Guidance for submitting an Appeal

This guidance and the QMUL Appeal Regulations must be read before submitting an appeal.

These guidelines are applicable to all students submitting an appeal under the Queen Mary Appeal Regulations.

Principles

Anyone who submits an appeal will not be disadvantaged or penalised by doing so. Privacy and confidentiality will be respected and any information provided by an appellant will only be disclosed to those directly involved with the case, or such administrative staff as may be necessary. An appellant can expect their request to be handled impartially, confidentiality and within a reasonable time-scale.

Do I need to submit an appeal?

Before you submit an appeal you should make sure of the following:

- You have contacted your School/Institute and you are clear why a certain decision was made. People you may find helpful to talk to include your: Personal tutor Senior tutor/ Director of Studies School Administrator Student Union Advocacy and Representation manager
- You feel that a decision made about your results, degree classification, progression or failure was subject to procedural error, or did not take into account extenuating circumstances which you have, in most cases, ALREADY disclosed in a timely manner and in any event, before the meeting of the relevant Examination Board.
- You have sought advice from your Department/ School or from the Students’ Union.
- You have exhausted all School/Institute procedures for obtaining feedback on your performance.

Please consider and act on the above points as they may prevent the need for an appeal.

Before submitting an appeal - Feedback

Students sometimes receive disappointing results and a natural reaction is to find out if they are correct. However in almost every case, published marks are correct as great care is taken when calculating, transcribing and publishing marks.

If you are unsure why you received a certain mark, then you should ask your academic school for some feedback. In practice this can be the examiner providing or going over the model answers with you or providing a brief summary, highlighting what you did and did not include and what was expected to get good marks.

Students' Union - Advocacy and Representation

The Students’ Union provide free, independent advice for students who wish to submit an appeal. The contact details are:
Annie Mitchell
Phone: +44 (0)20 7882 8042
Email: a.c.mitchell@qmul.ac.uk

How do I submit an appeal?

1. Complete the Appeal form on the Queen Mary website:
   http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/students/student-appeals/appeals/index.html
   You must complete all sections of the form. Advice on how to do this is given in these Guidelines.
2. Provide a written statement of your case in your own words. This should be concise and contain all the information you wish to be considered. It is very helpful if you provide a timeline of events and refer to evidence where it exists.
3. Provide evidence to support your case, or list any evidence which is to be submitted within 7 calendar days.

You will need to submit all of the above, to the Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Unit. You are encouraged to submit your form electronically from your Queen Mary email account to appeals@qmul.ac.uk.

When do I submit my appeal?

You must submit your appeal within 14 days of the official notification of your results, or the decision you are appealing against.
Please note that this is a strict deadline although discretion can be exercised in exceptional circumstances, to accept late appeals if there is a good reason for the late submission.
Completing the form – Grounds for a review

There are two grounds on which you may submit an appeal. You must indicate on the form and when writing your statement on which ground(s) you are submitting your appeal. The following are NOT valid grounds for appeal:

i. Appeals against the academic judgment of internal or external examiners.

ii. Appeals that are based on the informal assessment of a student’s work by members of academic staff.

iii. The retrospective reporting of extenuating circumstances that might have been reasonably made known at the time.

iv. Marginal failure to attain a higher class of degree.

v. Lack of awareness by the student of the relevant procedure/regulations.

vi. Vexatious appeals.

Completing the form – Subject of the appeal

When writing your statement and completing the appeal form you must indicate the decision which you are appealing against, to help you examples are given below:

- An individual module result – state the module code, title and the mark e.g. ELE105 Introduction to Multimedia, 38F
- The classification of an award e.g. 2i, 2ii etc.
- Please note that Subject Examination Boards (SEBs) consider borderline candidates very carefully.
- Cannot progress or graduate and required to resit or retake a module/s: e.g. failed three modules. Nb. SEBs consider borderline students carefully when agreeing progression.
- Termination of studies due to academic failure: e.g. out of attempts to pass enough modules for the award of a degree

Academic Judgement

The mark awarded for an assessment is a reflection of your achievement as determined by the examiner(s) in accordance with a prescribed marking scheme. Academic judgement cannot be appealed against and students may not base an appeal on the grounds of a challenge to academic judgement.

In other words, an examiner’s marking will not be scrutinised once it has been through the appropriate moderation and the marks have been confirmed by the Examination Board. Your work will not be remarked by another examiner.

Simply being convinced that your performance must have been better because of the amount of revision or hard work you put in are not valid grounds for an appeal. If this is the basis of your appeal then it will not be upheld and you should obtain feedback on your performance instead.

Excluding circumstances, what is a ‘good reason’?

If you had extenuating circumstances which you did not make known at the appropriate time then you must provide evidence of the ‘good reason’ why not.

‘Good reason’ is defined by the Appeal Regulations as follows:

Good reason requires a student to demonstrate circumstances beyond their control prevented the disclosure of the relevant factors at the appropriate time. Personal embarrassment or unwillingness to disclose personal circumstances shall not count as ‘good reason’ for the purposes of these regulations.

You’ve submitted your form – what happens next?

You will receive confirmation that your appeal has been received and is being considered via an email that will be sent to your Queen Mary email account.

You will normally be notified of the outcome of your appeal within 2 months from the submission of your supporting evidence. Where a case is likely to take longer than 2 months you will be notified to this effect.

While you are waiting for the outcome of your appeal, you must comply with the decision that has been made. For example, if you have been excluded from the College due to academic failure (i.e. you have run out of attempts to pass your modules), you are not reinstated until the appeal process is complete and the outcome of the appeal results in an amendment of the original decision.

A caseworker will investigate your case and will normally ask the Chair of the relevant examboard for comment and for additional information (including minutes of meetings, student records, department handbooks etc.) as necessary.

The caseworker will then present their findings to the Chair of the Appeal Panel and they will jointly agree whether the appeal is upheld or not.

DECISION – Not upheld

If it is decided that your appeal is not upheld then you will be written to notify you of the outcome and the steps you can take should you wish to take the matter further.
DECISION – Upheld
If there is clear evidence that the appeal is upheld and the grounds are of an administrative or regulatory nature then action will be taken to remedy the situation without referring the case to a Panel or to an exam board. Where there is substantive evidence that extenuating circumstances were not considered appropriately or, for good reason, could not be made known at the appropriate time the case may be referred back to the exam board for reconsideration.

Appeal Panel Hearings
A case is only referred to the Appeal Panel for consideration where the Academic Secretary’s nominee and Appeal Panel Chair cannot agree on a course of action.
If your case does go to a panel then you will be invited to attend (having been given at least 10 calendar days’ notice). You may bring someone with you to the meeting who will be entitled to assist or speak on your behalf.
The procedure for a panel is outlined in the Appeal Regulations.

Final Review
If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your appeal you may submit a Final Review to the Principal’s nominee.

Once a Final Review is complete you will receive a Completion of Procedures letter explaining that Queen Mary’s internal procedures are complete. The Completion of Procedures letter represents the final decision of Queen Mary and you should retain a copy for your records.

The final review process will involve a review of the existing case file to determine whether appeal procedures were followed appropriately and whether the outcome was reasonable in the light of the available evidence. New issues or evidence will not be considered at the review stage unless the student is able to demonstrate why this evidence was not made available with the formal request for an appeal.

If you are dissatisfied with the final outcome as outlined in the Completion of Procedures letter then you can submit a request to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)
The OIA is the independent body that review student appeals and complaints. The OIA is free to students and you must submit your complaint to them within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter. For more information on the OIA please visit their website: www.oiahe.org.uk

Sources of further advice and information

Academic Regulations:
http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/media/arcs/policyzone/Academic-Regulations-2017-18-[1].pdf

Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Office
Email: appeals@qmul.ac.uk
Phone: +44 (0) 207 882 3457
Post: Room E12, Queens Building, Mile End Road, E1 4NS

The OIA
Phone: +44 (0)118 959 9813
Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk