



DAVID GAME
HIGHER EDUCATION

ACADEMIC APPEALS POLICY

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Summary of changes to document

Summary of Changes between previous and current issue	Page Number
Reference now includes Head of Centre	Several references
Review of Academic Appeals now includes reference to University of Gloucestershire	12
Updates of the Grade challenge form and the academic appeals form	15 – 19
This policy now contains a schematic diagram outline and timeframes for Grade Challenges and Academic Appeals.	p.6 p.11
Removal of academic appeals process for New College Swindon now that the partnership has concluded.	Section 3

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INTRODUCTION

At David Game Higher Education (DGHE) an academic appeal is as defined by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education as *'a request for a review of a decision of an academic body around a mark, outcome or decision. Students may appeal an outcome on the basis of evidence of procedure, but not on the basis of disagreement with academic judgement.'*

The procedures outlined in this policy apply exclusively to the resolution of grade challenges and academic appeals.

This policy follows the guidance provided by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education in its expectations for quality:

'Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.'

'From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.'

The procedure outlined in this policy also follows the Office of the Independent Adjudicator principles of accessibility, clarity, proportionality, timeliness, fairness, independence, confidentiality and improvement of student experience.

Students studying on programmes awarded by either the University of Gloucestershire or Buckinghamshire New University must make their appeals directly to the universities themselves ([see Sections 3.2 and 3.3](#)).

SECTION 1 GRADE CHALLENGES

At DGHE (the College), a grade challenge is a request for the re-evaluation of academic work in a course. Whenever a grade is changed as a result of a grade challenge, an explanation of the re-evaluation and outcome must be documented.

Before presenting a grade challenge, the student **must** seek clarification of the assessment decision, in the first instance, with the respective lecturer or assessor.

A student can submit a grade challenge to the College if one of the following conditions have been met:

- a) The student has sought clarification of the decided level of achievement of all learning outcomes against the specified assessment criteria, but still wishes to pursue the challenge;
- b) the assessment/module in question has **not** been second marked;
- c) the results have been approved and released by either the Module Board or Programme Assessment Boards;
- d) less than fifteen (15) working days have elapsed after the publication of results;

When the student has met the above, the student must complete a grade challenge form outlining their rationale for the grade challenge, which should be based on one or more of the following grounds:

- a) the summative feedback is unclear or vague;
- b) there is no specific correlation between the summative feedback of the work, and how the grade was assigned;
- c) the student feels that he/she has been placed in a position of significant disadvantage due to prejudice or bias, or incorrect judgment by the original assessor;

Grade challenges are individual petitions that need to be submitted, in writing via email, to the Head of Academic Administration, within the above-mentioned time frame. The Head of Academic Administration will confirm via email to the student.

The Head of Academic Administration will assess the petition and, if it is considered to have merit, will assign the case to an independent third party who will autonomously conduct an internal verification of the coursework in question. Please refer to [Appendix 1](#).

The College then has fifteen (15) working days from the date of the email from the Head of Academic Administration to the student to decide an outcome for the challenge, the rationale for the decision, and provide information regarding the right to an academic appeal. Please refer to [Appendix 1](#).

Grade Challenge Process

Have you spoken to a member of the Academic Administration team so that you are clear about the process?

Student must submit grade challenge via email within fifteen (15) working days after the College publishes the results and sends email to students at their DGHE email address.

NOTE: The College is not responsible if the student does not check their DGHE email.

15
Working days

Grade challenge submitted to Head of Academic Administration who will assess the [Grade Challenge Form](#) to ensure all requirements have been met. The Head of Academic Administration will confirm having received the students appeal form via email stipulating the specific timeframe of fifteen (15) working starting from the date of that confirmation email.

Please refer to [Appendix 1](#)

15
Working Days

Head of Academic Administration assigns an independent third party to internally verify the marking in question

from
confirmation of
receipt of
grade
challenge
form.

Head of Academic Administration will inform student of the outcome

Student has the right to appeal.
Section 2 of the [Academic Appeals Policy](#)

SECTION 2 ACADEMIC APPEAL

An academic appeal is where a student requests that a ratified decision in terms of the grade or mark awarded for a summative assessment is reconsidered on specific grounds which are listed below.

