London Academy for Applied Technology (LAAT)

Academic Appeals Policy

Policy title: Academic Appeals Policy
Document reference: LAAT-STD-POL-A02
Department / Function: Academic Quality & Standards
Policy Owner: Academic Dean, Dr Manoj Ponugubati
Oversight Committee: Academic Board
Approving Body: Academic Board (recommendation) / Board of Governors (final approval)
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Status: Adopted from Plymouth Marjon University's relevant policies.
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Supersedes: None

Regulatory Alignment with Office for Students (OfS) Conditions

This Academic Appeals Policy forms part of the London Academy for Applied Technology's (LAAT) academic governance framework and supports the maintenance of academic standards, procedural fairness, and transparency in academic decision-making.

The policy aligns with ***OfS Condition B4 (Assessment and Awards)*** by ensuring that assessment outcomes, progression decisions, and awards are determined in accordance with approved academic regulations and that students have access to a clear and independent process to request a review where there is a reasonable belief that assessment or decision-making procedures were not correctly applied. The policy protects the integrity of academic standards by explicitly excluding challenges based solely on academic judgement, while enabling procedural irregularities, failures to apply approved adjustments, or other material issues to be considered fairly and consistently.

The policy also aligns with ***OfS Condition C1 (Consumer Protection)*** by ensuring that students are provided with clear, accessible, and accurate information about academic appeals, including the grounds on which appeals may be made, the stages of the process,

applicable timescales, and how decisions will be communicated. The policy ensures that outcomes are explained in writing and that students are appropriately informed of their right to seek external review through the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) once internal procedures have been completed.

This policy is informed by relevant sector reference points, including the ***UK Quality Code*** for Higher Education and the OIA Good Practice Framework, and is implemented through LAAT's academic governance and quality assurance arrangements to ensure consistency, fairness, and effective oversight.

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the framework through which students at the London Academy for Applied Technology (LAAT) may appeal against academic decisions that affect their assessment outcomes, progression, or awards.

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that academic appeals are considered and resolved through a process that is fair, transparent, timely, and evidence-based. It provides students with a clearly defined mechanism to raise concerns where there is a reasonable belief that academic procedures were not applied correctly, consistently, or in line with institutional regulations.

The policy supports LAAT's commitment to maintaining academic standards, procedural fairness, and regulatory compliance, while safeguarding the integrity of academic decision-making and ensuring alignment with relevant UK higher education regulatory and awarding body requirements.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students registered on franchised higher education programmes delivered by LAAT, including full-time and part-time modes of study, and regardless of the location or mode of delivery. It covers academic decisions relating to assessment results, progression, classification, and awards that have been formally confirmed through approved academic boards.

3. Grounds for Appeal

An academic appeal may only be submitted on one or more of the following grounds:

- Procedural irregularity in the conduct of assessment, examination or academic decision-making
- Bias or perception of bias by one or more decision-makers
- New, material evidence that could not reasonably have been submitted earlier
- Extenuating/Mitigating circumstances, where there is evidence that the circumstances were so severe that they prevented the student from making an informed decision at the time as to whether to attempt an assessment or to submit a claim for extenuating circumstances, and where these circumstances were not, and could not reasonably have been, made known at the appropriate time.
- Material irregularity in decision-making procedures, including errors or omissions in the processes of the Extenuating Circumstances Officer, Assessment Board, or Board of Examiners.
- Failure to implement approved support arrangements, where a student with a disability or additional learning need can demonstrate that:
    i. the initial needs assessment was not correctly carried out; and/or
    ii. the agreed reasonable adjustments or support were not provided; and/or
    iii. approved alternative assessment arrangements were not implemented.

Disagreement with academic judgement (for example, believing a mark should be higher) does not constitute valid grounds for appeal.

Clarification on Academic Judgement

Disagreement with the academic judgement of an Assessment Board or Board of Examiners cannot, in itself, constitute valid grounds for appeal.

