



Appeals Policy (Academic Progress)

1. Context

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, herein referred to as Trinity, recognises that in the context of its examination and assessment procedures, a student may wish to appeal a decision made in relation to their academic progress. The appeals procedure may be used only when there are eligible grounds for doing so and may not be used simply because a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of a decision concerning their academic progress.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the regulations in The University Calendar, Part [II \(for undergraduate studies\)](#) and Part [III \(for postgraduate studies\)](#), Sections 6 - 9 of the Chapter on Visitors in [The 2010 Consolidated Statutes of Trinity College Dublin and the University of Dublin](#), and the Guidelines as set out in 11.2 and 11.3 of this policy.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline a framework for appeals.

3. Benefits

This policy and the accompanying guidelines referred to in 11.2 and 11.3 of this policy support the management and conduct of academic appeals in a transparent and equitable way.

4. Grounds for Appeal

The grounds for an appeal are where a student case;

- (i) is not adequately covered by the ordinary regulations of the College, or
- (ii) is based on a claim that the regulations of the College were not properly applied in the applicant's case, or
- (iii) represents an *ad misericordiam* appeal. An appeal other than an *ad misericordiam* appeal cannot be made against the normal application of College academic regulations approved by the University Council.

The following are **not** grounds for appeal, as they are covered by the recheck/re-mark procedures outlined in the Calendars Part II (section II, para 68) and Calendar Part III (section 1, para 33):

- (i) claims that the grade is incorrect because of an error in calculation of results;
- (ii) claims that the examination paper or other assessment specific to the student's course contained questions on subjects which were not part of the course prescribed for the examination or other assessment; or
- (iii) that bias was shown by an examiner in marking.



In addition, where a student is seeking, expressly or impliedly and for whatever reason, a recheck or reassessment of their grades (including reassessment by an external examiner) this is not grounds for an appeal.

5. Scope

- 5.1 This policy applies to appeals brought to the Courts and Officers specified in 8.1.1, 8.2.1, 8.2.2 and 8.2.3.
- 5.2 This policy applies to all students registered on programmes of study in Trinity and to those who have gone off the register, provided they bring their appeal within the prescribed deadlines as indicated in 9.7 and 9.8.
- 5.3 Students attending validated programmes delivered by Trinity's linked providers, although they may be registered in Trinity for administrative purposes, are subject to the appeals policy of the linked provider institution.
- 5.4 Students on dual/joint-degree programmes are subject to the appeals mechanisms outlined in the relevant institutional partnership agreement.
- 5.5 Requests for re-checking/re-marking of examinations and assessments are not covered by this policy but are subject to separate regulations in the University Calendar, Parts [II](#) and [III](#). (see section 4 above).
- 5.6 Applications to go off-books, repeat a year, interrupt studies etc. should be submitted by students and in the case of undergraduate students, their tutors directly to the Academic Registry (see [Academic Registry Student Cases](#)) for consideration by the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (for Undergraduate cases) or the Dean of Graduate Studies (for Postgraduate cases) (see section 8 below).

6. Principles

Trinity is committed to ensuring that the management and conduct of appeals is equitable and consistent. The conduct and processing of appeals are strictly confidential and are subject to the University's [Data Protection Policy](#) and relevant legislation, specifically the EU General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 ("GDPR") and the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018.

7. Definitions

An Academic Appeal is a formal process through which a student can request a review of a decision related to their academic progress. This includes decisions arising from the examination process or other academic circumstances.



8. Levels in the Appeals Process

A student who feels that they have a case against the application of the standard regulations of the University (as outlined in the [Calendar Part II](#) or the [Calendar Part III](#)) may apply for the non-application of the regulation in their case. Applications are made to Student Cases in the Academic Registry for consideration by the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies (for Undergraduate cases) or the Dean of Graduate Studies (for Postgraduate cases) (see further details at <https://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/student-cases/>).

8.1 Undergraduate:

8.1.1 The levels in the appeals process for undergraduate students are:

- (i)** A Court of First Appeal (makes a recommendation to the Senior Lecturer)
- (ii)** Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies
- (iii)** The Academic Appeals Committee

8.2 Postgraduate:

8.2.1 The levels in the appeals process for postgraduate taught students (PGT) are:

- (i)** School Postgraduate Appeals Committee
- (ii)** Dean of Graduate Studies
- (iii)** The Academic Appeals Committee for Graduate Students (Taught)

8.2.2 The levels in the appeals process for postgraduate research students (PGR) appealing the decision of a thesis committee/confirmation panel or transfer panel are:

- (i)** School Postgraduate Appeals Committee
- (ii)** Dean of Graduate Studies
- (iii)** The Academic Appeals Committee for Graduate Students (Research)

8.2.3 The levels in the appeals process for postgraduate research students (PGR) appealing the decision of the examiners of a PhD thesis are:

- (i)** Dean of Graduate Studies
- (ii)** The Academic Appeals Committee for Graduate Students (Research)

9 Policy

9.1 Undergraduate and postgraduate appellants should, where appropriate, exhaust the appropriate appeals mechanism at a lower level of the appeals process prior to bringing an appeal forward to a higher level.

9.2 Students considering an appeal should in the first instance contact their tutor (for undergraduate cases) or the Postgraduate Advisory Service, as appropriate, to discuss the appeal including advice on admissibility, grounds and required supporting documentation.



