

Harper & Keele

VETERINARY SCHOOL

Academic Appeals Procedure

1. Academic Appeals

1.1 Academic appeals are appeals against the recommendations or decisions made by the Board of Examiners. You can only submit an appeal if one or more of the grounds listed below apply to your case.

1.2 You cannot submit an appeal to have any item of assessment re-marked unless there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the marking process. The academic judgement of examiners and decision of a properly constituted Board of Examiners is final.

1.3 Valid grounds for appeal can be one or both of the following:

(a) procedural irregularity in the conduct of the assessment or the academic warnings procedure;

(b) exceptional circumstances, providing that:

i. the circumstances were not already considered by the Exceptional Circumstances Panel;

ii. the circumstances can be verified by appropriate evidence; and,

iii. there is a valid reason for not notifying the relevant Exceptional Circumstances Panel of these circumstances (and/or appropriate evidence) by the specified deadline.

1.4 You can submit an appeal against one or more of the following recommendations made by a Board of Examiners:

i. the mark awarded for any assessment (see section 1,2 above);

ii. failure or termination of studies at any stage of the programme;

iii. the overall outcome of the programme of study;

2. Procedure for submission of an appeal

2.1 All Harper & Keele Veterinary School (Vet School) students have the right to access advice from either Keele Student Union or Harper Adams Student Union when submitting an appeal.

2.2 You must submit an appeal within 10 calendar days of the official notification of the decision of the Board of Examiners. If you submit your appeal later than 10 days after the official notification of results, your appeal will only be considered if you can provide valid evidence explaining why you were not able to submit within the deadline.

2.3 To appeal you must:

(a) complete and submit the approved Appeal Form available on the Keele University website (<https://www.keele.ac.uk/taughtcourseappeals/>) with the full details of your appeal, including any evidence.

(b) if you are appealing your final award, you must inform the Keele Student Records and Examinations office (studentrecords@keele.ac.uk) that you are appealing before the Joint Academic Board confirms the decision of the Board of Examiners. The Joint Academic Board will then delay confirming the Board of Examiners recommendation pending the outcome of your appeal.

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2.4 To complete the Appeal Form you must explain the reason for your appeal in full, provide supporting evidence, and state the action that you would like to be considered and the desired outcome. If not all of your evidence is available when you complete the Appeal Form you must state this on your form and agree a deadline for submission with Keele's Student Conduct Team. If you do not submit all your evidence by your agreed deadline, the appeal may be considered without it. You can also ask someone to write a statement on your behalf to include with your appeal form.

3. Appeals Stage

3.1 Appeals will first be considered at the Sifting Stage by the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct (or their representative) and a member of Keele's University Academic Appeals Committee (UAAC).

3.2 The Sifting Stage is an initial assessment of available documentation, including: your appeal form, information on your student record, previously submitted exceptional circumstances, and initial comments from the School or Service, as appropriate. You will be given the opportunity to respond to initial comments received from the School or Service.

3.3 If the case for the appeal is straightforward and the evidence supports your appeal, your case can be referred back to the Board of Examiners for consideration with a recommendation to uphold the appeal. The UAAC is responsible for the final decision on the outcome of your appeal.

3.4 If at the Sifting Stage it is agreed that you have not presented a valid case for appeal, based on the available information, your appeal can be rejected and you will be informed in writing, stating the reasons.

3.5 If your appeal is complex or requires further exploration of the evidence, the appeal may have to be considered by a full meeting of the UAAC.

3.6 In the case of an appeal against termination of studies, it may be agreed at the Sifting Stage that no case for appeal exists. However the Sifting Panel may, at their discretion, still refer the case back to the Examination Board with a recommendation to reinstate you or refer you to the UAAC to consider any circumstances which may allow you to remain registered at the Universities.

3.7 The constitution, powers and meetings procedures of Keele's University Academic Appeals Committee is set out in their Regulation B6 (<https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/regulationb6/>). These apply to Vet students whether they are hosted by Harper Adams University or with Keele University.

3.8 If at the end of the appeals stage you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may be able to submit a grievance to Council (Keele-hosted students, see section 4) or request a review of the outcome (Harper Adams-hosted students, see section 5).

