



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

# Academic Appeals to Central Student Appeals Committee (UG/PGT) Student Guide



## Who can help with an academic appeal:

- Prior to submitting your appeal, you are advised to speak to:
- Your Advisor of Studies
- Your Personal Tutor
- The Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Team ([appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk))
- [SU Advice](#)
- Wellbeing support is also available from the [Student Wellbeing Service](#)



## When can I appeal to CSAC?

You can appeal to the Central Student Appeals Committee (CSAC) within 5 working days of receipt of your Faculty Student Appeals Committee (FSAC) outcome.

You cannot appeal direct to CSAC and must first appeal to FSAC.

- New evidence has become available which could not have been provided to the FSAC (evidence withheld from the FSAC will not normally constitute new evidence).
  - There has been a procedural irregularity in the FSAC procedure which has had a demonstrable impact on the outcome
- Dissatisfaction with the FSAC outcome alone is not grounds for appeal. A CSAC appeal should not be a reiteration of the FSAC appeal.

## What are the grounds on which I can appeal to CSAC?

## What should I do before submitting an appeal?

Prior to submitting your appeal, it is advised that you:

- Read the [Academic Appeals Regulations \(Taught\)](#), the [General Provisions](#) and this Guide.
- Speak to [SU Advice](#)
- Consider whether this could be resolved via a clerical check.
- Attend your Student Outcome Meeting (if invited)
- Identify if you meet the grounds for appeal.
- Obtain relevant evidence in support of your appeal.

# Advice on completing a CSAC Appeal form

1. Provide a clear **statement** which clearly explains the decision you are appealing against and how you meet the grounds for appeal.



2. If appealing on the ground of **new evidence**: Provide supporting evidence that demonstrates the impact your personal circumstances had on your ability to study and on your ability to engage with University procedures (e.g. fit to sit and Exceptional Circumstances). You will also need to evidence why this was not available to present to FSAC,

3. If appealing on the ground of **procedural irregularity**: Provide supporting documentation which evidences both the procedural irregularity in the FSAC procedure and the impact this has had on your appeal outcome.

4. **Desired appeal outcome**: What would you like the CSAC to do? You should check the [University Regulations](#) and/or speak to your School/SU Advice or the Appeals Team to make sure that the CSAC has the power to grant what you are asking. Appeals requesting outcomes outside the remit of the CSAC to grant are likely to be dismissed.

5. **Supporting Evidence**: Ensure that you have provided all supporting evidence, which you consider supports your appeal. If you fail to submit the relevant evidence in support of your appeal before the appeal deadline, it may be rejected at the Sifting and Review stage because of lack of evidence. If not provided with your FSAC appeal, you are asked to provide a copy of your Board of Examiners' decision letter.



All information and supporting evidence provided by you through the academic appeals process will be treated and managed with the appropriate level of confidentiality, with information only being released to those who need to see it (e.g. for the School's response).

# Advice on Supporting Evidence for Academic Appeals

You should submit all evidence in support of your appeal. If you submit an appeal without clear and relevant evidence, this will likely result in your appeal being rejected by the Sifting and Review Panels.

**Useful types of evidence might include (but are not limited to):**

- Medical reports (including letters from your GP)
- Police reports
- Exam invigilator reports
- Emails, letters and other correspondence
- Witness statements
- Meeting notes

If you are appealing on the ground of new evidence, it is important to provide documentation, which evidences both the exceptional circumstance **and the impact your exceptional circumstances had on your ability to study or perform academically and on your ability to engage with University procedures (such as Exceptional Circumstances Procedure and Fit to Sit).**



All evidence must be in English. If your evidence is in another language, it is your responsibility to obtain an English translation of this evidence. The translation must be stamped and certified as an accurate translation.

**Evidence should be relevant to the missed/failed exam or assessment and must relate to the date(s) of the missed/failed exam or assessment.**

Any medical evidence should:

- Relate specifically to the dates and duration of your illness.
- Contain a clear medical diagnosis or opinion and indicate how this impacted on your academic performance at the time of the assessment(s) in question.
- Evidence impaired judgement regarding your fitness to undertake the assessment, in cases where you have taken or attempted the assessment(s).

Academic Affairs will contact you if they require sight of the originals of any documentation that you submit with your appeal.

Evidence must not be tampered with or forged. The University takes this very seriously and, as per the [Conduct Regulations](#), the standard penalty for a first offence of falsification/fabrication of evidence provided to the University is **expulsion from the University.**



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## What happens once I have submitted my appeal?

Once you have submitted your appeal, you will receive a notification email (to your University email address) confirming receipt of your appeal.

Once your appeal has been reviewed by a member of the Appeals team, you will receive a further email explaining the next stage of the process.

It is important that you check your University email account regularly, as you may be asked to provide additional information.

Once submitted, your appeal may be considered by a Sifting Panel and (if necessary), a Review Panel. You are not required to attend these meetings.

## What is the role of the Sifting and Review Panels?

The Sifting Panel will consider your appeal (and supporting evidence) and will decide to either accept or reject your appeal. If accepted, your appeal will be sent to your School for a response.

The Sifting Panel will reject your appeal if sufficient evidence and/or a sufficiently compelling case is not presented. For example, if:

- Your appeal form is incomplete and/or does not contain any supporting evidence.
- Your appeal clearly does not meet the grounds for appeal.
- Your desired outcome is not within the powers/remit of the CSAC to grant, e.g. the outcome requested is to change marks or to re-sit or re-take modules that have already been passed.

If the Sifting Panel rejects your appeal, the Review Panel will review this decision. The Review Panel will only consider the original appeal documentation and no additional information will be accepted at this stage.

The Review Panel will decide either to confirm or overturn the decision of the Sifting Panel.

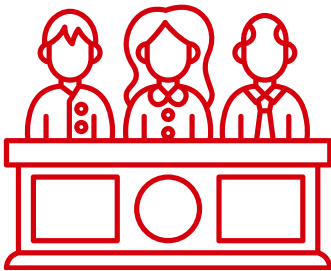
## My appeal was rejected by the Sifting and Review Panels: what happens next?

If your appeal has been rejected by the Review Panel, there is no further internal right of appeal and the original decision will remain in place.

If you believe there has been maladministration in the processing of your appeal, you may submit a complaint to the Office of the [Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman \(NIPSO\)](#). Complaints to the Ombudsman must be made within 6 months of notification of the decision of the Review Panel.



## My appeal was accepted by the Sifting/Review Panel; what happens next?



If your appeal has been accepted by the Sifting / Review Panels, you will be invited to attend a CSAC meeting

You will receive at least 5 working days notice of the meeting.

While it is not a compulsory requirement, it is strongly recommended that you attend this meeting to present your appeal to the CSAC.

## What if don't want to attend my CSAC meeting?

If you do not wish to attend the CSAC meeting and would prefer your appeal to be considered on the paperwork alone, you must inform the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Team ([appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)) by the deadline stated in your CSAC invitation.

If you confirm your attendance at the CSAC meeting and then fail to attend without a good reason for your absence, the CSAC may consider your case in your absence. The CSAC will determine what it considers to be a good reason, but work commitments would not normally be considered a sufficient reason to postpone a meeting.

If you are invited to an 'in person' meeting but wish to attend virtually instead, it may be possible to arrange your attendance by Microsoft Teams.





## Can I bring someone with me to the CSAC meeting?

You may be accompanied by a registered student of the University (which includes a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer), or a member of staff of the University, or University Chaplaincy. You might wish to contact [SU Advice](#) in the first instance.

If you consider that you have a disability or condition for which you require reasonable adjustments, you should advise the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints ([appeals@qub.ac.uk](mailto:appeals@qub.ac.uk)) when submitting your appeal or as soon as possible so that the appropriate reasonable adjustments can be put in place to help you engage as fully as possible with the appeals hearing. This may entail a consultation with Accessible Learning Support.

If you attend your CSAC meeting accompanied, you will still be expected to answer questions and make your own representations. The individual accompanying you is there to support you, not to represent you.



## Who are the CSAC Panel members?

The CSAC is comprised of four members of academic staff who have been nominated to hear student appeals. Each member will have experience of advising students on progress, assessment and award issues.

The CSAC will not contain a member of staff from your School.

If you are a student of the Institute of Professional Legal Studies, your CSAC will also include one member of the Inn of Court of Northern Ireland and one member of the Law Society of Northern Ireland nominated by the Council of Legal Education.

## Will anyone else be present at the CSAC meeting?

In addition to the CSAC, the following persons may be invited to attend the CSAC meeting. These persons will not be involved in deciding the outcome of your appeal.

- **FSAC Chair:** The FSAC Chair may be invited in order to clarify the FSAC outcome or to respond to CSAC appeals citing procedural irregularity in the FSAC procedures.
- **School Representative:** A School Representative may be invited to answer questions about your appeal, the School's procedures and practices, the programme of study or your academic performance to date.
- **Representative(s) from other University department(s)** (e.g. Accessible Learning Support): A representative from another department may be invited to answer questions about other concerns raised in your appeal.
- A note taker will also be present.



