
Academic Appeals Policy

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1.0 Introduction

The Dyson Institute is committed to ensuring that it provides its students with a high-quality experience. If a student is dissatisfied, every reasonable attempt will be made to resolve the issue informally. Should a student wish to explore a more formal means of resolving their issue, the Dyson Institute operates this Academic Appeals Policy which outlines the process and roles and responsibilities of all parties in relation to Academic Appeals.

Students will never be disadvantaged or treated less favourably because of their decision to make an Academic Appeal, regardless of the outcome.

This policy is based on both the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and the best practice outlined by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

Students who would like further guidance on this policy and the processes it describes can speak to their Student Support Advisor, the Senior Academic Administrator, or any member of the Governance Team.

Students with a long-term illness or disability should familiarise themselves with the Reasonable Adjustments Policy. Students who may require reasonable adjustments are encouraged to discuss their case with their Student Support Advisor as soon as possible upon joining the Dyson Institute or becoming aware of a potential requirement. Their Student Support Advisor will support them in securing appropriate reasonable adjustments.

1.1 Vision and mission

This policy has been developed with a view to supporting and furthering the Dyson Institute's vision and mission.

The Dyson Institute's vision is to be the best engineering university in the world, which develops the engineering leaders of the future.

Its mission is to build challenging and enriching educational experiences which are free, student-centric and aligned with the needs of industry

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- to explain what constitutes an Academic Appeal;
- to lay out the procedure for making an Academic Appeal;
- to explain what will happen during a meeting of the Academic Appeal Panel; and
- to explain what will happen after an Academic Appeal has been made.

1.3 Scope

This Policy covers all Academic Appeals against any formal decision relating to marks or credit awarded, progression, degree classification, decisions relating to academic misconduct or decisions relating to Mitigating Circumstances or Academic Misconduct.

2.0 Definitions

In this Policy, all references to a post holder in the Dyson Institute should also be read as referring to any person (including external parties) to whom the roles and responsibilities of that post holder have been delegated.

2.1 Academic Appeal

An Academic appeal is a request by a student for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards and includes academic assessment an academic appeal must be made in writing, following the process outlined in the Dyson Institute's Academic Appeal's Policy.

2.2 Academic Assessment Appeal

An Academic Assessment Appeal is a request by a student for a review of an academic body charged with deciding student progress, assessment, and awards.

2.3 Academic Judgement

Academic Judgement is a judgment that is made about a matter where only the opinion of an academic expert is sufficient. A decision about assessment, a degree classification, fitness to study, research methodology or course content/outcomes will normally involve academic judgment. The following areas do not involve academic judgment: decisions about the fairness of procedures, whether they have been correctly interpreted, what the facts are, how a provider has communicated with the student, whether an opinion has been expressed outside the area of an academic's competence, the way the evidence has been considered, whether there is evidence of bias or maladministration.

2.4 Assessment

Assessment includes both examinations and course work submitted for formal assessment and contributing to a student's final qualification.

2.5 Review

In this policy, review means a request by a student for a review of any academic assessment appeal decision made by an academic appeal panel under this policy.

2.6 Student

In this policy student means a registered or former student of the Dyson Institute as defined in the Academic Regulations.

2.7 Completion of Procedures letter

A Completion of Procedures Letter is a letter which the Dyson Institute sends to a student when they have reached the end of its internal processes, and there is no further avenue for the student to progress their appeal internally. A student can't usually complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator without a Completion of Procedures letter.

3.0 Academic Assessment Appeal

3.1 Confirmation of marks

If a student challenges a mark awarded, the Dyson Institute will always check this mark as a matter of process and amend as appropriate. The mark will be checked, and confirmation given to the student within two working days of a request being received.

3.2 Grounds for an Academic Assessment Appeal

The Dyson Institute will not consider Academic Appeals against any formal decision relating to marks or credit awarded, progression or degree classification unless the Appeal is made on the following grounds:

- A procedural irregularity or administrative error in the assessment process;
- Bias or perception of bias; or
- For good reason, the Academic Misconduct Panel could not have been made aware of that significant factor relating to the assessment of the student when it made its original decision.

Disagreement with academic judgement of staff will not be accepted as grounds for an appeal. As an example, a student cannot appeal simply because they disagree with a decision or feel that a higher mark should have been given. Students are encouraged to discuss their marks with the Module Lead, and to seek individual feedback. This could be, for example, an informal meeting with the first marker in which the exam script is looked at with the student.

3.3 Making an Academic Assessment Appeal

Students who would like further guidance on this policy and the processes it describes can speak to their Student Support Advisor, the Senior Academic Administrator, or any member of the Governance Team.

3.3.1 Submission of an appeal

Academic Assessment Appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the date of notification of the decision that is the subject of the Academic Appeal (or from the date on which a student's mark is confirmed, if this is the subject of the Academic Appeal). A further five working days are permitted to supply appropriate evidence if this was not available at the time of submitting the initial appeal.

Students may lodge an Academic Assessment Appeal by completing the Form on the Complaints, Concerns, Appeals and Feedback portal found on SharePoint [here](#).

3.3.2 Consideration by the Governance Team

The Governance Team will consider the grounds for the Academic Appeal and evidence provided and decide whether the appeal should be permitted to proceed. The Governance Team reserves the right to refuse an appeal if:

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- the appeal does not meet the grounds set at 3.2 of this Policy; or
- the appeal has not been made within the required 10 working days of the decision that is being appealed (and there is no reasonable explanation nor evidence for why the appeal has could not be made within the required timeframe).

If the Governance Team decides that the appeal will not be permitted to proceed, the team will write to the student within 5 working days of the receipt to advise that the appeal has been rejected, the reasons for that decision and notifying the student that the original decision appealed against will stand. There will be no right of appeal against this decision and the Governance Team will issue a Completion of Procedures letter within 28 days of coming to this decision. This letter will state the decision not to uphold the appeal, and the reasoning.

If the Governance Team decides to progress the appeal, they will notify the student of the intended procedure for reviewing the Student's Academic Assessment Appeal within five working days of receiving the student's initial appeal.

Where a student questions a mark, they have received, the Governance Team will always ask the Academic Team to check and confirm that the mark is correct. The mark will be checked, and confirmation given to the student within two working days of a request being received.

3.3.3 Investigation by a senior academic lecturer

The Governance Team will nominate a senior lecturer to investigate the student's academic assessment appeal. The student will be informed as to who has been appointed to investigate their Appeal.

The senior academic must not be from the same module as the module to which the academic decision or mark under dispute relates.

The senior academic who is nominated to investigate the student's academic assessment appeal will consider the documents relating to the student's academic appeal. They may also meet with the student and relevant staff of the Dyson Institute.

The appointed senior academic must write to the Governance Team within 20 working days of being appointed to investigate the academic assessment appeal. They will either determine that there is insufficient evidence for the academic assessment appeal to proceed or determine that the matter be referred to an Academic Appeals Panel.

If the senior academic determines that the appeal should not be upheld, the Governance Team will write to the student within five working days of receiving the senior academics decision to communicate this outcome, and the rationale. They will explain that the decision of the appointed senior academic not to take any further action is final and a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued.

If the appointed senior academic judgement is that the academic assessment appeal should be upheld, then the Academic Appeals Panel must be convened. The Governance Representative will write to the student within five working days of receiving the senior academics decision:

- informing them of the decision to convene the Academic Appeals Panel;
- confirming the date on which the Academic Appeal Panel will convene (the student must be given at least 15 working days' notice);
- providing copies of the evidence to be considered by the Academic Appeal Panel;
- providing details of the composition of the Academic Appeal Panel, including the name of the Chair, and providing the student with the right to submit representations regarding its composition within 5 working days;
- offering the student opportunity to submit a written statement to the Academic Appeal Panel;
- offering the student, the opportunity to attend the meeting of the Academic Appeal Panel in person;
- outlining the students' right to be accompanied to the meeting by a member of the Dyson Institute, who will be a silent observer in the meeting; and

– requesting a confirmation of attendance within ten working days of the letter being issued.

3.3.4 Attendance at the meeting

If a student has indicated that they do not wish to attend the Academic Appeal Panel, the Panel will make a decision taking into account any written representations from the student and advise the student of this decision accordingly.

If a student has indicated that they are attending but is prevented from doing so for good reason which can be evidenced, and the student advises the Chair no later than 24 hours before the hearing, the hearing will be deferred to a later date.

