

Research Degree Appeals Procedure

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GLOSSARY AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of these procedures.

TERM	DEFINITION
Academic Appeal	A request for a review of a decision of the Graduate School Board or its Sub-Committees charged with decisions on candidate progress, assessment, and awards.
Academic Judgement	A judgement that is made where only the opinion of an academic expert will suffice, for example a judgement about assessment, a degree classification, fitness to practise, research methodology or programme content/outcomes will normally be academic judgement. However, the fairness of procedures, the facts of the case, misrepresentation, the manner of communication, bias, an opinion expressed outside the area of competence, the way evidence is considered and maladministration in relation to these matters are all issues where academic judgement is not involved.
Academic Standards Manager (ASM)	This role oversees the University Appeals Regulations and Procedures. References to the Academic Standards Manager include their nominees who are working under their authority, or other appropriate officer nominated by the Academic Registrar.
Assessment process	This includes all aspects of assessment, including the application of Annual Performance Review (APR), Remediation, compliance with assessment requirements and outcomes, and the conduct of the Board of Examiners and/or the Graduate School Board.
Candidate	Any person pursuing a research programme of study offered by the University, which leads to a research award of, or the award of credit by, the University. This includes candidates enrolled with a collaborative partner on a research degree programme approved or validated by the University, unless otherwise stated in the partnership agreement and agreed at the point of validation.
Complaint	The expression of a specific concern about the provision of a course/module, programme of study, or a related academic or support service. These are dealt with under the Student Complaints Procedure .
Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards)	Head of the Quality and Standards Office in the Academic Registrar's Department. References to the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) include their nominees who are working under their authority, or other appropriate officer nominated by the Academic Registrar.
Graduate School Board	The formal body responsible for making decisions concerning a research degree candidate's assessment, progression, and award. The Graduate School Board is also responsible for the conduct of its Sub-Committees, e.g. the Research Degrees Progression Committee.
Material Irregularity	The University has not acted in accordance with its own regulations or procedures, or has not acted with procedural fairness, and that this failing on the part of the University is so significant that it has had a material impact on the outcome, i.e. had it not been for this failing the outcome would probably have been substantively different.

TERM	DEFINITION
University Working Days	The normal University working days are Monday to Friday throughout the year except for Bank and National Holidays and a Christmas closure week, normally between Christmas and the New Year. The availability of Academic staff, however, may be reduced outside of term-time and this may result in stages of the procedure being slower to progress during these periods

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The [Graduate School Board \(GSB\)](#) derives its authority from Academic Council. GSB, and its Sub-Committees makes such decisions in accordance with the requirements of the [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#). The GSB is the only body that can make decisions concerning the:
 - academic progression of candidates;
 - exclusion of candidates for academic failure;
 - conferment of awards.
- 1.2. The decisions of the [Graduate School Board \(GSB\)](#) can only be set aside in exceptional circumstances. Academic Council delegated responsibility for Research Degree progression and awards to the Graduate School Board on the 27 June 2012. A decision of GSB may only be modified by GSB, including by the Chair of GSB acting on behalf of the Board, or by Academic Council.
- 1.3. An academic appeal is a representation against a decision of GSB in respect of an assessment outcome for an individual candidate. The purpose of these procedures is to provide a framework within which a candidate may seek to challenge that decision in respect of that candidate's assessment, in order to protect against potential unfairness resulting from omission or error on the part of the University. The procedures are intended to provide an opportunity to remedy material disadvantage to a candidate.
- 1.4. No candidate appealing under these procedures, whether successfully or otherwise, shall be treated less favourably than would have been the case had an appeal not been made.
- 1.5. If a candidate wishes to present a complaint about the University, its research degree programmes or services or the individuals concerned in their delivery, the [Student Complaints Procedure](#) should be used. Where a candidate submits an academic appeal against a decision of GSB in accordance with these procedures which, in the opinion of the Academic Standards Manager, requires an investigation which falls outside the remit of the GSB and which constitutes a complaint under the provisions of the Student Complaints Procedure, then the matter shall be referred for consideration under the Student Complaints Procedure. The academic appeal shall be held in abeyance until the consideration of the matter under the [Student Complaints Procedure](#) has been concluded. The Academic Standards Manager shall notify the candidate accordingly, normally within 5 University working days of receipt of the academic appeal. The findings of the Complaint investigation will then inform the consideration of the academic appeal.
- 1.6. The University's policies on the assessment of candidates, the role of the Director of Studies, Supervisors, Independent Assessors, Members of the Examination Board and other related matters are published in the [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#) and the supporting [Research Degree Handbook](#).
- 1.7. This Procedure does not cover complaints or academic appeals against matters which have already or are currently being considered by the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education \(OIA\)](#), a court, or a tribunal.

- 1.8. The University reserves the right to terminate the academic appeals process at any time if it judges that the appeal is vexatious or frivolous. This decision will be made by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) on the advice of the Academic Registrar. Any candidate submitting fraudulent documentation in support of their appeal or who submits an appeal that is fraudulent in any other way will be subject to the provisions of the University's [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#), [Academic Misconduct Regulations](#) or the [Student Research Misconduct Regulations](#), as appropriate.
- 1.9. As academic appeals are always related to individual assessment outcomes, it is unusual for candidates to submit collective appeals. However, the University recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances where the issues raised affect a number of candidates and therefore those candidates may wish to lodge a collective appeal. In these cases, each candidate is expected to show how they have personally been affected by the situation. In certain instances, a nominated individual may be required to act as spokesperson for those candidates who are making the collective appeal.
- 1.10. An academic appeal may only be submitted by the candidate whose assessment decision is being challenged – a third party may not submit an academic appeal on behalf of a candidate.
- 1.11. The University will not consider academic appeals which are made anonymously, nor will it consider requests made by appellants for appeals to be considered anonymously.
- 1.12. Candidate expenses for making an appeal will not be reimbursed by the University, regardless of the subsequent outcome.
- 1.13. The University undertakes to treat all appeals with confidentiality. Disclosure of evidence will be restricted to those parties involved in the review process.
- 1.14. The University is committed to complying fully with the Data Protection Act 2018 in its handling of [personal data](#).

2. ACCOMPANIMENT AND REPRESENTATION

- 2.1. A candidate should seek advice from the [University of Westminster Students' Union \(UWSU\)](#) before making an academic appeal. Advice on the procedure may also be sought from the Academic Standards Manager or the [Graduate School Office](#).
- 2.2. Candidates invited to attend an appeal hearing may be accompanied by an officer or staff member of [UWSU](#), a currently enrolled candidate of the University, or a member of University staff, who may make representations on behalf of the candidate. Not all appeals will necessarily proceed to a formal hearing and will be managed in accordance with the procedure below.
- 2.3. Legal representation will not be permitted at appeal hearings.

3. GROUNDS FOR AN APPEAL

- 3.1. A decision of the Graduate School Board or its Sub-Committees or a recommendation by a Board of Examiners, confirmed by the GSB, may only be modified where one or more of

the following criteria (the grounds) have been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the body considering the appeal:

- a) That there is evidence that a procedural irregularity (including administrative error) has occurred in the assessment of the candidate's progress and performance (measured against the performance and rate of progress that would be required for a timely and successful completion as defined in the [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#) and the supporting [Research Degrees Handbook](#)) and that the procedural irregularity is of such a nature as to cause doubt as to whether the decision might have been different had there not been such irregularity; and/or
- b) That there is evidence of improper assessment by the assessors of the adequacy of the candidate's progress and performance in relation to the rate of progress required for a timely and successful completion as defined in the [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#) and the supporting [Research Degrees Handbook](#); a candidate may not otherwise challenge the academic judgment of the assessors; and/or
- c) That there is evidence of improper assessment of an application of Mitigating Circumstances, which resulted in the candidate being put at a disadvantage during subsequent assessments of progress and performance (measured against the performance and rate of progress that would be required for a timely and successful completion as defined in the [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#) and the supporting [Research Degrees Handbook](#)), which would not otherwise have occurred had reasonable and appropriate adjustments been made; and/or
- d) That there were circumstances affecting the candidate's performance of which the examiners were not aware at an oral examination (viva)¹; and/or
- e) That there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examination (including administrative error) of such a nature as to cause doubt as to whether the result might have been different had there not been such irregularity; and/or
- f) That there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners.

Candidates wishing to appeal should ensure they have read the [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#) and the supporting section of the [Research Degrees Handbook](#).

