**Submitting an Academic Appeal - Research Programmes**

**Student Guidance (August 2023)**

**Introduction**

This guidance must be read in conjunction with the Appeals Procedure as detailed in Annexes 1, 2, 3 and 5 (Research Programmes) of the [Handbook of Student Regulations](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/handbook).

If after reading this guidance alongside the regulations you still have questions about the procedure, please email [studentappealsandcomplaints@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:studentappealsandcomplaints@northumbria.ac.uk). If you would like independent advice and guidance about submitting an appeal, please contact the Students’ Union at [www.mynsu.co.uk/advice-centre/your-course](http://www.mynsu.co.uk/advice-centre/your-course).

Students may appeal Withdrawal for Unsatisfactory Academic Performance, Project Approval, Annual Progression, Thesis Submission and Viva Voce examination decisions. Students may also appeal Extension and Personal Circumstances request decisions.

If you are attempting to appeal on the basis of deficiencies in supervision, this is a complaint, not an appeal. Please consult Annexe 4 of the Handbook and the ‘Submitting a Complaint’ guidance.

**Key Points**

1. In all cases, students should raise a Stage 1 informal appeal as soon as possible after receiving their decision. Students can do this by contacting the Graduate School, normally the Faculty Graduate School Coordinator.
2. If you are unable to resolve the issue informally and believe you have grounds, your Stage 2 formal appeal must be submitted within **10 working days** of your decision being issued. This deadline is to ensure that if there are grounds to support your appeal, the issue can be remedied as swiftly as possible. If the Stage 1 informal appeal has delayed your ability to meet the 10 working day deadline for submitting a Stage 2 formal appeal, you should state this in your Appeal Form as an explanation for the lateness of the appeal.
3. **Students must demonstrate that they have grounds for an appeal**. The grounds for appealing Withdrawal for Unsatisfactory Progress, Project Approval, Annual Progression, and Thesis Submission and Viva Voce examination decisions are:
   1. Correct procedures were not followed in the conduct of Withdrawal, Project Approval, Annual Progression, or Thesis Submission and Viva Voce examination, and this significantly affected the outcome. You will need to explain which procedure you believe has not been followed and how the outcome has been significantly affected.
   2. Particular relevant information about your health or other personal circumstances was either:
      1. not properly taken into account during the assessment/procedures leading to the decision

or

* + 1. not previously made available by you and is now being made available. You will need to provide a compelling reason for why you could not provide the information before the original decision was taken and explain why you believe it significantly affects the outcome.

1. The grounds for appealing an Extension Request or Personal Circumstances decision are:

4.1. Correct procedures were not followed when considering your request or circumstances and this significantly affected the outcome. You will need to explain which procedure you believe has not been followed and how the outcome has been significantly affected.

4.2. You have new relevant information about your health or other personal circumstances which could not be provided earlier and which significantly affects the outcome. You must provide and evidence a compelling reason for why you could not provide the information before the original decision was taken, otherwise your appeal will not be considered any further.

1. Appeals based on a questioning of academic judgement are not permitted. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) defines academic judgement as “*a judgment that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential*” ([OIA Scheme Rules](https://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/2276/oia-rules-april-2018.pdf), 2018).
2. Students should submit evidence to support their appeal wherever possible. If you are awaiting evidence, you should still submit your appeal on time, indicating when the evidence will be available. The Student Appeals and Complaints Office will discuss this with you, but we will not commence our timescales for considering the appeal until all your evidence has been received.
3. If your appeal is late, you must provide and evidence a compelling reason for the lateness of the appeal. Without this, your appeal will be considered no further.
4. Before submitting your appeal, check that you have supplied the following documentation:
   1. A [Student Appeals Form](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/handbook)
   2. All supporting evidence
   3. A copy of the decision you are appealing
5. Organise your information carefully, ensuring that you clearly cross reference your arguments with the supporting evidence supplied by you. Do not repeat or copy and paste arguments made in your email, complaint form, and covering letter as this only delays the Student Appeals and Complaints Office’s ability to assess the information.
6. Your appeal will be considered by a member of the Student Appeals and Complaints Office. Appeals are normally considered within **30 working days**. If there is to be any delay, we will ensure you are kept informed.
7. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal and believe you have grounds, you may request a review of the decision within 10 working days of your Stage 2 decision being issued. See Appendix G of the [Handbook of Student Regulations](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/handbook) for further guidance about requesting a review.
8. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal and do not have grounds to request a review, you may request a Completion of Procedures Letter to enable you to take your case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). See Appendix H of the [Handbook of Student Regulations](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/handbook) for further guidance on taking your case to the OIA.