



Procedure for the Conduct of School Postgraduate Appeals Committees

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. At postgraduate level, the first stage of the appeals process is the School Postgraduate Appeals Committee, which hears appeals from taught postgraduate students on matters of academic progress arising from the examinations process, postgraduate research students regarding decisions of the School research transfer/confirmation panels or thesis committees, or other academic circumstances. A student may only bring an appeal when there are eligible grounds for doing so and not simply because a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of a decision concerning their academic progress (see section 4.1).

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Appeals Policy (Academic Progress), the regulations in The University Calendar, Part III for postgraduate studies, and Sections 6 - 9 of the Chapter on Visitors in the 2010 Consolidated Statutes of Trinity College Dublin and the University of Dublin. Where there is a conflict between the procedure provided below and that provided in the University Calendar Part III, the Calendar will prevail.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to outline the operation of a School Appeals Committee for postgraduate students.

2. Definition

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 examinations or other academic circumstances.

3. Scope

3.1. This procedure applies to the conduct of Postgraduate School Appeals Committees held to consider appeals from (i) postgraduate taught course students who are appealing the decision of a taught postgraduate programme committee or (ii) postgraduate research students who are appealing the decision of a School research transfer/confirmation panel or thesis committee.



3.2 This procedure does not apply to appeals by postgraduate research students against the decision of the examiners of a research thesis, which are outlined in the [Calendar Part III, §79– 82](#).

3.3 This procedure does not apply to the conduct of Courts of First Appeal for undergraduate students, which are outlined in the [Calendar Part II](#), Section 1, §72– 78.

3.4. This procedure does not apply to the conduct of Academic Appeals Committees at undergraduate or postgraduate level, which are outlined in the [Terms of Reference for Academic Appeals Committees](#).

3.5 There are separate procedures for a recheck or remark and these are unrelated to the role of the School Appeals Committee. Details can be found in the [College Calendar 2025- 26, Part III, Re-check/re-mark of examination scripts, § 39](#).

4. Procedure

4.1 Grounds for appeal to a School Postgraduate Appeals Committees

School Postgraduate Appeals Committees are convened to consider appeals on matters of academic progress arising out of examinations or other academic circumstances 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.

Academic appeals will be granted in exceptional circumstances only, and normally only with appropriate documentary evidence. Appellants must use the correct procedural form, must indicate the precise grounds (i to iii above) upon which the appeal is being made and must clearly state what outcome they are seeking (e.g., permission to repeat an assessment, permission to repeat the transfer process).

An appeal other than an *ad misericordiam* appeal cannot be made against the normal application of College academic regulations provided by the University Council. An *ad misericordiam* appeal is an appeal usually taken by a student who presents extenuating or mitigating circumstances, appropriately evidenced (see [Guidelines on Evidence in Support of an ad misericordiam Appeal](#) and [Guidelines on Exceptional Circumstances Supporting an Academic Appeal](#)), which they consider as having had an impact (past or future) on their academic performance or progression.



A School Postgraduate Appeals Committee may decline to consider an appeal where, for example, relevant grounds (see above) are not specified, or where the correct forms are not used, or where appropriate documentary evidence is not supplied.

4.2 Appealing the decision of a Taught Postgraduate Programme Committee

4.2.1 Where, as a consequence of performance during the coursework component, normal academic progression through the course (for example to the dissertation stage) or to graduation has been impeded, and where the student feels that there are mitigating circumstances, they may appeal, in writing, to the relevant School Postgraduate Appeals Committee for permission to repeat the examination(s) and/or assessment(s). The reasons for the request must be clearly stated and supported by appropriate documentary evidence. If the student's appeal is upheld and a repeat assessment is approved, the results of that assessment will be considered to be final i.e., repetition of the year will not be permitted.

4.2.2 Where a postgraduate student has passed the coursework component but has failed on the assessment of the research element or dissertation (including an oral examination), and where the student is dissatisfied with the manner in which the research element or dissertation was examined or feels that there are mitigating circumstances, they may appeal in writing to the relevant School Postgraduate Appeals Committee for permission to repeat the research element or dissertation. The grounds (4.1i, 4.1ii and 4.1iii listed above) for the appeal must be clearly stated and supported by appropriate documentary evidence. If the student's appeal is upheld and a repeat of the research element or dissertation is approved, the format of the research element/project is at the discretion of the programme director and repeating this component may incur additional fees¹

4.3 Appealing the decision of a Thesis Committee/Confirmation Panel or a Transfer Panel

4.3.1 Where, in the case of Postgraduate Research students, an annual review or confirmation interview has been held, and the thesis committee/confirmation panel has determined that a student should not transfer to or continue on the PhD register, the student may appeal in the first instance to the relevant School Postgraduate Appeals Committee. The grounds for the appeal must be clearly stated and supported by appropriate documentary evidence. If the student is granted another interview, the decision of the thesis committee/confirmation panel in that case will be final.

4.3.2 Where, in the case of students on the Masters by Research register, a transfer interview has been held and the panel has determined that a student should not transfer to the PhD research register, the student may appeal in the first instance to the relevant School Postgraduate Appeals Committee. The grounds for appeal must be clearly stated and supported by appropriate documentary evidence. If the student is granted another interview, the decision of the panel will be final.

¹ See information on Thesis Revision fees on the [Academic Registry website](#)



4.4 Appealing a decision of the School Postgraduate Appeals Committee

Students who are permitted to repeat an assessment as an outcome of an appeal process are not permitted to appeal to repeat the assessment again based on the same reason or reasons that grounded their initial appeal. There must be new reasons or circumstances to ground a further appeal.

If the School Postgraduate Appeals Committee refuses to grant the appeal, or the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal process, they may appeal the decision of the School in writing to the Dean of Graduate Studies, clearly stating under what grounds of 4.1i to 4.1iii listed above they are appealing and what remedy they are seeking. If the Dean of Graduate Studies denies the appeal, the student may appeal this decision to (i) the Academic Appeals Committee for Graduate Students (Taught), in the case of appeals against the decision of a taught postgraduate programme committee, or (ii) the Academic Appeals Committee for Graduate Students (Research) in the case of appeals against the decision of a School thesis committee/confirmation panel or transfer panel.

Appellants must have exhausted the appropriate appeals mechanism in the first instance through the relevant School Postgraduate Appeals Committee prior to coming before the relevant Academic Appeals Committee for Graduate Students (Taught or Research).

The Academic Appeals Committees for Graduate Students consider whether there is a case for a hearing and make decisions that are presented to the University Council for approval.

The Academic Appeals Committees for Graduate Students reserve the right to refuse to hear a case that has not previously been brought to the Dean of Graduate Studies without justification (see [Terms of Reference for Academic Appeals Committees](#)).

4.5 Membership of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee

The membership of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee will vary according to whether the appeal is against (i) the decision of a taught postgraduate programme committee or (ii) the decision of a School thesis committee/confirmation panel or transfer panel.

Members who have a conflict of interest with the case arising from their role must alert the Chair to the conflict. They may recuse themselves and leave the room for the duration of that case or give an undertaking to consider the appeal on the merits of the case. In this situation, the Chair of the Committee will have the final decision as to whether the member may remain for the case.

Where an appellant is a relative of a member of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee, that member should not be involved in hearing that student's appeal.

A member of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee should not be involved both in hearing



an appeal and in acting as a student representative in the same School Appeals session.²

No person from the relevant programme committee or an examiner or supervisor should serve on the School Appeals committee as a decision-maker.

The appellant (student) and/or their representative is entitled to attend a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee to present their case, and a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee may require the appellant's attendance in cases where the members of the committee require additional clarification. The student's representative should be appropriate to the formality of the appeal hearing i.e., a supervisor, other appropriate academic staff member (who is not a relative), a member of the Postgraduate Advisory Service or a relevant Students' Union Representative.

The minimum composition of School Postgraduate Appeals Committees is outlined below³.

4.5.1 Composition of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee for appeals against the decision of a taught Postgraduate Programme Committee.

- Head of Discipline/School or Pro-Head, Chair.
- Director Teaching and Learning Postgraduate (DTLP)
- A Student representative (e.g. student convenor, SU rep. etc.)
- An academic representative from the School/Discipline
- Course Office Administrative Officer (Secretary), in attendance.

The Course Director and/or the relevant module leader may attend to present background/supporting evidence.

4.5.2 Composition of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee for appeals against a decision of a School Thesis committee/confirmation panel or transfer panel.

- Head of Discipline/School or Pro-Head, Chair
- The Director of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate (DTLP)
- A Student representative (e.g. student convenor, SU rep etc.)
- An academic representative from the School/Discipline
- School Administrative Officer (Secretary), in attendance

The supervisor and/or the Chair of the School thesis committee/confirmation panel or transfer

² In other words, during a School Appeals session at which a number of different student appeals are being heard, a member of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee should not act in their capacity as a member of the Committee in the consideration of one student appeal and subsequently act in the capacity of student representative in the consideration of a different student appeal, in order to remove the risk of bias.

³ Flexibility is permitted to accommodate school, discipline or subject-specific requirements, e.g. attendance by representatives of accrediting/professional bodies or placement providers.



panel may attend to present background/supporting evidence.

Where an appellant is a relative of a member of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee, that member should not be involved in hearing that student's appeal.

4.6 Scheduling of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee

- School Postgraduate Appeals Committees are normally convened to hear appeals following annual and supplemental assessments in the case of taught postgraduate courses, or are convened following a meeting of a thesis committee/confirmation panel or transfer panel in the case of PhD students, as required.
- The dates of the School Appeals Committees for postgraduate taught courses should be set well in advance and communicated by the person responsible for appeals to all relevant Directors of Teaching and Learning/Course Co-Ordinators, to College Tutors, to the Senior Tutor, the Postgraduate Advisory Service and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The dates should also be publicised on Blackboard and/or in other appropriate locations.
- Deadlines should be set for the submission of appeals for consideration at School Postgraduate Appeals Committees and notified 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. 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.

4.7 Format of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee

A School Postgraduate Appeals Committee should be conducted wholly in person or wholly online i.e. hybrid meetings are not permitted. Where online meetings are being held, a College-approved secure platform should be used and participants must ensure that they join the meeting from a secure and private location.

4.8 Decisions of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee

A record should be kept of the deliberations of a School Postgraduate Appeals Committee, giving grounds for each decision.

5 Responsibility

Responsibility for the updating of this procedure rests with Academic Affairs, Trinity Teaching and Learning.

6 Related Documents/Resources

- 6.1 Appeals Policy (Academic Progress)
- 6.2 Procedures for the Conduct of a Court of First Appeal
- 6.2 [Terms of Reference for Academic Appeals Committees](#)
- 6.3 [Guidelines on Evidence in Support of an ad misericordiam Appeal](#)



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6.4 [Guidelines on Exceptional Circumstances Supporting an Academic Appeal](#)

6.5 [Guidelines for Off-books with Assessment \(OBA\)](#)

6.6 The University Calendar Part III

7. Document control

7.1 Approved by: University Council (February 2026)

7.2 Date procedure approved: 11th February 2026

7.3 Date of next review: 2028/29

7.4 Officer responsible for review: Dean of Graduate Studies