

Appeals Guidance Notes

Mark Check Request

There is a separate provision to request an administrative mark check if you have either failed a course or you are no more than 3 marks away from the next higher classification boundary in a single course. Please see the following link for information on making a [Mark Check Request](#). Mark Check Requests must be submitted within the following deadlines:

- For results published in July administrative mark check requests must be submitted by **22 July**.
- For results published in November administrative mark check requests must be submitted by **30th November**.

Please note that this process is completely separate from the appeal procedure and that it is your responsibility to submit a Mark Check Request through LSE for You within the deadline.

Please note that 92% of all appeals the LSE received during the 2014/15 academic year were rejected. These were mostly rejected because the candidates were unable to provide a good reason for not submitting [exceptional circumstances](#) within the normal seven day deadline.

A) How and when do I need to submit my appeal?

You have ten working days from the release of your results on LSE for You in which to submit an appeal. You must complete an appeal submission form and send it together with any supporting evidence to ssc.appeals@lse.ac.uk.

You may like to seek independent advice from the LSE Students' Union Advice Centre before submitting your appeal. Their contact details can be found here; <http://www.lsesu.com/advice/>

Please note that you must submit all of the information and evidence that you want the School to consider when you first make your appeal submission. There will be no further opportunities in the appeal process to submit further information or evidence about your appeal without express permission from the ART.

B) On what basis can I submit my appeal?

You can make an appeal on either or both the following reasons (known as grounds in the appeals regulations):

(Paragraph 6.1) that the examination board did not follow the correct procedure such that there is reasonable doubt that the decision would have been the same if the board had followed the correct procedure.

For example, this might include that you think the Exam Board did not properly consider your exceptional circumstances. Please note that the Exam Board must follow very strict criteria before any adjustments can be made to an overall classification. For this reason adjustments are very rarely made. Please see section 9 above. Please also note that you cannot base an appeal on the questioning of academic judgement (for example, you if don't agree with the marks or feedback you have been given by one or more examiners).

and/or

(Paragraph 6.2) that there is new information about exceptional (mitigating) circumstances that affected the examination outcome. If you are appealing against a final degree classification for this reason you must also be able to meet the following conditions;

(a) that your mark profile is no more than three marks below the next higher classification in a single course; and/or

(b) that your mark profile is no more than five marks away from the next higher classification on aggregate.

If appealing under paragraph 6.2, Paragraph 7 states that you will have to provide;

7.1) evidence of why you did not report those circumstances to the School within the normal seven day exceptional circumstances deadline and;

7.2) evidence of the exceptional circumstances.

Under paragraph 7.1 it will then be up to the School to decide whether or not you have provided a good reason for not submitting information about your circumstances to the School on time through the exceptional circumstances procedure. If it determines that you have not provided a good reason then your appeal will be rejected regardless of the exceptional circumstances.

C) What evidence should I submit with my appeal under paragraph 7.2?

You must attach corroborating evidence of your circumstances with your appeal submission form when you e-mail it to ssc.appeals@lse.ac.uk.

Any evidence that you present must meet the following standards and should be:

(a) Written by appropriately qualified professionals (e.g. health professional, police authority) who are independent from you.

(b) On headed paper and signed and dated by the author. Evidence presented by email may be acceptable in some circumstances and only if the email has been sent by the author from the official domain name of the author's organisation. Where evidence is submitted in e-mail form the School reserves the right to request further information from you.

(c) Confirming specifically that the circumstances were witnessed on the relevant date as opposed to being reported retrospectively.

(d) In English. If your evidence is not in English then you must submit an original source-language copy of the evidence together with an officially translated copy. The translation must include a statement signed by a Notary Public, attesting that the translated text is an accurate and complete translation of the source-language text.

The LSE Language Centre may be able to help with official translations of some languages.

It is your responsibility to attach all relevant documentation and to obtain an official translation at the time of submission.

(e) Unaltered. Documentation that has been amended for any reason will be deemed inadmissible by the School.

