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LEICESTER
STUDENTS'
UNION



ACADEMIC ADVICE

Academic Appeal

What is an academic appeal?

An academic appeal is a procedure which allows you to ask the University, on certain grounds, to review a decision they have made. This decision may relate to your final award, or your academic progress.

Examples of decisions that you can appeal include:

- A decision to transfer you to, or be awarded, a lower award than the one you registered for (e.g. a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma, instead of a Master's Degree).
- A decision which stops you from continuing your studies, such as a course termination.
- A decision which interrupts your studies, such as being given a year without residence or repeat year.
- The overall classification of your degree.

These decisions will usually be made by a **Board of Examiners**, but *other* academic bodies may be involved. For example, a research student's thesis committee can make recommendations relating to their progress.

Appeals which appear to challenge the academic judgement of those assessing your work **are not permitted**.

If you've been given one of the above decisions, and have suitable grounds for appeal, you can submit an academic appeal by completing an **Academic Appeal Form**, and attaching documentary evidence of your situation. On the form you need to provide your personal details, your grounds for appeal, and details of your appeal, as well as your ideal outcome.

What are the grounds for appealing?

For an appeal to be considered **it must have grounds**. There are **three grounds** for appealing, and you can appeal under one or more of these.

1. New evidence of significant mitigating circumstances

The University considers a mitigating circumstance to be *'a serious or significant event affecting a student's health or personal life which is beyond*

the student's control. The events are sufficiently serious enough in nature to result in the student being unable to attend, complete, or submit an assessment on time'. In such cases the mitigating circumstances regulations and policy may be applied. These regulations and associated policy are designed to ensure the fair and consistent treatment of all students [Senate Regulation 7.96].

There are various different issues that are considered to be mitigating circumstances. These include serious physical or diagnosed psychological illness, serious infectious disease, severe personal/family difficulties, serious illness or the death of an immediate family member, the sudden deterioration of a chronic medical condition or disability, being the victim of a serious crime, legal proceedings court attendance, complications during pregnancy or childbirth resulting in hospitalisation, and for distance learning and part-time students, significant and immediate change in working conditions.

2. Evidence of procedural irregularity

The University defines procedural irregularity as a situation where *“there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of examination or assessment procedures of such a nature as to create a reasonable possibility that the result may have been different if it had not occurred”*.

Examples of procedural irregularity include: - a mistake on your exam paper; that the exam contained something not taught as part of the programme; there was a divergence from the marking criteria; moderation procedures were not implemented; that Mitigating Circumstance outcomes were incorrectly applied; information in your handbook not being fully applied or unclear information in the handbook.

3. Evidence of prejudice or bias

This is where there has been prejudice or bias or lack of proper assessment from one or more examiners.

How should my appeal be structured?

The appeal form provides prompts to input **what** decision you are appealing, which **grounds** your appeal is based on, what **evidence** you are providing and what your **preferred outcome** would be.

Following this, you should outline your case in a **clear way**, and in **chronological order**. Try to include names and dates where necessary, and refer to any **evidence** you'll be including with your appeal in the body of the text, at the relevant points.

If you have **mitigating circumstances**, but have not informed your department of them, you can explain the circumstances in **Section 3, Part A (iii)** of the **Academic Appeal Form**. If you have multiple Mitigating Circumstances, put each one on a separate line in the blue box in Part Ai and identify the module code(s) and assessment title(s) affected in the right-hand column. You will need to give details of your **circumstances**, **when** they occurred and **how long** they lasted, how they've **impacted** you personally, and how they've **affected your academic performance**. You'll need to demonstrate that had the circumstances **not** existed, you would likely have passed the course or that the results might have been different.

It's also a good idea to mention the steps that you're taking to **overcome** your mitigating circumstances, to ensure that they **don't continue to affect your studies**, and also show your commitment to the course.

In **Section 3, Part A (ii)** you need to list the evidence that you'll be attaching to your appeal. Evidence does not need to be copied into the body of the form; it can be attached to the email you send when submitting your appeal form. In **Section 3, Part A (iii)** box you need to explain **why you couldn't inform your department/School and submit a mitigating circumstance form sooner** (*This information is very important*).

For **procedural irregularities**, you need to explain in **Section 3, Part B** what procedural irregularities you feel have occurred, **how** they affected your studies, **how things might have been different** if the irregularities hadn't occurred, and how your **evidence** demonstrates this.

Similarly, for **prejudice or bias**, **Section 3, Part C** you need to explain **what** prejudice or bias you believe has taken place, **how** it affected your studies, **how things might have been different** if the prejudice or bias hadn't occurred, and how your **evidence** demonstrates this.