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## Can I record the CSAC meeting?



Students and staff are not permitted to make electronic or digital audio or visual recordings of any meetings. Official minutes of the meeting will be taken by a member of Academic Affairs and will be available on request.



## What information will the CSAC consider?



The CSAC will be provided with the following documentation:

- Your CSAC appeal and any supporting evidence
- Documentation provided to the FSAC (your appeal to the FSAC and the School response)
- FSAC Record of Outcome detailing the FSAC decision
- Response from the FSAC Chair (or nominee) (if available).
- Response from other departments (e.g. Accessible Learning Support) if issues concerning these departments raised in the FSAC or CSAC appeal

If the FSAC Chair (or nominee) or another University department provides a written response to your CSAC appeal, you will be sent a copy by email in advance of the meeting.

## What happens at the CSAC meeting?

The CSAC meeting will follow the following format:

1. Introductions will be made and the meeting format will be explained.
2. You will be invited to briefly outline the decision you are appealing against and the grounds on which you are appealing. It may help to prepare a short statement which highlights important points and/or to comment on the School response or the FSAC decision.
3. If in attendance, the FSAC Chair will be asked to explain the FSAC decision.
4. If in attendance, the representative from your School (or from any other University department involved) will be invited to answer questions by way of clarification.
5. The Committee will then ask questions to clarify some of the issues you have raised in your appeal.
6. You and the School representative (and the FSAC Chair if in attendance) will be asked for any closing remarks.

**CSAC meetings normally take approximately 20-30 minutes.**





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What are the possible outcomes of my CSAC appeal?

The CSAC can make the following decisions:

1. Dismiss the appeal, with reasons, and confirm the original decision against which the appeal is made.
2. Refer the matter back to the Chair of the Board of Examiners, with or without recommendation.
3. Uphold the appeal in part or in full.

The CSAC cannot make academic judgements, i.e. changing marks or degree classifications.

How and when will I be informed of my appeal outcome?

Normally, the decision will be sent to you within 8 working days of the decision being reached. This will normally be sent to your University email address.

Please note that the Appeals and Complaints Team are unable to respond to individual, ad-hoc requests for decisions.

You will receive your outcome as soon as possible once it has been finalised.



There is no further internal right of appeal against the decision of the CSAC.

If you believe there has been maladministration in the processing of your appeal, you may submit a complaint to the Office of the [Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman \(NIPSO\)](#). Complaints to the Ombudsman must be made within 6 months of notification of the decision of the CSAC.

What if I am unhappy with the outcome of my appeal?





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# Late Appeals

(UG/PGT) Student  
Guide



What if I  
miss the  
appeal  
deadline?

A late appeal may only be considered if you can demonstrate that you were unable to submit an appeal before the deadline due to **circumstances beyond your control** (e.g. hospitalisation).

**You cannot submit a late appeal after you have graduated.**

Examples of reasons that would normally be accepted as sufficient cause for a late appeal include:

- Hospitalisation for an unexpected illness or accident at the time of the appeal deadline.
- Severe mental health illness, which meant that, at the time of the appeal deadline, you were unfit to engage with the appeal process.
- Serious illness or bereavement of a family member, partner or close friend, which meant that you were unfit to engage with the appeal process at the time of the appeal deadline.
- Being a victim of crime at the time of the appeal deadline. A crime reference number would normally be required as evidence of this.

Issues such as forgetting/not being aware of the deadline, ongoing physical or mental health issues, holidays/being in a different time zone, work commitments, submitting your appeal to the wrong place or not obtaining evidence on time **are not considered valid reason for a late appeal.**

What is normally  
considered to be  
circumstances  
beyond my  
control?

How do I  
submit a  
late appeal?

When completing your appeal form (on Queen's Portal), you must ensure that you also complete the 'late appeal' section of the form (ensuring that you provide clear and evidenced explanation as to why you are only now able to submit an appeal).

Please note that your written statement (detailing the reason(s) for your late appeal) **must** be supported by evidence (e.g. GP letter, hospital admission report). Any medical evidence must provide a medical opinion (e.g. diagnosis) and not simply record what you have reported to your health care professional. Any medical evidence must also provide a medical opinion on how your illness impacted on your ability to engage with the appeal process and to submit your appeal on time.

It is **strongly recommended** that you seek advice on preparing your appeal from [SU Advice](#).

Please refer to section 1.5 of the [Academic Appeals Regulations \(Taught\)](#).