If there is evidence that you have fraudulently presented documentation to the School the matter will be referred to the [Disciplinary Regulations for Students](#).

The School will not obtain any documentation on your behalf.

Where the circumstances concern your health and wellbeing, the School expects corroborating evidence to clearly and concisely set out your symptoms, diagnosis and the period of time during which your health was affected. It is unlikely that the School will be able to consider evidence that was

not written at the time of the assessment which you say was affected. The School cannot attach any weight to technical medical reports, X-rays, prescriptions or photographs of your condition.

Where the circumstances are that you were worried about a family member/situation or a close friend, whilst evidence of those circumstances might be useful, the School is mostly concerned about evidence to show how these circumstances specifically affected you and your exam performance.

Please note that all information including supporting documentation must be provided at the time that you initially submit your appeal. There will be no further opportunities in the appeal process to submit further information or evidence about your appeal without express permission from the ART.

D) How is my appeal processed?

You will automatically be sent an acknowledgement e-mail from ssc.appeals@lse.ac.uk once your appeal submission has been received.

The Assessment Regulations Team (ART) will first determine whether or not you have identified valid grounds for an appeal based on your appeal submission and the evidence you provide. Any relevant information from your academic record will also be considered.

The ART will decide, normally within 15-20 working days of receiving your appeal, either that:

you do not have a valid reason for appeal and it should be dismissed; or

you do have a valid reason for appeal and your appeal should be considered further

E) What happens next if the Assessment Regulations Team determines I do not have valid grounds for an appeal?

The ART will automatically pass your appeal to the Academic Registrar or a senior deputy. They will be asked to consider whether or not your appeal should be dismissed. He/she will have a further 10 working days to consider the appeal once it has been received from the ART. The Academic Registrar or a senior deputy will either;

dismiss the appeal; or

reject the decision to reject the appeal and ask the ART to send your appeal to the relevant School Board Chair.

If the Academic Registrar or a senior deputy decides to dismiss your appeal, that decision is final. The ART will send you a Completion of Procedures letter to explain the decision and confirm that you cannot appeal further to the School.

F) What happens if the Assessment Regulations Team determines I have valid grounds for an appeal?

If your appeal is accepted, the ART will notify you of this decision by e-mail within ten working days of receiving your appeal. Normally, your appeal will then be forwarded to the relevant School Board Chair of Examiners (either Undergraduate or Graduate) within 5 working days of the decision to accept it. The Chair will normally make a decision within a further 15 working days.

In order to ensure a fair and transparent process, the School Board Chair must seek the opinion of the Chair of the Sub-Board responsible for your degree. It will be open to the Sub-Board Chair to consult with other members of the Sub-Board though they do not have to. The Sub-Board Chair will normally give his/her opinion within 5 working days of being contacted.

G) What type of decision may be given by the School Board Chair?

When the School Board Chair has considered all the information presented, he/she will either:

- uphold the Examination Board's original decision; or
- make a new decision. This decision could be to:
 - award you a degree; or
 - award you a higher degree classification; or
 - allow you to take another attempt at a course or courses, or parts of a course or courses that you have previously failed.

If the Chair makes a new decision to award you a degree or a higher degree classification, the original marks for individual courses and parts of courses will not be changed.

The Chair's decision will be final. The ART will send you a Completion of Procedures letter to explain the decision and confirm that you cannot appeal further through the School's internal processes.

H) What are my options if I am unhappy with the School's decision?

It will be open to you to make a complaint in writing to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator \(OIA\)](#). The OIA is an independent body which looks in to the complaints from students against universities in England and Wales.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Appeal Process

1) What decisions can I appeal against?

You can appeal against the following decisions:

- a final degree classification;
- a decision not to award you a degree or to class you as a 'Final Fail';
- a mark or grade of Absent, Incomplete or Fail.

Please note, individual marks can never change as a result of an appeal and the School does not allow students to resit courses which they have passed.

2) For what reasons can I submit an appeal?

