



UK COLLEGE
OF BUSINESS AND COMPUTING

Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure

Reviewed by	NSD
Approved by	ASQC
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Version	V2.5

Applicability of the Policy

	<i>AAT programmes</i>	<i>Pearson HND programmes</i>		<i>BSU Programmes</i>	
	<i>Students registered on AAT Programmes</i>	<i>Students registered on NCC programmes up to Aug 2019</i>	<i>Students registered on NCC programmes from Sept 2019 or transferred to NCC registration</i>	<i>Students registered on BSU programmes up to Aug 2019</i>	<i>Students registered on BSU programmes from Sept 2019</i>
Academic Appeals at Informal stage at UKCBC	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Informal
Stage A of UKCBC Appeals policy	Applicable	Applicable	Academic Appeals procedures of NCC	Applicable	Academic Appeals procedures of BSU
Stage B of UKCBC Academic Appeals Policy	Applicable	UKCBC Stage B or NCC Academic Appeals Procedures		Academic Appeals procedures of BSU	
Issue of Completion of Procedures letter (CoP)	UKCBC	UKCBC/ NCC as applicable	NCC	BSU	BSU

Registration of students:

- Students who were registered on UKCBC's registrations with Pearson, before Aug 2019
- Students registered before Aug 2019 admitted on UKCBC's student number control
- Students registered after Aug 2019 are admitted on NCC's registrations with Pearson.
- Students registered after Aug 2019 are on franchised provision with BSU
- AAT students are all admitted and registered by UKCBC.

Introduction

UKCBC is committed to monitoring and evaluating all its teaching and assessment operations to enhance students' opportunity to attain the highest grades where possible. Feedback and comments on these operations are always welcome and students are encouraged to provide feedback to class lecturers and programme leaders directly and through regular module evaluations. Additionally, feedback can be presented to management via the Student Experience and Campus Committees.

The Student Appeals Procedure is the mechanism by which students enrolled with the College can have their concern related to academic issues and assessments evaluated and investigated.

In all cases, student appeal requests will be given highest level of consideration and with full confidentiality of the student wherever possible. **Students are not allowed to appeal against academic judgements.** They can only make an appeal on decisions related to any omissions/errors with specific references.

Links to QAA Quality Code and OIA Good Practice Framework

This document is designed to ensure confidence in the College's dealings with appeals and to actively improve its operation of academic judgements, thereby enabling students to progress through their learning and development in a timely fashion. In doing so, it takes reference from the Quality Code expectations for standards and expectations for quality core practices:

Concerns, Complaints and Appeals – Guiding Principles 1-8

Additionally, this policy resonates with the "Good Practice Framework" published by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Following the guidance of the Good Practice Framework, UKCBC is committed to concluding all formal appeals (stage A and B) within **three months** (90 calendar days) of receipt of an appeal.

Links to other policies

The remainder of this policy will relate to appeals of decisions that have a material effect on the opportunity to attain the best possible qualification by the student. UKCBC recommends that this policy is understood in the context of the wider maintenance of quality and standards, and particularly in relation to the following policies and documents:

- Complaints Policy;
- Assessment and Quality Assurance Policy;
- Academic Misconduct Policy;
- Admissions Policy;
- Student Charter;
- Attendance Monitoring Policy

Scope and Definition of Appeals

An appeal is defined, and in line with the UK Quality Code, as “*a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards*”. In the case of academic misconduct, this may include a request to change marks, progress decisions, or final award classification. It also relates to the opportunity the student must complete and attain their qualification of choice.

Appeals cannot be made against academic judgements. An appeal may be made to reconsider the resultant decisions made following:

- Assessments: - procedural irregularities, bias or undisclosed mitigating circumstances
- Academic Misconduct investigations – severity of penalty
- Attendance Monitoring – severity of penalty
- Fitness-to-study review – severity of penalty

A student can also appeal against a decision made following a disciplinary panel. An appeal may be made on the grounds of severity of the penalty awarded or for being procedurally unfair (where a student believes the procedure has not been followed).

