

Procedures for considering Appeals of Results

1. An academic appeal is a request for a review of a decision of an academic body relating to progression, assessment and awards in respect of an individual student.
 2. The following processes need to be distinguished:
 - (a) An appeal of result;
 - (b) A review of a mark.
- (a) An appeal of result - is an appeal of a student's result of a Part of a programme including the results of programme fail and not qualified, or a student's final classification result. For Postgraduate Research Students, an appeal of result can be failure to progress through their Confirmation of Registration examination or failure at their viva voce examination. This is considered by the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results under this procedure.**

The terms of reference of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results are to consider appeals by students against examination results, and to report to Senate.

- (b) A review of a mark - may be requested when a student considers that they have been awarded an incorrect mark for a module on the grounds of an alleged assessment irregularity in relation to a module mark. The Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results is not responsible for considering appeals against a module mark except in those cases where the module mark has affected the overall result of a Part or the final classification. If the student wishes to appeal against a module mark, the student should refer to the [procedures for review of module marks](#), which can be found at:**

Summary of the procedure for considering an appeal of result

3. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their concern which could form the basis of an appeal of result with their School Director of Academic Tutoring, or in the case of research students, their Supervisor or School Director of Postgraduate Research Studies, and to seek advice from the Advice Service in [Reading Students' Union](#).
4. To submit an appeal of result, students are required to send a completed appeal of results form to studentappeals@reading.ac.uk **before the relevant deadline** as listed on the appeal of results form, or within 5 working days of the results being released if no date is stipulated.
5. If the student submits their appeal of result form after the relevant deadline, the appeal will only be considered if the student demonstrates an insurmountable reason for the late submission of their appeal. Advice may be sought from the University's Disability Advisory Service where appropriate.
6. An appeal of result will normally be considered at the next meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results after the student has received the result in which they wish to appeal. The relevant deadline will be published on the Examinations

Office website and are on the appeal of result form.

7. The student may only submit an appeal of their result under one or more of the grounds specified in paragraph 10 of this procedure. **An appeal of result will not be considered on the ground of academic judgement.** In other words, a student may not appeal simply because they believe that they deserve a higher or different result.
8. There are two stages of the appeal of results procedure:

Stage 1:

An Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (APVC) for Education and Student Experience who has not had any previous involvement in the result, or in the case of PGR students the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (APVC) Postgraduate Research Studies & Researcher Development, shall conduct an initial evaluation of the completed appeal of result form and shall determine whether the reasons for appealing fall within the permitted grounds, whether sufficient evidence has been submitted, and whether the appeal therefore justifies further examination. If the APVC decides that the student's appeal of their result has demonstrated the above, the appeal shall proceed to Stage 2 of the process.

Stage 1 Review:

If the APVC decides that the student has not demonstrated any of the permitted grounds and/or has not submitted enough evidence, and the appeal does not therefore justify further examination, the appeal will be rejected at Stage 1. The student may request a review of this outcome by the Stage 1 Review Sub-Group. If at that stage, the Stage 1 Review Sub-Group determines that the student has demonstrated any of the permitted grounds and has submitted enough evidence, the student's appeal shall proceed to Stage 2 of the process.

Stage 2:

The student's appeal of result shall be heard by the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results (SSCER). The Committee shall decide whether or not to uphold the appeal of result and shall make a recommendation to vary the result where appropriate.

Stage 2 Review:

If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, the student may request a review of the Stage 2 outcome on the grounds specified in this process.

If a student is dissatisfied at the end of the internal process, they may submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

9. **Principles**

- **Advice** Students are encouraged to seek independent and confidential advice from the Advice Service in [Reading Students' Union](#). They are professional staff with knowledge and experience of the University's procedures and can attend the hearing as the student's 'friend' as defined in this procedure.
- **Accessibility** This process is open to all students of the University of Reading and the Committee shall implement reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- **Fairness** The student will have a fair opportunity to present their appeal and shall be

provided with clear reasons for the outcome of each stage of the process.