3.2. Academic appeals which seek to challenge the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners, Assessors or the Graduate School Board and its Sub-Committees will not be considered, and therefore matters of academic judgement will not be grounds for an academic appeal.

3.3. Mitigating circumstances will not be considered as grounds for an academic appeal following an examination (see Section B6 of the [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#))

¹ This criteria will only be considered in exceptional circumstances as the University operates a "Fit to Sit" policy, i.e. it is the responsibility of the candidate to determine if they are fit to participate in an assessment or if a mitigating circumstances claim, or in the case of the final *viva voce* oral examination an "application to postpone an examination" request should be submitted for non-participation (see Sections B of the [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#) and the [Research Degree Handbook](#)).

except where permitted under Section B7.4 as a “fit to sit” policy normally applies. It is recognised that mitigating circumstances may exist that have impacted on the progress of a candidate’s research programme, however, these should have been formally reported at the time the circumstance occurred, with any reasonable adjustments that were necessary and appropriate being discussed and agreed with the Director of Studies at the time. Candidates should appeal against the decision of the Graduate School Board in relation to improper assessment of a mitigating circumstance at the time it occurs, not after a subsequent assessment of performance or examination. Claims for mitigating circumstances will not be considered retrospectively.

- 3.4. Candidates should seek advice from the University of Westminster Students’ Union, before submitting an appeal. Further details are available from the [USWU web site](#).

4. PROCEDURES

STAGE 1: Initial Consideration

- 4.1. All academic appeals must be made within 15 University working days of the publication of the decision which is being appealed (see [Appeals Procedure summary](#)) using the application form for Stage 1 appeal which can be found on the Graduate School web page under [Academic Programme](#) and submitted to the Academic Standards Manager to undertake a review of the appeal and investigate the circumstances. All evidence from the appellant must be provided at the time the appeal is submitted.
- 4.2. Appeals submitted after this deadline may, exceptionally, be admitted at the discretion of the Academic Standards Manager where the candidate can provide good reason, to the satisfaction of the Academic Standards Manager, for its late submission.
- 4.3. The appeal request will be acknowledged normally within 5 University working days of its receipt.
- 4.4. The Academic Standards Manager and a senior researcher (e.g. College Research Director, Research Centre Director) with no prior contact with the case shall undertake a preliminary review of the appeal request and investigate the circumstances applying to the case to assess if there are permissible grounds and make one of the following determinations:
 - a) That the appeal provides **evidence of permissible grounds**, see [Section 3.1](#), in which case the appeal shall move to [Stage 2](#).
 - b) That the appeal **does not provide evidence of permissible grounds**, see [Section 3.1](#), in which case the Academic Standards Manager will advise the candidate in writing of this finding, normally within 20 University working days of receipt of the appeal, and that the appeal will not be further considered. If more than 20 University working days is required to undertake the investigation the Academic Standards Manager will notify the appellant to explain the reason(s) for the delay.
- 4.5. Where the candidate is dissatisfied with a determination that the appeal does not provide evidence of permissible grounds, the appellant may, within 5 University working days of the

notification letter, make a request to the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) that this decision is reviewed. In these circumstances the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) will refer the appeal to an Independent Rapporteur, who shall be a senior member of the University research active staff with no prior involvement in the case. The Independent Rapporteur will review all documentation available and may endorse the recommendation that no permissible grounds exist for an appeal or may determine that the appeal should proceed to [Stage 2](#). There shall be no right of appeal against the decision of the Independent Rapporteur. The Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) will aim to respond, within 15 University working days of receipt of the request to review the decision of the Academic Standards Manager that there are no permissible grounds for an appeal and will advise the candidate in writing of the Independent Rapporteur's determination. If more than 15 University working days is required for the Independent Rapporteur to complete their review the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) will notify the appellant to explain the reason(s) for the delay.

- 4.6. Where the Independent Rapporteur's decision is that no permissible grounds for an appeal exist, or where the candidate does not request a review of the decision of the Academic Standards Manager's decision within the 5 University working days, this will constitute the completion of the University's procedures in this matter.

STAGE 2: Consideration by the Graduate School Board

- 4.7. Following completion of the [Stage 1 Initial Consideration](#) and where it is determined that an appeal should proceed to Stage 2 the Academic Standards Manager will collate the documents submitted by the appellant and any other supporting documents identified during the preliminary review into a file for consideration by the Chair of the Graduate School Board. This file will include any determination made by an Independent Rapporteur, where appropriate.

