

## **EXAM BOARD APPEALS FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENTS**

At the end of each academic year (or at the end of your Taught modules if you are a PGT student) an Exam Board meet to confirm your results. For some students this is confirming whether they can proceed to the next year of study, proceed to a Masters Dissertation or for final year Undergraduates to confirm what classification of degree they can be awarded.

Where students have not passed modules, or have had Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) accepted, the Exam Board will need to decide what options can be given – for example, can students have a reassessment attempt. These decisions are made in line with the University's [Rules of Assessment](#) which explain what a student must do to pass and be awarded a degree. Where ECs have been accepted, the Exam Board may use their discretion to give additional options, outside of the standard Rules of Assessment.

If when you receive your results, you feel dissatisfied with the Exam Board decision, you have the right to appeal and request for the decision to be reconsidered.

### **SUBMITTING AN EXAM BOARD APPEAL**

When it comes to submitting an appeal there are 3 important things to consider;

- the deadline to submit an appeal;
- the grounds to appeal on;
- the outcome being hoped for

### **How long do I have to submit an appeal?**

The deadline for appealing your results is **10 working days from the date that your results were published**. This may not be the same day that you first viewed your results online so check the date they were **published** when calculating your deadline. Appeals submitted after this deadline may not be accepted.

### **What grounds can I appeal on?**

- There are 3 grounds for appeal that the University will consider:
  - i. **“Extenuating Circumstances** which you were not able to claim for by the published deadline for your course OR new evidence for an existing claim that you were previously unable to submit.”
  - ii. **“Procedural irregularities** such as administrative errors, that meant the University did not correctly follow its assessment, marking or examination procedures (including the Rules of Assessment)”
  - iii. **“Concerns of prejudice and/or bias** during your assessment and/or the consideration of your progress by the Board of Examiners”

These grounds will need to be explained and, in most cases, evidenced within your appeal form. Appeals must be submitted on the appropriate form which can be found on the following website along with the University guidelines and procedures: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/exams-and-coursework/submitting-an-academic-appeal>

### **What grounds will not be accepted?**

In order to appeal you must be able to prove you have grounds. It is important to remember, that the purpose of an appeal is not to question individual marks or grades... you are appealing the decision that you have been given about your academic progression – for example, whether you are allowed graduate or move into the next year of your course.

Any appeal that is based exclusively on one of the following grounds will be automatically rejected:

- a. Disagreement with a mark or grade and/or appeals against the academic judgement of internal or external examiners. **After an Exam Board coursework and examinations cannot be remarked**, except in cases of procedural irregularities;
- b. any provisional mark or informal assessment of work by a member of staff that is not the final mark approved by the Board of Examiners;
- c. the **retrospective reporting of extenuating circumstances** which a student might reasonably have been expected to disclose to the Board of Examiners before their meeting;
- d. appeals **against the judgement of the Board of Examiners in assessing the significance of extenuating circumstances**, and whether and to what extent they affected academic performance;
- e. **marginal failure to attain a higher class of degree**;
- f. **concerns relating to the inadequacy of teaching or other arrangements during the period of study**. Students should raise such complaints in writing, before the Board of Examiners meeting, under the Student Concerns and Complaints Procedures (or equivalent for Partner Institutions).

### **What are the possible outcomes?**

The Exam Board make decisions based on the [Rules of Assessment](#) for your course and so there are restrictions on what action they can take.

When submitting an appeal, it is important to consider what might be a realistic outcome to ask for. For example, the University cannot award additional marks or make a guess at what you might have achieved (even if you had accepted ECs) but they might allow you an opportunity to do a reassessment to have a fair chance to succeed without those circumstances impacting your work.

If you are unsure of what might be a possible outcome to request one of our advisers would be happy to discuss this with you.

### **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SUBMIT AN APPEAL?**

When an appeal is submitted, it will be checked to make sure it is valid – for example was it submitted in time and does it have valid grounds.

Appeals that are considered valid will then be considered by an Appeals Officer who review the content of the appeal and the evidence provided; the decision made by the Board of Examiners and the reasons these decisions were made and any University records that may be relevant to the case. The Appeals Officer will decide whether the appeal should be dismissed and the original Exam Board

decision upheld or whether the decision should be referred back to the Exam Board for further consideration.

If referred back to the Exam Board, they may choose to amend the previous decision or to uphold the previous decision. In some cases, rather than refer the case to the Exam Board, the Appeals Officer may choose to refer the case to the Deputy Dean – this is usually for the purpose of a quick resolution for example:

- when there is a clear and obvious procedural irregularity that the Dean can correct easily
- a student is asking to repeat a year instead of doing summer reassessments
- a student is appealing being withdrawn for failing to engage with exams or reassessment and wishes to be reinstated.

### **KEY THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN WRITING AN APPEAL FORM**

When writing your appeal, you should consider:

- What exactly are you appealing? What is the decision that you are challenging?
- What is your desired outcome and is it viable?
- Try to put yourself in the place of the examiner and look at your appeal with critical eyes. Try not to leave anything to be implied, be very clear about the ways in which things have affected you and your studies.
- Extenuating Circumstances – you cannot 'retrospectively' report circumstances that you think might have impacted your studies. You will need to explain why you could not have submitted this information before the relevant Extenuating Circumstances deadline. For example, this may be that an illness that was impacting you during the year was only diagnosed after the Extenuating Circumstances deadline.
- Procedural Irregularities - you will need to provide evidence to show that the University has not followed its own policies, procedures or rules of assessment.
- Prejudice/bias – you will need to provide evidence that the Board of Examiners were prejudiced or biased when they considered your case such as an email or proof that the you have been treated differently to another student in the same situation. You may wish to consider how/why this prejudice or bias has occurred.

### **HOW CAN SU ADVICE HELP WITH YOUR APPEAL?**

We would suggest that you complete an [Exam Board Appeal form](#), which is now an online form.

If you would like some feedback before you submit your appeal please send us screenshots of your online appeal form and complete a [client information form](#), where one of our Advisers would be happy to offer feedback and suggestions prior to you submitting it to the University.

We would advise that you collate your supporting evidence as soon as you can. Unfortunately, we cannot write appeal forms for you, we can only make recommendations and feedback on what you have written.

**If you have been given any options by the Exam Board, you must ensure you choose your preferred option before the deadline given to you. Even if you are appealing the outcome, you should choose the option you would prefer if the appeal is not successful. If you do not choose by the deadline, the University will impose a decision for you and it may not be your preferred option. If your appeal is successful, your outcomes will be amended accordingly.**

If you need any further advice, or would like to receive feedback on your appeal before submitting it, you can download one of our [Client Information forms](#), fill it in and send it over to us at [suadvice@essex.ac.uk](mailto:suadvice@essex.ac.uk). We can then book you in for an appointment with one of our advisers.

**Please ensure you allow plenty of time before your deadline when you contact SU Advice as we often have high numbers of students contacting the service and cannot guarantee a same day reply.**