

Academic Appeals Procedure

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Associated Policy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Appeals Policy QUA30 • Assessment Policy QUA26 • College Marked Assessment Procedure QUA24 • BTEC Internal Assessment Procedure QUA25 • Complaints Procedure QUA22 • Mitigating Circumstances Procedure QUA8

1. Aims

- 1.1. The purpose of this procedure is to provide an opportunity for learners to appeal against outcomes of assessment for qualification for which they are enrolled with the College and registered with an awarding organisation.
- 1.2. CRC aims to handle academic appeals fairly and timely with an overarching aim to enhance the learner experience.

2. Scope

- 2.1. An academic appeal is a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on learner progression, assessment and awards (QAA, Ch B9). This procedure is limited to addressing only complaints about academic outcome. Complaints about any other aspect will automatically be considered under CRC's Complaints Procedure QUA22
- 2.2. In the case of external assessments and examinations, the system for appeal is in accordance with the regulations and procedures of the relevant awarding organisation. Appeals in relation to examinations should be addressed to the Exams Manager.
- 2.3. **Where an academic appeal relates to a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG, QTAG or other TAG) in Summer 2021 in line with Ofqual's Extended Extraordinary Regulatory Framework (EERF), the process outlined in appendix 1 should be followed.**
- 2.4. Academic appeals are permitted only where the learner believes one of the following circumstances have occurred:
 - a) Where there is evidence that the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the regulations of the College or with awarding organisation rules
 - b) Where there is evidence that the assessment criteria relating to the specific assessment in question were incorrectly applied in arriving at the grade, mark or competency decision awarded (only where an assessment has not been second marked or internally verified)
 - c) There has been a procedural irregularity in the assessment process or material administrative error
 - d) Where the learner believes that their performance was affected by mitigating circumstances beyond their control and has supporting evidence e.g. illness, for which evidence is provided and accepted as genuine and applicable. In this instance, the learner is advised to first use the Mitigating Circumstances Procedure before an appeal.
- 2.5. A learner may **not** appeal on the following grounds:
 - a. Disputes the academic judgement or competency standards of the assessor/internal verifier or the learner believes they deserve a different outcome
 - b. Lack of knowledge of the assessment protocols or expectations
 - c. Issues relating to personal technology failure e.g. printers breaking, loss of work from a computer
 - d. Personal circumstances: please refer to our Mitigation Circumstances Procedure on how to apply for mitigation relating to assessment and examinations.

2.6. Definition of the learner.

- 2.6.1.** This procedure refers to a learner who is currently enrolled on an active programme at CRC. This procedure and related policy (Academic Appeals Policy QUA30) will be made available to learners during induction and can be requested at any time during their studies.

3. Procedure

- 3.1.** Formal appeals must be submitted in writing by the learner within 10 working days of receipt of marked work/assessment decision or within 5 days of sitting an examination.

- 3.2.** If the examination or assessment is externally controlled by an awarding organisation (AO), the learner is directed to use the AO's guidance on academic appeal. CRC will not investigate individual examination marks on behalf of a learner.

- 3.3.** The Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) will be made aware of any appeals raised on a course.

- 3.4.** To protect the interests of the learners and the integrity of the qualification, the College will adhere to the following stages:

3.5. Stage 1: Early resolution.

- 3.5.1.** Learners will be given an opportunity to discuss assessment outcomes informally with their assessor/tutor to confirm the assessment, internal and external verification process. This can include confirmation of the overarching internal verification procedures which are in operation and assurance of the quality measures aimed to protect learner achievement and college standards. The conversation will be recorded by the staff member and saved in the Course File for the relevant academic year.

- 3.5.2.** Learners will meet with their assessor/tutor within 5 working days of the assessment.

- 3.5.3.** If resolution is not reached, or the staff member is not able to identify that the assessment has satisfied procedural expectations, the academic appeal will be moved to the next stage.

3.6. Stage 2: Formal

- 3.6.1.** In the unlikely event that the learner is not satisfied with the informal stage, they can submit a formal appeal. A formal written notification must be submitted within 10 days of receiving the assessment decision or within 5 days of an examination. It must be submitted in writing (letter, email, online comments system) and be accompanied by appropriate evidence. Members of a panel will convene to hear and investigate the appeal at a mutually convenient time. The members of the panel will be:

- Appropriate manager as the chair person
- A lead internal verifier
- A Team Leader

and/or

- The Head of Department (if they were not the original assessor); or another staff member with knowledge of the area

The learner (and chosen representative) will be invited to attend the meeting; it is not a requirement that they attend. Minutes of the meeting will be recorded and distributed to the members, including the original assessor. The learner will receive in writing the outcome of the meeting and the decision to uphold or dismiss the appeal.

3.6.2. If the decision is upheld:

- a. The learner will receive notification of the actions which will be taken regarding their individual case which may include remarking of the assessment material or repeat of a practical element (with timely allowance for preparation) or representation of assessment material.
- b. The course team in collaboration with the Quality department will review their internal processes and procedures relating to assessment and quality assurance.

3.6.3. If the decision is dismissed:

- a. The learner will receive notification of the reasons why
- b. The academic appeal decision will be recorded and made available for review

3.6.4. A record of the information from any appeal (either upheld or dismissed) will be stored in the course file for the relevant academic year and made available to any internal and external quality assurer.

3.7. Stage 3: Review

3.7.1. If the learner is not satisfied with the final result, they can request a review to ensure all appropriate procedures were followed and that the decision(s) made were reasonable given the evidence submitted.

3.7.2. A manager within the College will review the processes of the formal academic appeal to ensure that procedures were followed and that the decision was reasonable. CRC will use in addition to any relevant awarding organisation's guidance on academic appeals. Any appropriate action to protect the interests of other learners and the integrity of the qualification if the outcome of any appeal warrants such action will be taken.

3.7.3. A record of the information from any appeal review (either upheld or dismissed) will be stored in the course file for the relevant academic year and made available to any internal and external quality assurer.

3.8. Continued dissatisfaction

3.8.1. If the learner is still dissatisfied with the outcome of the review, they should contact the awarding organisation. It will be acknowledged to the learner that they have completed CRC's procedure for Academic Appeals.

3.8.2. If, after exhausting all stages of the College appeals process and after appealing to the appropriate awarding organisation, the appeal still remains unresolved, the learner can raise their appeal to the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) whose decision will be final.

3.9. Recording and monitoring

3.9.1. CRC will retain records of appeals in line with relevant awarding organisation guidance. All formal appeals will be communicated to the EQA during relevant monitoring visits.

- 3.9.2.** The volume and content of appeals will be monitored to inform quality improvement, to ensure the effective of appeals procedure, to enhance the overall quality of the learner learning experience, and to promote effective learner engagement.

Appendix 1

Appeals Procedure relating to Teacher Assessed Grades awarded under the Extended Extraordinary Regulatory Framework

1. Cambridge Regional College (CRC) is committed to ensuring that when staff assess student work for external qualifications, this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification, college and awarding organisation rules. In this case, this appendix relates directly to the guidance provided by Ofqual, JCQ and each Awarding Organisation for the purpose of the process of providing calculated grades during the summer of 2021. More information can be found here: [JCQ Appeals-Guidance Summer-2021.pdf](#)
2. For qualifications assessed in the academic year 2020/21 there is a two-stage appeals process. Stage one is a 'Centre Review' which will be carried out by the college. Stage two is an appeal to the awarding organisation. A stage two appeal can only be carried out after they have received the outcome of their centre review and after the publication of results.
3. An appeal can only be made against a result that has been issued. Any student who believes that the college's decision to withdraw an entry due to insufficient evidence on which to determine a Teacher Assessed Grade, or not to make an entry in the first place, must raise concerns through the college complaints process. Any continuing concerns following completion of the college complaints process may be subsequently raised through the awarding organisations complaints process.
4. Appeals should be made in writing to the Head of Quality Improvement; information about how to do this, and the timescales in which this can be done are published on the college website www.camre.ac.uk.
5. For reviews where a higher education place is dependant on the outcome of an appeal, these will be prioritised, and the student will be advised to notify their preferred higher education provider that a review has been requested at the earliest possible opportunity.
6. The College will accept and process/investigate any request for review from a student.
7. The College will use the JCQ suggested template and consent form for appeals.
8. The College will keep a record of all review applications received and the outcomes of these reviews.
9. A student can withdraw a request for a review or appeal only as long as no finding has been made.
10. When an appeal is received the following procedure will be followed. All appeals will be checked for administrative and general procedural error. Each appeal will be led by a Quality Manager.

Stage 1 Centre Review

Administrative review

11. An example of an administrative error is the transposing of grades for students with similar names.
On receipt of a request for administrative review the following checks will take place. This is not an exhaustive list, and further checks may be required, under the guidance of the Head of Quality Improvement:
- Is there a record of the student on the student assessment record? The version submitted to Exams will be the one reviewed.
 - Do the grades match those on the available evidence, or on the assessment records held on MarkBook or in the Course File if Markbook is not used.
 - Is there a TAG recorded? Does it match the result awarded?
 - If the TAG does not match the result awarded, a check will be made with the Exams Manager to see if there was an error made when the TAG was submitted.
12. A record of this review will be made on the JCQ template. A copy will be retained in the appeal folder in the Quality (G) drive, together with all documents reviewed.

Procedural review

13. The types of procedural failure a student may raise include the existence and consideration of mitigating circumstances; the provision of agreed access arrangements/reasonable adjustments for an assessment; internal quality assurance processes; the authentication of work.
14. On receipt of a request for procedural review the following checks will take place. This is not an exhaustive list, and further checks may be required, under the guidance of the Head of Quality Improvement:
- Review the request made by the student to ascertain the reason for the review.
 - Check the student assessment record, the assessment evidence records, and the individual student variations record, as appropriate. The version of the student assessment record reviewed will be the one submitted to Exams.
 - If there is a discrepancy found, further investigation may be required, for example a discussion with the Head of Department or Team Leader. Notes must be taken of all meetings and documents reviewed.
15. A record of this review will be made on the JCQ template. A copy will be retained in the appeal folder in the Quality (G) drive, together with all documents reviewed.
16. Once the college has considered the review and determined if a grade change is necessary due to a procedural failure or administrative error, it must report the outcome either to the student who submitted the review (if the grade has not changed) or to the awarding organisation to request a change to the grade.
- 17. If the college's review finds a failure and concludes that a grade change is needed, before reporting the outcome to the student, the college will submit an error correction request to the relevant awarding organisation as soon as possible.**
18. The college will follow the process outlined by each awarding organisation. The error correction request to the awarding organisation must include the outcome of the review, the reason for the decision made and will be signed off by the head of centre or the Vice Principal for Quality Improvement.
19. Awarding organisation staff will then consider the outcome and reasons and make the final decision about changing the grade. Amended grades will be reported to the college, to be shared with the student along with the centre's review decision.
20. In cases where the awarding organisation disagrees with the college's decision to amend a grade as the result of a review and considers it inappropriate to do so, or

- considers a different grade to be appropriate, the awarding organisation will clearly communicate its reasons to the college.
21. The decision the college provides to the student will be set out using the JCQ template with a covering email. It will set out:
- a. whether or not the review found a procedural failure or administrative error
 - b. if it did, what that error was
 - c. the reason for the finding
 - d. whether there was a grade change and, if so, what the new grade is (if reporting an outcome pre-results, this information must not be provided)
 - e. a reason for the grade change, or lack of change (including any additional explanation from the awarding organisation where its decision was different to the centre's); and
 - f. information on the next steps if a student wishes to submit an appeal to the awarding organisation.

Stage 2 Appeals to the awarding organisation

22. The college will submit an appeal to the awarding organisation if the student considers that:
- a. the college did not follow its procedure properly or consistently in arriving at the result, or during the college review
 - b. the awarding organisation made an administrative error in relation to the result
 - c. the college made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/or the determination of that grade from the evidence.
23. The college will identify a named contact for all awarding organisation appeals to reduce delay in administering appeals; this is particularly important where an HE place is dependent upon results.
24. The college will follow the appeals process for each awarding organisation
25. The college will gather the following information from the student using the JCQ template:
- a. what they consider the college failed to do, why that was a failure to follow the college's procedures, and why that failure was important to the determination of the Teacher Assessed Grade
 - b. in what way they consider the awarding organisation made an administrative error, and what difference it made to the determination of the Teacher Assessed Grade If the candidate is dissatisfied with the outcome of the college review into an alleged administrative error by the college, the candidate should appeal on the basis that the college has failed to follow the review procedure properly or consistently.
 - c. in what way they consider there was an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement:
 - i. in the selection of evidence used to determine the Teacher Assessed Grade
 - ii. in the determination of a Teacher Assessed Grade from the selected evidence.

The requirements for each ground of appeal are different and not all grounds require any additional rationale:

- appeals made on the grounds of a general procedural check or on the grounds that there has been an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the determination of the grade from the evidence do not require submission of an explanation

- appeals made on the grounds of a procedural check in relation to mitigating circumstances or access arrangements/reasonable requirements do require submission of an explanation
 - appeals made on the grounds of an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade do require an explanation of the student's concerns
 - appeals made on the grounds of an administrative error do require an explanation of the perceived error.
- d. a clear statement that grades may be raised, stay the same or be lowered as the result of an appeal, with space to confirm that the student understands this and consents to those outcomes
 - e. relevant accompanying evidence. The college will use the JCQ checklist and will upload this with the evidence
 - f. a named contact at the college who can handle any awarding organisation queries. This will be the Head of Quality Improvement.
26. Once the college has submitted the appeal to the awarding organisation, it will confirm to the student that it has done so.
 27. The awarding organisation will advise if an application of an appeal is not accepted and provide the reason(s) for this.

Reporting the outcome

28. As a result of the appeal, the awarding organisation will report these findings to the college and direct them to review the Teacher Assessed Grade. This review will be carried out by a Quality Manager under the direction of the Head of Quality Improvement. The college will then inform the awarding organisation if it believes there should be a change to the grade.
29. An awarding organisation may impose a change to the grade. Appeals made on the grounds of procedural error will be evaluated by a staff member or an independent reviewer appointed by the awarding organisation.
30. Following final quality assurance checks, where it considers it appropriate to do so, the awarding organisation will make the grade amendment and report the outcome of the appeal, with reasons for its decision, to the college.
31. Where an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement is identified by the awarding organisation, the independent reviewer will determine the alternative grade. The awarding organisation will then report the revised grade and outcome of the appeal, with reasons, to the college.
32. The college will share the outcome of the awarding organisation appeal, and where appropriate the next stage of the process, with the student within 2 working days.
33. Following the conclusion of the awarding organisation's appeal process, a student who remains concerned their grade was incorrect may be able to apply for a procedural review to the Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) from Ofqual. Further information relating to this will be shared with students in their outcome letter from the college.

Document history

Date	Issue number	Change/Comments	Date Approved	Approved by
2015	1	Procedure Written	1/12/2015	
2017	2	Review and update	20/7/2017	
2019	3	Minor Amendments	7/3/2019	
2019	4	Minor Amendments	12/11/2019	
2021	5	Minor amendments including updating job titles and roles	15/04/2021	Quality Assurance Manager
2021	6	Appeals relating to TAGs awarded under the EERF procedure added as Appendix 1		



Contact Us
enquiry@camre.ac.uk