THE UNIVERSITY OF BUCKINGHAM
FACULTY OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Academic Related Appeals Guidance for Students

School of Medicine

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BUCKINGHAM
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Purpose

The University of Buckingham Medical School aims to investigate appeals in a timely, transparent and fair manner. This guide is intended to explain the Academic Related Appeals process within the Medical School. Queries from staff and students in respect of the procedure should be addressed to the Quality Unit or Head of the Medical School.

Scope

An academic appeal is a procedure which allows you to request a review of the decision made by the Board of Examiners to terminate your course. If you believe you have sufficient grounds for appeal you must submit your 'Academic Related Appeals form' and evidence within 7 calendar days of receiving your results. Please note, you will have continued access to support from your Personal Tutor throughout the appeal process.

Preparing for your appeal

Before submitting your appeal please ensure you read these guidelines thoroughly. Final decisions on the marks, grades or qualifications that you receive are made by the MB ChB Examination Board. Appeals relating to the Board of Examiners recommendation to terminate studies due to failure to meet the required academic thresholds are dealt with as an Academic Appeal, further information about these appeals can be obtained from the Medical School Quality Unit.

Grounds for Appeal

You may only appeal on the following grounds:

Procedural Irregularities

If you believe there has been a procedural irregularity in the operation of the assessment processes of the Board of Examiners, which has created a reasonable possibility that your result may have been different if it had not occurred.

You must be able to provide clear evidence of the procedural irregularities you believe to have taken place. You cannot, however, request a review because you simply disagree with the grade that you have received for your work.

Mitigating Circumstances

New mitigating circumstances that have affected your exam performance and could not have been reported to the Mitigating Circumstances Panel at the normal time. You will be required to explain to the Appeals panel on your Appeal Form why you were not able to, or did not, disclose information about the circumstances at the time. The Panel will determine if, in their view, this is a valid reason.

Academic Judgement

Appeals which simply question academic or professional judgement of Assessors or the Board of Examiners are not permitted. Requests asking for your paper to be re-marked or for a grade to be raised to take into consideration mitigating circumstances will not be accepted.

Fit to Sit' Policy

The Medical School operates a strict 'fit to sit' policy whereby if you present yourself for an examination you are declaring yourself as fit to take that examination. No appeals will be accepted

on these grounds. The only exceptions to this are where you become unwell during any part of an examination and you can provide evidence that you could not reasonably have foreseen that acute illness.

If you are unsure of whether you have sufficient grounds for appeal, please speak to your Personal Tutor or Dr Emma Spikings (Emma.spikings@Buckingham.ac.uk) or Student support.

Submitting an appeal

If you believe you have sufficient grounds for appeal, you may request a review of the Board of Examiners decision by completing and submitting an 'Academic Related Appeals form' (https://forms.office.com/e/uTEXJGuPXJ) The link to this form can also be found either through the UBMS Moodle, from your Personal Tutor or from the Quality team.

We recommend seeking advice from your Personal Tutor before submitting your appeal. Please ensure you read the form carefully and complete each section in full. When filling out your appeal application, you must detail all evidence you wish to submit alongside the form, ensuring each piece of evidence is clearly titled and dated; forms that do not contain sufficient information may be rejected. Your appeal and supporting evidence must be submitted to the Quality team within 7 calendar days of the date of publication of your results. Appeals and/or supporting documentation received after this date will not normally be considered.

Appeals should be made on your own behalf and it is your responsibility to obtain the required evidence. The Appeal Panel may request additional information which will equally be your responsibility to provide by the set deadline. If you require help in compiling your appeal, Dr Emma Spikings will be able to provide advice, however cannot write your appeal for you.

It is important that you submit evidence with your appeal. Please note that this must be new evidence, not copies of previously submitted evidence which has already been considered by the Board of Examiners or Mitigating Circumstances Panel. All evidence must be submitted in English. If the original evidence is not written in English, you are responsible for providing a certified translated copy. Medical evidence should be provided in the form of an official signed document from a registered medical practitioner and a clear medical diagnosis must be included as appropriate. The Medical School does undertake checks to ensure that all evidence provided is genuine and true.

Wherever possible, your appeal and supporting evidence should submitted via the online form, however, If you are unable to submit your documentation via the form, please contact fmhs-appeals@buckingham.ac.uk as soon as possible.4

Once your appeal and all supporting documentation has been received, you will receive an email of acknowledgement from the Quality Team, normally within 2 working days of submission. The Quality Lead, or their nominee, will check the eligibility of the appeal to ensure that:

a) The Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure is applicable; and
b) That any of the grounds as listed above are met; and
c) That the appeal has been submitted in time; and
d) That appropriate evidence has been provided to support the appeal. Ineligible appeals may be directed to a more appropriate procedure or dismissed completely with sign off by the Head of School.

Appeals Process

A report from the Medical School will be submitted to the Appeals Panel alongside your appeal for consideration, this will usually include but is not limited to; your full academic record, a report of any interactions you have had with the 'concerns process' and a summary of the decision taken by the Board of Examiners.

Upon receipt of your appeal, the Quality Team will form an appropriate Appeal Panel that is fit for purpose. The Appeal Panel will usually consist of 3 members normally composed of:

- The Dean from another Faculty in the University or their senior representative,
- An Academic and/or Clinical member of staff who does not sit on the Board of Examiners and has not taught the student being considered
- A Lay representative who is not involved in the concerns process or the Board of Examiners

The Quality Lead, or their nominee, will be available to call upon to offer clarification on the process or the codes of practice and procedures within the medical school. There may be occasions where additional members are recruited to the appeals panel to provide additional expertise. The Quality team will provide administrative support to the Panel, however, will have no involvement in any decisions.

Occasionally, the Appeals Panel may decide it is appropriate for the student to appear before it. Students may also make a case to appear in front of the Panel personally if their case is sensitive, though the final decision rests with the Panel. If a student does appear before the Panel they may be accompanied by their Personal Tutor (or another member of staff who has agreed to perform that role), and a companion (this may not be a family member) who will usually be a fellow student of the University. Legal representatives may not be present under any circumstances.

Outcomes

The Appeals panel are bound by UBMS regulations, defined in the Code of Practice for Assessment, and are therefore limited in their powers to modify and amend decisions made.

The Appeal Panel may only:

- Confirm course termination, or
- Permit the student a repeat period of study in line with the regulations

Please note that under no circumstances will the Panel be able to change the outcome of any assessment or allow a student to progress if they have not met the conditions for progression.

Once a decision has been reached, you will normally be informed in writing by the Chair of the appeals panel within two weeks after the appeal submission deadline.

The student will be given the opportunity to request a review of this decision within 5 days if unsatisfied with the original outcome.

Review of Decision

A student may request a review of the decision under the following grounds:
i. Procedural irregularity in the conduct of the Academic Appeals Procedure; or
ii. That the student has evidence of bias in the conduct of the Academic Appeals Procedure.

New evidence will not normally be accepted.

The review will take place in accordance with the Section 5.4 of the University's Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures: Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.

The Reviewer's role matches the University's: limited to assessing procedural error, unreasonableness, or new evidence.
Outcomes are not decided at review stage but referred back to Stage 2.

Appeal to the Office of Independent Adjudicator

If you believe that your appeal has been conducted incorrectly or that the outcome is unreasonable in relation to the evidence supplied, you have the right to raise the matter for external and independent review by the Office of Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA is an independent body set up under the Higher Education Act 2004 to review student complaints. The role of the OIA is to review individual complaints made by students against higher education institutions. A student can bring a complaint to the OIA after they have exhausted the internal procedures of the university, provided the complaint is eligible under the rules of the OIA's complaints scheme. For information about the process, please visit http://www.oiahe.org.uk.

Document Control

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