Academic judgement refers to decisions made by academic experts on matters such as:

- the quality of assessed work;
- the application of marking criteria;
- degree classification or progression decisions; and

- decisions requiring a student to repeat or undertake further assessment.

A student cannot appeal simply because they believe they should have received a higher mark, grade, or a different academic outcome.

4. Exclusions

Disagreement with academic judgement alone is not grounds for appeal. This includes challenges to the academic merit of work, marks awarded, or the professional judgement of examiners where correct procedures have been followed. Appeals submitted on excluded grounds will not normally be considered.

The following matters are not covered by this policy:

- Challenges to academic judgement alone
- Academic misconduct decisions (covered by the Academic Misconduct Policy)
- Complaints about teaching or services (covered by the Student Complaints Policy)
- Extenuating Circumstances decisions (except where procedural irregularity is alleged)
- Appeals against decisions taken under disciplinary proceedings, which are governed by the Student Disciplinary Policy
- Academic complaints, including matters relating to supervision, learning resources, or general academic support, unless these issues directly relate to a permitted ground for appeal as defined in this policy
- Grievances relating to personal harassment or discrimination, including complaints on sexual, religious, racial, disability-related, or other protected characteristic grounds. Such matters should be pursued through the appropriate Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination or Equality and Diversity procedures, with advice sought from a relevant member of staff

Appeals may be submitted only on permitted grounds. These include procedural irregularity in the assessment or decision-making process, evidence of bias or conflict of interest, the availability of relevant new evidence that could not reasonably have been submitted earlier, or a failure to implement approved reasonable adjustments or support arrangements. Appeals must clearly demonstrate how the stated ground materially affected the academic outcome.

5. Responsibilities of Students

Students are responsible for submitting appeals within the published deadlines, using the approved institutional process. Appeals must clearly identify the relevant grounds, explain the basis of the claim, and include supporting evidence where required. Students are expected to engage with the process in a professional and timely manner.

6. Academic Appeals Procedure

LAAT operates a two-stage internal academic appeals process. Stage One provides an initial review of the appeal to determine whether valid grounds have been established. Stage Two allows for a formal reconsideration where appropriate, ensuring independent review and procedural fairness. Students will be informed of outcomes and reasons at each stage.

7. External Review

Once LAAT's internal procedures have been completed and a Completion of Procedures letter has been issued, students may request an external review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). External review is subject to the OIA's eligibility criteria and procedures.

8. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Academic Appeals

Step 1: Receipt of Appeal

1. Appeals must be submitted by the student using the approved LAAT Academic Appeal Form at appeals@laat.ac.uk
2. Appeals must be received within the published deadline following notification of the academic decision.
3. Appeals must clearly state the permitted ground(s) and include supporting evidence.

Step 2: Administrative Validation

1. Academic Quality / Registry verifies:
    - student registration status
    - timeliness of submission
    - completeness of documentation
2. Incomplete or late submissions are rejected and the student is informed in writing with reasons.

Step 3: Initial Review (Stage One)

1. A designated Appeal Reviewer conducts an initial review of the appeal.

2. The review confirms whether the stated grounds are valid and supported by evidence.
3. Academic judgement is not reconsidered.
4. An outcome is recorded as upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.

Step 4: Stage One Outcome Notification

1. The student is notified in writing of the Stage One decision.
2. The notification includes reasons for the decision and, where applicable, details of any remedy or corrective action.
3. Information on eligibility for Stage Two review is provided.

Step 5: Request for Stage Two Review

1. Where permitted, students may request escalation to Stage Two within the specified timeframe.
2. Requests must state why Stage One did not adequately address the appeal.
3. New grounds are not normally accepted at this stage unless justified.

Step 6: Formal Review / Appeal Panel (Stage Two)

1. An independent reviewer or appeal panel is appointed with no prior involvement in the case.
2. The reviewer or panel considers:
    - appeal documentation
    - evidence submitted
    - procedural compliance
3. The review is conducted fairly and impartially.

