

ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCEDURE

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The University is committed to providing research, teaching and learning of the best possible quality. This includes the processes used to ratify marks, assess students for progression within a programme of study or determine an award. A Board of Examiners has authority delegated from Senate to ratify marks and determine student progression on all taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes as well as the award of a final qualification. The Postgraduate Research Award Board undertakes the same function on behalf of Senate for students following postgraduate research programmes of study. For sake of brevity throughout the document the term Board of Examiners will commonly be used for taught and research progression and award bodies unless there is a need to specify otherwise.
- 1.2 Where progression or final award assessments are considered by a Board of Examiners the University wishes to ensure that there is an effective, expeditious, fair and accessible system of appeals which is seen to be reasonable in its operation and which commands the confidence of all parties. The University is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of gender, age, disability, race, ethnic or national origin, socio-economic group, sexual orientation, marital status, family responsibilities, religion or political belief.
- 1.3 In support of these principles the University undertakes:
- i) to ensure that the Academic Appeals Procedure is operated in a fair manner;
 - ii) to ensure that any given Academic Appeal is brought to completion as soon as is reasonably practicable;
 - iii) to ensure that the Academic Appeals Procedure is accessible to all students;
 - iv) to ensure that confidentiality on behalf of the University is observed unless disclosure is necessary to progress the appeal.
- 1.4 If a student wishes to invoke the Academic Appeals Procedure it is his/her responsibility to ensure that application is made to the appropriate persons within the deadlines set out in the document. Failure to do so may result in the rejection of the appeal.
- 1.5 This Procedure includes the normal timescales for the various stages in the process. Every effort will be made to expedite the overall process and meet the normal timescales. However key staff absences and other unforeseen circumstances may mean that exceptionally the normal timescales may not be met.

2 Grounds for Appeal

- 2.1 An appeal with respect to a decision on ratification of marks, progression and final award shall be valid only on one or more of the following grounds:
- i) that relevant evidence is available which was not submitted in accordance with the personal mitigating circumstances procedure but for which there is reasonable or good cause for that omission;
(Information on the personal mitigating circumstances can be found in the programme handbook or on the University website:
http://www.governance.salford.ac.uk/cms/resources/uploads/File/AQA/Personal_Mitigating_Circumstances_procedure.pdf.)
 - ii) that there has been a significant procedural error on the part of the Board of Examiners or a failure to correctly apply the relevant academic regulations;

- iii) that the Board of Examiners has acted in a way which is manifestly unreasonable. In this context, unreasonable shall be taken to mean perverse, i.e. the decision was not a possible conclusion that a similar meeting of the Board of Examiners might have reached.
- 2.2 Disagreement with the academic judgment of the Board of Examiners in confirming marks, grades and recommendations of examiners for assessments **does not** constitute valid grounds for appeal.
- 2.3 The Academic Appeals Procedure must not be used to bring complaints related to teaching, supervision or services. These must be raised at the time when they occur and through the appropriate channels e.g. academic or personal tutor, supervisor, staff-student committee or the University's Student Complaints Procedure.

3 Stages of Procedure

- 3.1 The University has developed this Academic Appeals Procedure for all its students (including those at affiliated institutions) which comprises the following stages:

Stage 1 – Preliminary

Stage 2 – Appeals Review Panel

The Appeals Review Panel stage is used to determine whether there are valid grounds for the appeal to proceed. The Governance Services Unit will organise a meeting of the Appeals Review Panel to examine the submissions. If satisfied that there may be a case to answer, an Investigator is appointed to investigate the grounds for appeal. The Investigator's report is prepared in advance of and considered at the following stage of the procedure.

Stage 3 – Board of Appeal

At this stage the Board of Appeal formally considers the appeal including the report provided by the Investigator. It will then decide upon whether to uphold the appeal or not. If appropriate the Board of Appeal may:

- refer decisions to be reconsidered to the Board of Examiners
- report to Senate, or its delegated committee, on the conduct of the Board of Examiners.

A flowchart for the procedure can be found in Appendix A.

- 3.2 Informal resolution within the Academic Regulations and with the consent of both the appellant and the Board of Examiners is possible at all stages of the appeals procedure.

4 Scope of the Procedure

- 4.1 This procedure applies to all students registered at the University of Salford, including those following University of Salford programmes at affiliated institutions – that is to say, at institutions which have been affiliated to deliver a programme, or part thereof, leading to the award of a qualification of the University / or for automatic progression into the University. A list of all affiliated institutions can be found at: <http://www.governance.salford.ac.uk/page/collaborative>
- 4.2 This procedure applies to decisions ratified by Boards of Examiners including those dealing with module marks.
- 4.3 The procedure applies to ratified decisions for both taught and research awards. Section 11.5 of the Academic Regulations for Taught Awards provides detailed information on ratifications and decisions of Boards of Examiners and may be found at: http://www.governance.salford.ac.uk/cms/resources/uploads/File/policies/Academic_Regulations_for_Taught_Programmes_2011-2012.pdf.