- 9.3 Students are entitled to have representation appropriate to the level of the appeal hearing (e.g. tutor, postgraduate advisory service, Students' Union rep. etc.).
- 9.4 School-level Appeals Committees¹ are normally convened to hear appeals following the Semester 2 and supplemental examinations at UG and PGT level and should be scheduled to take place before the relevant meetings of the Academic Appeals Committee.
- 9.5 The dates of the School-level Appeals Committees should be set well in advance and communicated by the person responsible for appeals to relevant School staff and to College Tutors, the Senior Tutor, the Postgraduate Advisory Service and the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The dates should also be publicised on Blackboard and/or in other appropriate locations.
- 9.6 Deadlines should be set for the submission of appeals for consideration at School-level Appeals Committees and communicated clearly and in good time to the above parties. At postgraduate level, a window of ten working days between publication of results and submission of appeals will normally be required.
- 9.7 Appeals submitted after the prescribed deadline will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the chairperson of the court/committee or officer to whom the appeal is made.
- 9.8 For undergraduate students, appeals concerning events occurring more than eighteen months previously will only be considered by the [Academic Appeals Committee](#) in the most exceptional circumstances.
- 9.9 For postgraduate students (PGT and PGR), appeals concerning events occurring or decisions made more than four months previously will only be considered by the Academic Appeals Committee in the most exceptional circumstances.
- 9.10 Students should note that it is not possible to commence or continue any academic appeal related to their course of study after they have been conferred with a qualification arising out of that course of study.
- 9.11 The Academic Appeals Committee (AAC) does not normally hear appeals where the matter has not previously been considered (a) by the Court of First Appeal, (b) School Postgraduate Appeals Committees, and/or (c) the Senior Lecturer/Dean of

¹ Courts of First Appeal at UG level; School Postgraduate Appeals Committees at PGT level and PGR level (for students appealing the decision of a Thesis Committee/Confirmation Panel or a Transfer Panel).



Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies as appropriate.

Appeals process

- 9.12 Undergraduate students can appeal a decision of the Court of Examiners related to academic progress to the Court of First Appeal, using the Undergraduate Students Appeals Form. Supporting documentation must be provided. The recommendations of the Court of First Appeal are forwarded to the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies who may approve, reject or vary any such recommendations (see [Calendar Part II, Section 1, 69](#) for further details).
- 9.13 Postgraduate Taught students can appeal the decision of the Course Committee to the School Postgraduate Appeals Committee using the [Postgraduate Appeals Form](#). The decision of the School Postgraduate Appeal Committee is communicated to the student, who can appeal the decision to the Dean of Graduate Studies (see [Calendar Part III, Section 1, 72 – 75](#) for further details).
- 9.14 Postgraduate Research students can appeal the decision of a thesis committee/confirmation panel or transfer panel to the relevant School Postgraduate Appeals Committee using the [Postgraduate Appeals Form](#). The decision of the School Appeals Committee is communicated to the student. The student can appeal the decision of the School's Appeals Committee to the Dean of Graduate Studies ([see Calendar Part III, Section 1, 76 – 78](#) for further details).
- 9.15 Appeals against the decision of the examiners of a research thesis will be made in the first instance to the Dean of Graduate Studies using the [Postgraduate Appeals Form](#). The student can appeal the decision of the Dean of Graduate Studies to the Academic Appeals Committee for Graduate Students (Research) (see [Calendar Part III, Section 1, 79 – 82](#) for further details).
- 9.16 Students can appeal the decision of the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of Graduate Studies, as appropriate, to the College-level Academic Appeals Committee (chaired by the Registrar). Students should seek the guidance of their Tutor/Postgraduate Advisory Service in pursuing such an action. Grounds for appeal have to be submitted to the Secretary to the Committee, with the Committee considering whether or not there is a case for a hearing. Decisions of the relevant Academic Appeals Committee are presented to University Council for approval.
- 9.17 The role of the Visitors in appeals is determined by provisions in sections 6 - 9 of the Chapter on the Visitors in [The 2010 Consolidated Statutes of Trinity College Dublin and the University of Dublin](#).



10 Responsibility

The overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Senior Lecturer/Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Registrar.

11 Related Documents

- 11.1 The University of Dublin Calendar, Parts [II](#) and [III](#)
- 11.2 [Guidelines on Exceptional Circumstances in support of an ad misericordiam Appeal](#)
- 11.3 [Guidelines on Evidence in support of an ad misericordiam Appeal](#)
- 11.4 Undergraduate Studies Appeal Form
- 11.5 [Postgraduate Appeals Form](#)
- 11.6 [Terms of Reference for the Academic Appeals Committee \(AAC\)](#)
- 11.7 [Procedure for the Conduct of Courts of First Appeal](#)
- 11.8 [Procedure for the Conduct of School Postgraduate Appeals Committees](#)
- 11.9 [Admissions and Transfer Policy](#)
- 11.10 [Assessment and Academic Progression Policy](#)
- 11.11 [Academic Awards Policy](#)
- 11.10 [The 2010 Consolidated Statutes of Trinity College Dublin and the University of Dublin](#)

12 Document Control

- 12.1 Date of initial approval: March 2017
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