4. Further Stage for Keele-hosted Students : Grievance Stage

4.1 If you are a Keele-hosted Vet student and you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal, you may be eligible to submit a grievance. However, you can only submit a grievance if it meets one or both of the following criteria:

(a) procedural irregularity in the conduct of the appeal;

(b) there are relevant exceptional circumstances (with verifiable evidence) that you did not include in your original appeal and/or there is new, verifiable evidence (of procedural irregularity or exceptional circumstances) that you could not present in your original appeal. There must be a valid reason for not making the circumstances and/or evidence known at the time.

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4.2 Grievances will be considered under the provisions of Keele's Ordinance D3: Grievances Considered by Council. You must submit a grievance in writing within 14 calendar days of the letter informing you of the outcome of your appeal using the [Student Grievance Submission Form](#) either by email (grievances@keele.ac.uk) or in writing (addressed to Dr Helen Galbraith, Secretary to Council, c/o Pauline Nelson, Student and Academic Services, Tawney Building, Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG). Once your grievance has been considered, you will receive a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter.

4.3 If at the end of the grievance stage you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may be able to apply for a review of your appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) providing that the complaint you take to the OIA is eligible under its rules. Your OIA complaint form must be received by the OIA within twelve months of the date of your Completion of Procedures letter.

5. Further Stage for Harper Adams-hosted Students : Review Stage

5.1 If you are a Harper Adams-hosted student and you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal, you may request a review of the decision from Harper Adams University. You should write a letter, within 14 days of the date of the appeal outcome, clearly headed, 'Request for Review of Appeal Outcome' and send it to: appeals@harper-adams.ac.uk. All evidence presented at the appeals stage and the outcome of your appeal arising from the earlier stage will be provided to Harper Adams by Keele University's Student Conduct team. Your review request will be considered by the University Secretary of Harper Adams University, or their nominee, against at least one of the following three reasons, which you must specify clearly, with supporting explanation and evidence:

- i. that the procedures at the appeals stage did not follow appropriate arrangements;
- ii. that the outcome was unreasonable, in the circumstances;
- iii. any new material evidence has become available which you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

5.2 If the University Secretary considers that there are grounds for the appeal decision to be revised, in the light of the evidence presented, they will refer the matter to the Director of Academic Services, or nominee, for further consideration. The Director of Academic Services, or nominee, will consider the evidence presented and take advice from other relevant senior staff at Harper Adams or Keele universities where necessary, including in relation to the earlier considerations of the appeal. The final outcome will be advised to you in writing, normally within 20 days.

5.3 Once Harper Adams University's appeals procedure has been exhausted, you will be issued with a 'Completion of Procedures' letter, which confirms that the University's internal procedures are completed. At this stage, outcomes in relation to award or progression are implemented. You may contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the final stage of the complaints procedure. The OIA will determine whether your complaint is eligible for consideration under its rules. Your OIA complaint form must be received by the OIA within twelve months of the date of your Completion of Procedures letter.

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6. Maintaining Confidentiality and Use of Information Provided by an Appellant

6.1 Confidentiality is an important factor in conducting appeal investigations. The Universities will always have regard to any legislative requirements. For example, data protection legislation (as amended or superseded from time to time) and policies on confidentiality and the use of your information. Appeals will be handled with an appropriate level of confidentiality and information released only to those who need it for the purposes of investigating or responding to the appeal. No third party will be told any more about the investigation than is strictly necessary in order to obtain the information required from them. Notwithstanding this provision, information provided as part of an appeal might be used in consideration of your fitness to study or fitness to practise in a particular profession.

6.2 Where you provide information about third parties, you should limit any personal information to the essentials, since there is a requirement under data protection legislation to notify third parties of any circumstance in which their data is being processed.

6.3 Where your appeal involves claims against a student or member of staff and those elements have been upheld, you will be advised of this. However, it would not be appropriate to share specific details affecting specific students or staff members, particularly where disciplinary action is taken.

7. Reporting and Records Retention

7.1 Anonymised data will be summarised annually for consideration by the Joint Academic Board, and for submission in fulfilment of any external reporting requirements that might be required by regulatory or funding bodies. Regularly reporting the analysis of appeals information will help to inform the enhancement of services.

7.2 Records of appeals will be retained in line with the host institution's Records Retention Policy.

7.3 For appeals where a dispute is ongoing or is in reasonable contemplation for which there is a statutory limitation period, the records relating to the issue in dispute will be kept for the relevant statutory limitation period.