

Academic Appeal FAQs

What is an Academic Appeal?

An academic appeal is a submission by a student seeking an amendment or reversal of an academic decision taken by the Board of Examiners, Faculty Director of the Graduate School or Academic Conduct Panel. If you are unclear why a progression decision has been made or how your degree classification has been calculated, you should discuss the situation with your Senior Tutor/Personal Academic Tutor first before thinking about an appeal.

What's the difference between appeals and special consideration?

A Special Consideration is a submission by a student, informing them of circumstances which may affect, or have affected, their academic performance, such as illness, and this is submitted prior to the Board of Examiners taking place. I.e. A special consideration is submitted before the appeal window.

If a Special Consideration application has already been considered by your School, the same circumstances cannot normally be considered through the Academic Appeal process unless you are able to provide new evidence that your School has not previously considered.

Can I ask my School to review my results before going to an appeal?

Yes. It is a good idea to discuss your situation with either your Personal Academic Tutor or the Senior Tutor. They may be able to explain more clearly why the Board of Examiner's decision has been reached, which might save you from making an appeal that is unlikely to be successful. You can still go ahead with an appeal after you have spoken to them if you feel that is right for you. You cannot request for your work to be re-marked.

What can I appeal against?

Academic Appeals can be made against academic decisions provided you can show you meet one or more of the grounds for appeal (refer to question 4). You cannot appeal against a decision which has been made by the University in the proper exercise of academic judgement

(as an example, a student cannot appeal simply because they disagree with a decision the University has made or feels that a higher mark should have been given).

Appeals are usually against an award or progression decision of a Board of Examiners or against the outcome of an Academic Integrity Responsibility and Conduct Panel. If you are not sure if you can appeal against a particular decision, please contact the Student Casework Team (casework@soton.ac.uk) and we will do our best to help you.

If you wish to raise an issue with teaching, supervision, administration, materials or facilities, these will more likely be considered as complaints. If you wish to make a complaint, we recommend you first talk to your Personal Academic Tutor or another member of academic staff; if this doesn't resolve the issue, you can access our [guidance about complaints](#).

Can I appeal if I disagree with the marks I have received?

You cannot appeal on the grounds that you are not happy with your results, and you believe you deserve higher marks. This does not meet the grounds for appeal, as the process is not a mechanism through which the academic judgement of a marker can be challenged or by-passed. If you have evidence that your marks have been incorrectly calculated, for example by inadvertently omitting a component of the assessment, you should contact the Student Hub.

The Regulations say I cannot appeal on the grounds of academic judgement—but what is meant by academic judgement and why can't I question it?

Academic judgement includes decisions made where the opinion of an academic expert is essential, for example a judgment about marks awarded, a progression decision, or a degree classification. It 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 practise, research methodology or course content/outcomes will normally involve academic judgment

The University operates on the basis that the Examiners are experts in their field and that they are experienced in determining levels of attainment. Boards of Examiners follow University guidelines on the moderation of marking/double marking, and External Examiners ensure that standards are comparable with standards at other universities. Therefore, you may not base an appeal on your belief that your work was worthy of a higher grade than the one awarded.

If you obtain the report of the examiners or a marked script, you may not question the points awarded unless there is evidence of a miscalculation when the score was aggregated or if there is evidence that marking was not conducted in accordance with the published marking criteria.

How can I make an appeal

To make an appeal, you will need to fill in an appeals form which can be found online <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/studentadmin/appeals-complaints/for-students.page>

For more information and guidance on how to complete this form, please refer to [Student Guidance for Complaints and Appeals](#).

Do I need to submit supporting information?

Yes – the academic appeals process is evidence-based. Students are encouraged to submit evidence to support their case because this helps us to understand why you are appealing. Academic appeals submitted without supporting evidence are likely to be rejected.

What supporting information do I need?

The [Regulations](#) do not restrict this to any particular type of supporting information, however, we encourage you to use reliable/official forms of evidence where possible. We can accept statements from friends/family, but this is not guaranteed to be sufficient; Any documents you submit as part of your evidence should clearly show the name, qualifications/job role and contact details of the person who produced it.

Types of evidence might include statements from witnesses (the most creditable witnesses will be independent from you), proof of travel, meeting notes, emails, photographs and letters. The evidence should relate to the appeal ground, for example if it is health-related, then you should submit a statement or letter from a GP. If you are unsure of what type of evidence could be useful, please contact the [Students' Union Advice Centre](#).

The evidence you submit must show the impact of the circumstances referred to on your form and must be relevant to the date or period stated.

All evidence should be in English. If your evidence is not in English, it is your responsibility to provide a certified translation. We cannot accept documents that are not in English or have not been translated by a certified translator.

What should I check before submitting my form?

Before submitting your academic appeal, you should ensure that:

- Your form has been completed in full.

- You have attached all the evidence you wish to be considered.
- You submit your form by your deadline.

If your appeal submission is not complete or is out of scope of the process, it may not be accepted. If it is not accepted, you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

What if I don't get the evidence in time?

If your evidence is not available in time for you to meet your deadline, please contact the Student Casework Team to request an extension. Your appeal cannot be reviewed, and the time for reviewing it will not start, until all supporting evidence is received along with your submission form. It is your responsibility to ensure that all evidence is sent in with the submission. The Student Casework Team cannot contact third parties to request evidence on your behalf.

Who will see what I submit?

Evidence will be shared with employees of the University who will process and review your submission. If at the conclusion of these processes you choose to submit a Complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), information may also be shared with them. You should therefore ensure that where evidence relates to third parties you have their permission for this information to be disclosed.

What is the deadline to submit my appeal?

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students

In most cases you have 10 working days from receipt of your confirmed marks to submit an appeal but if you wish to appeal a supplementary examination decision, you must submit your Stage 1 appeal within 5 working days. It is your responsibility to ensure your email account is accessible. From the published time on marks release day, you can view your results via the 'Banner Self-Service' icon on your SUSSED account. Please note, this is different from the date any provisional marks are available. Appeals submitted when only your provisional marks are available will not be accepted.

Postgraduate Research Students

You will receive notification confirming your special consideration, extension or progress decision. Your deadline to submit an appeal will be 10 university working days from the date of the email.

Pre-Sessional Students

Pre-sessional students have 5 working days to submit an appeal related to their final marks.

Can I send in a late appeal?

Appeals received outside of the timescales detailed above will not be accepted unless you can demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the delay. You should submit an explanation, relevant to the period from the published appeal deadline until the submission of the appeal, and any evidence of the delay with your appeal form.

The decision as to whether you have demonstrated exceptional circumstances for late submission of an appeal will be made by the member of staff appointed as the Reviewer at Stage 1, by the Partial Academic Appeals Panel at Stage 2, and by the Partial Senate Appeals Panel at Stage 3.

If you are unable to demonstrate exceptional circumstances, the appeal will be rejected and you will have exhausted the University's procedure. A Completion of Procedures letter will be sent to you. You will be informed of this outcome normally within **5 working days** of the receipt of the appeal.

If you intend to submit a late appeal, please contact the Student Casework Team (casework@southampton.ac.uk) for advice and guidance.

How long does the appeals process take?

The Stage 1 appeals process usually takes 10 working days from the date that your submission form and all supporting evidence is received. Please note that delays can happen and you will be notified of any delay in processing your appeal. We will contact you if further information is required before your case can be considered.

Who will see my appeal and who will decide the outcome?

Your academic appeal will initially be processed by the Student Casework Team and considered by an appropriate member of staff. This is often a Module Lead or a Programme Lead. The member of staff may need to make enquiries about your status as a student and your progression decision, as well as any previous Special Consideration requests or Academic Appeals. Depending on the points you raise, they may need to check information on your student record or with other teams in the University, for example to check what advice or support you have previously been given. By submitting an appeal, you are agreeing to staff members discussing your case internally where it is necessary.

If you are concerned about the impartiality of the appointed member of staff, please contact the Student Casework Team (casework@southampton.ac.uk).

If the appointed member of staff feels that your appeal meets the grounds, the case will be referred to the original panel or Board of Examiners or Faculty Director of Graduate School and the Chair will determine whether or not the original decision should be changed in light of the issues you raised.

The [Regulations](#) set down who will consider Stage 2 and 3 academic appeals. If your appeal is seen by a full Panel at Stage 2 or 3, your appeal submission will make up part of the papers that will be seen by the panellists and the School Representative. If any other people are invited to speak, the level of information to be supplied to them will be dependent on the nature of their involvement. However, where appropriate, this will be limited and edited of sensitive personal information.

I wish to withdraw my appeal, what should I do?

You will need to confirm this in writing at: casework@southampton.ac.uk.

Outcomes

What grounds must my appeal meet to be successful?

We cannot guarantee the success of any individual appeal, but at the least, to be successful your appeal must meet one or more of the grounds that are set down in our Regulations:

*“4.1 That they [the student] possess **new substantive information supported by evidence** which was not known by the student and/or the evidence could not reasonably have been obtained by the student in time to present to the board or panel of the University which made the original decision against which the student is appealing;”*([Extract from Regulations Governing Academic Appeals](#), Section 4).

You could select this ground if you have recently received new information that you believe would cause the Board of Examiners or panel to change its decision. For example, you may become aware of a new witness that could provide important information to an Academic Conduct Panel. To be successful with this ground, you must be able to demonstrate why you couldn't present the evidence previously. It is not usually sufficient to provide further evidence demonstrating something that the University is already aware of and has accepted, including where you have new information about a long term or ongoing issue for which you are receiving support.

*4.2 That there has been **significant failure of due process** in the making of the original decision (including but not limited to irregularity in the procedures of the University or significant computational or administrative errors of fact in results published), which the student believes affected the University's original decision;*

Use this ground if you feel that there has been a procedural error. For example, if you believe the university's regulations for progression have not been correctly applied to you. It is strongly recommended that you bring potential errors to the attention of your Administration and Assessment Team in the first instance.

If you are appealing against the decision of an Academic Conduct Panel, you could use this ground to raise concerns about procedural errors at the panel, e.g. if you feel the panel was not constituted in accordance with the [Regulations Governing Academic Responsibility and Conduct](#).

4.3 That their performance had been adversely affected by illness or by other factors (e.g.: family crisis) which, in exceptional circumstances, they were unable or for valid reason unwilling to disclose to the University before it made its original decision (also see the Regulations Governing Special Considerations (including Deadline Extension Requests) for all Taught Programmes and Taught Assessed Components of Research Degrees).

To use this ground, you should present evidence that your academic performance was affected at a time relevant to the assessment. You must also provide an explanation for why you did not tell the University about the illness or other factors at the time. Stating that you were unaware of the Special Consideration Request procedure will not in itself be sufficient. Similarly, in the absence of a relevant health condition, stating that you thought you could work through an issue or that you didn't realise how affected you were until you were awarded a fail mark are cases that are unlikely in themselves to lead to successful appeals.

What type of appeals are likely to be rejected

- Appeals concerning academic judgement, e.g. disagreement about the marks awarded
- Appeals that relate to personal IT issues, such as your computer crashing or failing to save your work

- Appeals where the reason provided for not applying for Special Consideration is not compelling, e.g. “I didn’t know about the process”, because we consider that all our students are informed about the process in several different ways and so you should be aware of it.

Likely or possible appeal outcomes

- Remove a late penalty
- Allow an additional attempt at the next usual opportunity
- Remove the capping of a mark at supplementary examination/assessment or repeat year
- Reconsider an Academic Responsibility and Conduct Panel decision

There are also other possible outcomes; these are just some of the most usual.

Unlikely or impossible outcomes

- Increase a mark to allow a pass
- To permit you to progress into the next year of studies without meeting the criteria. In particular you must pass the Part you are in before you can progress.
- To award a higher degree classification outside of the usual Regulations
- To allow more than one supplementary examination/assessment attempt in the same academic year
- Re-marking work
- Reverse any progression review/milestone decisions for PGR students without the need for further assessment
- Allowing very large amounts of additional credit at referral.

These outcomes listed above aren’t possible because they would break our Regulations. There are also other outcomes, not listed here, which we wouldn’t be able to agree.

What are the chances of my appeal being successful?

Unfortunately, it is not possible to say what the outcome will be. Each case is dealt with on an individual basis, with your situation and all submitted evidence taken into consideration.

Will I get to present my case in person to a reviewer/panel?

The decision maker at each stage will consider if the case is suited to be decided on paper or if meeting you would be beneficial to help them understand your case. This may be impacted by

the complexity of your case, your progression position and whether you might be disadvantaged by not being able to explain your case in person.

How will I find out the outcome of my appeal?

You will receive notification of the outcome of your appeal by email. If your University email address is no longer operational, we will send the outcome to another email address registered in your Banner record.

What happens if I am offered another attempt at an assessment as a result of an appeal?

