

Appeals Information and Guidance for Students and Staff

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| Responsibility for Policy: | Registrar and Chief Operating Officer |
| Relevant to: | All LJMU Students on taught programmes including those at an Academic Partner |
| Approved by: | Student Governance |
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RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- N/A

RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS

- Academic Framework Regulations
- Research Degree Regulations

Introduction

This document is to provide information regarding the following appeals:

- Academic Appeals
- Academic Misconduct Appeals
- Appeals Against the decision of a Personal Circumstances Panel

Definitions

Academic Appeal: an appeal against formally finalised marks or the decision of a Board of Examiners

Academic Appeal (research degree): an appeal against the decision of the Research Degrees Committee.

Academic Misconduct Appeal: an appeal against the decision of an Academic Misconduct Panel.

Personal Circumstances Appeal: an appeal against a decision of a Personal Circumstances Panel.

These notes are intended as a guide for students who wish to lodge an appeal and should be read in conjunction with the more detailed information in the current LJMU Academic Framework regulations, Section C9 or Research Degree regulations and the Student Governance Privacy Notice.

The Academic Framework regulations may be accessed via the website at <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/academic-quality-and-regulations/academic-framework>

The Research Degree regulations may be accessed via the website at <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/the-doctoral-academy/academic-regulations-for-research-degrees/regulations>

Please note that there is a different process for appealing against a recommendation for exclusion or expulsion. The appeal against exclusion or expulsion procedure may be accessed via the website at <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/-/media/sample-sharepoint-libraries/policy-documents/205.pdf>

Sources of Help and Advice for Students and Staff

Students can contact their Programme Leader, Lecturer or Personal Tutor to discuss their results or progress transcript in the first instance.

Students can contact their Programme Leader, Lecturer, Personal Tutor or Faculty/School Administration Office to discuss a referral to the Academic Misconduct Panel in the first instance.

Students can contact their Programme Leader, Lecturer, Personal Tutor or Faculty/School Administration office to discuss the Personal Circumstances application process and deadline dates in the first instance.

The John Moores Students' Union (JMSU) operates an Advice Centre and will provide independent and confidential help and advice regarding appeals. The JMSU website is at <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/students/your-students-union> Telephone 0151 231 4900, Email: JMSUadvice@ljmu.ac.uk

Students and staff may obtain advice relating to the appeals process from Student Governance at StudentGovernance@ljmu.ac.uk

Who Can Appeal?

The appeals procedures are open to all registered or former students of Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). Students and former students can appeal against formally finalised marks issued on a University Results Day, a Board of Examiners decision, a decision of the Research Degrees Committee, an Academic Misconduct Panel decision or a decision of a Personal Circumstances Panel. This includes students on LJMU programmes delivered by collaborative partner institutions.

The University does not accept anonymous or third-party appeals.

Deadlines

There are strict time limits for submitting appeals at each stage of the process.

The deadline for submitting an appeal form is within **10 working days** of a) the decision of a Board of Examiners or the formal release of results via a University transcript b) the formal release of the decision of an Academic Misconduct Panel or c) the formal release of a decision of a Personal Circumstances Panel.

The University reserves the right not to progress appeals if they are submitted outside of the specified time limits. Discretion will only be given where there are exceptional reasons for late submission, supported by independent evidence.

The University endeavors to complete all stages of the formal appeals procedures within 60 calendar days. In cases where for good reason the University needs to extend this timeframe, the University will notify the student and keep them informed of progress.

Completion and Submission of the Appeals Form

The appeals form for each process is available at <https://myservices.ljmu.ac.uk/>

If students are unable to access the online form, they can contact StudentGovernance@ljmu.ac.uk for an alternative format.

All sections of the form must be completed clearly and concisely and students are expected to explain in full their grounds for appeal.

Students must submit a copy of their results statement (if an appeal against the decision of a Board of Examiners), or a copy of their progress transcript (if an appeal against a finalized marks), or the relevant decision letter/email from the Research Degrees Committee, Academic Misconduct Panel or Personal Circumstances Panel

The appeal must be accompanied by relevant evidence that supports the student's claim that there has been a material irregularity or some other material administrative or procedural error in the relevant process. All evidence should be numbered and listed on the form.

Students should not send original documents as the University cannot guarantee the return of documents. Only relevant information should be enclosed and no duplicates or long email trails that are not relevant.

Information provided by the student will only be shared with those involved in responding to the appeal. Student Governance may also be in receipt of other personal information about the student that is relevant to the appeal. Students should read the Student Governance Privacy Notice prior to submitting a Student Appeal.

Failure to complete the form in full, or failure to provide the requested information or relevant evidence may result in the appeal being rejected.

Grounds for Appeal

The grounds for appeal are:

1. that there has been a material administrative error or
2. that the assessment, in whatever format, was not conducted in accordance with current regulations or
3. that some other material irregularity has occurred.
4. that the decision of a Personal Circumstance Panel in considering a personal circumstances claim was unreasonable.

