

Academic Appeals and Extenuating Circumstances

This leaflet is intended as a brief outline of the Extenuating Circumstances and Academic Appeals process. Please click on 'Support and Information' tab on ShuSpace for more information.

MAKING AN APPEAL

What are the grounds for an appeal?

An academic appeal will only be considered by the University if you have 'grounds' for appeal. So make sure your appeal fits one or more of the following grounds before submitting your appeal. You can appeal against the decision of the Awards Assessment Board, an Extenuating Circumstances Panel or an Academic Conduct Panel.

1. Extenuating Circumstances (ECs)

You can appeal on the grounds that exceptional circumstances have affected your performance. Please see the next section of this leaflet for further information on ECs. An EC1 form should have been submitted with your work or exam for the Extenuating Circumstances Panel to consider. **If you have not done this, you will need to provide a good reason why you were unable to do so at the time.**

Provide full details of the ECs, including when, how and for how long your performance was affected. Say why you were unwilling or unable to tell the Extenuating Circumstances Panel about the circumstances before it met initially. This is important - your appeal will not be successful without a good reason. Providing as much supporting evidence as you can e.g. a doctor's letter is essential.

You can also appeal if you submitted an EC1 form but feel the Extenuating Circumstances Panel did not take sufficient account of the EC1 form you presented.

2. Procedural or Administrative Error

This relates to an error or irregularity in the assessment process. You can check the details of the assessment process with your Course Office. You can also appeal if the decision was not in accordance with approved assessment or cheating regulations.

What grounds are not covered?

You **cannot** appeal on the ground 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 the Complaints leaflet.

How do I make an appeal?

- You must make an appeal within **10 working days** of receiving a formal notification of your mark on form AA1. This form is available from the Students' Union or 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.
- It is important to submit independent evidence to back up your statement (eg 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 circumstance 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 at that time.
 - Include as much supporting evidence for appealing on grounds of extenuating circumstances as you can. e.g. a letter from a doctor.
3. Finish with a positive closing statement and don't be afraid to state what outcome you want e.g. the chance to resubmit work.

Completed forms should be sent to:
Head of Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement
Sheffield Hallam University
Floor 4 Surrey Building
Pond Street, 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.

An officer(s) within Student and Learning Services will investigate the student's case. The investigation will normally include discussions and correspondence with relevant University staff, scrutiny of relevant University records and documents, and scrutiny of any documents provided by the student with the appeal form to explain or support the appeal. The findings of the investigation will be considered by the Appeal Panel which will decide whether or not the appeal should be referred back to the relevant University Board or Panel on one or more of the grounds set out above

If the appeal is accepted, the chair of the appropriate panel will be instructed to review their decision in the light of the appeal. This panel will consider whether it wants to amend its original decision and will then let you know the outcome. Their decision is final with no further right of appeal. If the Appeal's 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 decision to appeal to the Academic Board Panel (ABAP). 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 above. Their decision is final and there is no further right of appeal. If not accepted, you will be informed of the decision in writing.

Stage 3.

If you wish to appeal after stage 2, you can apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) to consider your case. This must be done within 3 months after exhausting the appeals procedure at stages 1 and 2. The OIA operates an independent student appeals scheme, and there is no charge. You must apply using a Scheme Application Form, available from:

OIA, Fifth Floor
Thames Tower, Station Road
Reading RG1 1IX
Tel: 01189 599 813
www.oiahe.org.uk

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

What are Extenuating Circumstances?

The University considers Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) to be those things which cause an exceptional interference with academic performance. They could be:

- an exceptional family emergency
- a sudden, severe illness
- exceptional stressful life events e.g. homelessness, burglary, assault, relationship break-up.

The University states that distressing and difficult life events are considered to be a normal part of life and therefore not all circumstances will be accepted as exceptional circumstances. The following examples would not fall within the University's definition of ECs:

- losing work not backed up on computer disk
- normal work commitments on behalf of an employer
- not being able to get hold of books/resources.

What can I do if I have ECs and I am due to sit an exam?

Each Faculty has an EC Panel. If you believe your ECs will have an adverse affect upon your academic performance you can submit the following to your Faculty Office for the Panel to consider:

- an EC1 form available from: Faculty Offices, Student & Learning Services Centres and the student portal. This is your opportunity to explain as fully as possible your ECs and how they have impacted upon your ability to study.
- supporting documentary evidence from a third party e.g. letter from your GP or counsellor. It should ideally be a letter from someone who knows you in a professional capacity.

This should ideally be submitted before the exam and no later than 5 days after the exam.

What if ECs are affecting my ability to do coursework?

The same criteria as explained above apply. The EC1 form should be submitted before the coursework deadline. If your ECs are accepted, you would be granted a deferral i.e. the chance to redo and submit your work.

Alternatively, if you require only a short extension to your coursework submission date, you can submit an **Exceptional Extension Request Form (EER1)** to your faculty. The form is available from the student intranet. If it is accepted that you have valid exceptional circumstances, a short-term extension of up to 10 working days can be granted for the submission of set coursework. Your EER1 form should be supported by independent documentary evidence. It is considered by a member of staff appointed by the Faculty and the outcome of the request should be given within 48 hours.

What if I've already sat my exam a month ago and did not submit an EC1 form?

It is possible to submit an EC1 form more than 5 days after the exam, but it is unlikely the ECs will be accepted unless you have a valid and substantiated reason why you were unable to submit the EC1 form at the time.

A note on confidentiality. If you believe your ECs are of an unusually delicate or personal nature, and you do not wish to document them in detail on Form EC1, you should make them known to an appropriate member of staff instead in good time. This will enable the Panel to realise the genuineness of the case without all its members knowing all the details. You would still need to complete the relevant parts of Form EC1 and obtain appropriate supporting evidence.

What happens after I have submitted my EC1 Form?

The EC Panel will notify you whether they accept or reject the extenuating circumstances. The Awards Assessment Board will also be notified of the Panel's decision. If you wish to appeal the EC Panel's decision, please see the relevant section on making an appeal below.

My ECs have been accepted. What do I do next?

The relevant assessment components on your results transcript will be marked with "XP" for **Extenuating Pass**. This means that the Awards Assessment Board decided that those components might have been adversely affected by your ECs. You have the choice to:

- keep the assessment component pass mark and do no further assessment in that assessment component, or

- take the assessment again, as if for the first time as an **Exceptional Deferral**, and so obtain a new mark. If you do this the first mark will become void. You may therefore need to think carefully about your options.

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
Web: www.hallamunion.org/advice

Drop In: City Campus Mon-Fri: 1-3pm
Appointments needed outside these times

Outreach (term time)

Col Crescent Heart of the Campus Fri: 10-noon
City Campus Floor 5 Owen Wed: 5-7pm

Student & Learning Services

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