



# **Academic Assessment Appeals Policy 2023-2025**

Policy reviewed: August 2023 by Director of Quality

To be next reviewed: August 2025

To be reviewed by: Director of Quality

# Academic Assessment Appeals Policy 2023-2025

## Content

- **Purpose and Scope**
- **Glossary of terms**
- **Academic Judgement**; grounds of which an appeal can be made
- **Higher Education**
- **Internal Appeal Procedure**; stage 1, stage 2, stage 3
- **Stage 4**; appeals to an Awarding Organisation
- **Appeals against external assessment decisions**
- **Record Retention**

## Purpose and scope

The aim of this policy is to enable students who are dissatisfied with an internal or external assessment outcome (including a decision where the result of the assessment may require the student's withdrawal from the programme) to request a review of that decision. This procedure does not deal with disciplinary matters and such matters should be reviewed in line with the Student Development and Disciplinary Procedure. A copy of this policy can be found on the College website.

The Academic Assessment Appeals Policy is introduced to learners as part of their induction and the full policy can be located on the College website.

This policy applies to those students whose assessment/examinations are assessed under the internal authority of Sandwell College, Central Saint Michaels Sixth Form and Cadbury College and Sixth Form. Where examinations are set and assessed externally, the College has no powers to reconsider assessment decisions, but the procedure sets out how to make an appeal to the external awarding bodies concerned.

All information submitted in relation to appeals will be dealt with confidentially and will only be disclosed to those parties involved in the investigation and judgement of the appeal or as is necessary to progress the appeal.

## Glossary of Terms

Different awarding organisations use different names for the roles involved in quality assurance of assessment. This glossary is intended to clarify the roles referred to in the policy.

**Assessor:** The person who marks the student's work.

**Lead Internal Verifier/Internal Quality Assurer:** The person who checks the quality, accuracy and fairness of the assessment and feedback to the student. May also be called IV, Lead Verifier, Lead IV, Internal Moderator, IM, Moderator, Internal Standards Verifier, IQA, Internal Quality Assurer.

**External Verifier/External Quality Assurer:** The person appointed by the awarding body to check the quality and fairness of both the assessment and the internal verification against national standards. This role may also be referred to as: EQA, SV, Standards Verifier, External Standards Verifier, External Moderator.

**Enquiries about results (EAR);** the period of time an awarding body allows for any requests to review assessment outcomes following the publication of results.

## **Academic Judgement**

A student who does not agree with an assessment grade/mark awarded-is encouraged to approach the Assessor concerned, to discuss the mark/grade before submitting an appeal against the grade/mark awarded.

An appeal cannot be made against the assessor on a personal or professional level under this policy.

## **Grounds of which an academic appeal can be made**

There are 3 sets of circumstances in which the decision of an assessor may be changed by a higher authority within the College:

### **1. Material error or irregularity**

- There has been an administrative error;
- The assessment was not conducted in accordance with the programme regulations;

OR

- Some other material irregularity has occurred

### **2. Personal circumstances not known to the assessor/curriculum area**

An assessment decision may be reviewed if a student establishes the satisfaction of the Curriculum Leader/Lead Internal Quality Assurer that his/her performance in the examination or other form of assessment was adversely affected by illness, or other factors, which he/she was unable, or for valid reasons unwilling to divulge prior to assessment.

The student's request must be supported by medical certificates or other appropriate documentary evidence.

### **3. Bias or perception of bias**

A student's characteristics should not affect the mark/grade awarded for an assessment. Any bias due to gender, personality, ethnicity etc is unacceptable.

## Internal Appeals Procedure

If a student is dissatisfied with an internal assessment outcome he/she has the right of appeal. There are three stages in the appeals procedure and each stage must be exhausted before proceeding to the next one.

All students may request additional support to assist them with their appeal to address any perceived barriers.

### **Stage 1**

In the first instance, any student who disagrees with their assessment decision should appeal directly to the assessor who carried out the assessment. The appeal must be sent in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the assessment outcome and should clearly indicate:

- The points of disagreement and reasons.
- The evidence in the portfolio which the student believes they meet the requirements of the performance criteria.

Assessor will consider the appeal and provide a response to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. Students are advised to keep their own copies of all documents used in the appeals procedure.

Reasons for an appeal could be:

- The student does not understand why he/she is not yet competent, due to lack of, or unclear, feedback from the assessor.
- The student believes he/she is competent and that the assessor has misjudged them or missed/misinterpreted some vital evidence.

In most cases it is hoped that this stage of the process will terminate the appeals procedure.





## **Stage 2**

Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of their Stage 1 appeal can further appeal to the Lead Internal Verifier/Internal Quality Assurer for the course within 5 working days. This appeal must be in writing, but need not repeat the detail provided at Stage 1 as all the documentation used at Stage 1 will be passed on to the Lead Internal Verifier/Internal Quality Assurer.

The Lead Internal Verifier/Internal Quality Assurer will investigate the appeal and determine whether the student has valid grounds for an appeal. If the Lead Internal Verifier/Internal Quality Assurer rules valid grounds for an appeal exist, he/she will attempt to resolve the case to the student's satisfaction without an appeal hearing. The Lead Internal Verifier/Internal Quality Assurer will report back to the student within 10 working days.



## **Stage 3**

Before proceeding to Stage 3, the student must have exhausted the requirements of Stage 1 and 2.

Students who are not satisfied with the outcomes of Stage 2 of the Appeals Procedure may then proceed to Stage 3 by appealing in writing to the Director of Quality within 5 working days of receipt of the outcome of stage 2.

The Director of Quality ([Rachael.Aston@sandwell.ac.uk](mailto:Rachael.Aston@sandwell.ac.uk)) or a Senior Leader will examine the findings and call a meeting, within 10 working days of receiving the appeal, to report to the student, assessor and Lead Internal Verifier/Internal Quality Assurer.

While the appeal remains unresolved, the student shall have the right to proceed to the next stage of the programme, provided this is permitted in the programme regulations.

If the Director of Quality/Senior Leader decide in favour of the student, the assessor responsible for the original decision must meet with the Lead Internal Verifier/Internal Quality Assurer and Head of Section/Curriculum within 10 working days to reconsider the student's results i.e. reassess the student's work and regrade the work, or repeat the assessment process for the student. The Lead Internal Verifier/Internal Quality Assurer and Head of Section/Curriculum undertaking such reconsideration should consider the report from the meeting and the recommendations contained in it.

Where the Director of Quality/Senior Leader uphold the original assessment decision, there will be no further internal appeal.

The Director of Quality will not deal with appeals arising from disciplinary matters or from allegations of cheating or plagiarism under the Academic Appeals Policy. The Colleges Malpractice and Maladministration Policy or Disciplinary Policy should be referred to in this instance. A Copy of these policies can be found on the College website.



#### **Stage 4: Appeals to an Awarding Organisation**

(For regulated qualifications), before proceeding, the student must have exhausted all the internal appeals procedures of the College.

Students who are not satisfied with the outcomes of Stage 3 of the Appeals Procedure may then appeal to the awarding organisation or Ofqual.

This appeal must be in writing to the Chief Executive of the awarding organisation (or person advised by awarding organisation), and be accompanied by copies of all the documentation used in Stages 1, 2 and 3. The College will provide the information to the Awarding Organisation and will facilitate arrangements where required. There must also be evidence that students have exhausted all the internal appeals procedures of the College.

An investigation will be undertaken by the External Verifier/ External Quality Assurer appointed by the awarding organisation. On receipt of a report, the application will be considered by the Awarding Organisation's 'Appeals Committee'. This consideration will lead to one of two decisions:

1. Appeal upheld.
2. Appeal rejected.

Further to an Awarding Organisation Appeal, Ofqual or an Awarding Organisation may investigate the effectiveness of the centres and/or Awarding Organisation appeals process.

### **Higher Education**

Higher education students studying a **BTEC Higher National Certificate** or **Diploma** should use the College Academic Assessment Appeals Procedure. If students are dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may subsequently appeal to Pearson directly by contacting the Pearson Vocational Quality Standards Team at [vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com](mailto:vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com)

The College subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student complaints managed by the **Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)**. If a student is studying a higher education course and is dissatisfied with the final decision on their appeal, they may be able to take their case to the OIA.

The OIA rules and timescales for contacting the OIA can be found on their website at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

Higher education students studying programmes in partnership with the **University of Wolverhampton** should use University's Academic Appeals procedure. Details of the possible grounds for an Academic Appeal, along with information on how to submit your appeal can be found on the University's website:

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/current-students/conduct-and-appeals/academic-appeals/>

## **Appeals Against External Assessment Decisions**

This procedure enables students to appeal against the outcome of external assessment and the process of controlled assessments within the College.

If a student has any concerns about the procedures used in assessing their internally assessed work for public exams i.e. controlled assessment/coursework/portfolios, they should discuss the matter with their Personal Tutor and Head of Section/Head of Curriculum immediately. Following that, if the matter remains unresolved, the formal appeal procedure may be used by the student concerned.

On completion of external assessments and the notification of results, Heads of Section/Heads of Curriculum /Lecturers or Students themselves may wish to appeal the outcome. Each awarding organisation has specific procedures to be followed which follow the guidelines agreed by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). Therefore, all appeals against external assessment decisions will be processed and managed by the Examinations Department.

The procedure for appealing against external assessment decisions is as follows:

1. The Head of Section/Head of Curriculum, lecturer or student informs the Examinations Officer that they wish to appeal an assessment decision as soon as they receive notification of their results. This should normally allow at least 5 days before an Awarding Organisation deadline for closing their 'Enquiries About Results' (EAR) procedure.



2. The Examinations Officer will discuss the appeal request with the student or member of staff to ensure that the appeal is eligible within the regulations of the awarding organisation.

### **If the Curriculum Manager agrees to support the EAR**

The request, together with the appeal form, should be made to the Examinations Officer immediately and before the awarding organisations published deadline for EARs. The cost of the enquiry will be met by the Examinations budget.

### **If the Curriculum Manager does not agree to support the EAR**

A student may appeal against the decision not to support an EAR. Appeals should be made in writing to the Examinations Officer, at least 5 working days before the Awarding Organisations published deadline for EARs. The appeal should state, in detail, the reason(s) for the appeal. This appeal should be signed and dated and should include the daytime contact telephone number of the student, parent or guardian. The appeal information will be reviewed by the Examinations Officer and a member of the Senior Management Team; the outcome of the appeal will be communicated by telephone and 1st class letter posted within 24 hours of receipt. This decision is final.

### **If the College does not support the EAR**

The student may still proceed with the EAR but all costs involved will be paid by the student at the time the EAR is made. No EARs will be made until fees are paid. Requests must be made in person to the Examinations Officer before the awarding body's published deadline for EARs. If the enquiry is successful, the fee will be refunded to the student.

1. The Examinations Officer contacts the awarding organisation to clarify procedures and timescales for the submission of appeals and liaises with teaching staff or the student to collate any evidence being submitted in support of the appeal.
2. The Examinations Officer submits the appeal to the awarding organisation, together with any supporting evidence, and notifies the student/teaching staff.
3. On receipt of the appeal outcome, the Examinations Officer communicates the result to the relevant parties in line with awarding organisation requirements\*

\* Many awarding organisations communicate appeal outcomes directly to students, copying centres for information only.

## **Record Retention**

In the case of an academic appeal against an internal or external assessment result, all records must be retained, including all materials and learner evidence, until the appeal has been resolved.

Records will be made available for scrutiny by:

- Auditors from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ);
- The External Quality Assurer from the Awarding Organisation;
- College Quality Team.

Thereafter, assessment and internal quality assurance records for appeals will be retained electronically for at least 6 years (and including where any criminal investigation is involved). Documentation will be retained by the curriculum area for internal appeals stage 1 and stage 2 and by the Curriculum area and Quality team for internal appeals stage 3 and external appeals to an Awarding Organisation or Ofqual.

In all cases, a summary of relevant detail will be recorded on ProMonitor by the curriculum are



