

UCO Policy and Procedure

HE Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure

Reference Code: UCOQH-PO025

Version No: 2

Issue Date: September 2026

Date for Review: August 2029

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how students at Oldham College can submit an academic appeal and how those appeals will be considered.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure students understand how to make an academic appeal
- Provide a fair, transparent and consistent process for all appeals
- Protect the interests of students submitting an appeal
- Clearly define the valid grounds for appeal
- Enable staff to manage appeals effectively and consistently

2. Scope

This policy and procedure apply to appeals relating to academic matters only. Other matters of dispute involving a student and the College or curriculum area, shall be termed "complaints" and subject to the College's Higher Education Complaints Policy and Procedure.

This policy applies to all Higher Education (HE) students who are studying on a Higher National Pearson course or a Pearson Level 5 Diploma at Oldham College.

Where a course is delivered in partnership with an awarding organisation or university, students are required to follow the appeals procedures of the relevant partner institution. In the first instance, students are encouraged to discuss concerns informally with their Course Leader or Faculty Lead. Link to our partner institution's appeals procedures can be found below:

- University of Lancashire - <https://www.lancashire.ac.uk/legal/student-policies/taught-courses>
- Sheffield Hallam University - <https://www.shu.ac.uk/myhallam/university-life/university-rules-and-regulations/appeals-and-complaints/appeals>
- University of Huddersfield - <https://www.hud.ac.uk/policies/registry/regs-taught/section-9/>

3. Compliance with Regulations

All academic appeals will be conducted in accordance with this policy and associated procedures.

Oldham College will ensure that all appeals are considered fairly, consistently and in line with the principles of equity and equal opportunity.

4. Grounds for Appeal

4.1 Academic appeals may only be made on the following grounds:

a) Material Irregularity

Where a student believes that:

- A material error has occurred in the conduct of an assessment, or
- The assessment or Assessment Board was not conducted in accordance with the relevant regulations, or
- There has been another significant irregularity in the assessment process

The student must demonstrate that the error or irregularity was such that it could have affected the outcome of their result.

b) Incapacity

Where a student's academic performance or progression was affected by circumstances which:

- Prevented them from submitting an extenuating circumstance claim in time, or
- Could not reasonably have been disclosed before the Assessment Board made its decision.

Claims must be supported by appropriate evidence.

4.2 Extenuating Circumstances

An appeal against a extenuating circumstances decision may be made on the following grounds:

- The decision was not reasonable
- The correct procedures were not followed

If a student was unable, for valid reasons, to submit extenuating circumstances at the appropriate time, they must provide a clear explanation supported by appropriate evidence.

4.3 Academic Misconduct

An appeal against a decision of an Academic Misconduct Panel may be made where:

- There is significant new evidence which was not available at the time of the original hearing

- The original process was not conducted fairly
- The decision or penalty imposed was unreasonable

4.4 The Procedure May Not Be Used:

- To challenge the academic judgement of staff or Assessment Boards.
- To challenge decisions on progression or final awards based solely on marks achieved.
- To express dissatisfaction with results without valid grounds for appeal.
- To raise concerns about teaching, supervision or academic support (these should be raised through the Complaints Procedure).

5. Impartiality of Decision-Makers

No individual will be involved in the consideration of an appeal where they have had prior involvement in the case.

This includes:

- Members of the same academic department as the student
- Members of the Assessment Board whose decision is being appealed

Any individual involved in the appeals process must declare any conflict of interest. Where a conflict exists, they will not take part in the decision-making process.

6. Timescales and Stages

Students studying on courses validated by an awarding partner/University (other than Pearson) should submit an academic appeal in line with the relevant validating university regulations. Any application must be submitted in accordance with the relevant validating university regulations and in line with their timelines. For any appeals submitted to an awarding partner University, a copy should be sent to UCOHE.QualityDepartment@oldham.ac.uk so that progress can be monitored.

Students studying on a Higher National Pearson course or a Pearson Level 5 Diploma at Oldham College should follow the processes below.

6.1 Deadlines for Submitting Appeals

Grounds for Appeal	Deadline
Against Extenuating Circumstances decision	Within 14 calendar days of receiving the Extenuating Circumstances decision
Against Academic Misconduct decision	Within 14 calendar days of receiving your Academic Misconduct decision
Material Irregularity	After the Assessment Board within 14 calendar days of receiving the results.

Oldham College recognises that academic appeals can be complex and may be challenging for both students and staff.

All parties are expected to engage with the process promptly.

While indicative timescales are provided, all appeals will be fully investigated. In some cases, delays may occur due to complexity, staff availability, or College closures.

Where a student is unable to meet a deadline, appropriate evidence must be provided.

6.2 Stage 1 – Initial consideration

The Academic Services Team will undertake an initial review of the appeal. There are two potential outcomes from this initial consideration:

- **A clear error is identified:**
Where a clear error is identified, this may be resolved without referral to an Appeals Panel. If a change to an assessment decision is approved, the student will be informed of the outcome. The appeal will not normally proceed to an Appeals Panel unless the student requests that it does so.
- **No clear error is identified:**
Where the appeal falls within the permitted grounds, it will be referred to an Appeals Panel for further consideration. The student will be informed and given the opportunity to submit any additional evidence.

If an appeal is considered to fall outside the permitted grounds, this will be explained to the student. Following this explanation, the student may still request that the appeal proceeds.

The Academic Services Team may also refer all or part of an appeal for consideration under an alternative procedure, such as the Complaints Procedure or the Extenuating Circumstances Procedure, where appropriate.

Only cases that proceed to an Appeals Panel will be formally recorded as academic appeals.

6.3 Stage 2 – Formal Stage

The student will be informed where their case has been referred to an Appeals Panel. Where a case proceeds, it will be considered by an Appeals Panel comprising:

- A Panel Chair (a senior member of staff - normally the HE Quality and Standards Manager or nominee)
- Two senior members of academic staff with no prior involvement in the case

The student will have the opportunity to submit further evidence and/or an additional statement at this stage, should they wish to do so.

As part of the investigation, the Appeals Panel will consider:

- Whether there is evidence of actual or perceived bias
- Whether the outcome reached was reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances

In exceptional cases, where the facts or evidence are complex or disputed, the Panel Chair may invite the student to attend a hearing. Attendance at a hearing is at the discretion of the Panel Chair.

The student will normally receive:

- A summary decision within 7 calendar days of the Appeals Panel meeting, and
- A full written outcome report within 28 calendar days.

6.4 Stage 3 – Review Stage

If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Appeals Panel, they may request an internal review.

A request for review may only be made on the following grounds:

- That the correct procedures were not followed during the earlier stages of the procedure
- That the outcome of the formal stage was not reasonable
- That new material evidence is available which, for valid reasons, was not available at the earlier stages of the procedure

The review will be conducted by a senior member of staff (or nominee) who has had no prior involvement in the case. The Reviewer will be supported by the Academic Services Team.

As part of the review, consideration will be given to:

- Whether the procedures were followed correctly
- Whether the outcome was reasonable
- Whether there is any evidence of actual or perceived bias

If the student wishes to request a review, they must do so within 14 calendar days of receiving the full written outcome report from the Appeals Panel. Requests must be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided in the outcome report. A review request cannot be submitted until the full outcome report has been received.

The outcome of the review will normally be communicated within 28 calendar days of receipt of the request.

If the appeal is not upheld, the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter. If the appeal is upheld or partially upheld, the student may request a CoP letter.

A Completion of Procedures letter confirms that the College's internal procedures have been exhausted and enables the student to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) (see Section 8).

This marks the end of the College's internal Academic Appeals Procedure.

The formal and review stages of this procedure will normally be completed within 90 calendar days. This timeframe begins when the appeal proceeds to the formal stage.

7. Appeals to the Awarding Partner Institution

Students have a final right of appeal to Pearson, but only if the procedures in place at the Oldham College have been fully utilised or if the student is dissatisfied with the outcome. Further details are given in the

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees/enquiries-appeals-pearson-vocational-qualifications.pdf> and the following link can be used to contact Pearson <https://support.pearson.com/uk/s/qualification-contactus>.

8. Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Once all stages of the College's Academic Appeals Procedure have been exhausted, students have the right to refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education for independent review.

Any application to the OIA must be submitted within 12 months of the date of issue of the Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter.

The OIA operates an independent scheme for the review of student complaints and academic appeals. Oldham College is a member of this scheme. If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may request a review by the OIA. Further information about the scheme, including what the OIA can and cannot consider, is available via the OIA website.

Students will normally be required to have completed all stages of the College's internal appeals procedure before submitting a complaint to the OIA.

At the end of the internal process, the College will issue a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter confirming that there are no further internal steps available.

- If the appeal is not upheld, a CoP letter will be issued automatically
- If the appeal is upheld or partially upheld, students may request a CoP letter within 28 days of the appeal outcome

The OIA will not consider matters of academic judgement but will review whether the appeal has been handled fairly and in accordance with the relevant procedures.

For students studying on courses validated by a partner university, the Completion of Procedures letter will normally be issued by the awarding university. For students on courses awarded by Pearson, the College will issue the CoP letter.

9. Reporting procedures for academic appeals

On an annual basis, the Vice Principal – HE & Higher Skills will present a report to the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee and the Governors Curriculum and Quality Committee.

The report will contain an anonymised analysis of formal academic appeals, including:

- The number and reasons for appeals considered, and the outcomes of those appeals
- An analysis of appeals by mode of attendance (full-time and part-time)
- The time taken to complete the appeal process at each stage

Appeal reports make a positive contribution to Oldham College's quality assurance and enhancement processes. To support this, anonymised summaries of appeal outcomes will be shared with staff and students. This is intended to improve awareness of the procedures and to strengthen confidence in the transparency, consistency, and effectiveness of the College's policies and processes.

Version History:

Issue	Changes	Author	Approved at	Date of Issue
1	Policy Implemented	Head of HE Quality and Registry	QIC / C&Q	March 2020
1.1	Minor Amends – revised email address; updated review date	Head of HE Quality and Registry	CQSC	September 2022
1.1	Amends – revised references; appeals information updated and updated review date	Head of HE Quality and Registry	CQSC	September 2024
2	Full Review	HE Quality and Standards Manager	CQSC / Governors C&Q	September 2026

Published on:

UCO Website	UCO Staff Intranet	UCO Student VLE
✓	✓	✓

Appendix 1 – Academic Appeal Form

Academic Appeal Form

An Academic Appeal must be submitted in accordance with the timescales outlined in the Oldham College HE Academic Appeals Policy. Before submitting an appeal, be sure to read the Academic Appeals Policy document carefully. All information provided will be processed in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.

Guidance for Completion of this form

- Complete all four sections of the form.
- Please return your completed form to UCOHE.QualityDepartment@oldham.ac.uk
- It is your responsibility to ensure that the form has been completed correctly and that any supporting documentation is listed in Section Three and attached.

SECTION ONE	
Full Name	
Student ID Number	
Date of Birth	
Email Address	
Contact Address	
Course Title	
Year (e.g. 1, 2 or 3)	
Mode: Full-Time or Part-Time	
SECTION TWO	
Grounds for Appeal - Student's Summary Please tick all that apply: ☐ Material Irregularity ☐ Extenuating Circumstances Decision ☐ Incapacity ☐ Academic Misconduct Decision	

Student's Summary

Please summarise your reason(s) for appealing. In your summary you should include:

- the date you received notification of the decision against which you are appealing;
- details of the decision you wish to appeal against;
- the outcome you hope to achieve;
- a concise explanation of the circumstances in chronological order, including the key points to support your appeal.

SECTION THREE

Supporting Documentary Evidence

In the box below, please list any supporting documentary evidence you have attached to this application.

- Any evidence relevant to the appeal must be submitted at the same time as the form and clearly referenced and labelled.
- Include evidence of the attempt to resolve the issue(s) informally, e.g. discussions with the Course Leader

SECTION FOUR	
Student Signature	
Please sign in the space below and add the date you signed the form (can be typed).	
Date of Signature:	

SECTION FIVE

<i>To be Completed by the HESS Office</i>	
HESS Office Staff, complete the table below and update student record.	
Date Form sent to HE Quality Office:	
Date of Academic Appeal Panel:	
Panel Decision:	
Date Decision Communicated to Applicant:	
Date Student Record Updated:	