

Academic Appeals Policy

Purpose

The Inspire Education Group (IEG) is committed to compliance with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) and Awarding Body regulations to protect the interests of all students and maintain the integrity of qualifications. Any Student dissatisfied with a grade has the right to appeal.

Scope

This policy applies to all students and qualifications delivered by IEG, except those provided by University Centre Peterborough, for which a separate policy is in place.

Students have a right to appeal against the assessment mark, grade, or final outcome if they:

- Believe 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 Body shall have the right to appeal against the assessment mark, grade or final outcome
- Disagree with a centre's decision to reject internally assessed work on the grounds of malpractice by the student

An appeal in relation to an assessment decision should be unusual because students should have been given clear guidance on what is required to meet learning outcomes, linked to the assessment criteria of their qualification.

The Policy Statement

All processes which ultimately result in the award of qualifications are intended to be planned, transparent, appropriate, and fair. The appeals system allows students, who believe that the system does not live up to these aspirations, a process within which they can challenge it.

IEG will facilitate a student's ultimate right of appeal to the Awarding Body where appropriate.

IEG will:

- Inform students at induction of the Appeals Policy and procedure and it must be referenced in all Google Classrooms
- Ensure clear and accurate advice and guidance are made available for students appealing and for staff involved in handling or supporting appeals
- Ensure students have the opportunity to raise matters of concern without risk of disadvantage and that they are treated with dignity and respect
- Ensure appeals processes are equitable, and proportionate and allow for cases to be resolved as early as possible
- Keep a student who appeals informed at all stages of the appeals procedure
- Ensure any student required to attend any appeal hearing will have the right to be accompanied by another person (who may be a student of the College, a relative or an employer representative)
- Take appropriate action to protect the interests of other students and the integrity of the qualification, when the outcome of an appeal questions the validity of other results

Responsibilities

Assistant Principal Quality:

- Informing students of the need to explain on what grounds they wish to request a review of an internally assessed mark
- Providing a clear deadline for students to submit a request for a review and confirm the understanding that the request must be in writing
- Ensuring any review is undertaken by a teacher who has appropriate competence, who has had no previous involvement in the assessment of that candidate for the component in question, and who has no personal interest in the review
- Instructing the reviewer to ensure that the candidate's mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre and the Awarding Body
- Having processes in place, that are regularly checked, to reduce the risk of malpractice and maladministration
- Ensuring staff and students are aware of the Group's Plagiarism Policy
- Having robust Internal Quality Assurance procedures to reduce the risk of malpractice
- Informing the student in writing of the outcome of the review
- Ensuring the outcome of the review is made known to the Head of the Centre who will have the final decision if there is any disagreement on the mark to be submitted to the Awarding Body
- Forwarding an appeal to the Awarding Body when a student considers a decision continues to disadvantage them after the internal review process has been exhausted

Policy Name: CQ001 Academic Appeals Policy

Responsibility: Assistant Principal Quality

Issue: December 2024

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Sites: IEG Website, Inspire Insights

- Monitoring appeals to inform quality improvement

Head of Faculty responsible for:

- Ensuring work is marked by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding, and skill and who have been trained in this activity
- Ensuring course entry requirements are clearly set out and easily accessible for students
- Clearly communicating progression decisions to parents/carers in a timely manner setting out the reasons for the decision and any alternative options available to the student

Teachers responsible for:

- Assessing the quality of students' work according to agreed criteria and standards and without regard to individual circumstances
- Ensuring students are informed of their centre-assessed marks and provided with feedback before marks are submitted to the Awarding Body
- Considering a student's concerns and providing a clear explanation of the assessment decision following re-evaluation of the evidence
- Encouraging students who are dissatisfied with the centre-assessed mark to seek further feedback. This can include requesting copies of materials (for example, a copy of their marked work, the relevant specification, the mark scheme, and any other associated subject-specific documents) to assist them in considering whether to request a review. Making such documents available to the student within 3 working days. This will either be the originals viewed under supervised conditions or copies
- Facilitating access to the Awarding Body appeals process when students remain dissatisfied
- Discussing any progression concerns with students at the earliest opportunity to allow them time to rectify any attendance or Code of Conduct issues
- Reporting any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively

Lead Internal Quality Assurer responsible for ensuring:

- A rigorous system of assessment, internal verification, and standardisation processes are carried out effectively to validate fair assessment that complies with Awarding Body requirements
- Where a number of subject teachers are involved in marking students' work this is done in such a way as to ensure consistency in marking
- Having procedures in place for assessing work in a way that reduces or identifies malpractice such as plagiarism, collusion, or cheating

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Related Documentation

CQ002 - Assessment Policy

CQ004 - Internal Quality Assurance Policy

CQ008 – Plagiarism Policy

EX004 - Exams and Assessment – Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy

JCQ regulations and guidance

Awarding Body regulations

Appeals Policy – Appeals Procedure

Normally an appeal against an assessment decision can be made on any one of the following grounds:

- Relevant assessment criteria have been met but not acknowledged
- The assessments were not conducted in accordance with the Awarding Body's regulations
- Assessment procedures, including examinations, were not conducted fairly
- The internal verifier was presented with incorrect or inaccurate assessment information
- There were medical or other extenuating circumstances of which the relevant teacher was unaware when assessment decisions were being made
- There was unfairness or impropriety on the part of one or more of the teachers
- The student was unjustifiably excluded from an assessment opportunity
- A student disputes a decision not to mark Internally assessed work on the grounds of malpractice by the student

A student who disagrees with a decision to reject internally assessed work following an investigation into malpractice has the right to appeal against this decision. Students will be made aware of this policy and will have the right to a further appeal to the Awarding Body once the Group's internal appeals process has been exhausted if they are unhappy with the outcome. Students have a right to appeal to an Awarding Body where:

- The College has conducted its investigation and the student disagrees with the outcome
- The Awarding Body has asked the College to investigate and the student disagrees with the outcome
- The Awarding Body conducts its investigation and the student disagrees with its decision

Appeal Procedure

Informal Discussion – Assessor and Student

Where a student disagrees with a decision they must discuss this with the assessor concerned within 5 working days of receiving the exam/assessment decision.

The assessor must consider the student's concerns and respond within 5 working days, clearly explaining/reiterating (as appropriate) the decision following re-evaluation of the evidence.

If the student agrees with the explanation given the matter is closed.

A student who wishes to appeal should do so by completing the internal Appeal Form (Appendix 2) and submitting it to the assessor. Requests must be made in writing within 5 working days of then receiving the assessor's response.

Stage 1 - Lead Internal Verifier/ Lead Internal Quality Assurer

The assessor will provide the completed appeal form within 2 working days to the Lead Internal Verifier (LIV)/Lead Internal Quality Assurer (LIQA) or to the Head of Faculty (HoF) where the assessor concerned is the LIV/LIQA. The assessor will also provide the student evidence and/or the assignment task sheet/portfolio work to the LIV/LIQA/HoF within two working days of receiving the completed Appeal Form.

The assessor must remove reference to their rationale for the assessment decision and the grade originally awarded so that the LIV/LIQA/HoF are reassessing 'blind'. The LIV/LIQA/HoF must reconsider the assessment decision and this will normally involve an evaluation of student evidence and associated records.

The LIV/LIQA/HoF must then complete Part 2 of the Appeal Form and provide the student with the reconsidered decision within 5 working days of receiving the appeal.

Where the student is not content with the reconsidered assessment decision, the appeal must proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2 – Assistant Principal Quality

Assistant Principal Quality will establish an Appeal Panel comprising the Assistant Principal Quality and LIQA from another programme area who must evaluate the student's appeal. If the student is invited to attend a meeting with the Appeal Panel, they must be notified in writing of the time and place of the meeting at least 5 working days in advance. Copies of the student's work, the Appeal Form and the assessor's decision

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Should be presented by the LIV/LIQA/HoF. The panel will consider the evidence and reach a decision within 5 working days. The Assistant Principal Quality will then inform the student and teacher of the final decision.

