



Academic Appeals

There may be occasions when you may need to ask for a formal review of the University's academic decision, in other words to appeal. Reasons for appealing vary, from failing an upgrade or exam or receiving a decision about termination of your study.

In order to appeal, you need to first familiarise yourself with the **University of Southampton Academic Appeals regulations**, which are located on the University Calendar:

<http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/student-appeals.html>

Remember!

You cannot question the academic judgement of the examiner of marker. For example, if you think you deserve a better mark than the one you received.

Do I have grounds to appeal?

Before you start appealing, you need to find out if you have grounds.

There are only **3 potential grounds** that you can appeal under and the following questions may help you identify if you have evidence supporting any of them. A student can only appeal if:

- **Ground 4.1 That they possess new substantive information supported by evidence which was not known by the student and/or the evidence could not reasonably have been obtained by the student in time to present to the board or panel of the University which made the original decision against which the student is appealing**

Consider: What is your new substantive information? How does it relate to what has happened? What evidence can you provide to back it up? Is this an isolated incident, or on-going? Why were you not able to provide this information prior to the relevant body making its decision? What outcome are you seeking?

- **Ground 4.2 That there has been significant failure of due process in the making of the original decision (including but not limited to irregularity in the procedures of the University or significant computational or administrative errors of fact in results published), which the student believes affected the University's original decision**

Consider: Which formal process do you feel the School has not adhered to? Can you point to where this is written down in the School or University Regulations/Handbook? How does this failure relate to what has happened? What outcome are you seeking?



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- **Ground 4.3 That their performance had been adversely affected by illness or by other factors (e.g family crisis) which, in exceptional circumstances, they were unable or for valid reason unwilling to disclose to the University before it made its original decision**

Consider: What factors affected your performance and how do they link to the decision you are appealing? What evidence can you provide to support your case? Why could you not provide this information/alert someone (within the faculty) to this problem (by utilising the Special Considerations procedure, for example) prior to the relevant body making its decision? Was this an isolated incident, or is it on-going? If it is on-going, what steps can you take/support can you engage with, to ensure it has a reduced impact on your performance in the future?

Advice Alert!

The decision you are appealing must be a formal, ratified decision (confirmed by the Exam Board), not a provisional result. If in doubt, ask the Assessment team at your faculty.

How do I make an appeal?

Deadlines for appealing are quite tight. You can normally **appeal within 10 working days, or in the case of supplementary examinations, within 5 working days**, of the date you received the decision.

To start the appeal process, you need to **complete the Stage 1 Notice to Appeal form** located **under Appendix A of the Academic Appeals regulations**: <http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/student-appeals.html>. You need to submit it your faculty's Curriculum & Quality Assurance (CQA) team along the relevant supporting evidence.

CQA team contact details:

Arts and Humanities	fah-cqa@soton.ac.uk
Engineering and Physical Sciences	feps-cqa@soton.ac.uk
Environmental and Life Sciences	fels-cqa@soton.ac.uk
Medicine	fmed-cqa@soton.ac.uk
Social Sciences	fss-cqa@soton.ac.uk



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You will be invited to a Preliminary Discussion (Stage 1 Appeals meeting), usually within 5 working days from sending the form. Make sure you prepare for the meeting by writing a statement, which will ensure you cover all aspects of your case and make your appeal strong.

Top Tip

Writing a good statement can win your appeal! We have prepared a useful guide to help you write a statement. Helpful Features of a Student Statement Guide:

<https://www.susu.org/downloads/advice/Student%20Statement%20Guide.pdf>

Can the Advice Centre support me in my appeal?

As a student you have the right to seek independent advice and support regarding your appeal. Our Advisers can help you prepare and make the most of your appeal. They can also go with you to the appeal meeting and support you throughout.

What to do if you want the Centre's help with appealing

- Make an appointment with an Adviser in the Advice Centre
- Complete the Notice to Appeal Form and prepare relevant evidence
- Draft your statement
- Meet with the Adviser to go through your appeal, give you feedback for the appeals form and your statement
- Redraft your initial statement if necessary. If you need further feedback, send it to the Adviser after your initial appointment. Make sure you do it as soon as possible to ensure the Adviser can reply in time
- Submit the Notice to Appeal form and evidence to your faculty's CQA team
- Attend the Preliminary Discussion appeal meeting.

IMPORTANT! If you would like an Adviser to attend the Preliminary Discussion with you, you must contact the Advice Centre to inform them of the time and date of the meeting in advance.

Remember!

If you have a tight deadline for appealing and you may miss it because you cannot get an appointment with the Advice Centre, let the faculty know that you need more time, or send the paperwork for the appeal on time and then come to see an Advisor.



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What happens at the Preliminary Discussion meeting?

The meeting will be semi-formal. There will be a staff member from your faculty selected to review your appeal ('the appeal reviewer') and a note taker. You can bring one of the Advice Centre's Advisers to support you, but make sure you have an appointment in the Advice Centre beforehand.

During the meeting you will be asked for the grounds of your appeal and to outline your case. It is helpful to have a statement, as this will ensure you cover all aspects of your appeal and do not miss anything important. You may be asked questions about your situation or details of what has happened that led to the appeal. You will not get the outcome on the day, but you will receive the outcome within 5 working days.

What outcome can I expect from the Preliminary Discussion?

There can only be one of three potential outcomes of the Preliminary Discussion.

- The staff member accepts your appeal and recommends a change to the original decision
- The staff member decides that you did not demonstrate the grounds for appeal and makes a recommendation that you do not proceed with submitting a formal appeal - Stage 2: Academic Appeals (AA) Panel
- The staff member is of the view that the academic appeal does not fall within the scope of the Regulations e.g. it is not correctly made or it should be made under other regulations etc.

If the staff member who considered your appeal recommends that you do not go to formal appeal (Stage 2: Academic Appeals (AA) Panel) because you did not demonstrate grounds or evidence for your appeal, you still have the right to continue with the process and can proceed to next stage. Consult the Advice Centre at this point, to clarify the Stage 2 process and the strength of your case.

Further guidance

For further guidance on the Academic Appeals regulations, contact the Advice Centre.

- 02380 592 085
- advice@susu.org

You can also visit us in Building 40, Highfield campus. Our opening hours are Monday–Friday 09.00–17.00.



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Disclaimer: While care has been taken to ensure that information contained in the Advice Centre publications is true and correct at the time of writing, changes in circumstances after the time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information. The Advice Centre and SUSU cannot accept responsibility for any actions taken as a result of advice given in this publication.

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