If your appeal outcome is to offer you an additional attempt at an assessment and you agree to proceed on that basis, the marks you subsequently achieve will be those noted on your transcript and used to calculate your classification if relevant, even if you perform worse than at the original attempt. You should be aware of this and consider it carefully when you are deciding whether or not to appeal.

What happens if I am not satisfied with the outcome of my academic appeal?

The full procedure is set down in the [Regulations Governing Academic Appeals](#). If you're not happy with the Stage 1 outcome, you will need to escalate your appeal or go to the next stage set down in our Regulations. When you have been through all the possible internal steps, if you are still not happy, at that point you may make a complaint to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#) and ask them to review your case. To do this you will need a Completion of Procedures letter, which you can request from the Student Casework Team at the end of Stage 2 or 3. Completion of Procedures letters are automatically produced for all appeals that have got to our final internal stage, Stage 3, and been unsuccessful there.. For further information see <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/>

What support is there for me

If you are making an appeal, you may be in a situation where you do not feel your best. We strongly recommend seeking support from someone familiar with University procedures, who is in a good place to help you, such as:

- Your Personal Academic Tutor, Senior Tutor or an academic member of staff.
- The Casework Team will be able to provide guidance on the Procedure (casework@southampton.ac.uk)

- [The Student Hub](#), offers 24/7 support and can also refer you to our wellbeing service if you need additional help or you are worried.
- The [Students' Union Advice Centre](#) has trained advisors that support students in making academic appeals and can attend your preliminary meeting and any subsequent meetings to support you. The University encourages students to seek this support. (<https://www.susu.org/support/advice-centre.html>).

Additional Information

Notes to consider when choosing your desired outcome

If you are submitting an academic appeal to have another attempt at a module that you have already passed, in an attempt to improve your mark, you should be aware that if you achieve a lower mark, or a fail, this will be the mark that will be used to calculate your weighted mean mark and final degree classification.

If you fail the module, any previously achieved credit will not stand.

It is advised that you discuss this with your personal tutor so that you understand the risks of repeating a module for which you have already achieved credit.

If you wish to register as an internal repeat student, you will have full access to all campus facilities, will attend all teaching and will pay fees. The amount you pay will depend on the number of modules you are taking.

If you wish to register as an external repeat student, you

will have access to the library, library e-resources and to Blackboard if required. You will not attend teaching and will not pay tuition fees.

Can I still attend my Graduation ceremony?

If you passed and were awarded, yes you can attend Graduation if it is due to take place while your appeal is being decided.

If your appeal is successful and you have a change of degree classification, you will be required to return the certificate and transcript that you receive following your graduation ceremony before the updated documents will be forwarded to you. Should you wish to attend another

degree ceremony, you will be permitted to do so. Please contact the Student Hub to make the necessary arrangements.

You can choose to defer your graduation provided that the ceremony date for your programme has not yet passed.

If you wish to defer your graduation until after your appeal has been resolved, please contact the Exams and Awards Office (graduation@soton.ac.uk). Please note that it will then not be possible for you to have your degree conferred until the next graduation period. If you defer your summer graduation the next opportunity to graduate is December. Further information can be found on the [Graduation web pages](#).

Can I continue with my programme while awaiting the outcome of my appeal? If you wish to do this, you must consult with your Senior Tutor/Personal Academic Tutor. Any such arrangement is at the discretion of the School and there may be cost and/or Visa implications.

I am due to take referral examinations/assessments, but I have not heard the outcome of my appeal, should I still revise?

Yes—you should not delay any preparations for referral examinations/assessments.

What is a Completion of Procedures letter?

A Completion of Procedures letter means that the University's academic appeals procedure has been completed, and it will provide information about bringing a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The letter should normally be sent to you within **28** days of the University's final decision.

Information about the OIA's procedures may be found at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/> or in the OIA leaflet '*Introduction to the OIA for Students*'. If you wish to submit a complaint to the OIA you must do so within the timeframe set down in the [OIA Scheme Rules](#), which is normally 12 months from the date of the Completion of Procedures letter. A complaint must be made in writing using the MyOIA secure online portal or the OIA Complaint Form.

Where you request a Completion of Procedures letter more than one calendar month following the date of the outcome letter, the deadline for bringing a complaint to the OIA will normally be 12 months from the date of the University's final decision, rather than the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

Contact details for the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education are:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

Second Floor, Abbey Wharf

57-75 Kings Road

Reading RG1 3AB

Telephone: 0118 959 9813

Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk