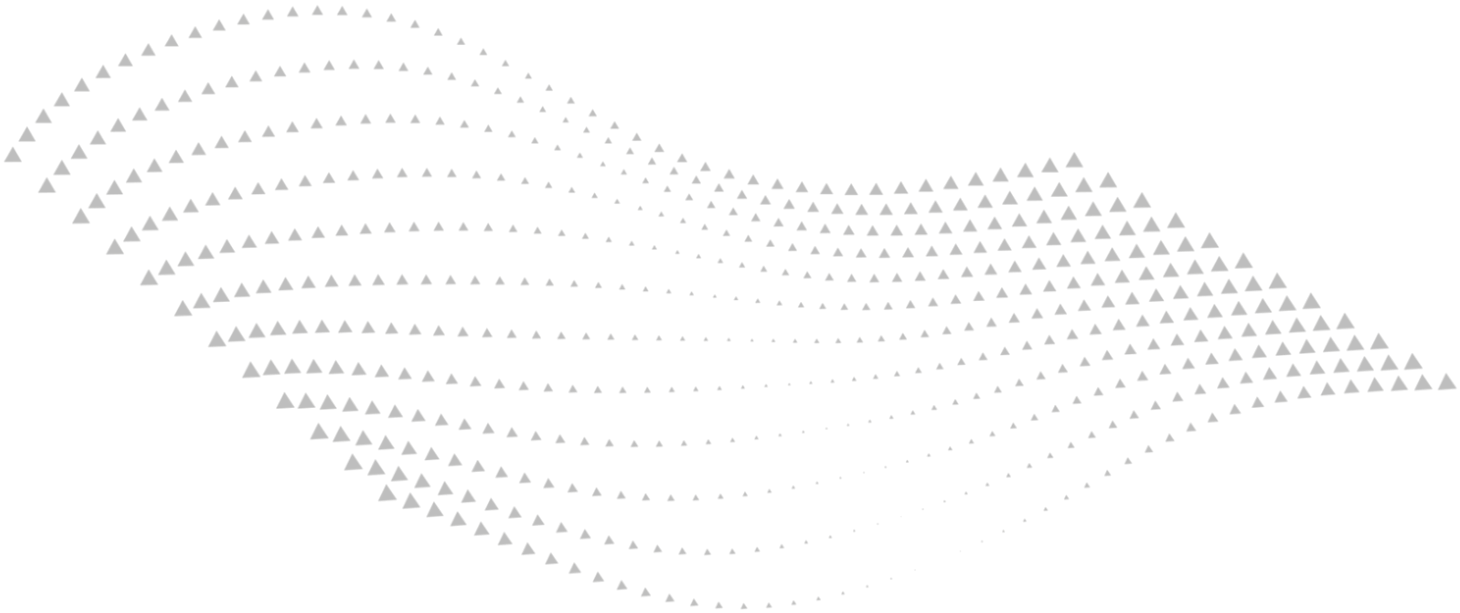
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metfilm SCHOOL

Academic Appeals Procedure



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1 Purpose

This procedure explains how to appeal an academic decision made by BIMM University.

It sets out:

- what decisions can be appealed.
- the grounds on which an appeal can be made.
- how to submit an appeal.
- how your appeal will be considered.
- your right to request a final internal review, and
- your right to seek an independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

2 Scope

This procedure applies to all students enrolled on programmes leading to a BIMM University award, including those studying at BIMM University and MetFilm School. Students at partner institutions delivering BIMM University awards should refer to the Partner Operations Handbook to determine which process to follow.

Students enrolled on a MetFilm School course leading to a University of West London (UWL) Award should refer to the UWL Appeals Regulations.

This procedure applies to appeals relating to:

- module results.
- progression decisions.
- award decisions.
- academic misconduct penalties.
- decisions made under the Exceptional Circumstances Policy; and
- decisions requiring a student to withdraw because academic credit requirements have not been met.

This procedure does not apply to:

- Admissions decisions (see the Admissions Policy).
- Fitness to Study decisions (see the Fitness to Study Procedure).
- Student Engagement decisions (see the Student Engagement Policy), or
- Student Disciplinary decisions (see the Student Disciplinary Procedure).

Where an appeal submission includes issues that are more appropriately considered as a complaint, the University may advise the student to pursue those matters through the Student Complaints Procedure. However, where a complaint is directly linked to and has materially affected an academic outcome, it may be considered as part of an academic appeal where this falls within the permitted grounds for appeal.

3 What is an Academic Appeal?

An academic appeal is a request for the University to review an academic decision.

You have the right to appeal an academic decision where there are valid grounds for appeal. However, an appeal cannot be based solely on disagreement with academic judgement, including a belief that your result does not fairly reflect the effort you put into your work, its merit, or your academic ability. Academic decisions are subject to robust quality assurance processes, including moderation and external examination, to ensure that assessment outcomes are fair and consistent. For more information about how assessment decisions are assured, please refer to pages 16 to 18 of the Student Assessment Handbook: *How do I know my assessment is fair?*

For example, you cannot appeal simply because you are unhappy with a mark awarded by academic staff. See section 8 for further details.

4 Our Commitments

We are committed to fairness and transparency in this process, and making an appeal will never unfairly disadvantage you in other aspects of your academic journey. If you submit an appeal:

- you will be treated fairly, respectfully and without disadvantage.
- your appeal will be considered on its individual merits.
- those considering your appeal will have had no prior involvement in the case wherever possible.
- appropriate consideration will be given to equality, diversity and inclusion requirements.
- We will treat information relating to your appeal confidentially and in line with data protection legislation. To enable us to consider your appeal fully, relevant information may be shared with staff involved in reviewing the appeal or implementing any resulting actions. Information will only be shared where necessary, and any sensitive personal data will be managed appropriately and in accordance with data protection requirements.

5 Before You Submit an Appeal

Before submitting an appeal, you may wish to seek clarification about:

- your feedback.
- your mark.
- an assessment outcome, or
- an academic decision.

We encourage you to discuss your concerns with your Lecturer, Course Leader, Student Support Adviser or a member of Academic Services before submitting an appeal. They can help explain how the decision was reached and clarify any aspects of your mark or feedback that you do not understand. In some circumstances, if an error is identified before the relevant Board has met, the issue may be reviewed and resolved informally, meaning a formal appeal may not be necessary.

Seeking clarification does not extend the deadline for submitting an appeal. Students are expected to engage with any assessment opportunity presented to them by the board and should not wait to receive the outcome of their appeal if the deadline falls before a panel has been able to convene.

6 Reasonable Behaviour

The University is committed to ensuring that students can raise genuine concerns and appeals without fear of disadvantage. We recognise that students may be upset, frustrated or distressed when pursuing an appeal, and we will treat all students fairly, respectfully and with compassion throughout the process.

We also expect everyone involved in an appeal to behave respectfully and reasonably. We may decide to manage or limit correspondence relating to an appeal where a student's behaviour is unreasonable. Examples may include:

- abusive, offensive or threatening language towards staff or other students.
- repeated contact about the same issue after a final decision has been reached.
- excessive, persistent or unreasonable demands that place a disproportionate burden on staff.
- knowingly providing false or misleading information; and
- attempts to disrupt the appeals process or influence decision-makers improperly.

Any decision to limit or cease correspondence will be made by the Casework Manager (or nominee), who will write to explain the reasons for the decision and any remaining options available to the student.

7 Grounds for Appeal

You may submit an appeal on one or more of the following grounds. These should be accompanied by evidence (see also Appendix 1):

a) **Mitigating Circumstances:** You experienced circumstances that affected your assessment, but there was a good reason why the Assessment Board was not aware of them when it made its decision. For example, this may include illness, bereavement, or other serious personal circumstances that could not reasonably have been reported earlier.
b) **Procedural Error:** There is evidence that the correct procedures were not followed, and this may have affected the outcome of the decision. This could include administrative errors, failure to follow University regulations, or other mistakes in the assessment process.
c) **Bias:** There is evidence that bias, prejudice, or unfair treatment may have influenced the marking process, moderation process, or Assessment Board's decision.

8 What cannot be appealed?

Marks cannot be appealed until they have been to an assessment board. Any marks you receive via Canvas following your assessment are only provisional - you must wait until you receive your formal outcome email.

An academic appeal is not a mechanism for challenging academic judgement.

Academic judgement is the decision of appropriately qualified academic staff about the academic quality of work. This includes the marks awarded, whether learning outcomes have been achieved, the academic standards applied, and the classification of awards.

As a result, the following will not normally be considered valid grounds for appeal:

- disagreement with academic judgement;
- dissatisfaction with assessment feedback;
- receiving a lower mark than expected;
- receiving a lower mark than in previous assessments;
- a request for a higher degree classification because the final result is close to a classification boundary.

For example, the University will not normally consider appeals based on statements such as the below:

- "I believe my work deserved a higher mark";
- "I disagree with the marker's assessment of my work";
- "I usually achieve higher grades";
- "My overall result was only a small percentage below the next classification."

The following will also not normally be considered valid grounds for appeal:

- circumstances that could reasonably have been submitted through the Exceptional Circumstances Procedure before the original decision was made;
- issues arising from incorrect file uploads, failures of personal equipment, software or internet connectivity, or other matters that could reasonably have been anticipated, managed or reported by the student at the time. Examples may include:
    - uploading the wrong file or an incomplete version of an assessment;
    - failure to check that a submission uploaded successfully;
    - computer, software or internet issues where sufficient time was available to seek assistance or make alternative arrangements;
    - moving house, relocation, travel arrangements or other planned personal commitments;
    - poor time management or workload planning;
    - forgetting an assessment deadline or examination date.

If you experience any technical difficulties when uploading your assessment, please contact your local assessment team who can advise you.

Work will not normally be remarked where there have been mitigating circumstances. However, where an appeal is upheld because of a procedural error or other valid ground, the University may arrange for the assessment, decision or process to be reconsidered in accordance with its regulations and procedures.

9 Submitting an Appeal

Appeals must be submitted using the Academic Appeals Form. If you have difficulty accessing or completing the form, require the information in an alternative format, or need reasonable adjustments to support you in making an appeal, please contact us as soon as possible at casework@bimm.ac.uk We will work with you to ensure that you are able to access the appeals process fairly and effectively.

When you submit your appeal, you should provide:

- a clear explanation of your appeal.
- the grounds on which you are appealing.
- all relevant supporting evidence - any evidence provided should support the circumstances described in the appeal, cover the time period affected and the timing of the assessment. Evidence must be submitted in English or with a translation if evidence is provided in another language.

Where additional evidence is requested, you must provide it by the deadline provided.

10 Appeal Deadlines

Board	Deadline
Trimester 1 /2 /3 Assessment Outcomes	Within 15 working days of receiving your assessment outcome
Retrieval Board outcomes	Within 5 working days of receiving the outcome (This helps ensure any successful appeal can be resolved before the start of the next academic year.)

Late appeals will only normally be accepted where there are **exceptional circumstances** that prevented you from submitting your appeal by the deadline, and where supporting evidence is provided. For example, if you were admitted to hospital and were unable to meet the deadline, evidence of your hospital stay would be required.

11 Initial Review of Your Appeal

When we receive your appeal, we will check whether:

- it has been submitted on time;
- it falls within the grounds for appeal;
- the required information has been provided;
- appropriate evidence has been submitted.

We will normally acknowledge your appeal within five working days.

We will normally acknowledge your appeal within five working days. If your appeal is not eligible for consideration, we will explain the reasons for this in writing.

12 Academic Appeals Panel

Eligible appeals will be considered by an Academic Appeals Panel.

The Panel will be chaired by a senior member of staff and will include suitably experienced senior academic and/or Academic Services staff. A Servicing Officer will support the Panel and record its decisions. The terms of reference for the Academic Appeals Panels are set out here.
Panel members must not normally have had any previous involvement in the case and must not have a conflict of interest.

The Panel will consider all available evidence before reaching a decision.

13 Possible Outcomes

Your appeal may be:

- **Upheld**: the Panel agrees with the appeal grounds and decides that action should be taken.
- **Partially upheld**: the Panel agrees with some, but not all, aspects of the appeal and decides that limited action should be taken.
- **Not upheld**: the Panel does not find sufficient evidence to support the appeal.

Where an appeal is upheld, outcomes may include:

- a further assessment attempt;
- reconsideration of an academic misconduct penalty;
- correction of a procedural error;
- remarking of an assessment (where procedural error or bias has been found)

The Panel may request additional information before reaching a decision if it believes further evidence is required.

The University will not increase a mark by estimating what a student might have achieved under different circumstances.

The University will not change a degree classification except where procedural error is found to have occurred during the classification calculation or where any remark recommended as part of an appeal outcome would move a student into a different classification band or enable the student to be eligible for a borderline increase.

14 Appeal Outcome

You will normally receive a written outcome within five working days of the Appeal Panel meeting.

The outcome letter will explain:

- the decision reached;
- the reasons for the decision;
- any actions to be taken;

- your right to request a Final Internal Review.

15 Final Internal Review

If you believe there is a reason why the appeal outcome should be reconsidered, you may request a Final Internal Review.