Step 7: Final Internal Decision

1. A final decision is reached based on evidence and procedural compliance.
2. Decisions at Stage Two are final within LAAT's internal processes.
3. Outcomes are formally recorded.

Step 8: Final Outcome Notification

1. The student is notified in writing of the final decision.
2. The notification includes reasons for the decision and confirmation that internal procedures are complete.

Step 9: Completion of Procedures

1. Where applicable, a Completion of Procedures letter is issued by Academic Quality / Registry.
2. The letter confirms the conclusion of LAAT's internal appeal process.

Step 10: External Review Signposting

1. Students are advised of their right to seek external review through the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
2. Information on timescales and eligibility is provided.

Step 11: Record Management

1. All appeal records are stored securely in accordance with data protection requirements.
2. Access to records is restricted to authorised staff only.

Step 12: Reporting

1. Anonymised appeal data is collated periodically.
2. Summary reports are submitted to Academic Board for monitoring and quality assurance.

12. Responsible People / Roles include

- **Dean (Policy Owner)**: Dr Manoj Ponugubati
  overall accountability for policy implementation
- **Head of Academic Quality**: Dr Vishwanath Kokkonda
  administration, guidance, and procedural oversight
- **Registry Function**: Mr Stephen Plant
  Administers the academic appeals process, ensuring procedural compliance, accurate record-keeping, and timely communication with students and decision-makers.
- **Assessment Support officer**: Ms Nuzhat Rifa
  Monitors appeals emails and notifies the Head of Academic Quality and Dean for final oversight
- **Appeal Reviewer / Panel**: independent consideration of appeals

A suitably senior and independent academic member(s), not previously involved in the assessment or decision under appeal, appointed to review the appeal and determine outcomes in accordance with approved procedures.

- **Students**: responsible for submitting appeals in line with policy requirements

List of people & contacts

Role	Name	Email id
Chair –Dean	Dr Manoj Ponugubati	manoj@laat.ac.uk
Registry	Mr Stephen Plant	Stephen.Plant@laat.ac.uk
Head of Academic Quality	Dr Vishwanath Kokkonda	vishwanath.kokkonda@laat.ac.uk

Assessment support officer	Ms Nuzhat Rifa	Nuzhat.Rifa@laat.ac.uk
Independent reviewer	TBD	

13. List of documents

Aligned with Plymouth Marjon University regulations, OfS Conditions, and OIA guidance

- **Completed Academic Appeal Form**

LAAT_Academic_Appeal_Application_Form.

- **Completion of Procedures (CoP) letters** issued to students

LAAT_Completion_of_Procedures_CoP_Lett

- **Appeals log / register** (dates, grounds, outcomes, timescales – anonymised)

LAAT_Academic_Appeals_Log_Register.xlsx

- **Academic Board minutes** noting oversight of appeals activity

LAAT_Academic_Board_Minutes_Academic_

- **Student handbook**

LAAT_Student_Handbook_Academic_Appea

14. Evidences

- Academic Board minutes
- Academic Appeal Application Form
- Completion of Procedures (CoP) Letter Template
- Plymouth Marjon University: Student Regulations Framework 2025–26

Evidence Item	Purpose / What it Demonstrates	Relevant OfS Condition(s)
Academic Board Minutes	Evidence of formal academic governance oversight, monitoring of appeals activity, and assurance to senior governance bodies	E1 (effective governance), B4 (monitoring quality), B5 (standards assurance)
Academic Appeal Application Form	Provides students with a clear, accessible, and fair mechanism to submit appeals on permitted grounds	C1 (fair processes), E3 (consumer protection)
Completion of Procedures (CoP) Letter Template	Confirms completion of internal procedures and provides correct signposting to the OIA for external review	E3 (consumer protection), E2 (effective management and processes)
Plymouth Marjon University – Student Regulations Framework 2025–26	Ensures alignment with validating partner regulations and maintenance of academic standards	B5 (academic standards), E1 (governance), E2 (institutional control)