- **Diversity and Inclusion** Staff who consider appeals of results at any stage of the process will be appropriately trained, particularly on issues relating to Diversity and Inclusion.
- **Confidentiality** Appropriate levels of confidentiality will be maintained
- **Improving the student experience** The University aims to use the information gathered by the process to improve the student experience.
- **Reporting of appeal of result** Appeal of result outcomes will be recorded, anonymised and reported to Senate.
- **Behaviour** The University reserves the right to terminate consideration of an appeal of result if a student's behaviour is unacceptable.
- **Group appeals** Students may use this process to submit group appeals.

10. **Grounds for submitting an appeal of result**

An appeal of result shall only be considered under one or more of the following three grounds:

1. If there has been a procedural irregularity;
2. If there has been bias;
3. If there has been a material defect in the delivery of teaching and learning which has had a significant impact on the result;

Exceptional circumstances shall only be considered by SSCER if they are being noted in conjunction with one of the above three grounds. This is because the University has a [Policy on and Procedures relating to Exceptional Circumstances \(ECs\)](#) and students should utilise the EC process at the appropriate time for these matters.

An appeal of result shall not be considered on the ground of academic judgement.

11. **Note for Postgraduate research students**

Section 8 of the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students makes provision for PGR students to raise concerns about the adequacy of their supervision or other arrangements during the period of study. It would normally be expected that a student has raised such concerns at the appropriate time. In consequence, appeals on the grounds that there has been a material defect in supervision will normally proceed to a hearing only in those cases where there is evidence that the student had made reasonable efforts to raise their concern at the appropriate time and before submission, in accordance with the procedures, and that the concern had not been satisfactorily resolved.

Please note that all references to 'School Director of Teaching and Learning' shall be replaced by the 'School Director of Postgraduate Research Studies' if the appeal of result is submitted by a Postgraduate Research student.

12. **Advice for students**

Before submitting an appeal of result form, students are advised to discuss their concerns with their Academic Tutor or the School Director of Academic Tutoring, or in the case of Postgraduate Research students, their Supervisor or School Director of Postgraduate Research Studies, as soon as possible after the result has been published. The Academic

Tutor, School Director of Academic Tutoring, Supervisor, or School Director of Postgraduate Research Studies should keep a record of the meeting.

13. Students are also strongly advised to seek independent advice from the Advice Service in [Reading Students' Union](#).

14. Graduation and progression

A finalist student who has submitted an appeal of result form, who has a Pass or higher, shall be permitted to graduate notwithstanding their pending appeal and the lack of a final determination of their degree classification. The Student Appeals, Complaints and Discipline team will inform the Graduation Office of these students so that their certificates may be removed. Students who fall within this category would not receive their degree certificate at the ceremony but will receive a letter confirming the current position. The degree certificate would be issued following the resolution of their appeal.

A student who has an appeal of result form will be ineligible to proceed to the next Part of their programme and shall not be permitted to proceed until they have fulfilled the relevant progression requirements.

Submitting an appeal of result

15. To submit an appeal of result, students are required to send a completed appeal of results form to studentappeals@reading.ac.uk before the relevant deadline as listed on the appeal of results form, or within 5 working days of the results being released if no date is stipulated.
16. **Deadline for submitting appeals of results forms and procedures for late appeals** Appeals of results are normally heard at the next meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results after the student has received the result in which they wish to appeal. The deadline will be published on the Examinations Office website and are on the appeal of result form.
17. In exceptional circumstances, the Standing Committee on Examination Result may meet outside of the scheduled published dates. For example, to meet regulatory requirements for the completion of a professional course, or the expiration of a visa, and where a PGR student has appealed a CoR or viva outcome. Requests should be submitted to studentappeals@reading.ac.uk.
18. If the student has submitted their appeal of result form after the deadline, they will be invited to explain their reasons for late submission on the appeal of result form, supported by medical evidence where appropriate. The APVC shall decide whether the student has shown an insurmountable reason for the late submission of the appeal. When considering whether to accept the appeal of result late, advice may be sought from the Disability Advisory Service if appropriate.

Stage 1: Initial evaluation of the appeal of result

19. The APVC will determine the following:

- (a) Whether the student has submitted their appeal of result form before the relevant deadline and, if not, whether the student has shown an insurmountable reason for the late submission of their appeal; **AND**
- (b) Whether the student's appeal of result has demonstrated any of the permitted grounds as set out in paragraph 10, has submitted enough evidence, and therefore justifies further examination.

20. Stage 1 outcomes

There are two possible outcomes of Stage 1:

Outcome 1:

The appeal of result has been submitted before the relevant deadline, or the student has demonstrated an insurmountable reason for the late submission of their appeal of result form, **AND** the student has demonstrated grounds for appeal with enough evidence which justifies further examination.

In the instance of Outcome 1, the appeal shall proceed to Stage 2.

OR

Outcome 2:

- (a) The appeal of result has been submitted after the relevant deadline and the student has not demonstrated a good reason for the late submission of their appeal of result form **AND** the student has not demonstrated grounds for appeal with enough evidence which justifies further examination.
- (b) The appeal of result has been submitted after the relevant deadline and the student has not demonstrated a good reason for the late submission of their appeal of result form **AND** the student has demonstrated grounds for appeal with enough evidence which justifies further examination.

OR

- (c) The appeal of result has been submitted before the relevant deadline or the student has demonstrated a good reason for the late submission of their appeal of result form **AND** the student has not demonstrated grounds for appeal with enough evidence which justifies further examination.

In the instance of Outcome 2 (a) (b) or (c) the outcome letter shall provide clear reasons for the decision and will also inform the student that they may request a review of the decision by the Stage 1 Review Sub-Group.

Stage 1 Review

21. **The purpose of this is to review the outcome of Stage 1 and the student will have a further opportunity to demonstrate grounds for appeal with enough evidence which justifies further examination.**
22. Students must request a review of the Stage 1 outcome by the deadline set out in the Stage 1 outcome letter. If the student does not meet this deadline, the review will only be considered if the Sub-Group is satisfied that the student has demonstrated an insurmountable reason for the late submission of their request for a Stage 1 Review. Advice may be sought from the University's Disability Advisory Service where appropriate.
23. The Stage 1 Review Sub-Group shall receive the student's appeal of result form and the student may submit further evidence or a statement for consideration.

Before the Stage 1 Review Sub-Group

24. The Secretary shall write to the student to inform them as to when their case will be reviewed by the Sub-Group.
25. The Secretary shall ask the student if they have any further evidence or if they would like to submit an additional statement in response to the Stage 1 outcome. They shall also inform the student how to access advice from RSU.
26. The advice of the Counselling and Wellbeing service, the student welfare team and/or the Disability Advisory Service shall be available to the Committee in appropriate cases.
27. All supporting evidence submitted by the student must be in English (or a professional English translation provided).

During the Stage 1 Review Sub-Group

28. The Sub-Group shall consider the student's appeal of result form, together with any evidence submitted by the student before the hearing.
29. The Sub-Group shall consider the case in private and the student shall be informed of the outcome in a timely way.
30. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings and evidence given to the Sub-Group.

After the Stage 1 Review Sub-Group

31. The Secretary shall send a Stage 1 Review outcome letter to the student in a timely way, and the student shall be provided with the decision and the reasoning.

Review of Stage 1 outcomes:

32. There are two possible outcomes of the Stage 1 Review Sub-Group:

- (1) The decision of the APVC is upheld. That is, the Sub-Group agrees that the appeal has not demonstrated eligible grounds, with enough evidence, which justifies further examination, and/or the student has not demonstrated a good reason for submitting their appeal late.

In this instance, the student has exhausted the University's internal process. The Secretary shall issue a Completion of Procedures letter and notify the Examinations Office, RISIS, the Doctoral Research Office, and the Graduation Office as appropriate.

OR

- (2) The decision of the APVC is overturned. That is, the Sub-Group are satisfied that the appeal has demonstrated eligible grounds, with enough evidence, which justifies further examination, and where an appeal was submitted late, the student has demonstrated a good reason for the late submission.

In this instance, the appeal shall proceed to Stage 2, to a full hearing at the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results.

Stage 2: Hearing at the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results

33. The Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results is the Committee which considers the student's request for an appeal of their result, and has the power and duty to issue recommendations to vary a result where appropriate.

Before the hearing

34. The Secretary shall send the student's appeal of result form to the student's School Director of Teaching and Learning or their representative who shall be required to provide a written response. If appropriate, the Chair of the relevant Examiners' may also be invited to provide a written comment on the case.
35. The Secretary shall write to the student to invite them to the hearing normally at least five working days before the Committee meeting. The student will be invited to attend the hearing at a specified date and time.
36. When inviting the student to the hearing, the Secretary will ask the student whether they have any special requirements to allow them to attend and/or participate fully in the hearing. The student should notify the Secretary not less than 5 working days before the hearing to allow the University to make appropriate reasonable adjustments.
37. The Secretary shall also inform the student how to access advice, their right to be accompanied by a 'friend' to the hearing, the composition of the Committee and provide the student with a copy of the appeal file to be considered by the Committee.
38. The appeal file shall contain the following: the student's appeal of result form, supporting evidence submitted by the student, and the School's response to the appeal. Other documents may also be included where appropriate.

39. The student has the right to be accompanied by a 'friend' which for this purpose is defined as: an adviser from Reading Students' Union Advice Service team, a current member of staff of the University of Reading, or a currently registered student of the University of Reading. A person who does not fall within these categories shall not be able to act as a 'friend' unless otherwise agreed by the Chair of the Committee.
40. The role of the 'friend' is to support the student in preparation for the hearing and accompany the student at the hearing, the 'friend' may speak on the behalf of a student only with the permission of the Chair. It is not the role of the 'friend' to present the student's case on their behalf, except in the most exceptional circumstances. Students with a disability may also be accompanied by a Support Worker in addition to a 'friend', as appropriate to their needs.
41. The University is committed to conducting a fair process when considering appeals of results. As these are not criminal or legal matters, legal representation is not routinely required or usually permitted. However, where a student has received legal support during the course of the process the University retains the right to request guidance from its legal team. In complex cases where the outcome for the student could have far reaching implications, it may be possible for the student to have legal representation during the Committee hearing. Where this is the case, permission must be sought in advance from the Chair and the University retains the right to have a member of its legal team in attendance.
42. The School Director of Teaching and Learning or their representative, shall be required to attend the hearing of the case. No other member of the School shall normally be present, but the Committee has discretion to call other members of the School or other relevant staff at the University as appropriate.
43. All supporting evidence submitted by the student must be in English (or a professional English translation provided).

During the hearing

44. The student, the 'friend' and the School Director of Teaching and Learning or their representative, shall normally be present throughout the Committee's hearing of evidence but the Chair may ask them to withdraw at any stage at the Committee's proceedings if the Committee wishes to consider privately any matter or point. If any person obstructs the proceedings, the Chair may require all or any of those present to leave the meeting.
45. The proceedings of the Committee shall not be invalidated by the failure of the student, the 'friend' or the School Director of Teaching and Learning (or their representative) to attend the meeting, or by the exclusion of the student, the student's 'friend' or the School Director of Teaching and Learning (or their representative) from the meeting.
46. The Committee shall consider the appeal file together with any oral evidence provided at the hearing. The Committee has the power to seek further information as it wishes.

47. The student, the ‘friend’ and the School Director of Teaching and Learning may speak, comment, or ask questions at any time with the permission of the Chair, provided that the content is relevant to the case. The Committee has the power to question the student, the ‘friend’, and the School Director of Teaching and Learning (or their representative) at any time during the hearing of a case.
48. The Committee has the power to adjourn a hearing for a reasonable period.
49. The Committee shall consider the case in private and the student and the School shall be informed of the outcome in a timely way afterwards.
50. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings and of evidence given to the Committee.

After the hearing

51. The Secretary shall send a Stage 2 outcome letter to the student in a timely way, and the student shall be provided with the Minutes of the hearing. The student shall also be informed how to request a review of the Stage 2 outcome.
52. The Committee may write to the School Director of Teaching and Learning, APVC, Pro- Vice-Chancellor, or Committee of the University following the outcome of an appeal of result to communicate concerns or issues that have been raised as a result of the appeal.
53. The Secretary shall notify the Examinations Office, RISIS, the Doctoral Research Office, the Graduation Office and the School Support Centre of the outcome of the appeal of the result as appropriate.

Stage 2 outcomes

54. There are two possible outcomes from the Stage 2, the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results hearing:

Outcome 1:

The Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results upholds the appeal and issues a recommendation to vary the result which must be approved by Senate. The recommendations to vary the result for Foundation, Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research students are outlined in paragraph 56 and 57.

OR

Outcome 2:

The Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results does not uphold the appeal and the student’s result will stand. Students may request a review of the outcome of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Result on the grounds specified in paragraph 61. Students must request a review within five working days of the date of the Stage 2 outcome letter.

55. Recommendation to vary a result for Foundation, Undergraduate and Postgraduate

Taught students. The Committee may recommend, but is not limited to recommending, one or more of the following remedies:

- Alternative Assessment or that the student is Deemed Not to have Sat (DNS) one or more assessments or modules;
- Exceptionally, to exempt an assessment or alter the weighting of assessments to award a higher classification;
- Exceptionally, that a student is permitted to repeat the year.

When the Committee issues a recommendation to vary a result, the views of the appropriate External Examiner(s) shall be sought, and, if the External Examiner(s) agree with the recommendation of the Committee, the recommendation shall be referred to the Senate for approval. If any External Examiners disagrees with the recommendation of the Committee, the Minutes of the hearing and the response(s) of the External Examiner(s) shall be referred to the Senate for resolution. The decision of the Senate shall be final.

56. Recommendation to vary a result for Postgraduate Research students

In the case of Postgraduate Research students, including PhD, MPhil by thesis, LLM by thesis, and professional doctorate, the Committee will make one of the following recommendations:

At confirmation of registration:

- (i) Where the decision of the examiners is to either recommend transfer to MPhil or to terminate registration, an exceptional third attempt at the confirmation of registration examination be permitted

At the viva voce examination:

- (ii) A recommendation that a candidate be deemed not to have submitted the student's thesis. In this case, the recommendation shall be referred to the Senate for approval;

OR

- (iii) A recommendation that a candidate's examination be set aside. In this case, the recommendation shall be referred to the Senate for approval;

OR

- (iv) Exceptionally, a recommendation that a specified higher degree be awarded. In this case, the recommendation shall be referred to an Independent Assessor, appointed by Senate, who shall submit a brief report to the Senate. If the Independent Assessor agrees with the recommendation of the Committee, the recommendation shall be referred to the Senate for approval. If the Independent Assessor disagrees with the recommendation of the Committee, the case shall be referred to the Senate for resolution.

Any decision by the Committee shall not affect the student's normal right to resubmit their thesis for re-examination.

Stage 2 Review

57. Where the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results does not uphold the appeal or where the student is not content with the recommendation of the Committee the student may request a review of the outcome under one or more of the permitted grounds set out in paragraph 61. Reviews will be considered by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor or alternate Chair who has had no previous involvement with the appeal of the result.
58. To request a review of the Stage 2 outcome, the student must submit a completed Stage 2 Review form and email it to studentappeals@reading.ac.uk within five working days of the date of the Stage 2 outcome letter.
59. If the student submits the Stage 2 Review form after the five working day deadline, the student shall be invited to explain why their form was submitted late. The review will only be considered if the student has demonstrated an insurmountable reason for the late submission of their Stage 2 Review form. Advice may be sought from the University's Disability Advisory Service where appropriate.
60. The Stage 2 Review will not consider issues afresh or conduct further investigation. The student is only permitted to request a review of the Stage 2 outcome under one or more of the following grounds:
- If there has been a procedural irregularity in the process;
 - If the decision was manifestly perverse;
 - If the student provides any new material evidence which the student was unable to provide for valid reasons earlier in the process.

Stage 2 Review outcomes

61. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor or alternate Chair shall seek to satisfy him or herself, that:
- There has not been a procedural irregularity; AND
 - The decision was not manifestly perverse; AND
 - The student has not provided any new material evidence, or where they have provided new evidence there is no valid reason why they were unable to provide it earlier in the process.

In this instance, the student has exhausted the University's internal process. The Secretary shall send a Completion of Procedures letter to the student providing clear reasons for the decision.

62. If the Pro-Vice-Chancellor or alternate Chair finds that:
- There has been procedural irregularity; AND/OR
 - The decision was manifestly perverse; AND/OR
 - The student provides any new material evidence which the student was unable to provide for valid reasons earlier in the process;

In this instance, the appeal of the result shall be re-heard at the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results with panel members who have not had any previous involvement in the appeal.

Membership

63. Stage 1

The initial evaluation of an appeal of result shall be considered by an APVC.

64. Stage 1 Review

This shall be a Sub-Group of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results and shall comprise of a Pro-Vice Chancellor or alternate appointed by the Senate as Chair of the Committee, a member of the Committee of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results, and a Student Officer from Reading Students' Union. The Pro-Vice Chancellor or alternate Chair who considers the appeal at the Stage 1 Review may also be the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results. No act or ruling of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results Sub-Group shall be invalidated by reason only of vacancy in the Committee.

65. Stage 2

The membership of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results comprises a Pro-Vice-Chancellor or alternate appointed by the Senate as Chair of the Committee. The membership of the Committee shall be published in the Committee list annually.

66. The Committee normally delegates to a panel its powers and responsibilities for considering appeal of results. The panel shall be drawn from the membership of the Committee and shall normally comprise: a Pro-Vice-Chancellor or alternate appointed by the Senate as Chair, and any other three members to be selected by the Chair, and a Student Officer from Reading Students' Union.

67. The Committee shall not include a member of a School which has sole or joint responsibility for the student's programme, nor include an APVC who has previously participated in consideration of the student's result.

68. No act or ruling of the Senate Standing Committee on Examination Results shall be invalidated by reason only of vacancy in the Committee or by reason of absence of one or more members from any meeting of the Committee provided always that the Committee shall not proceed to consider any appeal of result unless three of its members are present.

69. Stage 2 Reviews

Stage 2 reviews shall be considered by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor or alternate Chair who has had no previous involvement with the appeal of the result.

70. Recording, reporting and learning from appeal of results

The following details will be recorded and reported annually to the Student Experience Committee and the University Board for Teaching and Learning and Student Experience:

- The student’s programme and part of study;
- The student’s age group, gender, ethnicity, home or overseas status, and whether the student has a disability. The student’s name shall not be reported. If the student considers that this information may make them identifiable, this shall not be reported at the request of the student;
- The Stage at which the appeal was upheld or rejected.

71. Following an action from paragraph 55 or 56, the Secretary shall ensure that corrective action is recorded and reported annually to the Student Experience Committee and the University Board for Teaching and Learning and Student Experience.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

72. It is the University’s aim to deal with matters covered by this procedure sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All parties must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with a matter which is subject to this procedure, subject to the need to seek appropriate advice and guidance or to implement any decision made under it. The University will, during or at the conclusion of the procedure, inform such individuals or organisations as it considers necessary, having due regard to all the relevant circumstances.

73. In cases where the University holds personal data relating to individuals as a result of this procedure, the University will comply with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and all associated legislation at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that any personal data held on such individuals is:

- Not excessive but relevant and limited to the purpose for which it is held;
- Held securely (and in accordance with the university policies);
- Not shared with third parties (unless this can be lawfully shared in accordance with GDPR); and
- Not held for longer than is necessary.

Version	Keeper	Reviewed	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective From
1	AGS	Every year	UBTL	15 May 2018	May 2018
2	AGS	Every year	UBTL	15 Sept 2020	Sept 2020
3	AGS	May 2023	UBTL	24 May 2023	May 2023
4	AGS	February 2025	UBTLSE	05 February 2025	Immediate