- 4.8. The Academic Standards Manager in consultation with the College Research Director at Stage 1 will:

4.8.1 In the case of an appeal based on **grounds of material irregularity in an assessment process**, whether examination or a decision to exclude a candidate due to poor performance, report their findings in writing to the Chair of the Graduate School Board, whose decision is being appealed. The Chair of the Graduate School Board shall consider these findings on behalf of the Graduate School Board, and where appropriate should liaise with and seek views and opinions from relevant academic and non-academic staff and where appropriate, external examiners. The Chair shall, on behalf of the Graduate School Board, reach one of the following determinations:

- a) That a material irregularity in the assessment process did occur and that, had it not been for that irregularity, the original decision of the Graduate School Board would have been different. In such cases the Chair shall uphold the appeal and modify the Board's original decision as appropriate; or
- b) That a material irregularity in the assessment process did occur, but even had the irregularity not occurred the original decision of the Board would not have been different. In such cases the Chair shall reject the appeal and the Board's original decision will stand; or

- c) That a material irregularity in the assessment process did not occur. In such cases the Chair shall reject the appeal and the Board's original decision will stand.

4.8.2 In the case of an appeal based on **grounds of material irregularity in the conduct of the Mitigating Circumstances process** (see [Section B7 of the Research Degree Academic Regulations](#)), report their findings in writing to the Chair of the Graduate School Board whose decision is being appealed. The Chair shall consider these findings on behalf of the Graduate School Board, and where appropriate should liaise with and seek views and opinions from relevant academic and other staff. The Chair shall, on behalf of the Graduate School Board, reach one of the following determinations:

- a) That a material irregularity in the conduct of the Mitigating Circumstances process did occur and that, had it not been for that irregularity, the original decision of the Graduate School Board would have been different. In such cases the Chair shall uphold the appeal and modify the Board's original decision as appropriate; or
- b) That a material irregularity in the conduct of the Mitigating Circumstances process did occur, but even had the irregularity not occurred the original decision of the Board would not have been different. In such cases the Chair shall reject the appeal and the Board's original decision will stand; or
- c) That a material irregularity in the conduct of the Mitigating Circumstances process did not occur. In such cases the Chair shall reject the appeal and the Board's original decision will stand.

4.9. Written confirmation of the Stage 2 decision, along with the full reasons for that decision, should be provided by the Academic Standards Manager to the candidate normally within 40 University working days of receipt of the appeal (or within 70 University working days in those cases where an Independent Rapporteur reviewed the initial decision of the Academic Standards Manager in accordance with Section 4.5 above). Where the outcome of the appeal may impact on a candidate's progression, and any delay in considering the appeal may adversely impact the candidate's academic career, the University will do all that it can to expedite the consideration of the appeal, however this cannot be guaranteed as it is important that a robust process is followed and full consideration is given to the appeal.

4.10. Where the Chair of the Graduate School Board modifies the Board's original decision, this shall be reported to the next meeting of the Graduate School Board.

STAGE 3: Consideration of a Request for an Appeal Hearing

4.11. Should the candidate be dissatisfied with the Stage 2 decision the candidate has the right to request the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) to refer the matter for consideration by an Appeal Panel. Such a request must be received by the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) within 10 University working days of the date of notification of the Stage 2 decision. Where such a request is not received by the deadline, the University's internal procedures are completed. Such a request will not be considered if [Stage 2](#) of the process has not completed.

- 4.12. Such a request must be submitted on the Stage 3 application form (see [Academic Programme](#)). The completed form must stipulate clearly and unambiguously the grounds upon which the request is based and include a comprehensive statement explaining why the grounds have been met. All evidence submitted must relate only to the grounds for the request. The Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) will acknowledge receipt of the request in writing normally within 5 University working days.
- 4.13. The only possible grounds are as follows:
- That there was a material irregularity in the consideration of the academic appeal at [Stage 2](#);
 - That new evidence has come to light to support the appeal which could not reasonably have been made available at the time the appeal was submitted.
- 4.14. The Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) will consider the request against these grounds, and only these grounds. The Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) may request the candidate or any other party to provide further information or clarification.
- 4.15. Where, in the opinion of the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards), there is evidence that one or both of the grounds might have been met the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) shall accept the request and refer the matter for consideration by an [Appeal Panel at Stage 4](#).
- 4.16. Where, in the opinion of the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards), there is no such evidence the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) shall reject the request. In this case the Stage decision shall stand, there shall be no further opportunities for appeal, and the University's internal procedures are completed.
- 4.17. The Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) shall notify the appellant in writing of the decision, and the reasons for it, normally within 20 University working days of receipt of the request. Where it is not possible for the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards) to meet this deadline the appellant will be informed and will be advised of the reasons for the delay.
- 4.18. Pending the outcome of Stage 3 the original decision will stand.

