AWARD-WINNING EDUCATION

HIGHER EDUCATION

HOPWOOD HALL COLLEGE

ACADEMIC APPEALS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

2024-2025

The Queen's Anniversary Prizes 2023

2022/23 BEACON AWARDS WINNER

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Policy Cover Sheet

Please fill in the following details:

Policy Name	Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure 2024-2025
Version Number	V1
Policy Owner	Simon Farrar
Release Date	05/08/2024
Policy valid for	1 year

Documents included:

Completed Checklist (below)	X
Policy text	X
Filled in EIA	X

Where should this policy be shared? All policies will be shared on the HUB.

The HUB	X
Net Consent	X
Website	X

Policy Checklist
Have you completed the following tasks:

Used the Microsoft Accessibility Checker	X
Used formatted headings	X
Used Arial 12pt font	X
Included numbered paragraphs	X
Included page numbers	X
Included alternative text for all images which accurately describe what's in the picture	X
Checked for gender neutral language e.g. remove dinner ladies, workmen, he/she and replaced with servers, contractors, they.	X
Used the full phrase instead of the acronym at least the first time	X
Used the spelling and grammar check	X
Gained feedback from colleagues to ensure the policy is clear and accurate	X
Included any legal, social or organisational changes since the last policy review	X
Reviewed the connected policies to ensure they are still active	X
Filled in the change log	X
Listened to the policy using the accessible reader	X
Reviewed the policy flowchart	X
Informed the EDI Manager of upcoming policy deadlines	X

Sign Off: To be filled in by the named person only

	Name	Date
SLT	Liz Duncan	05/08/2024
Corporation (if required)		
Trade Union		
EIA	Adam Carney	05/08/2024

Change log

Version number	Changes description	Major changes? Y/N	Initiator	Rationale	Date of completion	New version number
N/A	New policy	Y	Simon Farrar	New policy for 24/25	22/04/2024	V1

CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

1.1 This HE Academic Appeals Policy aims to uphold Hopwood Hall College's commitment to enhancing the quality of the learning experience and continuously improving all services. It ensures that students' comments or concerns about assessment are addressed openly, fairly, and effectively.

1.2 Hopwood Hall College is dedicated to handling appeals against assessment decisions seriously, impartially, and within a reasonable timeframe, guaranteeing learners the right to appeal without fear of reprisal or victimization.

2. SCOPE

2.1. This policy applies to any assessment conducted by higher education students at Hopwood Hall College. This encompasses assessments at the entry to a programme (assessment of prior knowledge and experience), during a programme, or within 3 months of student completing their programme. However, it excludes appeals against the results of examinations or courses where the awarding body or partner university is solely responsible for the grades awarded to candidates.

2.2. If a student believes that an assessment decision concerning their work is incorrect or has been based on incorrect or partial information, they have the right to appeal against that decision without fear of reprisal or victimization. Hopwood Hall College will handle such appeals seriously, impartially, and within a reasonable timescale.

2.3. Separate procedures exist for providing feedback about any service provided by Hopwood Hall College (Compliments and Complaints procedure) and for making disclosures in the public interest (See HE Speaking Out Policy and Procedure). The HE Appeals procedure cannot be utilised for any of these purposes.

2.4. For students enrolled in higher education (HE) programs, appeals should be made internally to Hopwood Hall College using the procedure outlined below. However, HE students may also need to refer to the Academic Regulations of their awarding university. HE students can typically only appeal on specific grounds, including material irregularity or significant administrative error in the assessment process, bias or reasonable perception of bias, non-compliance with program regulations during assessment, or circumstances affecting performance not previously disclosed before the Exam Board meeting.

2.5. Disagreement with the academic judgment of the tutors and examiners assessing the merits of an individual piece of work, or in reaching any decision based on the marks, grades, and other information relating to a candidate's performance, does not, in itself, constitute grounds for a request for reconsideration by a candidate.

2.6. Those involved in the consideration of an appeal at all stages will not attempt to re-examine the student, nor to appraise the professional judgment of the examiners, but to consider whether the decision of the Exam Board was fair and whether all relevant factors were taken into account.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. The Assistant Principal for Academic and Higher Technical Education is responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of the appeals procedure. They oversee the adherence to the policy and procedure guidelines within departments.

3.2. Programme Managers for individual subject areas are responsible for the administration of the first stage of the appeals procedure, as outlined in section 4 of this policy.

3.3. The Quality Manager holds responsibility for the administration of the second stage of the appeals procedure, as outlined in section 5 of this policy. They

ensure that appeals are processed efficiently and in compliance with the established procedure.

3.4. All teaching and assessment staff at Hopwood Hall College have a responsibility to inform learners of the appeals procedure and to ensure its effective operation within their programs. Programme Managers, and internal quality assurers may have specific responsibilities as part of their roles in supporting the appeals process and ensuring fairness and transparency in assessments.

4. THE FIRST STAGE

4.1. In the first instance, an informal approach is preferred to provide an opportunity to resolve the issue raised without resorting to the formal appeals procedure. Students should inform their Programme Manager of their concern. An agreed record of the discussion should be entered on Pro Monitor under Comments and Meetings. Programme Managers should record a detailed overview of the appeal including an explanation of the scoring received, how marks have been calculated, how the work compares to other exemplars of work at different grades and any other details that are pertinent to the informal appeal.

4.2. The Programme Manager should then consult the Quality team and relevant Centre Director to investigate if the matter can be quickly resolved. If the matter cannot be resolved within a period of **10 working days** from the date of the publication of results, the appeal may proceed to the second stage. The student will be informed of this outcome in writing and the issue may be closed, or if unresolved may progress to the second stage.

5. THE SECOND STAGE

5.1. If a students concern cannot be resolved at the first stage, they should write to the Head of Quality to request that the appeal be investigated formally. This request should be made within **20 working days** of the publication of results. In the letter/email, a student should clearly state the grounds of their

appeal (as outlined in 2.4 above) and provide any available evidence in support (such as medical notes, previous communication, assignment instructions, automated acknowledgements etc). Additionally, explain the steps taken at the first stage to resolve the concern informally and state the outcome that a student is seeking through the appeal.

5.2. The Head of Quality will review the appeal and confirm if the academic appeals procedure is the appropriate process to follow. If not, the student may be directed to an alternative procedure, or the appeals procedure of a partner institution or awarding body.

5.3. If the Head of Quality determines that the appeal has valid grounds for an Academic Appeal, they will allocate the appeal to a manager with no previous involvement to investigate. This may include the Head of Quality investigating the appeal themselves. If the appeal does not have valid grounds, the Head of Quality will inform the student accordingly. They will also receive a Completion of Internal Processes letter at this stage. Refer to paragraph 10.3 for guidance on further steps if desired.

5.4. The staff member investigating the appeal may request a meeting with the student to gather additional information if necessary. However, a meeting may not be required if there is already sufficient information from the initial correspondence. Alternatively, they may contact a student via email to seek further information, if needed.

5.5. The student will receive written notification of the investigation outcome within **15 working days** of the appeal submission. This notification will provide a clear explanation and outline the reasons for each decision in straightforward language. It will also explain the procedure, grounds, and timelines for advancing the appeal to the third stage, and access to support, if necessary.

5.6. The outcome of the investigation will be recorded centrally to identify the causes of appeals and introduce improvements where necessary.

6. THE THIRD STAGE

6.1. If a student is dissatisfied with the response received at the second stage and wishes to pursue the matter further, they should write to the Assistant Principal for Academic and Higher Technical Education within **10 working days** of receiving the outcome of the formal investigation, providing the following details:

6.1.1. Their name
6.1.2. Contact address (including telephone and/or email address, if available)
6.1.3. Programme of study
6.1.4. Date of the disputed decision
6.1.5. Nature of the decision
6.1.6. Reasons for the appeal
6.1.7. Any other relevant information

6.2. The Assistant Principal will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within **3 working days** and will arrange for an Appeals Panel to hear the appeal. If a students expectations of the Appeals Panel seem to exceed the scope of the review stage, the Assistant Principal will communicate this to you to manage expectations effectively. A student can elect to speak on their behalf at the appeals panel or alternatively provide full and clear information supported by evidence in their response to the panel notification.

6.3. The Appeals Panel will consist of three members who have not been involved in the appeal at previous stages. This may include members of the College Management Team, as well as Programme Managers or Internal Quality Assurers from other areas.

6.4. The Panel will assess whether the relevant procedures were followed during the second stage, whether the outcome of the second stage was reasonable in all aspects, and whether you have been provided with clear reasons for the second stage outcome. If new material evidence has been presented, the

Panel will consider whether you have provided valid reasons for not submitting this earlier.

6.5. The Panel meeting will occur within **15 working days**. Following the meeting, you will receive a written account of the decision within **5 working days**. The written outcome will indicate whether the outcome of the second stage has been upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.

6.6. This marks the conclusion of the internal appeals procedure. You will receive a 'Completion of Internal Processes' letter at this point. On academic matters, students have the right to escalate the appeal to the awarding body (The Open University) at this stage. This letter will detail the next steps and timeline for this.

6.7. The outcome of this stage will be recorded centrally to identify the causes of appeals and introduce improvements where necessary.

6.8. Once the awarding body receives and considers your appeal, you will be informed of the outcome in writing. Following this, all internal procedures will have been exhausted, and you will be issued a Completion of Procedures letter (CoP) by the awarding body. For Open University validated programmes, more information is detailed in Appendix 1: Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure of the OU Handbook for Validated Awards.

6.9. Upon receiving a Completion of Procedures Letter, students enrolled in Higher Education programs through Hopwood Hall College have the right to request the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), the independent ombudsman service, to review their complaint regarding the outcome of the provider's academic appeals process. The complaint should be submitted to the OIA within **12 months** of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

7. GROUP COMPLAINTS

7.1. In instances where the issue in question has affected a number of students, students may submit a 'group complaint'. The students involved may

nominate a representative, and all members of the group must agree that this person can speak and liaise on their behalf. The nominated representative will then present the group's concerns and grievances to the relevant authorities on behalf of the group members.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY, SUPPORT AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

8.1. If you require any reasonable adjustments as set out in the Equality Act 2020 to facilitate your engagement with the academic appeals process, or general support and advice on understanding and navigating the process, please contact a member of the Student and College Services team.

8.2. The College is committed to its obligations under the Equality Act 2020 in making its learning environments accessible and inclusive to all learners and provides a Learning Support Team to promote this. We have a moral and legal duty to ensure accessibility to the College, its courses, and facilities.

8.3. Throughout the appeal process, you have the right to be accompanied by a friend, parent, or fellow student. With the agreement of the College, a friend, parent, or fellow student may present the appeal on your behalf.

8.4. All information will be held and processed in line with the college's Data Protection Policy. Information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis, recognising the potentially sensitive nature of personal details shared, and where this may also include 'special category' data such as disclosure of disability.

9. AWARDING ORGANISATIONS

9.1. The College will notify the Awarding Organisation or HE partner institutions of any outcomes from an appeal that have implications for the conduct of an examination or the issuance of results.

10. VEXATIOUS OR FRIVOLOUS COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

10.1. The Quality Manager reserves the right to identify an appeal as vexatious or frivolous in situations including, but not limited to:

10.1.1. Complaints or academic appeals that are obsessive, harassing, or repetitive.

10.1.2. Insistence on pursuing non-meritorious complaints or academic appeals and/or seeking unrealistic, unreasonable outcomes.

10.1.3. Insistence on pursuing meritorious complaints or academic appeals in an unreasonable manner.

10.1.4. Complaints or academic appeals designed to cause disruption or annoyance.

10.1.5. Demands for redress lacking any serious purpose or value.

10.2. Such appeals may be terminated. In any such case, the Quality Manager will provide written explanation for the termination of the appeal. You will also be informed of the procedure to appeal this decision.

11. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Available at our University Centre Policy page:

11.1. Compliments and Complaints Policy

11.2. OU Academic Regulations for Validated Awards

11.3. OU Handbook for Validated Awards

11.4. HE Speaking Out Policy and Procedure

If this document is required in an alternative format, please contact equiries@hopwood.ac.uk