Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure

Introduction:

In accordance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

1. The undelisted highlight our approach to the process of appeals:
    - **a.** Clarity in the process and it's simplicity.
    - **b.** A focus on a solution-centric process
    - **c.** Fairness and consistency in the hearing from both the learner and the assessor
    - **d.** The independence of the panel and the adjudicating individuals.
    - **e.** Maintaining awareness through the creation of visibility tools, such as the central information sites and portals and support ser ices
    - f. Confidentiality of all parties concerned with and involved in the process.
    - **g.** An open-door policy and a willingness to learn from presented issues with a view to improving the student experience
2. All of our appeal processes will be reviewed and appropriated under these seven broad headings. We are aware that each educational institution maintains its individual statement of how the above principles are supported. Acme's reviews its procedures against the backdrop of these seven on an annual basis. This forms an integral part of it's Learning and Development supervisory functions.
3. The students appeals regulations and policy to be followed are agreed between Acme and each partner institution as part of the collaborative and support provisions' contractual process and included in each signed Memorandum of Understanding and the student's programme handbook.
4. The remainder of the policy identifies agreed dynamics for supporting the articulation of the seven principles within practice.

Clarity in language and process

1. Our appeals procedure is important for both the learners and for the student body. Our staff and students are expected to remain confident that our appeals processes are fair and far-reaching and that lessons learned are fed into future institutional plans.

2. Acme has developed a set of standard forms and guidance to be used by

students wishing to submit a School-level appeal or a University-level appeal request.

3. Students will be kept informed of the progress and outcomes of their appeal at the periodic stages of the process.

4. It is pertinent to state that student academic appeals are different from student complaints, which should be dealt with via the Student Complaints Regulations portal. To protect the integrity of the appeal regulations and to support consistency of treatment between students, any complaints that are incorporated within an appeal claim will be dealt with separately and in accordance with the principle and regulations as stipulated in the students complaints portal Ordinarily, consideration of an appeal will occur before the consideration of a complaint.

Support and resolution

1. The appeals procedure is the last in a set of options of possible actions available for students who have challenges with regard to their assessment, award or career progression. These may be related to circumstances outside the immediate control of the student, or to mistakes made during assessment. The mechanisms are made known to students through various fora such as handbooks and social media published provided by schools and approved institutions as well as through the Student Information Centre.

2. At Acme, our objective is to enable early, informal resolution of mistakes as much as possible, and to assist students experiencing challenges in ways that do not compromise academic standards in relation to their academic colleagues. Where the problems do happen, we aim to learn from these and therefrom progressively improve the student experience. Lessons are learned from individual appeals and a periodic review process at relevant authority levels ensure that lessons learned from such appeals inform the institutional changes and the improvement of support services for students.

Fairness and consistency

1. Every case of appeal is considered on its own merits, and are considered in accordance with University Regulation and Policy and the outcomes seek to uphold principles of natural justice and fairness for the study body as a whole as well as for individuals.

2. The school still has a responsibility to ensure that no student is unfairly advantaged through any special arrangements unavailable to other students.

3. Dealing with appeals should be done in a timely fashion. The regulations include timelines for the consideration of different stages of an appeal which

should be treated as normal timelines.

4. In line with our vision as an equal opportunity, equality and diversity institution, we will make reasonable adjustments to the Regulations where appropriate after our periodic reviews whenever reasonable

Independence and integrity

1. The appeals procedure seeks to ensure fairness both to individual students and to the student body as a whole. We have a responsibility to our students to maintain the quality and standards of our awards and preserve the integrity of academic judgement. Our appeals procedures and potential outcomes are designed to ensure that fairness is maintained through independence in the consideration of appeals and independence in academic judgements by adjudicators.

2. Staff involved in decision-making at the School level stage of an appeal are not expected to have any responsibilities for decision-making should the appeal be submitted for review of the institution. The Student Affairs Officer is responsible for appointing staff considering appeals and will need to take into account conflicts of interest during the appointment process.

3. Independence in decision-making by those appointed by the School Officer needs to be assured. Also, those appointed are expected to possess the necessary knowledge, seniority, and experience to discharge their responsibilities:
    a. Individuals consulted during the course of an investigation are selected on the basis of their knowledge of the case, expertise and/ or experience in the issues under investigation.
    b. Individuals managing appeals are appointed on the basis of their expertise, experience and knowledge of the relevant procedures.
    c. It is expected that decision-making at the initial scrutiny and appeal panel stages should be carried out by individuals with adequate experience and expertise to: consider the evidence presented, and reach a considered judgement based on the facts presented.
    d. Matters of academic judgement remain the responsibility of the Assessment Board but academic input is important during the appeals process and it is expected that consultation and decision-making will be undertaken by an appropriate mix of academic and professional services staff at each stage of the appeals process.
    e. It is recommended that a senior supervisor is available for initial scrutineers to consult with and that any appeal panel includes at least one senior supervisor within its membership for research students

4. The Students' Union has a key role to play in providing students with a source of independent advice and support concerning appeals and other related matters. Students are encouraged to contact the Students' Union at the earliest possible

opportunity if they are experiencing problems.

Maintaining awareness

1. Schools maintain a statement indicating the key points at which students are notified of the appeals regulations and procedures. As a minimum these including:

    a. the provision of accurate, up-to-date information about the appeal regulations and policy in programme handbooks. The programme handbook will also contain information on other sources of advice and guidance students can access;reminders concerning the options for appeal when results are released.

Respecting confidentiality

1. The school has a duty to investigate appeals made in good faith which meet the grounds identified in the Policy and Procedures. This will involve the sharing of information during the course of the investigation. The circulation of the appeals documentation and evidence will be limited to the adjudicators directly involved in the investigation who might reasonably be expected to require direct sight of the information in order to ensure the investigation is conducted with fairness and without prejudice.

Equality and Diversity

1. Acme promotes equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected peoples, working patterns, family, socio-economic background, political inclinations, belief or other distinction.

2. Wherever relevant to the procedures, panels saddled with making decisions will ensure a reasonable gender balance and will also consider representation of other protected groups.

Personal responsibility

3. At Acme, we will, consistently act on and provide solutions to any errors made which might impact on a student's career progression or award as quickly as possible. We remain hopeful that students make any potential oversights known to us at the earliest possible opportunity.

4. When potential grounds for an appeal is identified by a student, we expect the appropriate documentation and accompanying guidance to be used in preparing for the appeal. These are made available on the school's website along with other sources of guidance and support.

5. Our appeals procedures are designed to be simple and we encourage feedback from students on their functionality.

Enhancement

6. Schools and approved Institutions prepare periodic reports on appeals considered at all levels to. These detail the number and outcome of cases.

a. Schools prepare annual review and action. These are actions designed to create a point of focus for:

   i. the collation of data to be used for annual evaluation and enhancement at local level;
   ii. the facilitation of useful feedback and collaboration between Schools and central information services including Students' Associations and Academic Service Divisions
   iii. the articulation of the ways in which Schools embed Acme's principles for appeals;
   iv. the articulation of systematic evaluation and improvement activities with relevant proof

b. Schools prepare annual review and action plans are also designed to provide an arrangement for:

   i. the achievement of synergy of good practice across Schools;
   ii. the retention of local knowledge and cultural practice which might otherwise be lost over time;
   iii. the collaboration of School and support service recommendations for institutional change.