There are only two reasons (known as grounds) under which you may submit an appeal:

- a) You feel that the examination board did not follow the correct procedure such that there is reasonable doubt that the decision would have been the same if the board had followed the correct procedure (*Paragraph 6.1 of the appeals regulations*); and/or
- b) There is new information about exceptional (mitigating) circumstances that affected the examination outcome (*Paragraph 6.2 of the appeals regulations*).

3) Can I appeal if I do not agree with the mark(s) I have been given for a particular course?

No. The School's view is that there are three acceptable approaches to marking which provide a highly rigorous assessment procedure: double-blind marking; sighted double marking; and moderated single marking, involving a second examiner. External examiners also review scripts from across the full range of marks for each course to ensure that the internal marking is consistent and of an appropriate standard. Only candidate numbers are used during the marking process and when your results are considered at the Exam Boards. Therefore examiners are wholly unaware of your identity when your marks are confirmed.

The School is confident that its approach to the marking of students' summative work is sufficiently robust and therefore you are not able to call into question the academic judgement of the Board of Examiners. This means you cannot submit an appeal on the basis that you believe you have been given an inadequate mark by your examiners. There is no provision in the School's regulations for an assessment to be re-marked. However, it may be possible to request an administrative mark check. Please see the information under 'points to note' above or use the following link [here](#).

4) I submitted Exceptional Circumstances within the deadline but they don't appear to have been considered by the School. Can I submit them again as an appeal?

No. If you submitted an exceptional circumstances form to the School within the seven day deadline then it will have already been carefully considered by the Sub-Board of Examiners responsible for your programme. It is therefore not possible to reconsider the same circumstances as part of an appeal.

5) I submitted Exceptional Circumstances on time but now have new supporting evidence. Can I submit this to the School as part of my appeal?

Yes, but the School will need to determine whether or not the evidence you provide in your appeal contains brand new information about your condition which may have led the Sub-Board to make a different decision had it seen this evidence at the appropriate time. You will also need to provide a good reason for why you did not submit this information to the School within the normal deadline.

6) I believe that circumstances beyond my control impacted on my exam performance but I did not inform the School about these circumstances at the time. Can I do so now?

For the majority of cases it is now too late for the School to consider your circumstances unless you can provide evidence of your circumstances (under paragraph 7.2) and a compelling reason for not informing the School within the seven day deadline (under paragraph 7.1). You also need to have a borderline mark profile (please see section 9 below).

7) What if I was unaware of how my circumstances impacted on my performance at the time?

The School had various processes in place to assist you if you experienced problems (ill health, family problems etc.) during the course of your studies: You could apply for Individual Exam Arrangements if you had a long term health condition or disability. Alternatively, you could apply to defer your exams to the next exam session or interrupt your studies to the next academic year. Because these processes were in place the School expected that when you attempted your exam(s) you decided you were fit enough to do so.

Having entered an examination, if you felt your exam performance had been affected by circumstances beyond your control you could have submitted evidence of 'exceptional circumstances' to the School. This would have allowed the Sub-Board of Examiners to have considered whether or not your performance may have been affected by your circumstances. The School expects all its students to submit their exceptional circumstances within seven days of their final assessment. Timely submission allows Sub-Boards of Examiners to review individual cases within the context of all other cases from students on the same programme. This ensures that all students were treated equally.

This is why, if you are presenting new information about your circumstances to the School now, after the release of your results, you will need to provide a compelling reason why you did not submit an exceptional circumstances form to the School within the seven day deadline.

If your results are not what you expected this in itself cannot be taken as an indication that there was a procedural error with the processing of your marks or that your performance was impaired.

8) Can I appeal if I believe a procedural defect took place during my exam?

If you believe a procedural defect occurred that negatively affected your exam performance then it was open to you to alert your Sub-Board about these circumstances through the School's exceptional circumstances procedure within the seven day deadline. You will therefore need to provide information about what happened and a compelling reason for not submitting this information through the exceptional circumstances procedure within the seven day deadline.