If the Student has indicated that they are attending but fails to attend and does not inform the Chair of the Academic Appeals Panel prior to the hearing, the hearing will go ahead and a decision on fact will be reached based on the information available to the Academic Appeal Panel.

If the student fails to confirm their wish to attend the panel (or not), and all attempts to contact the student have failed, the hearing will go ahead and a decision on fact will be reached based on the information available. Attempts to contact the student will be recorded on the student's file including copies of letters and emails.

3.3.5 Academic Appeals Panel

The Governance Team will convene a Panel. The Panel will usually consist of:

- the Director (Chair)
- a senior academic
- a member of the Governance Team who has not previously been involved in the consideration of the student's request for an Academic Appeal
- a representative nominated by the student, selected from a list of approved individuals; and
- an appointed Clerk.

The membership of the Academic Appeals Panel may vary to ensure there can be no perception of bias: this may require using non-Dyson Institute staff as panel members. Any reasonable concerns which the student has regarding the composition, or any perception of conflicts of interest or bias of the Academic Appeals Panel must be addressed within 5 working days of any representations made by the student.

The Academic Appeals Panel at its meeting will review all written evidence submitted, including that submitted to any previous panel as well as receiving oral evidence and representations from the student or other parties as appropriate, to fully understand the basis and merit of the Academic Appeal.

A written record must be kept of all meetings of the Academic Appeals Panel by the Clerk to the Panel which will be confidentially stored.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Academic Appeals Panel will make one of the following decisions in relation to an Academic Assessment Appeal:

- To reject the Appeal and uphold the original assessment decision; or
- To uphold the Appeal and make a recommendation to the relevant Board of Examiners that it reconsider its previous decision in light of the decision of the Academic Appeal Panel.

The outcome of the Academic Assessment Appeal shall be communicated to the student in writing, noting the reasons for the decision, within ten working days of the meeting of the Board of Examiners relating to the Appeal.

The Academic Assessment Appeals process is to be completed typically within 90 working days.

3.4 Review of an Academic Assessment Appeal

If the student's Academic Assessment Appeal is not upheld, the student may request a Review of the Academic Assessment Appeal if:

- The student is in possession of evidence of Mitigating Circumstances or other material circumstances which would materially have affected the outcome of their Academic Assessment Appeal that could not have been demonstrated at an earlier stage in the process, and can evidence good reason as to why this evidence could not have been made available at an earlier stage; or
- There is evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the Academic Appeals process.

There are no other acceptable grounds on which to request a review and no further new evidence can be submitted unless it can be confirmed with good reason that the evidence could not have been submitted as part of the previous Academic Appeal.

A request for the Review of the Academic Assessment Appeal must be made within ten working days of the receipt of the decision of the Academic Appeals Panel.

A review can be requested by a student by contacting the Governance team, in writing, setting out the grounds for seeking the review. The Governance Team will nominate a senior member of Dyson Institute staff who has had no prior involvement to conduct the review. The student will be advised of the outcome of the review in writing within 20 working days of the receipt of the request for the review. The decision will be final, and a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued to the student.

The outcome of the review could include the original decision of the Academic Assessment Appeals Panel being upheld, overturned, or amended, or the matter being remitted back to an Academic Appeals Panel for reconsideration afresh.

Following the completion of all internal processes related to any Academic Appeal, including the conclusion of any associated matters such as the reconsideration of a result by the Board of Examiners, a Completion of Procedures letter must be sent to the student. This letter must be sent no later than 28 days following the completion of all steps associated with the Academic Appeal.

If, after the Academic Appeals process and any associated review has been finalised, a student is dissatisfied with the outcome they may raise their appeal with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Any request for review must be received by the OIA within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

3.5 Support through the Academic Appeals process

During all stages of the Academic Appeals process, students may be accompanied to meetings by a member of the Dyson Institute, usually either a member of staff, a Dyson employee or a fellow student.

Only in exceptional circumstances and by prior agreement may a student be accompanied by someone who is neither a member of the Dyson Institute nor a Dyson employee

The role of the companion is to offer support and advice to the student: they cannot formally represent the student or act as their advocate. They must remain a silent observer in the meeting of the Academic Appeals Panel.

Students who would like further guidance on this policy and the processes it describes can speak to their Student Support Advisor, the Senior Academic Administrator, or any member of the Governance Team.