

Academic Appeals Policy

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This policy has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation and Disability. We will continue to monitor this policy and to ensure that it has equal access and does not discriminate against anyone, especially any person/s listed under any protected characteristic.

1. It is the policy of Bedford College Group to develop and maintain assessment procedures that are fair, reliable and open to scrutiny. The College charter fully outlines the College's commitment to students.
2. The Bedford College Group operates a rigorous system of internal verification across all of its centres to guarantee fair assessment that complies with awarding organisation requirements. It is recognised, however, that there could be exceptional circumstances when individual students or groups may wish to appeal against recommendations or decisions relating to assessment. The following appeals procedure outlines the action that may be taken in such circumstances.
3. In all cases the centre's academic appeal process supports and supplements the appeal process for all awarding organisations and Higher Education Institutions. While students are encouraged to follow the College's internal appeals policy, students have the right to appeal directly to the relevant awarding organisation or relevant Higher Education Institution at any time.
4. For all FE Awarding Organisations and for Pearson Higher Nationals, the student may request support from the Quality Nominee in order to access and understand the awarding organisation's appeals process. Likewise, the Head of HE and Partnerships is available to provide similar support for appeals related to university validated programmes.

Scope of Policy and Procedure

5. Any student who believes that a piece of work submitted for assessment has been assessed unfairly, inconsistently or not in accordance with the standards and level required by the Awarding Organisation, shall have the right to appeal against the assessment mark, grade or final outcome.
6. In the first instance any concerns should be discussed with the student's assessor, another member of the teaching team, Programme Manager or Head of School. While it is recognised that in most circumstances student queries relating to assessment can and will be resolved informally, the formal appeals procedure is available to support students in their appeal.
7. If a student needs help or individualised support in making an appeal, this can be obtained by contacting their Learning Mentor or a member of the Quality Department.
8. It is the responsibility of students to inform the centre if they are not satisfied with the grading of any piece of work. The College Academic Appeals Policy and procedure enables students to make a formal appeal against a recommendation or decision relating to:
 - (i) The mark or grade for an individual item of coursework
 - (ii) The result of an individual course

- (iii) Entitlement to an award
- (iv) The class or grade of an award

Note 1 Throughout this document a piece of work shall refer to a set task which may be a written report, essay or assignment, a diagrammatic or pictorial representation, the production of a tangible item or artefact, a portfolio of work or an oral presentation or performance.

Grounds for Appeal

9. A student/candidate may appeal against an assessment decision if they believe that the decision is unfair or unreasonable. Normally an appeal can be made on any one of the following grounds:
 - (i) Relevant assessment criteria have been met but not acknowledged
 - (ii) The assessments were not conducted in accordance with the awarding organisation's regulations
 - (iii) Assessment procedures, including examinations, were not conducted fairly
 - (iv) The Internal Verifier was presented with incorrect or inaccurate assessment information
 - (v) There were medical or other extenuating circumstances which were not taken into account when assessment decisions were being made
 - (vi) There was unfairness or impropriety on the part of one or more of the assessors/examiners
 - (vii) The student was unjustifiably excluded from an examination or an assessment opportunity
10. For appeals related to externally assessed work or examinations, the student must appeal directly to the relevant awarding organisation via their Quality Nominee or Exams Representative
11. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Programme Manager in writing of any extenuating circumstances which may be adversely affecting the student's performance. Normally, this should be done before the assessment process takes place.
12. The procedure to be followed in the case of an appeal is detailed on page 5 of this document.

Awarding Organisation Rules and Regulations

13. Where the awarding organisation allows, if a learner is unable to resolve an appeal with the centre by following their own internal processes, then they have a right to escalate the appeal to the associated awarding organisation. In this instance the student should contact the Quality Nominee for the centre they are registered at, who will support them with the process.
14. The relevant awarding organisation's appeals procedure will be invoked where:
 - a. The issue cannot be resolved internally
 - b. The appeal is in relation to an examination
15. To ensure that our processes and practices are continually improving and remain student centred; the themes of appeals logged will be collected to support this process.
16. Appealing students' personal data—including name, student ID, contact details, appeal details, and any supporting evidence—is collected and processed by The Bedford College Group. This information is used solely to assess and manage the appeal, and may be shared with relevant academic staff, appeals panels, and relevant awarding organisations where necessary and requested. Data is stored securely and retained for 3 years in line with awarding organisation policy, after which it is deleted or anonymised. Students have rights under UK GDPR to access, correct, or delete their data at any time. To do this please contact the Quality Nominee at the site your appeal was made.
17. This policy cross-references and should be used in conjunction with the following documents:
 - The Bedford College Student Charter
 - The Have-Your-Say Policy
 - The Internal Verification Policy
 - The Extenuating Circumstances Policy
 - The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy
 - The Additional Learning Support Policy
 - The Religion and Beliefs Policy
 - Awarding Organisation rules and regulations

Copies of all documents can be obtained by accessing the College intranet. In the case of awarding organisation rules and regulations the examinations department or your Quality Nominee should be contacted.

Bedford College Group Procedure for Academic Appeals

Stage	Person	Student Action	To Whom	College Action	Timeframe
1. Informal	Appeal referred to and resolved by the <i>assessor</i>	Student to discuss with assessor within 5 working days of receipt of assessment decision	Assessor (1)	Assessor to discuss and seek to resolve	2 working days
2. Informal	Appeal referred to and resolved by the <i>Internal Verifier</i>	Student appeal to Internal Verifier within 5 working days of the above decision	Lead Internal Verifier	Lead Internal Verifier to have piece of work reviewed by member of staff with no previous involvement in the assessment decision under appeal. Lead Internal Verifier will check that assessment fully meets awarding organisation requirements	5 working days
3. Formal	Appeal referred to and resolved by the Programme Manager or Head of School	Student to appeal to the relevant Programme Manager or Head of School within 5 working days of the above decision. To begin stage 3 the student must complete the appropriate form (p.7 of this policy)	Programme Manager or Head of School	The Programme Manager, Head of School, or a manager with appropriate vocational expertise must investigate the assessment decision and review it with the curriculum area's Internal Verifier, ensuring that both internal and awarding organisation procedures have been properly followed. The decision of the investigating manager should be made in writing within the timescales	5 working days in writing (2)

				<p>outlined in this policy. If it is deemed necessary to gather further evidence or seek advice from an awarding organisation, then times frames may be extended but the student making the appeal should be notified of this in writing.</p> <p>Evidence of this process and outcome of this appeal should be logged with your campus Quality Nominee.</p>	
4. Formal	Appeal referred to Group Director of Quality Assurance	Student appeals in writing within 5 working days if they feel the decision is unfair at Stage 3 and there is likelihood of a major impact on the student's future, e.g. main qualification not awarded on completion of fulltime course	Group Director of Quality Assurance	Assessment decision investigated (information obtained from appropriate IV and Programme Manager or Head of School). A decision will then be taken based on the evidence.	5 working days

1. If the student feels that he/she cannot approach the assessor/tutor he/she may choose to discuss the matter with a personal tutor or another member of staff
2. The time frames are given as guidance. It may be necessary to seek the advice of the relevant Awarding Organisation and a response to resolve the appeal may take longer