- The Appeal Panel must consider any mitigating circumstances and will determine whether additional members are required in order to bring specific expertise to the panel
- Where learning disabilities or difficulties are irrelevant to the progress qualification outcome and where the student has achieved the entry requirements for a progression qualification, the panel will ensure that students with additional education needs will not be treated less favourably for a reason relating to their needs
- Where considered appropriate by the Appeal Panel the student will be invited to attend a meeting with the Appeal Panel. The student should be invited to the meeting where they can contribute additional information in support of their appeal. Where all applicable evidence is available to the Committee, it can operate in camera. If invited to attend the Committee meeting the student may be accompanied by a friend /representative
- If invited to attend the student must be notified in writing of the time and place of the meeting. The Appeal Panel will proceed with the meeting whether or not the student is in attendance

All appeals documentation shall be retained in the student's file and appropriate MIS systems, e.g. ProMonitor/Markbook.

Appeals records shall be retained for inspection by the Awarding Body for a minimum of 18 months.

Awarding Body Appeals

If a student has exhausted the internal procedure but continues to have concerns relating to assessment or a malpractice decision, they may appeal to the Awarding Body. Details of how to do this are contained in the Centre Handbooks for all Awarding Bodies. A copy of this document and any further advice can be obtained from the Awarding Body's website. Appeals to the Awarding Bodies must be made within 5 working days of being informed of the outcome of the stage 2 panel meeting.

The moderation process carried out by the Awarding Bodies may cause a marked change, either upwards or downwards, even after an internal review. The internal review process is in place to ensure consistency of marking within the centre, whereas moderation by the Awarding Body ensures that the centre marking is in line with national standards. The mark submitted to the Awarding Body is subject to change and should therefore be considered provisional.

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A student who has not been allowed to progress to a subsequent year of a course or another course at a College has the right to appeal against that decision. The progression decision should always be clearly communicated to the student (and parents/carers) setting out the reasons and giving them the chance to provide mitigating circumstances or additional evidence.

Accompaniment

Students have the right to be accompanied by a supporter at any stage of the appeals process, including informal discussions, meetings with assessors, and formal appeal hearings. The supporter may be a fellow student, a parent, a guardian, a relative, a support worker, or any other individual chosen by the student. The role of the supporter is to provide emotional support, assist with communication, and help the student navigate the process. However, the supporter is not expected to act as an advocate or legal representative.

Confidentiality

IEG is committed to maintaining confidentiality for all students involved in the appeals process. All information shared during the process will be treated as confidential and will only be shared with individuals directly involved in the appeal. Student information will not be disclosed to any third parties without the written consent of the student, except where required by law or JCQ regulations.



Appeals Form

Stage 1

Please tick the box to indicate the nature of your appeal and complete all white boxes on the form below.

- ☐ Appeal against an internal assessment decision
☐ Appeal against a malpractice decision

Part 1

Appellant names		Student name if different to the appellant	
Awarding Body		Qualification title	
Assessment/Assignment Title (if applicable)			
Please state the grounds for your appeal below (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):			
Appellant Signature:		Date:	

Policy Name: CQ001 Appeals Policy - Appeals Form - Appendix 2

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Part 2

Lead IQA Name		Student name if different to the appellant	
Awarding Body		Qualification title	
Response from the assessor:			
Lead IQA Signature:		Date:	

Appeals Policy – Formal Appeal

Stage 2 – Formal Appeal

Appeal Committee Membership	Name	Role
Assistant Principal Quality		Chairperson - confirm all course assessment procedures are correctly completed. All student assessment evidence is available and the student is advised of the meeting.
Head of Faculty		
Lead IQA		
Course Tutor/Assessor		
Student		

Decision of Appeal Committee	Appeal Upheld	Appeal Not Upheld
Student Informed of Decision	Yes	No

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