

University Academic Appeals Procedure

This Procedure is made under Regulation 6 of 2003 which is made under section 22 of Statute IX.



A. Introduction

This procedure covers **Appeals** against decisions made by boards of examiners, academic committees or other bodies which are not covered by the separate procedures listed below. This includes Appeals in relation to examination results or other assessment outcomes, including progression examinations (e.g. transfer of status).

An Appeal can only be made on one or more of the following grounds, which you must identify on your Academic Appeal Form:

- a. there was an error in the decision-making process or a procedural irregularity; and/or
- b. there was any bias or perception of bias in the decision-making process.

There is no right of appeal over matters of academic judgment.

Appeals may be brought by individual students, groups of students or former students.

The following types of appeals have separate procedures:

- Appeals against Proctors' decisions under the Examination Regulations on special arrangements for examinations. Such appeals are made to Education Committee. See [Part 18 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations](#).
- Appeals against decisions made on behalf of Education Committee regarding dispensation from regulations (e.g. relating to academic progress or examinations). These appeals are made to [Education Committee](#). More information is available from Senior Tutors and colleges.

Complaints about supervision or teaching should be pursued under the [Complaints Procedure](#).

For informal advice about the Appeals process, please contact the Proctors' Office at casework@proctors.ox.ac.uk. Advice and support are also available from OxfordSU at advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk or from your student common room.

B. General Principles

1. Appeals will be dealt with confidentially by all parties involved, except where it is necessary to disclose information to carry out a fair investigation.
2. All parties involved in an Appeal are required to act reasonably and fairly towards each other and to respect the University's procedures.
3. If an Appeal falls across more than one University procedure, the University will deal with the matter as flexibly, fairly and proportionately as possible.
4. Anyone involved in an Appeal may act through a representative who should usually be a member of the University, a member or employee of OUSU (for students), or a trade union officer (for members of staff).

5. All Appeals will be dealt with promptly. Any time-critical factors set out in the Academic Appeals Form will be taken into account.
6. Time limits should usually be met by all parties. Time limits may only be extended by the relevant decision-maker where it is necessary to do so in order to ensure a fair outcome.
7. Malicious or vexatious allegations may result in disciplinary action.
8. The University may decline to consider an Appeal where the matters in dispute are currently being considered or have been decided by an external body (such as the OIA or a court or tribunal).
9. No one investigating an Appeal should have any conflict of interest in the matter. If all of the Proctors are conflicted, the Vice-Chancellor will appoint a substitute.
10. A reference to a "Proctor" means a Proctor, a Pro-Proctor or an appointed substitute.

C. First Stage: Local Informal Resolution

1. Before making an Appeal to the Proctors, you should explore your concerns with at least one of your subject or college tutor, Senior Tutor, course director, director of studies, supervisor, or a college or departmental administrator.
2. As part of this stage, you can ask your departmental or course administrator to provide you with factual information explaining how your results and/or MCE was considered.
3. Examiners must not discuss examinations with students directly.

D. Second Stage: Formal Consideration by a Proctor

1. If, after local consultation, you continue to have concerns, you can submit an Appeal for investigation by a Proctor.
2. You should complete and submit an Academic Appeal Form ([available here](#)) to the Proctors' Office (casework@proctors.ox.ac.uk). A group of students making a joint Appeal must nominate one student as their spokesperson on the Academic Appeal Form. Exceptionally, the Proctor may consider an Appeal that is made in another format where it is fair to do so. The Academic Appeal Form should state your ground(s) of Appeal.
3. You should submit your Academic Appeal Form as soon as possible and at the latest within 20 working days of the date you were notified of the relevant academic decision.
4. If you are a member of a college and are on a taught course (rather than a research degree), your Academic Appeal Form should be submitted through your Senior Tutor.
5. The Proctors' Office will ask for evidence that you have tried to address the matter locally under the First Stage and the Proctor may decline to consider your Appeal if you have not done so.

6. The Proctors' Office will confirm receipt of your Academic Appeal Form within 5 working days.
7. The Proctor may decline to consider your Appeal if it is trivial or repeats an Appeal that has already been made.
8. For all other Appeals, the Proctor may take any steps the Proctor considers necessary to investigate, including calling on any person to provide specialist assistance.
9. The Proctors' Office will usually send details of an Appeal to the person or body which made the decision and other relevant parties and will give them up to 5 working days to respond.
10. The Proctor or a member of the Proctors' Office may request a meeting with you or any other relevant party. Anyone present at such a meeting can inspect any minutes of that meeting on request.
11. When meeting with a Proctor or a member of the Proctors' Office, a student may be accompanied by a member of University, college or OUSU staff or another student, and a member of staff can be accompanied by another member of University or college staff or a trade union representative.
12. The Proctors' Office will keep you and the original decision-maker informed of the progress of the investigation.
13. If you withdraw your Appeal at any time the Proctor may decide to continue the investigation if it is appropriate and fair to do so.
14. The Proctor will aim to complete the investigation, make a decision and send you a decision letter within 30 working days of receipt of the Academic Appeal Form. The Proctors' Office cannot guarantee that the investigation will be completed within this timeframe. There might be occasions when this timeframe needs to be extended. If the timeframe is extended, the Proctors' Office will provide you with a further update if a Proctors' decision is not available within the timeframe.
15. In the decision letter, the Proctor will explain what steps have been taken and set out the decision, including the reasons for the decision and any directions and/or recommendations. The Proctor will usually enclose a copy of any evidence material to the decision, unless doing so would breach any duties owed to a third party (such as a duty of confidentiality).
16. The Proctors' Office will also notify the outcome to the original decision-maker and any University bodies that need to be made aware of it.

E. Third Stage: Review

1. If you are dissatisfied with the Proctor's decision you may request a review of the decision on one or more of the following grounds:
 - a. there was a procedural irregularity or error in the Proctor's investigation;
 - b. the Proctor's decision was unreasonable (you must identify which aspects of the Proctor's decision you consider to be objectively unreasonable and explain why);
 - c. you were not provided with clear reasons for the Proctor's decision; or

- d. you have material evidence which the Proctor has not yet seen which you have valid reasons for not having provided earlier.
- 2. The review will be carried out by a Reviewer who will be a member of the Review Panel. The Reviewer will not have been previously involved in your Appeal.
- 3. You should submit an Academic Appeal Review Request Form ([available here](#)) to the Proctors' Office (review@proctors.ox.ac.uk) within 10 working days of the date of the Proctor's decision letter. Exceptionally, the Reviewer may consider a review request made in another format where it is fair to do so.
- 4. The Reviewer will only consider the matter on the grounds listed above, and will not consider the issues afresh or carry out a further investigation.
- 5. The Reviewer will usually reach a decision and send you a decision letter within 10 working days of receiving your Academic Appeal Review Request Form. The decision letter will set out the Reviewer's decision and the reasons for that decision.
- 6. If the Reviewer rejects your review request, you will have reached the end of the University's procedures and the decision letter will be a Completion of Procedures letter.
- 7. If the Reviewer upholds your review request, you will be informed that the matter has been referred back to the Proctors. A Proctor who has not previously been involved in your Appeal will then reconsider your Appeal in light of the Reviewer's decision. This may involve further investigation.
- 8. The Proctor will send you a final decision letter within 10 working days of the Reviewer's decision letter. This will set out the Proctor's reasons for the decision and any directions and/or recommendations. You will have reached the end of the University's procedures and the decision letter will be a Completion of Procedures letter.
- 9. The Completion of Procedures letter will also set out other sources of advice and support available to you and will state that you have the right to seek review by the Office for the Independent Adjudicator and the time limit for doing so.