



ACADEMIC ADVICE

ACADEMIC APPEALS

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 defines mitigating circumstances as **“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.”** [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, the quality of your supervision, information in your handbook not being fully applied, unclear information in the handbook, and mitigating circumstances not being taken into account.

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?

A good way of structuring your appeal is to start with an introductory paragraph. In this you should state what it is you're appealing, your basis for doing so and what the ideal outcome of your appeal 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 **3Ai** of the appeal form. 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. It's also a good idea to emphasise 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 box **3Aii** you need to list the evidence that you'll be attaching to your appeal, and in box **3Aiii** you need to explain why you didn't inform your department and submit a mitigating circumstances form sooner.

For **procedural irregularities**, you need to explain in section **3B** 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**, in box **3C** 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 the relevant box towards the end of the form, 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 which 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, 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 verified translation.

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).

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.

The table on the following page gives you an indication of the types of documents that the university would consider as evidence for mitigating circumstances

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. <i>*Covid-19 symptoms/positive test will not need evidence during the current pandemic phase (19/20 and 20/21)</i>
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.
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	Crime report and number, or evidence from alternative reporting routes as appropriate. Letter from medical professional/counsellor. 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.

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 letter. 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?

You should send your appeal form, along with your evidence, to the Quality Office, unless you are an MBChB student. The email address for the Quality Office is appeals@le.ac.uk, but if you would prefer you can submit a hard copy. Hard copies can be handed in at the main reception of the Fielding Johnson Building, in an envelope marked 'Academic Appeal: For the attention of the Quality Office'. They can also be posted to:

Quality Office
Student & Academic Services
Fielding Johnson Building
University of Leicester
Leicester, LE1 7RH

Appeal enquiries:

Tel: +44(0)116 252 2605

Email: appeals@le.ac.uk

If you're an MBChB student, you need to email your appeal form and evidence to dkp7@le.ac.uk, or hand it in at the main reception of the Maurice Shock Building, in an envelope marked 'Academic Appeal: For the attention of Mr David Parker'. Appeals can also be posted to:

Mr David Parker
College of Medicine, Biological Sciences & Psychology
Maurice Shock Building
University of Leicester
PO Box 138
Leicester LE1 9HN
UK

Appeal enquiries:

Tel: +44(0)116 223 1598

Email: dkp7@le.ac.uk

What happens next?

Once you've submitted your appeal form and evidence, it will be checked by the Quality Office 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.

If you do have grounds for appeal, your department will be asked to produce a report relating to your appeal. Upon receiving the departmental report, the Quality Office will conduct a secondary 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 accepted or 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 Quality Office.

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).

What can the Advice Service do for me?

[Advice Service](#) (formerly known as Education Unit) – Here in the Advice Service we provide advice on academic, housing and signposting issues.

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

Our advisors 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 within 2 working days to offer you an appointment, or provide further advice.

Opening hours are 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday.

If your query is urgent you can contact us on advice@le.ac.uk or +44 (0)116 223 1132/1184/1109.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Advice Service is now closed and will not be offering any face to face meetings or drop-ins. We will still be advising via email and can arrange video calls and phone calls if required. Information about our service changes is available [here](#).

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:

- **Quality Office** – You can contact the Quality Office for more information about the appeals process and deadlines etc., unless you are an MBChB student. Their email address is appeals@le.ac.uk or you can call +44 (0)116 252 2605.
- **MBChB** - If you are an MBChB student, you can contact Mr David Parker in the College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology, for more information about the appeals process and deadlines etc. Their email address is dkp7@le.ac.uk or you can call +44 (0)116 223 1598.
- **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.
- **Career Development 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 call +44 (0)116 252 2448, or email studentservices@le.ac.uk. It's important that you go to a Careers appointment prepared, so take your CV along with you, and have a think beforehand about what career path you'd like to take.
- **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. They're located in the Charles Wilson building, and 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, email visas@le.ac.uk.

Useful links

- [University's information about Academic Appeals](#)
- [University's student guide to 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

advice@le.ac.uk

0116 223 1132/1184/1109



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