2.1 Appeal of Decisions

A student can appeal a decision if it follows under any of the following categories:

- a) a rejected grade challenge for non-fulfillment of the requirements in [Section 1](#);
- b) decision of termination of study due to failure to comply with attendance, submission and/or programme requirements;
- c) decision to exclude the student from an assessment or resubmission opportunity, that is not due to an alleged academic misconduct;
- d) decision that prevents the student to progress or complete their studies;
- e) decision of termination of studies due to serious academic dishonesty or professional misconduct;

Any student that wishes to appeal any of the decisions above will need to notify the college of their intent to make an academic appeal via email at appeals@dghe.ac.uk. The student then must submit their formal appeal to the Head of Academic Administration, using the pro-forma in [Appendix 2](#), within fifteen (15) working days of their notification email informing the College of their decision. The grounds for appeal **must** be clearly stated on the appropriate form, in order to be considered, and all relevant documentary evidence appended.

2.2 Academic Appeal

A student may appeal on one or more of the following grounds:

- I. A procedural irregularity occurred in the conduct of the assessment process. This includes:
 - a. published results contains an arithmetical or other error of fact;
 - b. the assessment has defects or irregularities in the written instruction of the assignment or advice relating thereto, that has caused reasonable doubt as to whether the assessors would have reached the same decision had they not occurred, and has had an adverse effect on the student's performance;
 - c. an assessment was not conducted in accordance with the programme regulations;
 - d. special arrangements for assessment of a student were formally agreed but not implemented during the assessment period and it has had an adverse effect on the student's performance;
- II. The presentation of new or additional extenuating circumstances which were not made known to the Module Board or Programme Assessment Board for

good reason, and that if they were known it is likely that it would have changed the decision made;

a. Mitigating circumstances need to follow the Understanding Mitigating Circumstances and Claims Procedure and be reviewed by the reasonable adjustment panel before consideration to an academic appeal.

- III. The outcome of an academic misconduct procedure has been considered excessive or inappropriate;
- IV. The outcome specific to the student's appeal by the Module Board or Programme Assessment Board has been considered as excessive, inappropriate or in direct contradiction to the provisions of the current policy, programme regulations, or guidance provided by the OIA;
- V. There are reasonable grounds to believe that a decision was manifestly unreasonable or influenced by prejudice or bias on the part of the decision-maker.

Any student that wishes to appeal any of the decisions above will need to notify the college of their intent to make an academic appeal via email at appeals@dghe.ac.uk. The Head of Academic Administration, in liaison with a designated Welfare Officer, will seek an informal consultation with the student, and other affected parties to:

- a) Ensure that the student is clear about the academic appeals process specific to their case
- b) Try to reach an amenable resolution of the issue.

Student will then receive a written outline of that meeting within five (5) working days of the meeting having taken place.

If the student wishes to proceed with the appeal they must submit their formal appeal to the Head of Academic Administration, using the pro-forma in [Appendix 2](#), within fifteen (15) working days of their notification email informing the College of their decision. The grounds for appeal **must** be clearly stated on the appropriate form, in order to be considered, and all relevant documentary evidence appended.

Appeals that are submitted outside the grounds stated and those submitted simply because a student disagrees with the mark they have been awarded or with the academic judgement of the assessor will **not** be accepted and the student will be informed accordingly in writing by the Head of Academic Administration within ten (10) working days. Any appeal that also does not justify adequately the rationale for the appeal or provide the required evidence for consideration will be rejected by the Head of Academic Administration and the student will be informed accordingly in writing by the Head of Academic Administration within ten (10) working days.

2.3 The Appeals Procedure

The Head of Academic Administration will confirm having received the student's appeal form via email. The College then has fifteen (15) working days from the date of the email from the Head of Academic Administration to decide an outcome to the appeal.

The Head of Academic Administration has a duty to verify if the academic appeal is submitted under the correct procedure, falls within the grounds described in [Section 2](#), and was submitted within the given deadline.

The outcome of the appeal will be either that:

- a) the academic appeal has been accepted for consideration;

OR

- b) the academic appeal has been rejected because it does not meet the grounds, or has not been submitted in the correct format, or in the given deadline;

If the academic appeal has been accepted, the Head of Academic Administration will nominate an academic member of staff that has had no previous involvement in the matter to be the Investigation Officer.

2.3.1 Appeal of Decisions Process

If the academic appeal falls under the appeal of decisions procedure under [Section 2.1](#), the Investigation Officer that has been nominated to conduct the investigation will:

- a) request a meeting with the student;
- b) request a meeting with key members of staff;
- c) all meetings will be recorded by a member of the Academic Administration Office;
- d) request further evidence from either the student, school or department;
- e) confer with the Head of Academic Delivery and Development , if necessary;
- f) reach a conclusion and submit a decision to the Academic Board.

If the academic appeal grounds is based on an academic decision that has been reviewed under the proceedings of Section 1, the reviewer cannot be the same individual that has investigated the previous claim.

2.3.2 Academic Appeal Process

If the academic appeal falls under the academic appeal procedure under [Section 2.2](#), the member of staff that has been nominated to conduct the investigation will:

- a) request a meeting with the student;
- b) request a meeting with key members of staff;
- c) request further evidence from either the student, school or department;
- d) all meetings will be minuted by a member of the Academic Administration Office;
- e) reach a conclusion and submit a decision to the Appeals Panel.

The College will then to convene an Appeals Panel ensuring that this is done as swiftly as possible to:

- expedite necessary actions,
- ensure that the student is not disadvantaged.

- ensure independence and fairness.

The Chair of the Appeals Panel and members must not have been party to any preceding decision that may have initiated the appeal. The Panel should be made up of at least two members of staff who have not been involved previously.

2.4 Closing the Academic Appeal

Once the the Appeals Panel reaches an outcome, the student will be issued a Completion of Procedures letter within fifteen (15) working days, by the Head of Academic Administration.

The decision should clearly state:

1. the outcome of the appeal;
2. the student's right to escalate the appeal to the review stage;
3. the grounds on which the review stage can be accepted;
4. the timeline for the submission of the escalation of the appeal;
5. the appropriate procedure;
6. how to access support.

When the academic appeal is upheld, the College will need to clearly state in its decision how and when it will implement any remedial action, issue a formal apology and inform the student of their rights if the student is still dissatisfied with the outcome.

All appeal decisions are then confirmed by the Academic Board to ensure that appropriateness and fairness have been applied to the process.

See diagram below for Academic Appeals process

Academic Appeals Process

Student reviews categories of academic appeals
See **Section 2.1**

Has student discussed their concerns with a member of staff so that they understand the options available to them?

Student sends notification email to the College of their intention to make an academic appeal to appeals@dghe.ac.uk

15
Working
days

Student submits formal [Academic Appeals Form](#) to the Head of Academic Administration within fifteen (15) days of notification email

Head of Academic Administration will notify student about whether their appeal has been accepted or not within ten (10) working days.

10
Working
Days

Head of Academic Administration and designated Wellbeing Officer will arrange to meet with a student informally to discuss appeal. Student will then receive a written outline of that meeting within five (5) working days of the meeting having taken place.

IF STUDENT WISHES TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR APPEAL
Head of Academic Administration will confirm having received the students appeal form via email stipulating the specific timeframe of fifteen (15) working days starting from the date of that confirmation email.

15
Working
Days

Head of Academic Administration will assign an investigating officer

Head of Academic Administration will notify student of the outcome with a [Completion of Procedures Letter](#).

Student has the right to appeal to the awarding body.
Section 2 of the [Academic Appeals Policy](#)

SECTION 3

REVIEW OF ACADEMIC APPEAL

After exhausting the formal appeals stage, and after review of the appeal process by the Academic Board, if the student considers that a decision continues to disadvantage them they may appeal to the Awarding Body. For the HND provision this entails an appeal to Pearson, whilst for students following Partnership/ Franchised courses, they will follow the respective partner university/ institution appeals process.

3.1 PEARSON

HN students have a right to appeal to the awarding body, Pearson, once they have exhausted the internal processes in DGHE. Students **cannot** appeal to Pearson without first going through the DGHE appeals process as detailed in Section 2 above.

The team can be contacted on vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com regarding vocational qualifications or for End Point Assessment to epadelivery@pearson.com.

The student or the College (on behalf of the student) has the right to enquire or appeal when:

- it disagrees with the outcome from the external quality assurance activities carried out by the awarding body (for example, a Standards Verifier report);
- it disagrees with the outcome(s) from our end point assessment activities;
- it disagrees with a qualification decision made by the awarding body (for example rejection of a late certification or registration request);
- it disagrees with the outcome of the College internal appeals procedure;

The grounds for the appeal and any supporting documentation must be submitted within fourteen (14) working days of communicating to Pearson the intention of appealing a decision approved by the Academic Board.

The Pearson Vocational Quality Standards team will consider whether:

- DGHE's procedures are consistent with the awarding body requirements.
- DGHE's procedures were applied properly and fairly in arriving at judgments.
- The awarding body external quality assurance activities were consistent with regulatory requirements.
- DGHE's end point assessment activities were consistent with regulatory requirements.
- The enquiries and appeals process focuses on procedure and is not concerned with making judgments about learner work.

The process does not normally involve the re-assessment of learner work but a review may be needed if the outcome of the enquiry or appeal requires it.

The appeal process will follow the procedure outlined in the 'Enquiries and Appeals about Pearson vocational qualifications and end point assessment Policy' available [https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees/Enquiries and Appeals on Pearson Vocational Qualifications.pdf](https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees/Enquiries_and_Appeals_on_Pearson_Vocational_Qualifications.pdf)

3.2 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE NEW UNIVERSITY

An academic appeal by a student against the decision of the Board of Examiners shall be decided under the academic appeals procedure of the University and not those appeals procedures of DGHE stipulated above in Section 2.

Any complaint by a student (including an appeal) in respect of Franchise arrangements shall be decided by the University in accordance with the University Policies and Regulations. The decision of the University shall be final and the Partner shall be required to comply with the University's decision.

The grounds for the appeal and any supporting documentation must be submitted within ten (10) working days of communicating the University.

The appeal process will follow the outlined in the 'Academic Appeals Policy' available under the Policies section of the University website. <https://www.bucks.ac.uk/about-us/how-our-university-operates/policies-and-strategies> . Once on the webpage simply click on the tab **Quality and Teaching** where you will find a pdf *Academic Appeals Process*.

3.3 UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

An academic appeal by a student against the decision of the Board of Examiners shall be decided under the academic appeals procedure of the University and not those appeals procedures of DGHE stipulated above in Section 2.

Any complaint by a student (including an appeal) in respect of Franchise arrangements shall be decided by the University in accordance with the University Policies and Regulations. The decision of the University shall be final, and the Partner shall be required to comply with the University's decision.

The grounds for the appeal and any supporting documentation must be submitted within twenty (20) working days of communicating the University.

The appeal process will follow the outlined in the 'Academic Appeals Policy' available: <https://www.glos.ac.uk/information/knowledge-base/academic-appeals-procedure/>

SECTION 4

APPEALS TO THE OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR (OIA)

If, after exhausting the Appeals stage through Pearson and the student feels that the outcome is unreasonable in relation to the evidence, then a review may be requested from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), within twenty-eight (28) days of the issue of a Completion of Procedures letter by the College.

The College will provide the student with guidance on contacting the OIA but cannot act of behalf of the student making the appeal. The time limit for bringing a complaint to the OIA is 12 months.

Contact details for the Independent Adjudicator are:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator
Third Floor Kings Reach
38-50 Kings Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 3AA

Information may also be obtained directly from the OIA at: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>

SECTION 5 REFERENCE POINTS, EXPECTATIONS AND PRACTICE

Theme 3 - Concerns, Complaints and Appeals

Expectations	Core Practices	Common Practices	DGHE References
Expectations for Quality			
<p>Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.</p> <p>From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.</p>	<p>The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.</p>	<p>The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.</p>	<p>Approval of New Programmes Policy</p> <p>Assessment and Internal Verification Policy</p> <p>Academic Appeals Policy</p> <p>Complaints Policy</p> <p>Academic Board Meeting Minutes</p>

APPENDIX 1

DGHE APPLICATION FOR A GRADE CHALLENGE

This form is to be used by any student who wishes to submit a Grade Challenge petition for review under Section 1 of the current policy.

Before completing this form, students should read **Section 1 of the [Academic Appeals Policy](#)**, taking particular notice of the grounds on which a grade challenge may be made. This form should be typed and submitted to the Head of Academic Administration by email to appeals@dghe.ac.uk within fifteen (15) working days of receiving your approved results by the Module Board/ Programme Assessment Board.

The grounds of the petition **must** be clearly stated, as applications submitted without specifying the grounds will **not** be considered. Further details, if any, and any relevant documentary evidence, medical or otherwise, must be attached.

Full Name	Click or tap here to enter text.
Student Number	Click or tap here to enter text.
E-mail address	Click or tap here to enter text.
Course	Click or tap here to enter text.
Module/ Assessment	Click or tap here to enter text.
Assessor Name	Click or tap here to enter text.
Grade Awarded <i>(please indicate if you are challenging the overall grade or a specific task grade)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Overall Grade <i>(Please state overall grade)</i> Click or tap here to enter text. <input type="checkbox"/> Task Grade <i>(Please specify the task/ Learning outcome you are challenging)</i> Click or tap here to enter text.
Grounds for the Grade Challenge <i>(You MUST indicate the grounds on which you are presenting this grade challenge)</i>	Please select at least one option: <input type="checkbox"/> The summative feedback is unclear or vague; <input type="checkbox"/> There is no specific correlation between the summative feedback of the work, and how the grade was assigned; <input type="checkbox"/> The student feels that he/she has been placed in a position of significant disadvantage due to prejudice or bias, or incorrect judgement by the original assessor.