Lastly, in Section 4, you'll need to provide details of your **ideal appeal outcome**, and we recommend that you include **several possible options**. This will need to be in line with University Regulations, as an appeal that seeks an outcome which isn't permitted within Regulations, will not proceed to a panel.

What evidence do I need to attach?

Evidence of **procedural irregularity**, or **prejudice or bias**, should clearly demonstrate the circumstances that you discuss in your appeal. Examples of **evidence** could include but aren't limited to copies of emails between relevant parties, proofs of text messages, relevant sections of your course or module handbooks, information published on Blackboard or MyStudentRecord, and information in the [Senate Regulations](#) and [University Policies](#) which demonstrate what has **not** been adhered to.

It is your responsibility to provide evidence, and it must be written in English. Any evidence not written in English should be submitted with a **certified translation** (meaning provided by a professional translator including their details and credentials i.e., qualification or job title).

If you're appealing on the grounds of **new mitigating circumstances**, the evidence that you submit with your mitigating circumstances form should demonstrate several things:

1. **What** the circumstances are and how they impacted you personally.
2. **How** they affected you in relation to your exams or assignments.
3. **When** you were affected.
4. **How** long you were affected, or how long you will be affected (if the situation is ongoing).
5. **How** and **why** you were unable to apply for mitigating circumstances at the time of the assessment.

The evidence that you submit should cover the dates you talk about in your appeal, so if you require **medical evidence**, it is really important that you see a **GP as soon as possible**, so that your evidence is dated as early as possible. If the situation is ongoing, make sure you also visit your GP **regularly**, so that you can provide evidence of such if necessary.

This table on gives you an indication of the types of documents that the University would ‘consider’ as evidence for mitigating circumstances (for a more comprehensive list see the [Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#))

Mitigating Circumstance	Examples of Evidence
Serious illness or accident resulting in hospitalisation or urgent medical attention/treatment relating to a student	Medical certificate/hospital report/report from qualified medical practitioner. These should be produced whilst the symptoms were still apparent to the medical practitioner.
Serious illness (as described above) of a member of the student’s immediate family (e.g. mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter, grandparent, spouse, guardian)	A medical report from a qualified medical practitioner, letter from medical professional.
Serious infectious disease that could put others at risk	Medical certificate/hospital report/report from qualified medical practitioner. These should be signed whilst the symptoms were still apparent to the medical practitioner.
Sudden deterioration in a chronic medical condition or disability	An individual flare up of a declared long-term condition does not need to be re-evidenced if previously disclosed and evidence provided at that point. Evidence of a long-term condition and possible flare ups only needs to be provided once to the University. New or undeclared conditions will require a medical report from an appropriate qualified medical practitioner.
Childbirth, or pregnancy complications	Medical certificate/hospital report/report from qualified medical practitioner.
Diagnosed psychological illness	Report from a psychiatrist, psychologist, medical practitioner or Student Support Services. (Documentation should provide details of diagnosis and/or treatment, rather than just a record of appointments)

Legal proceedings requiring attendance at court as a witness or jury service	Documentary evidence from the court or a solicitor.
Severe adverse personal/family difficulties	Report from Student Support Services, other qualified professional.
Being the victim of a crime	<p>Crime report and number, or evidence from alternative reporting routes as appropriate. Letter from medical professional/counsellor.</p> <p>In circumstances where no evidence is available, claims should still be submitted and considered without a request for evidence. For example, evidence is not required for sexual assault.</p>
Significant and immediate change in working conditions (distance learning and part-time students only)	Where possible evidence from employer detailing the change in working conditions and timescale of advance notice given to employee (student). Call up papers for military deployment.
Harassment based on a student's disability, faith, gender identity, race, and/or sexual orientation	Evidence is not required and claims will be assessed based on student statement of impact. Additional supporting statements could be provided by a personal tutor or student support services if the student deems it appropriate.

When is the deadline for submitting an appeal?

The deadline for your appeal will be stated on your **decision notification email which you will have received and is available to view on 'MyStudentRecord'**. The deadline for your appeal will be shown when you log-in to view your results.

Appeals submitted after the given deadline will be deemed to be out of time, and will not be considered **unless** you can provide evidence which shows you were prevented from submitting the appeal on time.

Where should I send my appeal form?

Course Appeals (including if you are a MBChB student)

You should send your appeal form as a Word document **not** a PDF. Please note the Appeals team will be unable to open documents saved on your personal drive so you will need to download and attach them, along with your evidence, to the Appeals Team appeals@le.ac.uk

Appeal Enquiries:

Tel: +44(0)116 252 2250

Email: appeals@le.ac.uk

What happens next?

Once you've submitted your appeal form and evidence, it will be checked by the **Appeals Team** to see whether you have **eligible grounds** for appeal.

If you do not, you'll be notified in writing, and will be asked to supply further evidence, or told that it cannot be accepted. If it isn't accepted, and you believe there's evidence of procedural irregularity in the initial decision, or that your evidence for eligibility has not been fully considered, you can request that the University review their decision by completing the **Academic Appeal Review Request Form**. You have **14 days from the date of the decision** to do this.

In order to investigate whether you have grounds of appeal your **department may be asked to produce a report** relating to your appeal. Upon receiving the departmental report, the **Appeals Team** will conduct a **review** of the information provided, and make a **judgement** as to whether the case goes forward to an appeals panel, is accepted, or is rejected.

If it's decided that your appeal will go to **panel**, you will have the opportunity to see the report, and write a response to it. Your response should cover what you agree with from what the department has said, what you don't agree with, and what, if anything, they haven't addressed.

If your appeal is rejected at this stage you will see the departmental report (for information only), but again you can request a **review of the appeal**.

If going to **panel**, your appeal and evidence, the department's report and your response will then be sent to an **appeals panel** for consideration.

The University will inform you of the date that this will occur.

The panel will be made up of *three* members of academic staff from within the University, but from outside your department, so will not know anything about your case other than what they see in your appeal and other documents. As such, it's important that you put your case across in as much detail as possible.

Once a decision has been made, you will be notified of the result. As at all other stages, **if you're unhappy** with your appeal outcome and **meet the grounds to do so**, you can request a review of your case **within 14 days of the decision being made**, which will be considered by the **Education, Quality and Enhancement Team**.

If you're unhappy with the overall outcome of your appeal, after the review stage you can submit a complaint to the **Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)** - You have 12 months from the date of the outcome letter to raise a complaint with the OIA.

What can the Advice Service do for me?

[Advice Service](#) Here in the Advice Service we provide confidential academic and housing advice. We also offer guidance and signposting to Employment Rights, Legal, Wellbeing Services and anything else that enriches your University experience. We are an independent organisation and separate from the University. Therefore, we have no involvement in the decision-making processes of the University and we do not have access to any of the data on academic and/or personal records.

If you have any queries about the appeals process, we have a team of advisers on hand to help.

Our advisers can explain the appeals process to you, listen to your situation, answer your questions, and give you advice on how best to put your case across.

We can check through your appeals form before you submit it, and give you some suggestions on how to improve it. We're also able to look at your evidence and advise on what you should submit with your form.

We can advise on how to put together a response to a departmental report or review request, and can guide you through the OIA process.

We're also able to signpost you to other services from around the Union, University, Student-led and community who might be able to help you with different aspects of your circumstances.

Feel free to get in touch with us via our [contact form](#), and we will then get back to you to provide further advice or discuss ways to support you through the process.

Opening hours are 11am-3pm, Monday to Friday.

If your query is urgent you can contact us on advice@le.ac.uk or +44 (0)116 223 1132.

Who else can I talk to about my academic appeal?

The following people and services may be able to help you with various aspects of your appeal:

- **Personal Tutor** – You should keep your personal tutor updated about your situation. They may also be able to give you more advice and guidance on the appeals process.
- **GP** – If your mitigating circumstances involve illness, it's important that you visit your doctor, as you'll need to provide evidence of your illness.
- **Education, Quality, Enhancement and Development Team** – You can contact the appeals team for more information about the appeals process and deadlines etc. Their email address is appeals@le.ac.uk or you can call +44 (0)116 252 2250.
- **[Careers and Employability Service](#)** – The University's Career Development Service can discuss your options with you, and help you think about career and

study options. To book an appointment please log onto MyCareers or email careerhelp@leicester.ac.uk

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- **[Student Counselling & Wellbeing Service](#)** – If you feel that you need mental health support, the University offers a counselling service for students. You can book an appointment by filling in their [online form](#). You can also contact them on +44 (0)116 223 1780 or wellbeing@le.ac.uk.
- **[Student Welfare Service](#)** – If you need advice on any financial issues, you can book an appointment with the Welfare Service. Their contact details are + 44 (0)116 223 1185 or welfare@le.ac.uk.
- **[Student Immigration Advice and Compliance Team](#)** – For information and advice on visas and immigration, and how suspending your studies might impact this and please visit [Student and Immigration Advice & Compliance page](#), or email visas@le.ac.uk.

Useful links

- [University's information about Academic Appeals](#)
- [Academic Appeal Form](#)
- [Appeal Review Request Form](#)
- [Senate Regulation 10](#): Regulations Governing Academic Appeals.
- [Office of the Independent Adjudicator \(OIA\)](#) webpage.

leicesterunion.com/advice

Advice Service

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0116 223 1132



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