A Final Internal Review can only be requested where:

- new evidence has become available that could not reasonably have been provided earlier;
- there was a procedural error in the handling of the appeal;
- there is evidence of bias in the handling of the appeal.

A Final Internal Review is not a second appeal. The reviewer will not reconsider the entire case unless one of the review grounds is established. Review requests that are solely based on expressions of dissatisfaction with the original appeal outcome decision without establishing grounds for review will not be considered.

Requests must normally be submitted within:

- 15 working days of the appeal outcome; or
- 5 working days in Summer Retrieval Board cases.

The review will normally be completed within 20 working days. If we think it'll take longer, we'll let you know.

16 Completion of Procedures Letter

A Completion of Procedures Letter is the University's formal confirmation that it has completed its consideration of your appeal.

The letter will explain:

- the final decision reached by the University.
- the reasons for that decision; and
- your right to ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to review your case.

A Completion of Procedures Letter will normally be issued following the conclusion of the Final Internal Review stage. It may also be issued where the University determines that there are no grounds for further consideration of an appeal.

17 Independent Review

Once you have completed all stages of the University's Academic Appeals Procedure, you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter**.** This confirms that the University's internal procedures have been completed and that there are no further opportunities to appeal within the University.

If you remain dissatisfied with the final outcome of your appeal, you may be able to ask the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to independently review your case. The OIA is an independent body that reviews student complaints and appeals about higher education providers in England and Wales. The OIA is separate from the University and its review is free of charge to students.

The OIA will normally only consider a case once the University's internal procedures have been completed and a Completion of Procedures Letter has been issued. The OIA will not usually re-examine academic judgement, but it can consider whether the University has acted fairly, followed its procedures correctly, and reached a reasonable decision based on the evidence available.

Students wishing to ask the OIA to review their case must normally do so within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter. Requests submitted outside this timeframe may not be considered by the OIA.

Further information about the OIA and its Scheme Rules can be found at www.oiahe.org.uk.

Appendix 1: Examples of Supporting Evidence

The evidence you provide should support the circumstances described in your appeal, relate to the relevant time period, and where possible demonstrate the impact on your ability to undertake or complete the assessment(s) concerned. The examples below are intended as guidance and are not exhaustive.

Examples may include:

Medical or Health Circumstances

- A letter, report or certificate from a GP, consultant, psychologist, counsellor or other registered healthcare professional.
- Hospital admission or discharge documentation.
- Evidence of emergency medical treatment.
- Documentation confirming ongoing treatment or a diagnosed condition relevant to the period affected.

Bereavement or Serious Family Circumstances

- A death certificate.
- An order of service or funeral notice.
- A letter from a medical professional, social worker or other relevant professional confirming the circumstances.
- Other independent evidence demonstrating the impact of the circumstances.

Personal or Domestic Circumstances

- Police reports or crime reference numbers.
- Insurance claims relating to theft, fire or other significant incidents.
- Legal documentation.
- Evidence from support services, social services, housing providers or other relevant organisations.

Caring Responsibilities

- Documentation confirming caring responsibilities.
- Evidence from healthcare professionals involved in the care of the individual.
- Evidence from local authorities or support agencies..

Administrative or Procedural Error

- Relevant email correspondence.
- Published assessment information or module documentation.
- Records demonstrating that incorrect information or advice was provided.
- Documentation showing that a required process was not followed.

Bias, Prejudice, Discrimination or Unfair Treatment

- Relevant correspondence or communications.
- Witness statements from individuals with direct knowledge of the circumstances.
- Documentation demonstrating inconsistent treatment or application of procedures.

- Evidence from a formal complaint investigation or similar process where available.

Evidence That Is Unlikely to Be Accepted on Its Own

The following would not normally be considered sufficient evidence without additional independent supporting documentation:

- A personal statement describing the circumstances.
- Statements from family members or friends.
- General claims of stress or pressure without supporting evidence.
- A belief that a mark does not reflect the effort invested in the assessment.
- Disagreement with academic judgement.
- Unsupported allegations of bias, prejudice or unfair treatment.

Evidence Requirements

- Be relevant to the grounds of appeal.
- Relate to the period affected and the timing of the assessment or decision being challenged.
- Be submitted in English or accompanied by a translation where originally produced in another language.
- Be provided at the point of submission wherever possible.
- Clearly demonstrate both the circumstances being relied upon and, where relevant, their impact on the assessment outcome.