STAGE 4: Consideration at an Appeal Hearing

- 4.19. The Appeal Hearing will be conducted by an Appeal Panel and its composition will be as follows:
- a) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or nominee (Chair)
 - b) Two academic staff members of Academic Council with experience of research degree completions
 - c) President of the Students' Union, or sabbatical officer nominee.

The Secretary to the Panel shall be a nominee of the Deputy Registrar (Quality & Standards).

- 4.20. No member of the Panel shall have had any previous involvement in the case, nor shall have been involved in advising, supervising or assessment of the candidate.

- 4.21. The quorum for an Appeal Panel is three, including the Chair.
- 4.22. The Appeal Hearing shall normally be held within 30 University working days of the written notification of the Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards) decision to accept the request to refer the matter to an Appeal Panel. Where it is not possible for the Hearing to be held within this timeframe the appellant will be informed and will be advised of the reasons for the delay. Wherever possible the date set will be at the candidate's convenience.
- 4.23. The candidate's expenses for attending an appeal hearing will not normally be reimbursed by the University.

Procedures for conducting an appeal hearing

- 4.24. At least 10 University working days in advance of the hearing the University will write to the candidate and ask that within 5 University working days the candidate:
- Confirm their attendance at the hearing
 - Confirm the name and relationship of the person who will be accompanying them to the hearing
 - Confirm the name and relationship of any witnesses that the candidate wishes to call during the hearing
 - Provide any additional evidence that they wish the appeal panel to consider that has not previously been submitted at stage one or stage two of the appeals process
 - Provide an indication of the outcome they are seeking within the scope of the Research Degree Academic Regulations.
- 4.25. The members of the Appeal Panel, the candidate, and the Chair of the Graduate School Board, whose Stage 2 decision is being appealed, will receive the same documentation prior to the hearing including:
- The candidate's submission and supporting evidence
 - The Stage 2 outcome letter, which will include the reasons for the decision
 - The relevant assessment regulations
 - Other documents which may be considered relevant.
- 4.26. Submission of additional evidence will not be permitted except orally during the hearing. Tabled evidence will not be permitted.
- 4.27. The panel will ask questions of:
- the candidate
 - any witnesses that the candidate wishes to call
 - the Chair of the Graduate School Board whose decision is being appealed
 - any witnesses that the Chair of the Graduate School Board wishes to call
- 4.28. The candidate is expected to attend the hearing in person. In the event of a candidate's non-attendance the appeal hearing will proceed. Exceptionally, this condition may be waived by the Chair of the Appeals Panel where there is evidence to show that a candidate

is unable to comply, e.g. where a candidate is too incapacitated by illness to attend. A representative will not be allowed to attend on the candidate's behalf.