9) What possible outcomes can I expect if my appeal is upheld?

Individual marks are never changed as a result of exceptional circumstances. Rather, for finalists the normal classification rules can be suspended so that you are awarded a higher degree classification than your overall mark profile would ordinarily allow. Such cases would only occur where the Sub-Board believes that, as a result of your circumstances, your performance fell marginally short of a higher degree classification.

If you are a first or second year student and the Sub-Board believes that your circumstances have resulted in you failing or being absent from an exam, it may recommend that your failed or absent attempt be discounted (i.e. removed from your academic record) or a further exceptional attempt be awarded.

Sub-Boards and School Boards of Examiners are looking for very specific conditions before the normal application of the classification rules can be suspended. Such conditions may include that a student must;

- (a) be very close to the next higher classification boundary (normally within 3 marks of a single full unit course or 5 marks on aggregate),
- (b) have marks in that higher classification range,
- (c) clearly be able to show that the assessment(s) in question were significantly and negatively affected by exceptional circumstances which were unforeseen and beyond your control,
- (d) be able to show that his/her performance in the affected assessment(s) was significantly out of line with their performances in other, unaffected assessments.

In light of these specific criteria, suspensions of regulation cases are very rare.

10) What if my appeal is rejected, will I have the opportunity to make any further submissions?

No. There will be no opportunity to submit any further information to the School once your appeal has been submitted. This includes if your appeal is rejected by the ART or by the Academic Registrar or a senior deputy.

11) *If I am eligible, will accepting my degree certificate or attending the graduation ceremony impact the consideration of my appeal in anyway?*

If your appeal is upheld and this results in an adjustment to your degree classification, the School will simply re-issue you with a new degree certificate upon receipt of your original certificate. Accepting the original degree certificate or attending the graduation ceremony will not prejudice your appeal submission in anyway. Please note that it is unlikely your appeal will be concluded before the graduation ceremonies.

12) *Are there any other points to note?*

Whilst we shall do our best to try to adhere to the timescales set out in the School's regulations it is not always possible to do so. Where it looks like the School will be unable to process the appeal on time, the ART will inform you of the delay and the new time frame.

Please note that there is no requirement or expectation for you to remain in London or the UK during the appeals process. All submissions must be made in writing. There is no scope within the appeals regulations to make a face to face presentation. Whilst the ART is happy to provide generic advice about the appeals procedure, it is unable to provide advice about individual cases.

Glossary of terms used:

Academic Registrar

The Academic Registrar's Division (ARD) supports the recruitment, admission, registration and examination of undergraduate and postgraduate students, teaching quality assurance processes and servicing related committees including the Academic Board.

Assessment Regulations Team

The Assessment and Regulations Team (ART) administers the appeals process and matters relating to the School'. The team also deals with student complaints on academic matters and advises on degree and programme regulations.

Exceptional Circumstances

The process through which you must alert the School of any circumstances which you feel may have impacted on your performance. All exceptional circumstances must be received by the Student Services Centre within seven days of your last assessment.

Grounds

Refers to the reasons for which your appeal may be accepted in the first instance by the Assessment Regulations Team. There are only two grounds under which you may submit an appeal:

(1) that the examination board did not follow the correct procedure such that there is reasonable doubt that the decision would have been the same if board had followed the correct procedure. And/or;

(2) that there is new information about exceptional (mitigating) circumstances that affected the examination outcome.

Suspension of regulations

Individual marks are never changed as a result of exceptional circumstances. Rather, the normal classification rules can be suspended so that you can be awarded a higher degree classification than your overall mark profile would ordinarily allow. Such cases would only occur where the Sub-Board believes that, as a result of your circumstances, your performance fell marginally short of a higher degree classification.

If you are not up for the award of the degree and the Sub-Board believes that your circumstances have resulted in you failing or being absent from an exam, it may recommend that your failed or absent attempt be discounted (i.e. removed from your academic record) or a further exceptional attempt be awarded.

Sub-Board of Examiners

A Board of Examiners from a Department or Institute who ratify results for the degree programmes that they run. The Sub-Board considers exceptional circumstances forms submitted by students on their programmes. It can make recommendations to the relevant School Board of Examiners about the type of degree classifications to award its students or if there are any suspension of regulation cases.

School Board of Examiners (SBE)

The School Board of Examiners consists of a representative from each undergraduate Sub-Board of Examiners. It meets in July each year to ratify all of the undergraduate results and to consider suspension of regulation cases that are put forward by each department.

Graduate School Board of Examiners (GSBE)

This Board operates on the same principal as the School Board except it deals exclusively with graduate level programmes, marks and suspension of regulation cases. Both of these School Boards ensure that the decisions of all of the Sub-Boards are fair and equitable.

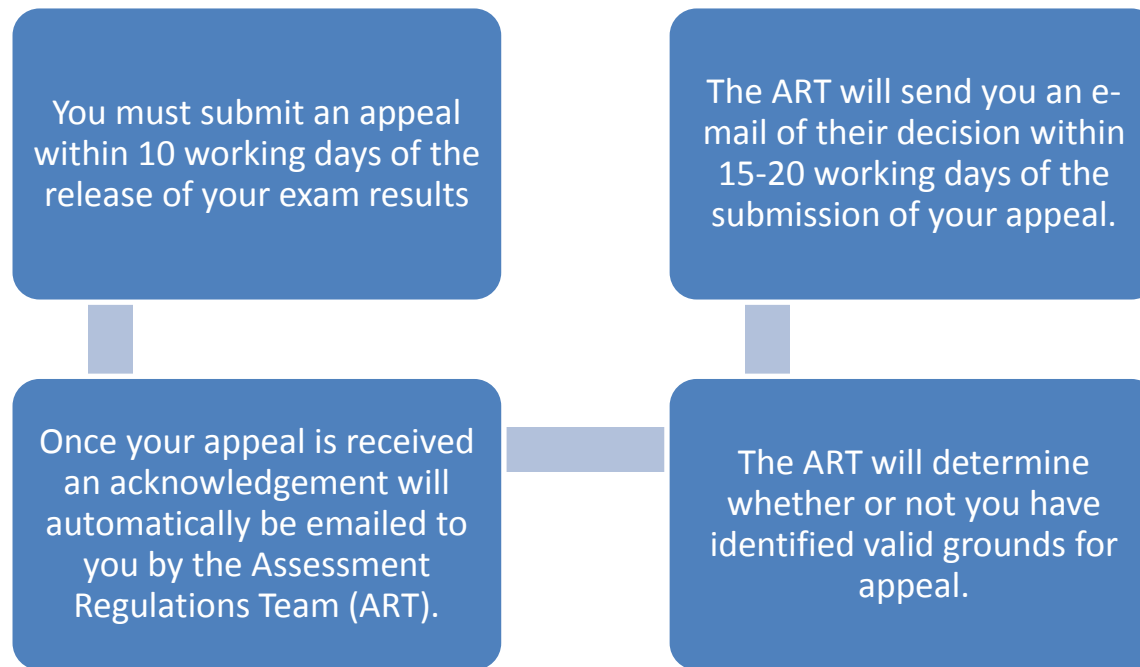
Completion of Procedures letter

This is a letter which sets out the School's final decision and confirms that the School has completed its internal processes in considering your appeal. It will set out your right to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator if you are dissatisfied with the School's decision or the way it handled your appeal.

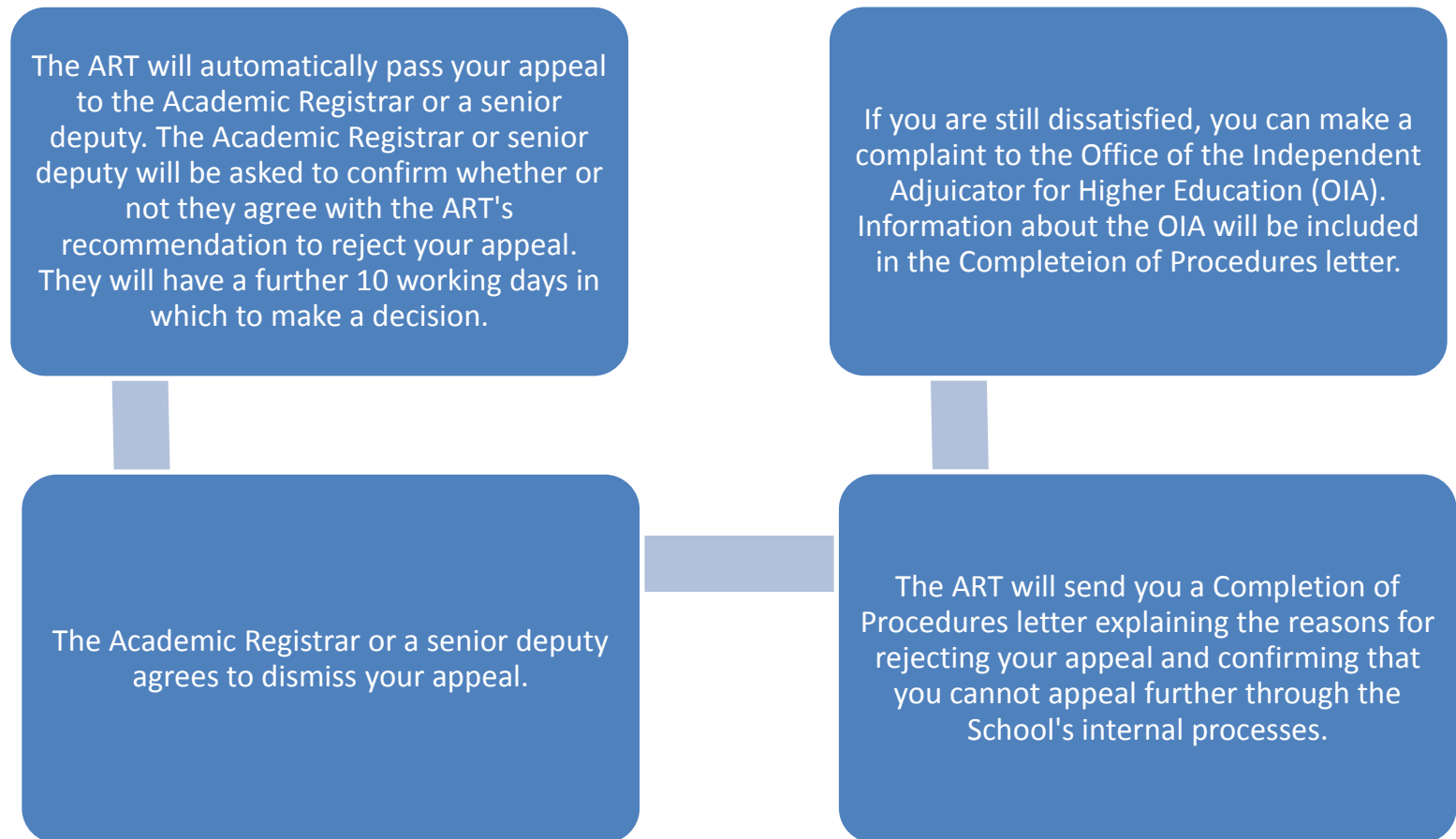
Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

The Higher Education Act 2004 required the appointment of an independent body to run a student complaints scheme in England and Wales. The OIA was chosen to operate this scheme, to which all universities in England and Wales must subscribe. The OIA's role is to review individual complaints by students against universities.

Flow chart of the appeals process – initial stage



Flow chart of the appeals process if you do not have valid grounds for an appeal



Flow chart for the appeals process if you have identified valid grounds for appeal