In accordance with the student disciplinary procedure, an appeal can be lodged **within 10 days** of the notification of investigation outcome. Any suspension or expulsion of a student will remain in force during an appeal.

An appeal can be informally discussed with the relevant Programme Leader at the first instance to resolve and clarify any concerns a student may have. If such informal interaction has not satisfactorily been resolved, the student may choose to appeal to the college in writing. There are 2 stages in the Appeals procedure:

- Stage A: written submission to be reviewed by **the Director of Studies**
- Stage B: written submission to be reviewed by **the Director of Quality, Enhancement & Development**

UKCBC takes the management of appeals very seriously and will mitigate against bias, perceived bias or conflicts of interest in all cases. Therefore, appeals will be evaluated and investigated by a Chair that has had no previous involvement with the case being appealed. Where this is not possible due to operational constraints, and with the student’s agreement, other staff members will be co-opted for the purpose of the investigation.

In all cases, appeals will be considered in a fair, consistent and timely manner. No student will be disadvantaged by making an appeal in good faith, in line with the Student Charter and Student Code of Conduct.

Current and suspended students may request an appeal **within 20 working days** of notification of the academic decision to which the appeal relates.

Process of Appeals Investigation

Prior to making a formal appeal, students are generally encouraged to try and resolve their disagreement informally with a lecturer/Programme Leader or a member of Academic Staff where it is possible to do so. However, if this is not possible students must utilise the formal process commencing at Stage A. If the outcome of a lower level resolution or investigation remains unsatisfactory to the student, they may raise the appeal to the next level within the process.

Formal – Stage A

- An Appeal request is submitted to the **Director of Studies (HND, AAT) and Academic Director for BSU programmes** using UKCBC Appeals Form A – “Day Zero”
- Student receives a written acknowledgement of receipt **within 3 working days** of Day Zero
- Appeal is reviewed by the **Director of Studies/Academic Director** (Stage A Chair), (or Nominee), **within 10 working days** of receipt of the UKCBC Appeals Form A.
- The Stage A Chair will convene a panel of at least 3 members – Chair plus 2 additional colleagues to assist in the investigation
- The Investigation panel will invite the student and other parties to make a presentation as part of the investigation process.
- Student will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation **every 10 working days**.
- Where possible, the investigation will be concluded **within 20 working days** of Day Zero
- At the conclusion of the investigation the Stage A Chair will inform the student of the outcome and any action in writing. Additionally, the student will be informed that if not completely satisfied, they may raise the issue utilising the Stage B process, through BSU or NCC if applicable. Students directly registered with UKCBC will follow UKCBC Stage B process.
- The student may request a **Completion of Procedures** letter only after the completion of Stage B for UKCBC students and after due procedures of BSU/NCC as applicable. If they wish to progress the appeal directly with Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The letter will note that the internal procedures have not been fully exhausted.
- Details of the appeal, investigation and action will be recorded in the Appeals Log for annual monitoring.

Formal – Stage B (for UKCBC registered students only) – Students of BSU and NCC need to make an appeal directly as per the regulations of respective Institutions.

- Stage B Appeal requests are submitted to the Director of Quality, Enhancement and Development using UKCBC Appeal Form B – “Day Zero”.
- Student receives a written acknowledgement of receipt **within 3 working days** of submission.
- Appeal is reviewed by the Director of Quality, Enhancement and Development (Stage B Chair), (or Nominee), **within 10 working days** of receipt of the UKCBC Appeal Form B
- The Stage B Chair will convene a panel of at least 3 members – Chair plus 2 additional colleagues to assist in the investigation. All members of the panel must have no previous involvement in the appeal to ensure impartiality.
- The Investigation panel will invite the student and other parties to make presentation as part of the investigation process.
- Student will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation every **10 working days**.
- Where possible, the investigation will be concluded **within 40 working days** of Day Zero
- Details of the appeal, investigation and action will be recorded in the Appeals Log for annual monitoring.
- **Students who are directly registered with NCC or BSU post September 2019, need to take up the appeal directly to NCC or BSU as applicable, after the completion of Stage A process of UKCBC, if not satisfied with the outcome of the process.**

General Points regarding the Appeals Process

Where **a group of students** are making a formal appeal request, UKCBC will discuss the options to best resolve the appeal and proceed with the process. At times it may be more convenient to liaise with a single student on behalf of the group.

