

Procedure 002: Academic Appeals

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 This procedure describes how the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) ensures the equitable, transparent and timely consideration of a student's appeal against an academic decision in relation to assessment, progression, grades, and award outcomes.

1.2 This Procedure aims to explain the reasonable due course which students are required to consider and follow when submitting an Academic Appeal.

2. Procedure

2.1. ACM seeks to resolve all appeals and complaints in a timely manner through considered escalation of matters as outlined in this procedure.

Early Resolution Stage 1:

2.2. Where a student wishes to dispute an academic outcome they should, in the first instance, seek further advice and clarification through the Senior Programme Officer (SPO), who will facilitate meetings and responses to the student's queries. This is considered the first early resolution stage. Normally consultation through this stage will provide further clarity around the academic decision and provide guidance in relation to the formal appeals process, where relevant.

2.3 Where there are reasonable grounds to remedy the academic decision due a clear material or administrative error, the Programme Manager may take actions to remedy the matter. Any resolutions and actions that are agreed with the appellant must be kept on record and communicated to the student and Registry in writing.

2.4 Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal stage they may escalate their appeal to the formal stage.

2.5 If the Student Progression and Achievement Board (SPAB), or Final Exam Board (FEB) considers that there may be grounds for an academic appeal, it may request, through the Senior Programme Officer, that a written statement be provided to the Board providing the required information. These written statements should be in a form suitable for use as evidence at an Appeal Panel they may be escalated to the first formal stage.

Formal Stage 2:

2.6 All academic appeals must be submitted in writing to Registry within 10 working days of the publication of the academic decision that is being disputed. The appellant should attach relevant supporting materials and evidence to support their appeal. Appeals that lack relevant supporting documentation may be dismissed.

2.7 Registry will assess whether the application meets conditions for academic appeal, and may request further information from the appellant, relevant programme team, or independent staff, to ensure a fair assessment is made of the appeal.

2.8 Registry will acknowledge receipt of the appeal in writing, and notify the appellant of the next steps within 10 working days of receiving the appeal. Normally one of the following will apply:

1. the matter the appellant has raised does not meet conditions for academic appeal and no action will be taken,
2. the matter the appellant has raised does not meet conditions for academic appeal, they may seek further recourse through the Complaints and Grievances provisions,
3. the matter will be referred to an Appeal Panel, the FEB or SPAB for consideration

Appeal Panel

2.9 An Appeal Panel will be constituted by Registry and will consist of a minimum of three staff members, chaired by a senior staff member that has not been directly involved in the matter that is subject to appeal. The panel will normally consist of a member from the Registry team and two members from the Education team. The panel will examine the evidence that has been submitted, and may opt to call meetings with the appellant, and staff involved in order to gather further evidence to make a reasonable determination of the outcome of appeal.

2.10 For an appeal against a penalty imposed for academic misconduct: the documentation used in relation to the academic misconduct shall be provided to the Appeal Panel.

Student Progression and Achievement Panel, Finalist Exam Board (Appeal Panel)

2.11 Appeals of provisional grades may be considered by the SPAB and appeals of the final grades will be considered by the FEB. These Panels shall consist of a minimum of three members including the Chair.

2.12 In compelling circumstances, the Chair of the SPAB or FEB may take Chair's Action in the student's favour, and this decision must be reported at the first opportunity at the sitting of the Student Progression and Achievement Board, or Final Exam Board. The Chair shall formally communicate this decision to Registry, who will notify the appellant within 5 working days.

2.13 A record of all panel interviews and a record of the panel outcome(s) will be provided to Registry in writing.

2.14 Panel proceedings should be concluded within 30 days of the initial notification of the receipt of the academic appeal. The outcome reached by the Panel will be communicated to the appellant in writing through Registry. Registry will communicate the outcome of the Panel proceedings within 5 working days.

2.15 A decision on an appeal by the Appeal Panel (SPAB or FEB) is final and no further appeal is possible against it.

2.16 At this stage the academic appeal procedures of ACM are concluded. Where the appellant is dissatisfied with the outcome they may escalate the matter to the awarding body.

2.17 An appellant's failure to reply in writing within 10 working days of the date on the letter offering an informal settlement shall be taken as acceptance of the offer.

2.18 A decision on an appeal by a Student Progression and Achievement Board or Final Exam Board is final and no further appeal is possible against it within ACM. Students have the right to follow the Appeals Regulations of the awarding body for their programme.

Student Progression:

2.19 Until the appeal is concluded, the appellant:

- Will be allowed to continue their studies, except under circumstances where the academic decision being disputed is in relation to a progression decision in accordance with institutional progression regulations,
- Must continue to meet attendance, engagement, and assessment requirements for the programme.

Formal Stage 3:

2.20 Where a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of ACM's Academic Appeal procedure, they may escalate their appeal to Middlesex University. Middlesex University Regulations for Appeals apply to all Higher Education programmes and these are set out in Section G: Appeal Regulations and Procedures, of the Middlesex University Regulations which are available online at: <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/university-regulations>

Formal Stage 4:

2.21 Where the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the University proceedings, they may escalate their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for students in Higher Education. The University can provide further guidance to the appellant if they wish to escalate their appeal. Information about the OIA is available here: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

3. Responsible Parties

- 3.1 The policy lead is responsible for the cyclical monitoring and review of the policy in liaison with the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager. The Academic Appeals Policy lead is:

- Head of Quality and Student Experience

3.2 Decisions and appropriate actions in support of the implementation of the Policy will be authorised by the following designated staff:

- Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager
- Registry Manager
- Group Head of Education
- Programme Managers
- Senior Programme Officers
- Chair and Secretariat of the Finalist Exam Board
- Chair and Secretariat of the Student Progression and Achievement Board

4. Supporting Documentation

- Appeals Policy
- Deferral of Assessment Policy
- Extenuating Circumstances Policy
- Extenuating Circumstances Procedure
- Extenuating Circumstances Form
- Interruption of Studies Form

5. Date of Approval and Next Review

Version: 2.1

Approved on: 21 May 2018

Approved by: Academic Board

Next Review: 01 Aug 2019