

Academic Appeals Policy

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This policy has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation and Disability. We will continue to monitor this policy and to ensure that it has equal access and does not discriminate against anyone, especially any person/s listed under any protected characteristic.

1. It is the policy of Bedford College Group to develop and maintain assessment procedures that are fair, reliable and open to scrutiny. The College charter fully outlines the College's commitment to students.
2. The Bedford College Group operates a rigorous system of internal verification across all of its centres to guarantee fair assessment that complies with awarding organisation requirements. It is recognised, however, that there could be exceptional circumstances when individual students or groups may wish to appeal against recommendations or decisions relating to assessment. The following appeals procedure outlines the action that may be taken in such circumstances.
3. In all cases the centre's academic appeal process supports and supplements the appeal process for all awarding organisations and Higher Education Institutions. While students are encouraged to follow the College's internal appeals policy, students have the right to appeal directly to the relevant awarding organisation or relevant Higher Education Institution at any time. Students also have a right to appeal through the appeals procedure as stated in the NVQ Code of Practice.
4. For all FE Awarding Organisations and for Pearson Higher Nationals, the student may request support from the Quality Nominee in order to access and understand the awarding organisation's appeals process. Likewise, the HE Director is available to provide similar support for Appeals related to University validated programmes.

Scope of Policy and Procedure

5. Any student who believes that a piece of work submitted for assessment has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the standards and level required by the awarding Organisation, shall have the right to appeal against the assessment mark, grade or final outcome.
6. In the first instance any concerns should be discussed with the student's personal tutor or a member of the teaching team. While it is recognised that in most circumstances student queries relating to assessment can and will be resolved informally, the formal appeals procedure is available to support students in their appeal.
7. If a student needs help in making an appeal, this can be obtained by contacting their personal tutor or a member of the Quality department.
8. It is the responsibility of students to inform the centre if they are not satisfied with the grading of any piece of work. The College Appeals policy and procedure enables students to make a formal appeal against a recommendation or decision relating to:
 - (i) The mark or grade for an individual item of coursework
 - (ii) The result of an individual course

- (iii) Entitlement to an award
- (iv) The class or grade of an award

Note 1 Throughout this document a piece of work shall refer to a set task which may be a written report, essay or assignment, a diagrammatic or pictorial representation, the production of a tangible item or artefact, a portfolio of work or an oral presentation or performance.

Grounds for Appeal

9. A student/candidate may appeal against an assessment decision if he/she believes that the decision is unfair or unreasonable. Normally an appeal can be made on any one of the following grounds:
 - (i) Relevant assessment criteria have been met but not acknowledged
 - (ii) The assessments were not conducted in accordance with the awarding Organisation's regulations
 - (iii) Assessment procedures, including examinations, were not conducted fairly
 - (iv) The internal verifier was presented with incorrect or inaccurate assessment information
 - (v) There were medical or other extenuating circumstances of which the relevant course manager was unaware when assessment decisions were being made
 - (vi) There was unfairness or impropriety on the part of one or more of the assessors/examiners
 - (vii) The student was unjustifiably excluded from an examination or an assessment opportunity
10. For appeals related to externally assessed work or examinations, the student must appeal directly to the relevant Awarding Organisation.
11. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the course manager in writing of any extenuating circumstances which may be adversely affecting the student's performance. Normally, this should be done before the assessment process takes place.

Appeals Procedure

12. The procedure for appeals is detailed on page 5 of this document.

Awarding Organisation Rules and Regulations

13. Where the Awarding/EPAO Organisation allows, if a learner is unable to resolve an appeal with the centre then they have a right to escalate the appeal to the associated Awarding or EPAO Organisation. Any appeal must be submitted within 20 days of the associated assessment.
14. The relevant Awarding Organisation's appeals procedure will be invoked where:
 - a. The issue cannot be resolved internally
 - b. The appeal is in relation to an examination

Further Reading

15. This policy cross-references with the following documents:
 - The Bedford College Student Charter
 - The Have-Your-Say Policy
 - Assessment Policy
 - Corporate Equalities Scheme
 - Awarding Organisation rules and regulations

Copies of all documents can be obtained by accessing the College intranet. In the case of awarding organisation rules and regulations the examinations department should be contacted.

Bedford College Group Procedure for Academic Appeals

Stage	Person	Student Action	To Whom	College Action	Timeframe
1. Informal	Appeal referred to and resolved by the <i>assessor/tutor</i>	Student to discuss with assessor/tutor within 5 working days of receipt of assessment decision	Assessor/tutor (1)	Assessor to discuss and seek to resolve	2 working days
2. Informal	Appeal referred to and resolved by the <i>Internal Verifier</i>	Student appeal to Internal Verifier within 5 working days	Internal Verifier	Internal Verifier to have piece of work reviewed by member of staff with no previous involvement in the assessment decision under appeal.	5 working days
3. Formal	Appeal referred to and resolved by the <i>Head of Department</i>	Student to appeal to the relevant Head of Department within 5 working days of the above decision. To begin stage 3 the student must complete the appropriate form (p.6 of this policy)	Head of Department	Head of Department to investigate assessment decision and review with curriculum area internal verifier. IQA will check that assessment fully meets awarding Organisation requirements	5 working days in writing (2)
4. Formal	Appeal referred to Director of <i>Quality Improvement and TLA</i>	Student appeals in writing within 5 working days if they feel the decision is unfair at Stage 3 and there is likelihood of a major impact on the student's future, e.g. main qualification not awarded on completion of fulltime course	Directorate	Assessment decision investigated (information obtained from appropriate IQA and Head of Department). A decision will then be taken based on the evidence.	5 working days

1. If the student feels that he/she cannot approach the assessor/tutor he/she may choose to discuss the matter with a personal tutor or another member of staff
2. The time frames are given as guidance. It may be necessary to seek the advice of the relevant Awarding Organisation and a response to resolve the appeal may take longer

