

## Academic Appeals

This leaflet is intended as a brief outline of the University Appeals process. The full regulations can be found in the rules and regulations section on ShuSpace. The link can be found at the bottom of the page under the University life tab.

### MAKING AN APPEAL

#### **Appeal must be made on form AA1 within 10 working days of the decision you wish to appeal against**

You can appeal against the **decisions** of:

- 1) A Ratification Panel (RP)
- 2) An Extenuating Circumstances Panel (ECP)
- 3) An Academic Conduct Panel (ACP). *(For further information about appealing ACP decisions please see our leaflet on Cheating and Plagiarism).*

#### **What are the grounds for an appeal?**

An appeal will only be considered by the University if you have 'grounds' (a valid reason) for appealing. So make sure your appeal fits one or more of the following **grounds** before submitting your appeal.

The grounds for appealing are different for each panel and are detailed in the regulations but relate to errors or incorrect processes and, for Extenuating Circumstances panels only, may include consideration or reconsideration of your personal circumstances.

- **Ratification Panel. (aka Assessment Boards)**

If you feel that your exam or coursework/exam mark is not as high as you expected it to be, then you can appeal the decision of an RP on the grounds of procedural or administrative error.

**NB** If you think your marks have suffered due to your personal circumstances you should appeal against the Extenuating Circumstances Panel (see below) rather than the Ratification Panel even if you haven't yet submitted an Extenuating Circumstances form for the ECP to decide upon. *This is because the absence of a **deferral** opportunity (i.e. the chance to resubmit work that has been affected by your personal circumstances without a cap of 40%) is seen as a 'decision' by the ECP. This decision can be as a result of the ECP refusing to accept the*

*circumstances you told them about or because you didn't submit an EC1 form for the ECP to consider.*

- **Extenuating Circumstances Panel.**

If you did not submit an Extenuating Circumstances form prior to assessment you can submit one afterwards under the appeal regulations if you feel your work has been affected. You would need to show a good reason for not submitting the form on time. This is important - if you have missed the usual deadline for submitting the EC1 your appeal will not be successful without showing a good reason for this. Providing as much supporting evidence as you can e.g. a doctor's letter is essential. You need to provide full details of your circumstances, including when, how and for how long your performance was affected.

You can appeal if you did submit an Extenuating Circumstances form on time but feel that the Extenuating Circumstances Panel did not take sufficient account of the circumstances you presented or if you have additional evidence that you would like the ECP to consider.

You can also appeal if you think there has been procedural or administrative error.

- **Academic Conduct Panel**

If you have been accused of plagiarism or cheating, and you disagree with the decision or the sanction, then you can appeal the decision based on a procedural or administrative error. This includes appealing because you think the sanction is too severe in proportion to the misconduct.

### **What do the grounds mean?**

- **Procedural or Administrative Error**

This relates to an error or irregularity in the assessment process. You can check the course specific details of the assessment process in your course handbook or you can speak to your course administrator. The university's general assessment regulations are on shuspace. You can appeal if you think there has been a mistake and/or the appropriate regulations were not followed.

- **Extenuating Circumstances**

The regulations define EC's as

"Those things which cause exceptional interference with academic performance and which are of a very serious nature which is over and

above the normal difficulties that happen in life, and which could not be avoided or prevented, or their effect on academic performance could not be mitigated."

### **What can't I appeal against?**

You **cannot** appeal against decisions which are a matter of 'academic judgement' i.e. solely on the grounds that you disagree with the marks, grade, progression or award.

If you have concerns related to the teaching or services you received you may want to consider making a complaint. Please see our Complaints leaflet.

### **How do I make an appeal?**

- You must make an appeal on form AA1 within **10 working days** of receiving the decision. The AA1 form is available to download on shuspace or you can get a copy from Hallam Union Advice Centre in the Hubs or from Student & Learning Services on floor 5 of the Owen Building.
- Complete the statement on the form and make it specific, relevant and ensure it fits the grounds for appeal. Your appeal will be rejected if it does not meet the strict criteria.
- If your appeal is about Extenuating Circumstances It is important to submit independent evidence to back up your statement (e.g. police officer, solicitor, GP, University Counsellor)
- If you need more space, type/write your statement on a separate piece of paper and attach it to form AA1

### **Your Statement**

- 1.** Begin by stating the decision you want to appeal against. e.g. 'I wish to appeal the decision of...' ...the Academic Board to fail me in my module ABC 123' or ...the Extenuating Circumstances Panel not to accept my exceptional circumstances'
- 2.** Detail the circumstances in chronological order and be as detailed and open as possible.
  - Include dates and other verifiable details wherever you can.
  - Clearly state how your circumstances affected your ability to do your work/exam and/or explain clearly why you think there has

been an administrative or procedural error in the decision you are appealing against.

- Include as much supporting evidence as you can if appealing on the grounds of extenuating circumstances

Completed forms should be sent to:

Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement, Student and Learning Services, Oneleven Building, Sheffield Hallam University, City Campus, Sheffield S1 1WB

The envelope should be marked 'Appeal' and you should either send the appeal by registered post, or get a receipt if you deliver it by hand.

## **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

### **Stage 1.**

The Appeal Panel considers and investigates your appeal. It will normally let you know the result within 30 working days of receipt of the appeal.

- If the appeal is accepted, the panel which made the decision you appealed against will be instructed to review their decision. This panel will consider whether it should amend its original decision and will then let you know the outcome. This decision is final with no further right of appeal.
- If the Appeal Panel rules that the appeal is not accepted, you will be notified in writing.

### **Stage 2.**

If your appeal is not accepted at Stage 1, you can proceed to Stage 2 of the process if you feel that not all available evidence has been considered or that the correct procedures have not been followed. You have **10 working days** from receiving the Stage 1 Appeal Panel's decision to submit a Stage 2 appeal to the Academic Board Appeal Panel.

You may appear in person before the panel if you wish and you have the option to take someone with you for support. If the ABAP rules that the appeal is admissible, the appropriate panel will be instructed to review its original decision as with Stage 1 (see above).

The ABAP do not accept your appeal there is no further right of appeal using the University's internal procedures. If not accepted at Stage 2 you will be informed of the decision in writing and will receive a 'Statement of Completion' letter.

### **The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)**

If you wish to challenge the University's decision further, you can ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) to consider your case. This must be done within 3 months of the date of the 'Statement of Completion' letter. You should visit the OIA's website for information about the scheme including the kind of cases it will and won't consider.

The OIA operates an independent student appeals scheme, and there is no charge. You must apply using a Scheme Application Form

### **Further advice is available from:**

#### **Advice Centre**

The HUBS  
Paternoster Row  
Sheffield  
S1 2QQ  
Tel: 0114 225 4148  
Fax: 0114 225 4943  
Email: [advicecentre@shu.ac.uk](mailto:advicecentre@shu.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.hallamunion.org/advice](http://www.hallamunion.org/advice)

#### **Student & Learning Services**

Sheffield Hallam University  
City Campus:  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Owen Building  
Tel: 0114 225 3813  
Collegiate Crescent Campus  
Heart of the Campus  
Tel: 0114 225 2491

### **The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)**

OIA, 3rd Floor  
Kings Reach, 38-50 Kings Road  
Reading RG1 3AA  
Tel: 01189 599 813  
[www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk)