

# Student Academic Queries and Appeals Policy

Effective from 1 September 2024

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out how student academic queries and appeals will be handled.

It ensures that academic queries and appeals are dealt with fairly and promptly, and at the appropriate level. This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Student Academic Queries and Appeals Procedure](#).

## 2. What is covered by the policy?

This policy relates to academic queries and appeals submitted by all students, regardless of level, location or programme of study.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

The **Academic Registrar**, or nominee, is the senior person in the University with overall responsibility for ensuring a proper outcome for an academic query or appeal. The Academic Registrar is also responsible for considering requests for Level 3 case reviews of academic appeals.

**Appeal Adjudicators** are impartial academic colleagues responsible for considering whether an academic appeal should be upheld or not.

**Appellants** are students or former students wishing to query or appeal against an academic decision. Appellants are responsible for ensuring that the information they provide is accurate.

**Case Officers** are members of the Student Progress Service with responsibility for administering Level 2 and Level 3 academic appeals.

**The Chair of the Board of Examiners** for your programme of study may consider Level 1 academic queries.

**The Chair of the Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Committee** for your programme of study may consider Level 1 academic queries.

**The Dean of Education** for your programme of study may consider Level 1 academic queries.

**Degree Programme Directors (DPDs)** for your programme of study may consider Level 1 academic queries.

**The Director of the Student Progress Service** is responsible for considering Level 2 academic appeals and deciding whether or not they meet the specific grounds to be admitted for consideration by an Appeal Adjudicator.

## 4. Policy

### 4.1. Fairness

All student academic queries and appeals will be investigated thoroughly, fairly and within a reasonable timeframe.

The University will disclose relevant case documents to appropriate parties involved in the academic query or appeal.

To ensure impartiality, Appeal Adjudicators appointed to consider a Level 2 or Level 3 academic appeal will have no prior connection to the appellant or their programme of study.

If the Appeal is considered at more than one level of the Procedure, each Level of appeal will be considered by a new, impartial University employee, with no prior involvement in your case.

If your appeal is upheld and referred back to your School, an Appeal Adjudicator may request that an independent Chair is appointed to reconsider your case in order to avoid instances of the same person being responsible for making decisions about your specific circumstances.

### 4.2. Timeframes

#### 4.2.1. Level 1

Level 1 academic queries should be submitted in writing to the relevant Chair of the Board of Examiners, Chair of the PEC Committee, Degree Programme Director or Dean of Education, within 14 calendar days of the publication of the academic decision against which you wish to appeal.

Level 1 outcomes should normally be determined within 14 calendar days of submission.

#### 4.2.2. Level 2

Level 2 academic appeals should be submitted in writing to [casework@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:casework@ncl.ac.uk), within 21 calendar days of the outcome of the Level 1 decision.

The receipt of the appeal will be acknowledged in writing within 7 calendar days. If the Director of the Student Progress Service determines that your academic appeal does not meet the specified grounds to be admitted for consideration, this decision will be communicated to you in writing within 14 calendar days of the decision.

If the Director of the Student Progress Service determines that your appeal does meet the specified grounds to be admitted for consideration, your academic appeal all relevant

documentation will be forwarded to the appropriate Academic Unit for comment. The Academic Unit will normally be given 7 calendar days to respond, and their comments will then be forwarded to you. You will be given 7 calendar days to submit any further comments or evidence in support of your appeal.

Then all documentation submitted will be sent to an impartial Appeal Adjudicator for consideration, and you will be informed of the outcome, in writing, normally within 14 calendar days of their decision. Where there is a delay expected in the process you will be informed in writing.

#### 4.2.3. Level 3

Requests for Level 3 case reviews should be submitted in writing to the Academic Registrar (via [casework@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:casework@ncl.ac.uk)) within 14 calendar days of the Level 2 outcome or reconsideration of the Academic decision made by the relevant Academic Unit. The Academic Registrar will consider whether your request meets the specified criteria for a case review.

Consideration of a Level 3 case review of the appeal outcome will normally be determined within 30 calendar days from the receipt of the request for review, although some circumstances may require a longer period of investigation. Any delays to the determination will be communicated to you in writing.

#### 4.3. Confidentiality

All University colleagues and students involved in the investigation of an academic query or appeal have a duty of confidentiality to the Appellant. This means that all parties should refrain from discussing the case with anyone other than people who may be deemed to have a legitimate need to know.

By submitting the Academic Queries and Appeals form via your Newcastle University email account, you are giving permission for relevant colleagues with a legitimate business need to access your documentation.

Relevant colleagues will be informed, in confidence, of the outcome of any Academic Appeal case.

#### 4.4. Appeals

Where an Appellant is unhappy with a Level 1 academic query decision, they may submit a Level 2 academic appeal to [casework@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:casework@ncl.ac.uk) for further impartial consideration.

Where an academic query has been referred back for reconsideration and the Appellant is

unhappy with the offered resolution, they may submit a Level 3 request for review to the Academic Registrar (via [casework@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:casework@ncl.ac.uk)), on the grounds set out below.

An Appellant may appeal a Level 2 academic appeal decision by submitting a request for review to the Academic Registrar (via [casework@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:casework@ncl.ac.uk)), based on one or more of the following:

- Procedural irregularity;
- Unreasonable decision.

Level 3 decisions made by the Academic Registrar (or their nominee) are final and may not normally be appealed against.

Following a Level 3 decision about an academic appeal, the Appellant will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter to confirm that the University's internal procedures have been completed.

If you are dissatisfied with the final outcome you receive from the University, you can seek an external review of your case by submitting a claim to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator \(OIA\)](#). Claims to the OIA must be submitted within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.

#### 4.5. Monitoring

The Director of the Student Progress Service will make an annual report to the University Education Committee of all academic appeals investigated under this policy, including:

- The number of formal Level 2 academic appeals made, and whether they were upheld or rejected;
- The nature of the matters raised and any remedial action recommended and taken.

Equality monitoring data will be collected for all academic appeals investigated under this policy. This information will be used to ensure that no group or groups of students are negatively impacted by the application of this procedure. This data will be anonymised and shared internally for service improvement purposes only.