

1. Introduction

The University is committed to providing students with the right to appeal, on permitted grounds, against University decisions relating to their assessment, progression or standing within the University. The purpose of the Student Appeals Procedure is to ensure that decisions affecting students are made in accordance with relevant procedures and that circumstances impacting students' performance or capacity to study are considered in a fair and consistent way.

The Student Appeals Procedure is evidence based. Supporting evidence must be submitted to substantiate all appeals. The procedure applies to all registered students and graduands. Appeals relating to Student (Garda) Vetting and Risk Assessment decisions from appellants who have accepted an offer of a place from the University will also be processed using this procedure.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with related policies, regulations and codes. Please see section 10. Students should read accompanying [Student Guidelines](#) before submitting an appeal. For assessment appeals, please also see [Assessment Appeals Policy](#).

2. Definitions

Appeal: A student appeal under this policy is defined as: A formal review of a decision or sanction determined by a university body charged with making decisions concerning a student's assessment, progression or standing within the University.

Appellant: A student who has submitted an appeal.

Original decision-making body: The university committee or board with responsibility for making the decision which is being appealed.

Governing Boards: All programmes in the University are overseen by a Governing Board which is responsible for monitoring the overall performance and progression of students registered to its programmes and ensuring their academic welfare.

Graduand: A student who has completed the requirements for, but who has not yet been conferred with, a degree.

3. Decisions that may be appealed

The following appeals can be made by students under this procedure:

Assessment Appeals:

- 3.1 An appeal against the result of any assessment of students' academic work. An appeal against the result of a module can only be submitted against a final result, including an appeal against a component of a module.
- 3.2 An appeal against the decision of the Academic Council Committee on Examinations on the award of a Research Master's Degree.
- 3.3 An appeal against decisions on progression in and award of doctoral programmes. A student can appeal the decision of the Transfer Assessment Panel or the decision of the Academic Council Committee on Examinations on the award.

Student Conduct Appeals:

- 3.4 An appeal against decisions made under the Student Discipline Procedure. Appeals may be made against decisions and/or any penalty applied under the Student Discipline Procedure.
- 3.5 An appeal against decisions of School Plagiarism Committees.
- 3.6 An appeal against decisions by UCD Residences in relation to breaches of the License to Reside.

Continuation, Progression and Standing Appeals:

- 3.7 An appeal against decisions made by Governing Boards in respect of:
 - Discontinuation of a student's registration under Continuation (Academic Regulation)
 - Fitness to Continue in Study
 - Student Fitness to Practise¹
- 3.8 An appeal against decisions of the Ad Astra Academy to discontinue a scholarship.
- 3.9 An appeal against decisions made by the Student Vetting Committee.
- 3.10 An appeal against decisions made by the Risk Assessment Standing Committee.

The following matters are not open to review under the Student Appeals Procedure:

- Challenges to the academic judgement of examiners, Governing Boards, or other University decision-making bodies.
- Complaints about the delivery or quality of a programme. If a student has concerns about the delivery or quality of a programme, they should be raised at the earliest opportunity. For information about raising concerns and making formal complaints please review the [Student Complaint Policy and Procedure](#).

¹ Some programmes with professional practice elements are subject to the University's [Student Fitness to Practise Policy](#).

4. Grounds for Appeal

- 4.1 For Assessment Appeals, an appeal may be made on the following grounds:
- **Procedural irregularity:** there is evidence that the procedures relating to a decision were not followed properly, which may have impacted on the decision.
 - **Extenuating circumstances:** there were extenuating circumstances of which the relevant Governing Board was aware but had rejected, because the application was late and the Governing Board did not consider the reason why the application was late to be valid.
- 4.2 For all other appeals taken under the Student Appeals Procedure (see 3.4 to 3.10), an appeal may be made on the following grounds:
- **Procedural irregularity:** there is evidence that the procedures relating to a decision were not followed properly, which may have impacted on the decision.
 - **New evidence:** information relevant to the decision, which for good reason was not available to the original decision-making body.
- 4.3 For student conduct, fitness to continue in study and student fitness to practise, an appeal may be made on the following additional ground:
- **Disproportionate outcome or penalty:** The action or penalty applied was disproportionately severe with regard to the circumstances of the case.
- 4.4 Appeals against a decision to discontinue an Ad Astra Scholarship may be made on the grounds of **procedural irregularity** and **new evidence**, with the following exceptions:
- Where a Scholar withdraws from the University.
 - Where a Student Discipline Committee has suspended or excluded a Scholar from the University.
 - Where a Scholar (Elite Sports) returns a positive result to a drugs test and the relevant National Sports Governing Body has suspended an athlete.

5. Submitting an Appeal

- 5.1 The Student Appeals Procedure may be used by registered students and graduands. Appeals against decisions made under the [Student Vetting Policy](#) or decisions made under the [Relevant Offence Risk Assessment Policy](#) from appellants who have accepted an offer of a place from the University may also be accepted. Appeals from graduates will not be accepted.
- 5.2 An appeal cannot be lodged until the final decision has been ratified by the original decision making body.
- 5.3 Appeals must be submitted using the relevant [Student Appeals Form](#). All relevant information must be included in the form, with any additional evidence attached as required. Appeals must be submitted electronically, within the specified timeframe. Student Appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the notification or publication of the decision.
- 5.4 An appeal will be not be accepted if it

- does not fall under the stated grounds for appeal.
- does not include the necessary evidence to support the appeal.
- is not submitted within the given timeframe.

Appeals that do not fall under the scope of the Student Appeals process will not be submitted to the Student Appeals Committee and appellants will be notified.

