's representative.
	The Senate Appeals Committee has the right to invite any relevant member of staff to attend the meeting if it is believed their input could aid deliberations.
<b>Student attending the meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A student will be entitled to be accompanied by one person:</li> <li>• a friend,</li> <li>• a relative,</li> <li>• a student representative or advice worker from The Students' Union.</li> <li>• The person should not be a legal representative unless this is approved by the Chair in advance of the meeting. This approval will be at the Chair's discretion based on the circumstances of the appeal and will take into account matters such as the seriousness of the alleged offence and potential penalty, the ability of the student to present his or her case and the procedural complexity of the case.</li> <li>• Failure by a student to attend at the time and place specified by the Senate Appeals Committee will not prevent the committee from considering the appeal and reaching a decision</li> </ul>

Procedure	Senate Appeals Committee
<b>Hearing the case</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Senate Appeals Committee will consider the appeal together with any submitted evidence, provided by the student or the University.</li> <li>• Occasionally, the date of the meeting may clash with an individual committee member's commitments unexpectedly after the meeting has been arranged. However, when this does happen, the member of the Committee will be invited to consider cases prior to the meeting and provide feedback confidentially to the Secretary of the Committee. This feedback will be tabled at the arranged Senate Appeals Committee meeting. The non-attendance of the committee member will not have a material impact on the outcome of the appeal. Providing the feedback will ensure that the appeal is heard at the earliest opportunity and the member's participation will ensure that all cases are treated equitably and considered by all the necessary members of the Committee.</li> <li>• The student may present such written or oral evidence in support of their case as he or she wishes. Written evidence must be supplied in advance along with the Appeal form.</li> <li>• The University's representative may question the student or any witness called by the student.</li> <li>• The student and student representative may question the University's representative or any witness called by the University's representative.</li> <li>• Any member of the Senate Appeals Committee will have the right to question the student, the student representative, any witness called by the student or the University representative in order to seek clarification.</li> <li>• In its sole discretion and in the interests of justice and fairness, the Senate Appeals Committee may hear evidence on the part of the student not given at a previous panel or committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Chair's Action</b>	<p>If an appeal is received, with evidence, this will be forwarded to one of the Chairs for Chair's action during busy periods.</p> <p>However, if the appeal is rejected via Chair's action a meeting will be arranged with a different Chair, to enable the appellant to attend a meeting to discuss the appeal.</p>
<b>Reaching a decision</b>	<p>The Senate Appeals Committee will consider the matter and reach its decision in private.</p> <p>The Senate Appeals Committee will decide whether to decline or uphold the appeal.</p>

Procedure	Senate Appeals Committee
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p>The Senate Appeals Committee may decide as follows:</p> <p><b>Appeal is not upheld</b></p> <p>If an appeal is not upheld, then the existing decision and any penalty will be confirmed by the committee</p> <p><b>Appeal is upheld (or partly upheld)</b></p> <p>If an appeal is upheld or partially upheld then depending on what decision is being appealed, the Senate Appeals Committee can decide to do one of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reverse the original decision and rescind any penalty previously imposed.</li> <li>2. If an appeal on any penalty is upheld, review the level of penalty imposed and choose to reduce or rescind it.</li> <li>3. Refer the case back to the original committee/panel with a judgement that the original committee/panel should review their decision and/or penalty. The Senate Appeals Committee can provide a recommended decision/penalty.</li> <li>4. In the case of an appeal against a decision from examiners related to a research qualification, require that the examiners reconsider their decisions or that new examiners be appointed to re-assess the thesis and re-examine the candidate.</li> </ol> <p>It should be noted that the Senate Appeals Committee is not an examination board and does not have the authority to alter the decision of a School Assessment Board or School Board of Examiners, nor to recommend an academic award.</p>
<p><b>Communicate the decision</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The decision of the Senate Appeals Committee and any effect on an existing decision and penalty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be communicated to the student by the Chair of the committee at the meeting, giving reasons for the committee's decision.</li> <li>• Will be communicated to the student by the Secretary to the Senate Appeals Committee by e-mail within 5 Working Days of the meeting.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The notice communicating the decision and any effect on an existing penalty will give reasons for the decision.</li> <li>• The decision of the Senate Appeals Committee will be final and will indicate the end of UWS processes.</li> <li>• The student will be advised of the right of appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.</li> <li>• The decision and any effect on an existing penalty or award will also be reported to the Chair of the committee/panel which the appeal was against.</li> <li>• Depending on the decision and any change to a penalty or award, Registry may be required to alter the student's record.</li> </ul>

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