- 4.29. Candidates have the right to call any witnesses that they choose who will be able to provide information pertinent to the issues under consideration at the appeal hearing. The Chair of the Graduate School Board whose decision is being appealed also has the right to call any witnesses that they choose who will be able to provide information pertinent to the issues under consideration at the appeal hearing. Witnesses will not be able to ask questions on behalf of the candidate and are only permitted to be present whilst giving evidence.
- 4.30. Appeal Hearings shall be held in private.
- 4.31. The Appeal Panel shall consider the evidence presented and shall limit its consideration to the grounds stated at Section 4.13 above. It is not the purpose of the Appeal Hearing to rehear the original academic appeal. The Appeals Panel will decide on the balance of probabilities, either:
 - a) That one or both of the grounds for appeal are met, in which case the appeal is upheld and the matter is referred back to the Chair of the Graduate School Board to reconsider the original academic appeal. The Panel may also make recommendations to the Chair of the Graduate School Board; or
 - b) That neither ground for appeal is met, in which case the appeal is rejected and the [Stage 2](#) decision shall stand. There shall be no further opportunities for appeal, and the University's internal procedures are completed.
- 4.32. In the event that the Panel does not reach a consensus, the Chair will have the casting vote. No vote will be counted for absent panel members.
- 4.33. The Appeals Panel may also recommend to Academic Council and Graduate School Board changes to assessment procedures or highlight examples of good practice as a result of the appeals process.
- 4.34. The candidate and the Chair of the Graduate School Board will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal hearing within 5 University working days. The outcome letter will include the reasons for the Panel's decision.
- 4.35. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final and cannot be the subject of any further appeal. This is considered the end of the University's internal procedures.
- 4.36. Pending the outcome of any appeal at Stage 4 the original decision will stand.

STAGE 5: Reconsideration by the Graduate School Board

- 4.37. Where the Appeal Panel upholds the appeal and refers the matter back for reconsideration by the Chair of the Graduate School Board this reconsideration must be completed at the earliest opportunity and normally within 20 University working days of notification of the Panel's decision.

- 4.38. This reconsideration will be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Section 4.8 above.
- 4.39. The candidate must be informed by the Academic Standards Manager of the outcome within a further 5 University working days.
- 4.40. There shall be no further right of appeal following this reconsideration, which shall constitute the completion of the University's internal procedures.

Completion of Procedures

- 4.41. At the completion of the University's internal processes relating to appeals, the Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards), or nominee, will issue a letter informing a candidate that the University's procedures are complete. If a candidate remains dissatisfied with the outcome it may be possible to make a complaint to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education \(OIA\)](#). The OIA website contains Information and the eligibility rules.

5. ANNULMENT OF THE DECISION OF AN ASSESSMENT BOARD

- 5.1. Notwithstanding the fact that the candidate has no further right of appeal, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) may recommend to Academic Council that the decision of the Graduate School Board be annulled if:
- The Chair of the Graduate School Board has failed to reconsider the [Stage 1 decision](#) despite referral back following a successful appeal; or
 - The Chair of the Graduate School Board has ignored a reasonable recommendation from the Appeal Panel in their reconsideration; or
 - Following the completion of all other internal procedures the decision remains perverse or unreasonable to the detriment of the candidate.
- 5.2. If it is felt that the irregularity may have affected other candidates, Academic Council may annul part or all of the assessment process.
- 5.3. Where Academic Council annuls the decision of the Graduate School Board or part or all of an assessment process it shall put in place arrangements as it sees fit in order to remedy the situation. This may include substituting the decision of the Graduate School Board with a modified decision.

APPEALS PROCEDURE SUMMARY

Stage 1 Initial Consideration

Decision	Outcome
Grounds	Appeal Progresses to Stage 2
No Grounds	Three possible outcomes: 1. Student does not request a review of the decision and a Completion of Procedures letter is issued. 2. Student requests a review of the decision and the outcome is <u>upheld as no grounds</u> . A Completion of Procedures letter is issued. 3. Student requests a review of the decision and the outcome is that <u>there are grounds</u> . Appeal progresses to Stage 2.

Stage 2 Consideration by the Graduate School Board

Decision	Outcome
Upheld	Material irregularity has occurred. Outcome sent to student who has the right to request an appeal hearing (Stage 3/4)
Reject	Material irregularity has occurred but it would not have changed the original decision. Outcome sent to student who has the right to request an appeal hearing (Stage 3/4)
Reject	Material irregularity has not occurred. Outcome sent to student who has the right to request an appeal hearing (Stage 3/4)

Stage 3/4 Consideration of a request for an appeal hearing

Decision	Outcome
Accept	Appeal hearing finds that material irregularity has occurred, outcome sent to student. Student has the right to request an appeal hearing (Stage 3/4)
Accept	Appeal hearing finds that material irregularity has occurred but it would not have changed the original decision, outcome sent to student. Student has the right to request an appeal hearing (Stage 3/4)
Reject	Appeal hearing request rejected and Completion of Procedures letter issued. No further right of University appeal.

If the student remains dissatisfied at the end of the University Appeals Procedure, they can make a complaint to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education \(OIA\)](#).