Disagreement with the academic judgement of a marker or a Board of Examiners in assessing an individual piece of work or in reaching a decision on a student's progression or on the final level of award, based on the marks, grades and other information relating to a student's performance, cannot in itself constitute grounds for an Academic Appeal.

Disagreement with the decision of an Academic Misconduct Panel or Personal Circumstances Panel cannot in itself constitute grounds for an appeal. Students must demonstrate that a material irregularity or some other error in the process has occurred.

Students must be aware that appeals will only be accepted under the circumstances outlined above and appeals that do not meet the criteria will be deemed ineligible.

Please note that the university does not accept personal or extenuating circumstances as grounds for an academic appeal. Students with extenuating circumstances should access the **Personal Circumstances Procedure**. Students may then appeal a decision from a Personal Circumstances Panel students as in '4' above.

Please note that there is a different process for appealing against a recommendation for exclusion or expulsion. The appeal against exclusion or expulsion procedure is available at <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/-/media/sample-sharepoint-libraries/policy-documents/205.pdf>

Some issues may be more appropriately considered under the **Student Complaints Procedure** and if students are unsure whether they have grounds for appeal or what process they should use, then they should seek further advice from the Student Governance office at studentgovernance@ljmu.ac.uk or the JMSU on telephone number 0151 231 4900 or by email at JMSUadvice@ljmu.ac.uk

Initial Assessment

On receipt of the relevant appeals form, Student Governance will determine the eligibility of the appeal i.e. whether the appeal attempts to demonstrate that the student has grounds for appeal and whether the appeal is submitted within the deadlines.

Appeals that are out of time or not eligible will not be accepted. Students will be formally notified of this and issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

Appeals that are eligible and in time will be considered under Stage 1 of the appeal procedure (see below). This will be confirmed to the student by the Student Governance office.

In some cases, Student Governance may contact the student to obtain further information or refer them to a different procedure such as the Student Complaints Procedure.

Stage 1 Appeals

Stage 1 appeals are considered by a Nominated Respondent. Students will normally receive a response to their appeal with an explanation to support the decision within **15 working days** of the receipt of the appeal.

The Nominated Respondent will not be substantially associated with the student and will not have chaired the Board of Examiners, Academic Misconduct Panel or Personal Circumstances Panel which made the original decision.

Stage 1 Outcomes

If the appeal is upheld, the student will be notified of the reason for the decision and any action to be taken. For example, the Board of Examiners, Research Degrees Committee, or Academic Misconduct Panel may be required to reconsider their decision(s) in light of the appeal outcome.

If the appeal is not upheld the student will be notified of the reason for the decision and be provided with information on how to progress their appeal to Stage 2.

Stage 2 Appeals (Final Review)

Students who believe that the appeals procedure at Stage 1 has not been conducted properly have the right to proceed to Stage 2 of the procedure. Stage 2 is not a re-opening of the appeal and the student must demonstrate evidence of a procedural irregularity and a supporting statement detailing why they believe the Stage 1 decision is incorrect.

Stage 2 appeals are considered by the Assistant Academic Registrar (Student Governance) or a nominee who has had no previous involvement with the appeal and the outcome will be reported to the student usually within 30 days.

The Stage 2 Reviewer will not normally consider new issues of appeal.

Students are not required to re-submit any documents already submitted as part of the Stage 1 appeal, but students can refer to these documents in their Stage 2 statement.

The Stage 2 Reviewer will only consider additional new documents, not submitted as part of the Stage 1 appeal, if they were either not available to the student prior to them making their Stage 1 appeal or they are in support of the Stage 2 statement.

Stage 2 Final Review submissions should be submitted within **10 working days** of the notification of the Stage 1 outcome via email to StudentGovernance@ljmu.ac.uk

Stage 2 Outcomes

The Stage 2 Reviewer will consider the following documents:

- The student's original appeal.
- The Stage 1 response to the appeal.
- Any relevant minutes/notes and correspondence.

The Reviewer will decide one of the following:

- The appeal is not upheld
- The appeal is upheld or upheld in part.

If the Stage 2 Final Review is upheld the Board of Examiners, Research Degrees Committee, Academic Misconduct Panel, Personal Circumstances Panel will reconvene or other appropriate action will be taken and the student will be notified accordingly.

If the Stage 2 Final Review is not upheld, the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter. They will need this if they decide to refer their appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Liverpool John Moores University is a member of this scheme. If a student is unhappy with the outcome they may be able to ask the OIA to review their complaint.

Students can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right if something has gone wrong at <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>

A student normally needs to have completed the university's internal Appeals procedure before they can complain to the OIA. Liverpool John Moores University will send the student a letter called a "Completion of Procedures Letter" when they have reached the end of university processes and there are no further steps the student can take internally. If the student's appeal is not upheld, Liverpool John Moores University will issue the student with a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically. If the appeal is upheld or partly upheld the student can ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter if they want one. Students can find more information about Completion of Procedures Letters and when they should expect to receive one at: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>