Rationale for the Petition <i>(please indicate the reasons for the grade challenge based on the grounds you have noted above)</i>	Click or tap here to enter text.
Student Signature	
Date	

Please submit your completed form and evidence via email to appeals@dghe.ac.uk.

For Office use only

Has the Grade challenge been accepted for review based on the conditions set out within the current Academic Appeals Policy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>(Please state reasons)</i> Click or tap here to enter text. Date: Click or tap here to enter text.
Name of Programme Manager/ Head of School reviewing this challenge	Click or tap here to enter text.
Decision outcome of the Grade Challenge	Click or tap here to enter text.
Rationale for the decision	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date completed	Click or tap here to enter text.

APPENDIX 2

DGHE APPLICATION FOR AN ACADEMIC APPEAL

This form is to be used by a student who wishes to submit an Academic Appeal.

Before completing this form, students should read **Section 2 of the [Academic Appeals Policy](#)**, taking particular notice of the grounds on which an appeal may be made.

This form should be typed and submitted to the Head of Academic Administration by email to appeals@dghe.ac.uk within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the decision against which they are appealing.

The grounds of the petition **must** be clearly stated, as applications submitted without specifying the grounds will **not** be considered. Further details, if any, and any relevant documentary evidence, medical or otherwise, must be attached.

Full Name	Click or tap here to enter text.
Student Number	Click or tap here to enter text.
E-mail address	Click or tap here to enter text.
Course of Study	Click or tap here to enter text.
State the decision against which you are appealing: Click or tap here to enter text.	
Grounds for the academic appeal <i>(You MUST indicate the grounds on which you are appealing this decision)</i>	<p>Please select at least one option:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A procedural irregularity occurred in the conduct of the assessment process.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The presentation of new or additional extenuating circumstances which were not made known to the Module Board or Programme Assessment Board for good reason, and that if they were known it is likely that it would have changed the decision made;</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The outcome of an academic misconduct procedure has been considered excessive or inappropriate;</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The outcome of the Module Board or Programme Assessment Decision has been considered as excessive, inappropriate or in direct contradiction to the provisions of the current policy, programme regulations, or guidance provided by the OIA;</p>

	<input type="checkbox"/> There are reasonable grounds to believe that a decision was manifestly unreasonable or influenced by prejudice or bias on the part of the decision-maker.
Justify the reasons for the appeal to be considered and attach any relevant documentation/ evidence. Click or tap here to enter text.	
Declaration: <input type="checkbox"/> I declare that I have read DGHE's Academic Appeals Policy and that the information given on this form, and on any accompanying papers, is a true statement of the facts to the best of my knowledge and belief.	
Student Signature:	
Date:	

APPENDIX 3 COMPLETION OF PROCEDURES LETTER

Dear [Name of complainant],

This letter confirms that the internal procedures of David Game College, Higher Education Centre in relation to your *complaint / appeal* regarding [please describe] have been completed.

The issues that you raised in your *complaint / appeal* were [details]

The issue(s) that were considered in relation to your *complaint / appeal etc* was / were*: [brief summary of the complaint etc].

The final decision of David Game College, Higher Education Centre is* [detail] because [reasons].

The procedures / regulations applied were*: [details and date as supplied to the OIA's electronic Regulations Bank].

David Game College, Higher Education Centre subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student complaints. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome you may be able to apply for a review of *your complaint / appeal etc** to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provided that the complaint you take to the OIA is eligible under its Rules.

Should you decide to make a complaint to the OIA, your OIA Complaint Form **must be received by the OIA** within **12 months** of the date of this letter, that is, it must be received by the OIA **on or before** [insert date - e.g. if the Completion of Procedures Letter is dated 9 July 2015, this date should be 9 July 2016].

[Include here any factors of which the College is aware which mean that it is particularly important for the student to bring the complaint promptly.]

You can fill in the OIA's complaint form online or download a copy from the OIA website. <http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/oia-complaint-form.aspx> . Alternatively, you can telephone or write to the OIA for a form. You should send a copy of this letter to the OIA with your OIA Complaint Form.

Guidance on submitting a complaint to the OIA and the OIA Complaint Form can also be found on the OIA's website <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/> . You may also wish to seek advice from the Advice and Wellbeing Service about taking your complaint to the OIA.

Please note that the OIA will normally only review issues that have been dealt with through the College's internal procedures.

Yours sincerely,