4.4 Section 13 of the Research Awards Regulations provides information on decisions with respect to appeals related to progression. Section 35 provides information on appeals related to examination or re-examination and must be read in conjunction with sections 32, 33 and 34 and tables E (recommendations by the Board of Examiners), F (possible decisions by the Postgraduate Research Award Board) and G (relevant criteria appropriate to an award). The Research Award Regulations may be found at: http://www.governance.salford.ac.uk/cms/resources/uploads/File/AQA/Research_Award_Regulations_2011-12.pdf.

4.5 For the purposes of this procedure, "assessment" includes written examination, Viva Voce examination, assessed coursework or project work, presentation and performance evaluation, thesis and all other methods of assessment the results of which are considered by a Board of Examiners.

4.6 A student may attempt to resolve an appeal informally by contacting his / her Head of School, programme leader or supervisor, School Manager or another appropriate academic tutor.

5. Attendance at Meetings and Hearings

5.1 if, for good reason, a student is unable to attend a hearing under the Procedure, then the student may request permission from the University for the student's representative (see Section 6) to attend that hearing without the student to present the case on the student's behalf.

5.2 The Procedure is for student use and appeals by third parties (including parents, guardians and friends) will not be dealt with through the Procedure. Students can give authority for a third party to pursue an appeal on their behalf and students wishing to do this should notify the appropriate officer within the School (Stage 1) or Governance Services Unit (Stages 2 and 3).

5.3 Section 16 provides contact details for advice and assistance on making an appeal.

5.4 With the exception of the appeals filtering stage (section 8.3), different staff will be involved in offering guidance to students (section 5.3), serving as panel members at Stage 2 (sections 8.4 or 8.6) or as members of the Board of Appeal (section 9.2).

5.5 A student who wishes to appeal against a final award may be able to attend a Graduation ceremony where an award is being made if he/she wishes. Attendance will not prejudice the appeal.

5.6 The student will be responsible for paying the costs of his/her attendance and the University will not reimburse any of them.

6 Representation at Meetings and Hearings and Confidentiality

6.1 The student may be accompanied at any meeting or hearing under this Procedure by a representative of his/her choice and that representative may speak on the student's behalf.

6.2 Where a representative is attending a hearing on the student's behalf (see Section 5.1):

6.2.1 the Board will only be required to consider the representations which are made by the representative on the student's behalf at the hearing and not any written or oral representations which the student may make before or after that hearing;

6.2.2 the representative must not be someone who has been suspended or excluded from the University for any reason and he/she must be willing to act in that capacity. The student must provide the name of the representative to the University before the hearing.

- 6.3 It is the responsibility of the student (and not the University) to relay all relevant notices and other communications under the Procedure to the representative.
- 6.4 The audio recording of meetings and hearings held under this Procedure is prohibited, subject to such reasonable adjustment as may be agreed by the University where required under the Equality Act 2010.

Legal representation

- 6.5 There is no automatic right for a student to have legal representation at meetings and hearings and legal representation is only allowed for certain meetings or hearings where the student has been granted permission as set out below.
- 6.6 The student must apply for permission if he/she wishes to be represented at a hearing of the Board of Appeal under this Procedure by an individual who is legally qualified.
- 6.7 To apply for permission, the student must give written notice to the Head of the Governance Services Unit at least 5 working days before the date scheduled for that hearing giving the name of the student's proposed representative. Bearing in mind the factors that will be considered in deciding whether to grant permission (see paragraphs 6.8 and 6.9 below), the student may also wish to include in the notice representations as to why he/she considers that permission should be granted. The hearing of the Board at which the student wishes to have legal representation may be delayed so that it takes place no earlier than 15 working days starting on the date of receipt by the Head of Governance Services Unit of the student's notice.

Applying for permission to have legal representation

- 6.8 The student's application for permission will be considered by the Chair of the Board (as applicable)*. The Chair should consult with the Head of the Governance Services Unit or his nominee before reaching any decision on the application.
- 6.9 If the Chair considers that the outcome of the hearing could deprive the student of the right to practise his/her chosen profession or could irretrievably prejudice that right, then he/she must grant permission.
- 6.10 If the Chair considers that the outcome of the hearing could neither deprive the student of the right to practise his/her chosen profession nor irretrievably prejudice that right, then the decision whether or not to grant permission is at the discretion of the Chair. However, in deciding whether or not to grant permission, the Chair should take into account the following relevant factors:
- the seriousness of the charge/allegation and the potential penalty/outcome for the student;
 - whether any points of law are likely to arise at the hearing (in most cases the purpose of the hearing will be to determine points of fact and not law);
 - the capacity of the student to defend/present his/her own case;
 - the difficulty the student would have in cross-examining witnesses, particularly (if applicable) expert witnesses;
 - the need for reasonable speed in achieving an outcome;
 - the need for fairness as between students or between the student and the University.

The Chair may also consider other relevant factors, including any representations by the student, in reaching his/her decision.

- 6.11 The Chair will reach a decision within 10 working days starting on the date of receipt by the Head of the Governance Services Unit of the student's notice and his/her decision will be notified to the student by the Head of the Governance Services Unit.
- 6.12 The decision of the Chair on the student's application for permission is final and there is

no right of appeal for the student under this Procedure against this decision.

- 6.13 Where permission is granted, then the University may also be represented at the hearing by an individual who is legally qualified. The notification to the student under paragraph 6.6 above will confirm whether or not the University will have its own legal representation and, if so, whether this will be a member of the University's in-house legal team or an external legal adviser.
- 6.14 Where permission is not granted, the hearing will, if necessary and if the Head of the Governance Services Unit receives a request from the student within 5 working days starting on the date of the notification to the student under paragraph 6.6 above, be delayed so that the student has a period of at least 10 working days starting on the date of that notification and ending on the date of the hearing within which to find alternative representation.
- 6.15 The student will be responsible for paying the costs of his/her representation (including legal costs) and the University will not reimburse any of them.

* Any other member of the Panel or Board (as applicable) may act as a substitute for the Chair under paragraph 6.7 if for any reason he/she is unable to deal with the matter.

7 Stage 1 - Preliminary

- 7.1 An Academic Appeal may be dealt with informally and as close as possible to the point at which it has arisen. The appeal should therefore be made to the member(s) of staff nominated by the School. It must be made in writing. At this stage simple mathematical or factual errors may be submitted for consideration. Matters may be referred back to the Board of Examiners for ratification if appropriate.

8 Stage 2 – Appeals Review Panel

- 8.1 If the preliminary stage is either not invoked or resolved to a student's satisfaction, a formal appeal may be submitted. A student who wishes to appeal against a decision of a Board of Examiners must inform the Governance Services Unit of their intention to appeal by completing Sections 1 and 2 of the Academic Appeals Pro-Forma within 10 working days of the publication of the Board's decision. The Pro-Forma can be found at: http://www.governance.salford.ac.uk/page/aqa_forms

or obtained from the School Office. At this stage, the proforma should:

- i) specify the grounds on which the appeal is made;
- ii) state clearly the decision of the Board of Examiners against which the appeal is being made.

Notice of intent to appeal received by the Governance Services Unit after a period of 10 working days will be accepted for consideration only in exceptional circumstances.

- 8.2 A student must submit full details of the appeal within 4 weeks of publication of the decision of a Board of Examiners. Sections 3 and 4 of the Academic Appeals Pro-Forma must be completed and returned to the Governance Services Unit either electronically or in hard copy. In order that all students are treated equitably and to avoid undue delays students must submit sufficient and appropriate documentation to support their appeal within the 4 week period so that proper consideration can be given to their case by the Appeals Review Panel.
- 8.3 The Governance Services Unit will receive all appeals. The Senior Assistant Secretary from the Unit will review the appeals submitted and reject those which are clearly out of time or which do not disclose one or more of the specified grounds for appeal. If an appeal is rejected at this stage students should be advised of the same within 10 working days.

- 8.4 Those appeals which have met the specified grounds are referred to the Associate Head (Academic) in the School who reviews the appeal, referring as appropriate to the Programme Leader and the Chair of the PMC Panel or other relevant staff, to see if the matter may be resolved in the student's favour on the basis that the student's evidenced appeal brings to the attention of the School some inadvertent error, miscalculation or omission. In that eventuality, appropriate action is taken and the matter is reported to the Appeals Review Panel for information only and is copied to Governance Services Unit.
- 8.5 If the appeal cannot be so resolved, all documentation should be referred to the Appeals Review Panel for consideration. The Appeals Review Panel will normally meet within 30 days of receipt of full details of the appeal.
- 8.6 *In the case of all taught programmes* appeals will be referred to an Appeals Review Panel, which will comprise a Senior Investigator or nominee as Chair, another Investigator and an officer of the Governance Services Unit who will provide administrative support.
- 8.7 *For taught programmes* an officer from the Governance Services Unit will collect the necessary information from the School in order for the Panel to decide whether a student has established valid grounds for appeal, including:
- Minutes of the Board of Examiners' meetings;
 - Mark spreadsheet for the student cohort;
 - Guidelines under which the Board of Examiners operates;
 - The Handbook for the appropriate programme of study;
 - Evidence of personal mitigating circumstances (PMC) held and considered by the PMC Review Panel and referred to the Board of Examiners.
- 8.8 *In the case of research programmes* appeals will be referred to an Appeals Review Panel consisting of two academic members of staff who have been part of a supervisory team for a research award over the past 3 years and an officer of the Governance Services Unit who will provide administrative support. The academic members of staff must not include the student's supervisor or be a member of the student's supervisory team.
- 8.9 *For research programmes* an officer from the Governance Services Unit will collect the necessary information from the Postgraduate Research Award Board, such as the Joint Examiners' Report Form, and any other appropriate information in order that the Panel may decide whether a student has established valid grounds for the appeal.
- 8.10 *In the case of research programmes which have a significant taught component (e.g. MRes, DProf, DBEnv, DRealEst, DConsMgt)* if the appeal relates to the taught element of the programme of study the Appeals Review Panel must be constituted in accordance with Section 8.6. In the same way, if it relates to the research element of a programme it must be constituted in accordance with Section 8.8.
- 8.11 If following review of all the information provided the Panel considers there are no valid grounds for the appeal, the student will be advised of this in writing within 5 working days of the meeting with the reason for the Panel's view. The decision of the Panel in this case will be final within the University and the appeal will terminate at this point. The information will be conveyed to the student with notification that the appeal has reached the end of the University's internal appeals procedure (the 'Completion of Procedures' letter: See Section 14.1).
- 8.12 If the Panel considers there are grounds for further consideration of the appeal, the Chair (or nominee) will refer the matter to an Investigator chosen from a list of trained Investigators held by the Governance Services Unit. The Governance Services Unit will advise the student in writing within 5 working days of the meeting that an Investigator has been appointed. The Investigator will produce a report which will be considered at Stage 3 by the Board of Appeal. He / she should not have served as a member of the Appeals Review Panel nor be eligible to serve on the Board of Appeal. A decision by

the Panel that a valid ground has been made in no way implies that the appeal will succeed. Information on the role of the Investigator and the Investigator's report can be found in Appendix B.

- 8.13 If new material evidence previously not available were to come to light the Panel could reconsider the grounds for appeal in an individual case as long as it is submitted within 15 working days of the meeting of the Panel unless an extension is agreed by the Governance Services Unit.

9 Stage 3 – Board of Appeal

- 9.1 If the Appeals Review Panel considers that there are grounds for further consideration of the appeal, the Governance Services Unit will organise a meeting of the Board of Appeal following receipt of the investigator's report. The Board of Appeal will normally meet within 60 working days of the Appeals Review Panel with the Investigator's report normally completed 15 working days prior to the meeting of the Board.

- 9.2 *In the case of taught programmes* it will be chaired by an Associate Executive Dean (Academic), or his / her nominee, a Senior Investigator or another experienced Investigator. The Chair must be from a College other than that in which the student's programme of study is located. The Board of Appeal will also include two members of academic staff who are Investigators and who are from a School other than that in which the student's programme of study is located. Members of the Board of Appeal must not have been involved in any way in the investigation for the appeal under consideration. A member of staff from the Governance Services Unit will act as Secretary to the Board of Appeal but not constitute a member of the Board or take part in its decision making.

- 9.3 *In the case of Research Awards* it will be chaired by an Associate Executive Dean (Research) or equivalent, or his / her nominee. The Chair must be an academic member of staff who has been part of a supervisory team for a research award over the past 3 years but not a member of staff from within the student's supervisory team. The Board of Appeal will also include two academic members of staff who have been part of a supervisory team for a research award over the past 3 years but who have not had any previous involvement in either the assessment of the student or the appeal. A member of staff from the Governance Services Unit will act as Secretary to the Board of Appeal but not constitute a member of the Board or take part in its decision making.

- 9.4 *In the case of Research Awards* which have a significant taught component (e.g.MRes, DProf, DBEnv, DRealEst, DConsMgt) if the appeal relates to the taught element of the programme of study the Board of Appeal must be constituted in accordance with Section 9.2. In the same way, if it relates to the research element of a programme it must be constituted in accordance with Section 9.3.

- 9.5 The student shall receive a written notice from the Governance Services Unit:
- i) giving at least 10 working days notice of the date and time when the appeal will be considered;
 - ii) enclosing a copy of the Investigator's report, any further Investigator's comments and any other documents referred to the Board of Appeal, and advising that the student may make further written representation to the Board of Appeal for receipt by the Governance Services Unit not later than 5 working days before the date on which the appeal will be considered;
 - iii) inviting the student to attend an oral hearing of the appeal and to confirm whether or not he / she proposes to attend ;
 - iv) reminding the student that he / she may be accompanied by one other person of his / her choosing (See 5.2 above). Information on legal representation can be found under Section 6.

- 9.6 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall receive a written notice from the Governance Services Unit:
- i) giving at least 10 working days notice of the date and time when the appeal will be considered;
 - ii) enclosing a copy of the Investigator's report, any further Investigator's comments and also any other documents submitted to the Board of Appeal and advising that the Board of Examiners may make a further written submission to the Board of Appeal for receipt by the Governance Services Unit not later than 5 working days before the date on which the appeal will be considered;
 - iii) inviting the Chair of the Board of Examiners or the Chair's nominee to attend an oral hearing of the appeal.
- 9.7 If either the student (or, where appointed under Section 5.1, his/her representative) or the Chair of the Board of Examiners, to whom proper notice of a hearing has been given, does not appear at such a hearing the Board may proceed to consider the appeal in his/her absence. However if reasonable grounds for non-attendance have been provided (e.g. sickness absence) the Board has the discretion to adjourn.
- 9.8 The process to be followed at a hearing of the Board of Appeal shall be at the discretion of the Chair of the Board of Appeal, subject to the principle of procedural fairness. Meetings will be serviced by a member of the Governance Services Unit, who will act as Secretary. The following model will usually be adopted:
- i) introduction of the student and his / her representative, the Chair of the Board of Examiners and the Investigator (if required to attend by the Board of Appeal); all parties shall be present throughout the meeting;
 - ii) the student and his / her representative shall have the right to address and present information to the Board of Appeal at the start of the meeting; the Board of Appeal may ask questions at the end of any address or presentation of evidence;
 - iii) the Chair of the Board of Examiners shall have the right to address and present the information to the Board of Appeal; the Board of Appeal may ask questions at the end of any address or presentation of evidence;
 - iv) either the student or Chair of the Board of Examiners may call witnesses who shall attend only to present their evidence and answer any questions that the student, or other party, may put to them through the Chair of the Board of Appeal. Once their evidence has been heard and there are no more questions, witnesses shall withdraw (students shall bear the cost of any witnesses they may choose to call);
 - v) the Board of Appeal will undertake to conduct a fair and proper hearing and admit all relevant information and advice. Commentary deemed by the Chair to be irrelevant, frivolous or vexatious will not be heard;
 - vi) both the student and /or his / her representative and the Chair of the Board of Examiners shall have the right to make final submissions to the Board of Appeal. The student and / or his / her representative will speak first, followed by the Chair of the Board of Examiners;
 - vii) the student and his/her representative and the Chair of the Board of Examiners will withdraw whilst the Board of Appeal reaches its decision.
- 9.9 The Board of Appeal, having considered the submissions by the student and the Chair of the Board of Examiners and having considered any oral clarification from the Investigator if required, shall take one of the following decisions:

- i) dismiss the appeal, in which case the decision of the Board of Appeal is final and not subject to further review within the University; A Completion of Procedures letter is issued by the Governance Services Unit. See Section 14 below.
- ii) deem the ground(s) for appeal to be upheld.

9.10 If an appeal is upheld on one or more of the grounds of appeal set down in Section 2.1 the Board of Appeal shall for:

- taught programmes refer the matter back to the Board of Examiners with a detailed rationale for its decision;
- research programmes refer the matter back to the Postgraduate Research Award Board with a detailed rationale for its decision;
- Research Awards which have a significant taught element refer the matter with a detailed rationale for its decision back to the appropriate Board dependent upon the nature of the appeal.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Examiners / Postgraduate Research Award Board to notify the student of the outcome once the matter has been resolved.

9.11 It must be noted that, in the case of Research Awards, the Postgraduate Research Award Board may refer the matter back to the original examiners or may have to appoint new examiners to re-assess a thesis; the examiners would then make further recommendations to the Postgraduate Research Award Board.

9.12 The Board of Appeal shall record a summary of its findings of material fact, giving sufficient information as to enable the parties to understand the reason for the Board of Appeal's decision. The information will be conveyed to the student via a letter that advises the student of the outcome of the appeal and that the appeal has reached the end of the University's internal appeals procedure (the 'Completion of Procedures' letter: See Section 15.1).

9.13 In cases where the Board of Examiners for research awards must reconsider its decision, this will be considered by the Postgraduate Research Award Board at its next meeting. For taught programmes, the Chair of the Board of Examiners will either organise a meeting of the Board or take Chair's Action after appropriate consultation.

9.14 The Board of Appeal may request an investigation by the Governance Services Unit if it finds that there has been serious administrative error, non-observance of guidelines or University regulations or irregularity during its assessment process by a Board of Examiners. Where deemed appropriate by the Governance Services Unit the matter shall form the subject of a report to the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee or the Research Committee with recommendations for remedial action.

9.15 If a student is still dissatisfied after a Board of Examiners or the Postgraduate Research Award Board has considered a referral by the Board of Appeal, he/she shall write to the Governance Services Unit to request a Completion of Procedures Letter. See Section 14 below.

10 Status of a Student during an Appeal

10.1 A student whose case is under consideration in accordance with the Academic Appeals Procedure may only continue with his/her programme of study providing that he/she will accumulate all the credits necessary to complete the level or stage if their appeal is upheld. This is to ensure that a student whose appeal may subsequently be upheld is not academically disadvantaged. In cases where an academic appeal relates to a clinical placement or practice, the student may only be permitted to undertake a further placement or practice at the discretion of the programme team.

- 10.2 Whilst a student is continuing, pending the outcome of an academic appeal, assessment may be completed and marked and feedback given. However, marks should not be ratified by a Board of Examiners during this interim stage.
- 10.3 If the appeal is subsequently upheld and the student permitted to progress and register on the next level or stage, the marks obtained during this interim period should be ratified by a Board of Examiners in the normal way.
- 10.4 If the appeal is subsequently dismissed, any marks obtained during this interim period will be declared null and void. The student will be required to step off the programme and retrieve the outstanding credits in accordance with the original decision of the Board of Examiners.
- 10.5 If during the appeal period a student is permitted to attend at the next level until the appeal is heard, it is the responsibility of the School to counsel the student to ensure that s/he is fully aware that s/he may have to retake elements at the previous level or required to withdraw from the programme.
- 10.6 Attendance at the next level whilst an appeal is being heard cannot form the basis for a claim that the student has been permitted to progress onto the next level of study

11 Publication of Procedures

- 11.1 A copy of this procedure will be made available by the Governance Services Unit, on request, to any student registered on a programme at the University and will be available on the University's Web site:
http://www.governance.salford.ac.uk/page/academic_handbook.
- 11.2 The Governance Services Unit will also ensure that copies of this procedure are available to Schools and to Boards of Examiners. Schools should take steps to ensure that students are aware of this procedure. The University will take steps to make reasonable adjustments to the Procedure to accommodate students with disabilities where this is necessary.
- 11.3 This procedure and accompanying guidance can be made available in alternative formats on request.
- 11.4 Letters of notification of results will include a statement advising students of their right to make an Academic Appeal.

12 Legal Proceedings

- 12.1 The University is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards and to carrying on its activities fairly, honestly, openly and in compliance with all applicable laws. Students should note that disciplinary action may be taken against them if they offer to give any University staff money, gifts or any other advantage which is intended to induce or reward impropriety in the consideration or resolution of his/her complaint. (Bribery is a criminal offence and morally wrong and exposes the University and its employees to the risk of prosecution, fines and imprisonment as well as endangering the University's reputation.)

13. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 13.1 The Governance Services Unit maintains a database of Academic Appeals in a specific academic year, which permits the progress of appeals to be monitored and delays in the process to be identified and acted upon.
- 13.2 The Governance Services Unit shall report statistical data on numbers of appeals, Schools from which they originate, length of process and gender, disability and ethnicity of appellants on an annual basis to the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee (taught programmes) and Research Committee (research programmes). The Senior Investigator for Taught Academic Appeals and the Director of Postgraduate

Students may include commentary on the report as appropriate.

- 13.3 It is the responsibility of the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee and the Research Committee to monitor and review the Academic Appeals Procedure and recommend regulatory or procedural reviews or changes to the Senate when appropriate.

14 Related Procedures

- 14.1 Information gathered during the appeal process may be made available to other institutional processes and *vice versa* if appropriate, for example if a complaint subsequently informs an Academic Appeal, and subject to 1.3 iv above.

15 Completion of Procedures Letter / Further Action

- 15.1 A "Completion of Procedures" letter is a formal notification to a student that the appeal has reached the end of the University's internal appeals procedures.
- 15.2 If on receipt of a Completion of Procedures Letter the student is still dissatisfied s/he may request a review from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Contact details for the Independent Adjudicator are:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator
3rd Floor
Kings Reach
38-50 Kings Road
READING
RG1 3AA
Tel: 01189 599813
Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk
<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

16 Appointment of Substitutes

- 16.1 If:
- i) any post-holder of the University who is specified in this Policy ("the Specified Post-holder) for any reason declines or fails to take any action that is his / her responsibility under this Policy; or
 - ii) the Vice-Chancellor* requires the Specified Post-holder to stand down from taking any action that is his / her responsibility under this Policy so that the proceedings under the Policy are consistent with the principles of natural justice,

then the Vice-Chancellor* shall appoint a substitute for the Specified Post-holder in terms of his / her position within the University. Where any substitute is appointed, then reference to the Specified Post-holder throughout this Policy will be to such substitute.

* Reference to the Vice-Chancellor will include any individual to whom the Vice-Chancellor delegates the decision regarding the standing down of the Specified Post-holder in the event of the Vice-Chancellor's unavailability.

16 Contact Details

- 16.1 Governance Services Unit is responsible for the administration of the Academic Appeals Procedure and general enquiries about the procedure can be made to Annette Cooke (Telephone 0161 295 4123) or Dr Peter Dooley (Telephone 0161 295 5211) or gov-academicappeals@salford.ac.uk
- 16.2 General information to students on the operation of the Academic Appeals Procedure is available from the Student Life Directorate (Telephone 0161 295 0023) or e-mail iSite@salford.ac.uk

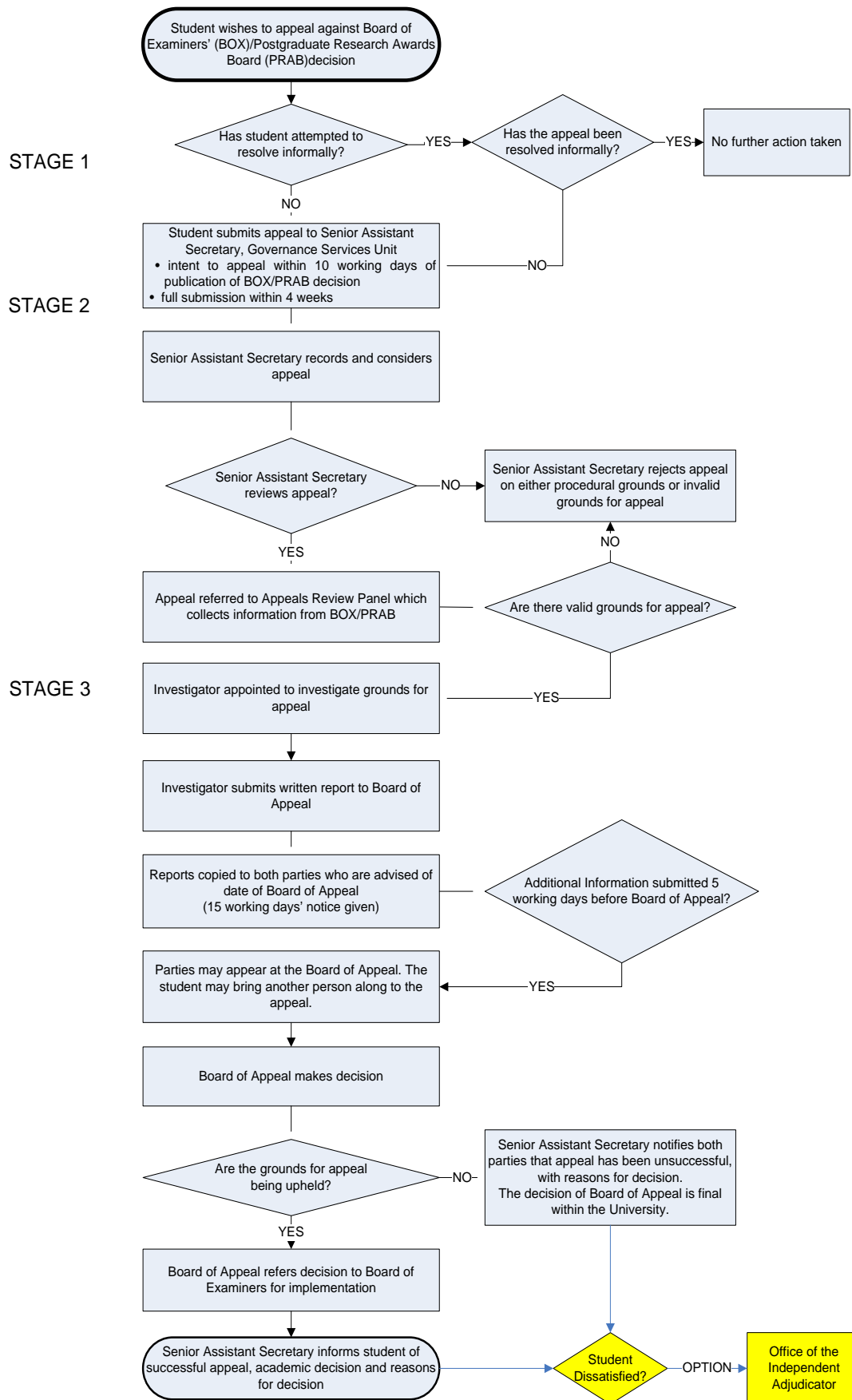
- 16.3 Individual advice to students and advocacy on behalf of students is available from the Students' Union (Telephone 0161 351 5400)

FOOTNOTE

This Procedure applies from 1 August 2011. Further copies of this Procedure may be obtained from College/School/Professional and Administrative Services Offices. The procedure may also be accessed via the University's Policy and Procedures Web Site at <http://policies.salford.ac.uk>.

The University will take steps to make reasonable adjustments to the Procedure to accommodate students with disabilities where this is necessary. The procedure (and accompanying guidance) can be made available in alternative formats on request.

APPENDIX A: ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCEDURE



APPENDIX B**APPENDIX B ROLE OF THE INVESTIGATOR
(SEE SECTION 8.12 OF THE ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCEDURE)**

- B.1 The Investigator will investigate the grounds for appeal in an impartial manner.
- B.2 The Investigator may, by way of example, employ the following steps:
- a) request the student to provide further particulars of the grounds of appeal, or for the Board of Examiners to provide further information;
 - b) arrange a preliminary meeting or meetings with the parties, for instance in order to clarify material points concerned in the appeal or to review examination scripts or other assessed material;
 - c) request the Board of Examiners to investigate and respond concerning such matters as:
 - whether the decision made by the Board of Examiners has been incorrectly recorded and published;
 - whether there is an error in calculation of any mark on taught programmes;
 - whether at the time it made its decision the Board of Examiners was in possession of and had considered:
 - i) any material information about illness or other personal mitigating circumstances submitted by the student via the PMC procedure;
 - ii) any information about material irregularities in the conduct or administration of the assessment process;
 - d) ascertain whether the Board of Examiners wishes to recommend an alteration to its decision;
 - e) ensure that all relevant information for the hearing is placed before the Board of Appeal.

Investigator's Report

- B.3 When the Investigator is satisfied that it is appropriate to refer the appeal to the Board of Appeal for determination, s/he:
- a) will submit a written report on his/her investigation above indicating the strengths or weaknesses of the student's case and any further comments helpful to the Board of Appeal; the report should be submitted by the Investigator as expeditiously as possible;
 - b) will submit any further information, report or recommendation provided during the course of the investigation of the appeal;
 - c) may include an indication of the Board of Examiners' willingness to revise its decision if this has been explicitly expressed.
- B.4 The Investigator may be required by the Board of Appeal to attend the hearing.
- B.5 Any further Investigator's comments shall be copied to both the student and the School or the supervisory team to which the student belongs as well as to the Board of Appeal.

APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

The following definitions relate to terms in the Academic Appeals Procedure and the definitions are made in that context rather than as general definitions.

Academic Appeal or Appeal	A formal objection raised by a student about a decision made by a Board of Examiners.
Academic Appeals Pro-forma	The means by which a student notifies the University of an appeal against an academic result or outcome.
Academic Regulations	The rules related to academic study, which apply to all students on taught programmes. The Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes are part of a wider set of policies and procedures, which help to maintain and improve quality and standards. There are also Regulations for Research Awards.
Affiliated Institutions	Affiliation is the process by which an organisation which does not have degree awarding powers, or is overseas, is approved to deliver programmes which lead to awards of the University of Salford. Affiliated institutions are empowered to deliver such awards.
Appeals Review Panel	The panel which carries out a preliminary review of a formal Academic Appeal.
Academic Handbook	Academic Handbook which details policies and procedures related to programmes and students.
Assessment	For Taught Awards the purpose of assessment is to test a student's learning against specified learning outcomes. Assessments are carried out for Research Awards in line with the Research Award Regulations – for example, Annual Progress Report, Interim Assessment, Internal Evaluation and Viva Voce (or oral) examination.
Associate Head (Academic)	Senior member of staff within a School with responsibility for matters related to teaching and learning for taught programmes and awards.
Board of Appeal	A body of Senate with delegated authority to make the final decision with respect to an Academic Appeal.
Board of Examiners (BoX, PRAB)	A committee of internal academic staff and, as appropriate, external examiners who ratify the marks given for assessed work and make decisions about progression and qualifications awarded to students. At Salford the Board of Examiners for Research Awards is known as the Postgraduate Research Award Board.
Chair of Board of Examiners	The duly appointed Chair of the bodies which make decisions on Taught or Research Awards.
“Completion of Procedures” Letter	The official communication from the University which notifies a student that the internal University procedures have been completed and that there is a right of appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
Examination	For Taught Awards, an assessment which takes place at a specific time and location, which is formally scheduled by the Assessments Team (Student Information Directorate) and supervised by invigilators. In the case of Research Awards the assessment is a

	viva voce or oral examination (abbreviated to viva) in which questions and answers are spoken rather than written.
Governance Services Unit	The Professional and Administrative Service which provides support for the development and operation of the University's corporate and academic governance and which administers the Academic Appeals Procedure. General enquiries: telephone 0161 295 6849 or e-mail m.rollinson@salford.ac.uk Enquiries related to the Academic Appeals Procedure: telephone 0161 295 4123 or e-mail gov-academicappeals@salford.ac.uk
Graduation Ceremony	The event which celebrates awards achieved by students at the institution.
Grounds for Appeal	The categories under which an Academic Appeal must fall (at least one or more of three).
Investigator	An academic member of staff from a different School or supervisory team to that of the student who will investigate the appeal at Stage 2 of the Procedure.
Legal Representation	The retention by a student of a solicitor, barrister or similar profession to speak on his/her behalf at a meeting
Level	Modules are designated at one of a number of Levels – 3,4,5,6,7 and 8. The level of a programme is normally the same as the level of the modules which make up that year or part of the programme. Programme levels 3,4,5 and 6 are undergraduate and 7 and 8 are postgraduate. These levels comply with those designated within the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Making an Appeal	The procedure for Academic Appeal has three stages: 1. Preliminary 2. Appeals Review Panel 3. Board of Appeal
OIA	The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) operates an independent student complaints scheme. It will normally review a case only if all internal University procedures have been exhausted.
Personal Mitigating Circumstances	Any serious medical or personal problem that a student feels has had an adverse effect on their academic performance, and would like to be taken into consideration with respect to assessment. The Personal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure provides further information on the procedure and there are further notes of guidance for students.
Postgraduate Research Award Board	A body of Senate with delegated authority to make decisions on student progression, including final award, for research programmes.
Programme	In the case of Taught Awards, a specific combination of modules, which is a planned coherent learning experience, leading to a named qualification. A research award programme of studies will involve planned and coherent study by research.

Publication of the Board's Decision	Notification of the decision by means of a published pass list or letter sent to each student's home, term-time or correspondence address as appropriate. For Research Awards, notification follows consideration of the joint examiners' report recommendation by the Postgraduate Research Awards Board.
Research Awards	Higher Degrees based predominantly upon the conduct and/or presentation of research as are designated by the University (e.g. MSc/LLM by research, MPhil, PhD).
School	A School of Studies at the University (e.g. Art & Design, Salford Law School, Computing Science and Engineering).
Semester	A specified period of teaching, study and assessment. There are three semesters per academic year.
Senate	The Senate is the academic authority of the University. It is responsible for the 'planning, co-ordination, development and supervision of the academic work of the University' within the overall framework of corporate strategy and policy approved by the Council.
Senior Assistant Secretary (Governance Services Unit)	The senior officer in the Governance Services Unit with ultimate responsibility for the administration of the Academic Appeal procedure.
Senior Investigator	A member of staff appointed to chair an Appeals Review Panel.
Students' Union	The body which will provide a student with independent expert advice or support in the appeals procedure.
Taught Awards	Awards of the University based predominantly on teaching delivered by academic staff as are designated by the University (e.g. BSc, BA, LLB, FdA, HND, DipHE).
Viva Voce	An oral examination, i.e. an examination in which questions and answers are spoken rather than written. Abbreviated to vivas, they are compulsory for all Doctoral candidates and may be required for Masters candidates by research.