If a student is unsure about the appeals process, it may help to discuss the issue with someone confidentially and independently. The Student Representatives may be familiar with an individual’s experience and suggest ways to deal with the appeal or support individuals through the process. Furthermore, a student may receive support and assistance by being represented by a (Lead) Student Rep during the process and at investigation meetings.

Appeal against the decisions of the College to (i) Pearson (ii) New City College or (iii) Bath Spa University (As applicable in the context of the course of study undertaken).

- Students studying HND through the NCC Partnership will write to HE@redbridge-

college.ac.uk. The New City College will make a final decision on the outcomes of the appeal made to UKCBC.

- Students registered on top up degree programmes of Bath Spa University will write to complaintsofficer@bathspa.ac.uk
- Students studying HND after completion of complaints procedures of NCC can also write to Pearson at <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/contact-us/students.html>

Issue of Completion of Procedures Letter for students registered with UKCBC

After the conclusion of the investigation of both Stage A and Stage B, the **Director of Studies/Academic Director** will inform the student of the outcome and any action in writing. This letter will be known as the **Completion of Procedures (CoP)** Letter.

If the student remains unsatisfied with the outcomes or the process, they have the right to direct their appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Details can be found at "<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/guidance-for-students.aspx>"

A Certificate of Completion of Procedures (CoP) will be issued by UKCBC only on completion of all the stages and processes as explained in this paragraph.

Issue of Completion of Procedures Letter for students registered with NCC or BSU

Students who are registered directly with NCC and BSU under the revised partnership/franchised arrangements need to exhaust the respective Academic Appeals procedures with NCC or BSU who are further responsible to issue the Completion of Procedures letter to respective students.

Appeals Annual Review

As a part of the Annual Monitoring Review, all appeals are reviewed, considered and investigated to inform improvements for the student experience. This is formally reviewed each semester resulting in an Action Plan presented to the Academic Standards and Quality Committee for discussion and the college operation and student learning experience enhanced accordingly.

The college welcomes student feedback through a number of announced opportunities including module evaluations, Student Representatives, Quality Circle Activity, and access to Campus and Academic Managers, in addition to direct access to all Senior Managers. As such UKCBC welcomes the opportunity to work with students to enable such enhancements throughout the college operation.

OIA – Good Practice Principles in handling Academic Appeals

A good academic appeals process

Accessibility

- Is open to anyone who is or was recently a registered student.†
- Is easy to navigate for students.
- Gives students clear information about how to access advice and support.
- Allows students to appoint a representative.
- Is responsive to the needs of individuals.

Clarity

- Is well signposted so that students know which process to follow.
- Is easy to understand and gives clear information about time limits.
- Sets out the grounds upon which an academic appeal may be brought.
- Includes effective record keeping.

Proportionality

- Is flexible where a student raises issues which fall under more than one process.
- Expects all parties to act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the processes themselves with respect.
- Normally consists of two stages:
 - Formal stage
 - Review stage.

Timeliness

- Includes time limits within which students are normally expected to submit academic appeals.
- Allows for the identification of academic appeals which require particularly swift action.
- Will normally be completed within 90 calendar days of the start of the formal stage.

Fairness

- Ensures that decision-making staff are properly trained, resourced and supported, and able to approach each decision afresh.
- Allows each party an equal opportunity to present their case.
- Requires clear reasons to be given for decisions reached.
- Ensures that students are not disadvantaged as a result of bringing an academic appeal.

Independence

- Ensures that decisions are taken by people without actual or perceived conflicts of interest at all stages of the process.

Confidentiality

- Ensures an appropriate level of confidentiality without disadvantage.

Improving the student experience

- Captures learning to ensure that:
 - Decisions are made consistently.
 - Decisions are made at the appropriate level.
 - Appropriate action is taken on issues identified.
 - Information gathered is used to improve services for students and the student experience.