- 5.5 Appeals submitted after the relevant deadline are regarded as late and will not normally be accepted. In exceptional circumstances, including an explanation and supporting evidence of a delay, and at the University's discretion, a late appeal may be accepted.
- 5.6 Appeals will normally be processed within 30 working days. Should any delays occur appellants will be notified of the delay and advised on when to expect a decision.
- 5.7 In relation to appeals, all decisions of the University remain in force until the outcome of any decision on an appeal.

Student Responsibility

- 5.8 It is the student's responsibility to have read and be familiar with the content of any relevant University policies, procedures, regulations, codes of practice, and course and programme information.
- 5.9 Where invited to do so, attend meetings to present their appeal and respond to questions of the Student Appeals Committee.
- 5.10 Where an appeal has been submitted, students must ensure that they engage with the process in a timely manner.

6. Student Appeals Panel

- 6.1 A Student Appeals Panel is a panel of faculty and professional staff, appointed by Academic Council on the recommendation of the Academic Council Committee on Student Appeals and Complaints (ACCSAC).
- 6.2 A Student Appeals Committee will be convened from the membership of the Student Appeals Panel and comprise 3 members, one of whom will be appointed as chairperson. Each Student Appeals Committee should ensure gender balance.
- 6.3 In the case of appeals submitted against decisions taken under academic procedures, the composition of Student Appeals Committees shall be drawn from the academic staff membership of the Student Appeals Panel.
- 6.4 In the case of appeals submitted against decisions taken under the Student Discipline Procedure, relating to general misconduct breaches, the composition of Student Appeals Committees may be drawn from the faculty and professional staff membership of the Student Appeals Panel.

7. Procedures of the Student Appeals Committee

- 7.1 The Student Appeals Committee will conduct its business in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Members of Student Appeals Panels will not be asked to serve on committees involving students from their school or programmes upon which they teach. No member of the original decision-making body or person providing administrative support may serve on or support the appeal committee. Committee members must recuse themselves if they become aware of any potential conflict.
- 7.2 A copy of the appeal form and any other supporting evidence provided by the appellant will be sent to the original decision-making body for comment. The response to an appeal should be normally submitted within 5 working days of the date of notification of the appeal. The response should be given in writing, and address all pertinent issues raised by the student. Any relevant evidence to support the response should be provided including all documentation considered by the original decision-making body and a summary note or relevant minute of its meeting.

A copy of the appeal form and any other supporting evidence provided by the appellant and evidence submitted by the original decision-making body, including the decision-making body's comment in relation to the appeal, will be issued to both the committee and the appellant in advance of the meeting. The committee may request additional information from the appellant and/or original decision-making body.

- 7.3 Some categories of student appeals are determined by the Student Appeals Committee based on written appeal submissions and relevant documentary evidence.

Where a student is not required to attend the meeting, they will receive a copy of the response from the original decision-making body and may provide a further response within 5 working days to inform the review of the appeal by the Student Appeals Committee.

Where a student is permitted to attend the meeting of the original decision-making body, appellants will be invited to make an oral submission to the Student Appeals Committee.

Where appellants are invited to attend the Student Appeals Committee meeting, appellants

- will be given 10 working days' notice of the date of the meeting. Appellants may choose to waive this notice period if an earlier meeting can be facilitated by the Student Appeals Committee;
- may be accompanied by a person of their choice to support them at the meeting, such as a Student Adviser, an SU Officer or a relative. A support person will not normally be a legal representative and it will be at the University's discretion whether a legal representative shall be permitted to attend;
- will be provided with copies of all documents supplied to the Student Appeals Committee within 5 working days of the date of the committee meeting.

- 7.4 Decisions will be made on the balance of probabilities, by a simple majority.
- 7.5 A note-taker will be in attendance and a record of the meeting and related outcomes will be kept.
- 7.6 A student can withdraw from the appeals process at any point before the final decision of the Student Appeals Committee. Requests for postponements to the appeal process will only be facilitated in exceptional circumstances and students may be asked to provide documentation to support their requests.

8. Decisions

8.1 The Student Appeals Committee may decide to

- Uphold the appeal, in full or in part
- Not uphold the appeal

In cases where a Student Appeals Committee upholds an appeal either on the ground of a procedural irregularity in the process leading to the original decision, or on the ground of new evidence, the Student Appeals Committee, at their discretion, may refer the case back to the original decision-making body for a new hearing with such conditions as the Student Appeals Committee deems appropriate within Academic Regulations and University Policy, this may include the constitution of a new committee.

8.2 On upholding an appeal a Student Appeals Committee may require the appellant to meet specified conditions.

8.3 Where the Student Appeals Committee is considering an appeal against a penalty imposed under the Student Discipline Procedure (including penalties imposed by School Plagiarism Committees and UCD Residences in relation breaches of the licence to reside), the Student Appeals Committee may decrease or increase a penalty or vary the nature of the penalty.

8.4 The decision of the Student Appeals Committee is final and will be communicated to the appellant and the original decision-making body within 5 working days of the committee meeting.

9. The Office of the Ombudsman

If an appellant is dissatisfied with the University's handling of an appeal or decision in relation to an appeal, they may submit a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Office of the Ombudsman may consider the case and make a decision on whether to investigate. Information about the Office of the Ombudsman and education services is available at: <https://www.ombudsman.ie/publications/information-leaflets/the-ombudsman-and-educati/index.xml>

10. Related policies, regulations and codes

Assessment

[Assessment Appeals Policy](#)

Student Conduct

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Student Discipline Procedure](#)

Continuation, progression and standing

[Continuation – Academic Progress Policy and Procedure](#)

[Student Fitness to Practise Policy](#)

[Fitness to Continue in Study Policy and Procedure](#)

[Ad Astra Terms and Conditions](#)

[Student Garda Vetting Policy](#)

[Relevant Offence Risk Assessment Policy](#)