

Reviews and Appeals of Academic Decisions Procedure

Version 2 - Approved 10 July 2023

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Purpose

This procedure outlines the process to be followed if a student seeks to:

- a) request an internal review of an academic decision made by the University of Tasmania, relating to:
 - i. a mark given for an individual assessment task (including an exam);
 - ii. an overall final result for a unit;
 - iii. an academic progress status;
 - iv. special consideration in assessment (including deferred examinations); or
 - v. a credit decision.
- b) lodge an appeal if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of that internal review.

This procedure also outlines the grounds upon which a student can request an internal review or lodge an appeal.

This procedure does *not* apply to decisions made under the [Student Academic Integrity Ordinance](#) or [Student Academic Integrity Procedure](#), which make specific provision for appeals against academic integrity decisions.

Applicable governance instruments

Instrument	Section	Principles
Student Participation and Attainment Ordinance	Part 4 – Credit, Part 5 – Assessment and Results, Part 6 – Academic Progress	N/A
Admission, Enrolment and Credit Policy	3 – Recognition of prior learning	3.7

Definitions and acronyms can be found at: <https://www.utas.edu.au/policy/policy-definitions>

Related policy and procedures can be found at: <https://www.utas.edu.au/policy>

<u>Academic Progress Policy</u>	1 – Monitoring and supporting student academic progress	1.9
<u>Assessment and Results Policy</u>	1 – Assessment and results	1.5

Procedure

1. Guiding Principles

The following principles guide internal reviews and appeals of academic decisions:

- a) reviews and appeals will be considered with courtesy, due regard to confidentiality, and without fear of prejudicial treatment;
- b) students will be afforded procedural fairness and reviews and appeals will be undertaken by an impartial decision-maker;
- c) students will act responsibly, not seek reviews or appeals for trivial or vexatious reasons, and will provide factual evidence in support of review requests and appeals;
- d) the original decision will stand while a review or appeal is being undertaken;
- e) requests for review and appeal will be resolved in a timely fashion;
- f) the review process must be fully completed before a student is eligible to lodge an appeal; and
- g) if a review or appeal of an academic decision brings to light a systemic error which has affected the outcome of one or more other students, steps should be taken to correct this and students notified accordingly.

2. Reviews of Academic Decisions

2.1 Review stages

Except for reviews of academic progress status decisions, the review process is conducted in two consecutive stages. These stages are summarised in Schedule A: Review Stages and Requirements.

- a) Stage 1 – review by the original decision-maker or the appropriate University / College officer.
- b) Stage 2 – review by a senior officer of the University (Executive Dean, or other members of staff holding senior positions).

If the relevant Stage 1 reviewer has a conflict of interest, the review will proceed directly to Stage 2.

The student has the right to be accompanied by a support person to any meetings requested as part of the review process.

A review of an academic decision may lead to one of the following outcomes:

- a) no change to the original decision;
- b) a less favourable decision; or
- c) a more favourable decision.

Reviews of academic decisions must be completed in a timely fashion in order to avoid any delay in the results finalisation process.

2.2 Reviewers

Stage 1 reviews of **individual marks and final unit results** are undertaken by the Unit Coordinator (or the Associate Head (Learning and Teaching) if the Unit Coordinator is unavailable).

Stage 1 reviews of **academic progress status decisions** are undertaken by the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching Performance).

Stage 1 reviews of **other academic decisions** (such as special consideration and credit) are undertaken by the original decision maker.

Stage 2 reviews of **individual marks** are undertaken by the College Executive Dean or delegated College reviewer (who has not been involved in the Stage 1 review).

Stage 2 reviews of **final unit results** are undertaken by the Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching Performance).

Stage 2 reviews of **other academic decisions** (such as special consideration and credit) are undertaken by a Senior Officer in the relevant organisational unit.

2.3 Requesting a review

Requests for review are made by the student using the online application form available from the [Student Portal](#).

A request for review may be automatically declined if:

- a) the request is not submitted within the timelines set out in Schedule A; or
- b) the request is made on grounds other than those specified in Schedule A.

The decision to decline an application for review in these circumstances is final.

2.4 Grounds for a review

The permissible grounds, timelines and requirements for reviews of academic decisions are fully outlined in Schedule A. The requirements and timelines vary depending on the type of academic decision under review, but in summary, the permissible grounds for Stage 1 reviews are as follows:

Request for stage 1 review of:	Permissible grounds
Mark for individual assessment task or exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Error in the application of marking standards (such as misuse of the assessment rubric or inconsistency within the assessment rubric). • Error in the application of the stated marking process. • Error in application of approved special consideration for specific task or tasks
Overall final unit result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedural or numerical error in the determination of the overall final unit result.
Academic progress status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress status has not been assigned in accordance with University ordinance, policy or procedure or the course rules.
Other academic decision (e.g., credit or special consideration in assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original decision was not made in accordance with University ordinance, policy or procedure. • Student requires further information to understand how the original decision was reached.

The permissible grounds for Stage 2 reviews are as follows:

Request for stage 2 review of:	Permissible grounds
Mark for individual assessment task or exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 review because there has been an error in marking standard or marking process has occurred, which has not been adequately dealt with in the Stage 1 review.
Overall final unit result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 review because there have been one or more procedural errors, which have not been adequately dealt with in the Stage 1 review.
Other academic decision (e.g., credit or special consideration in assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 review because the original decision was not made in accordance with relevant University ordinance or policy or procedure; or the decision (at Stage 1) was not fair or reasonable.

2.5 Additional review information

Reviews of marks for individual assessment tasks/exams

To be considered, a request for a review of a mark for an individual assessment task or exam must be submitted by the student within 10 business days of the mark being released.

Each request for review will be considered on its merits and independently of any other reviews requested by the student for assessment items in the same, or any other unit.

A request for review can only be made if the assessment item:

- a) has a weighting equal to or more than 10%; or
- b) is a hurdle task for the unit (a hurdle task is a task that a student must successfully complete to pass the unit).

The existence of a margin between the mark received by a student for an assessment item and a mark that would result in a higher final overall result in the unit is not considered to be grounds for review.

Where there is only one original assessor, and the outcome of Stage 2 is that there has been an error in either marking standard or marking process, the Stage 2 reviewer will reassess the original assessment item.

Reviews of overall final unit results

To be considered, a request for a review of an overall final unit result must be submitted by the student within 10 business days of the final result being released.

Notwithstanding the fact that a reviewer may need to check the calculation of marks for individual assessment tasks, a review of a final unit result does not necessarily involve the re-marking of the individual assessment item/s that contributed to the overall final unit result.

Reviews of academic progress status

To be considered, a request for a review of an academic progress status decision must be submitted by the student within 20 business days of the status being released.

Any academic progress status decision may be the subject to review (supported/advice, conditional/managed, academic exclusion).

3. Appeals Against Academic Decisions

3.1 Grounds for appeal

The review process/es must be fully completed before a student is eligible to lodge an application for appeal.

The permissible grounds, timelines and requirements for appeals against academic decisions are fully outlined in Schedule B.

The requirements and timelines vary depending on the type of academic decision under appeal, but in summary, the permissible grounds for appeal are as follows:

Appeal against outcome of review of:	Permissible grounds
Mark for individual assessment task or exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 2 review process was procedurally irregular or unfair. • Availability of new information that could not have been provided at the review stage(s) and that, in all likelihood, would have affected the review outcome.
Overall final unit result	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 2 review process was procedurally irregular or unfair. • Availability of new information that could not have been provided at the review stage(s) and that, in all likelihood, would have affected the review outcome.
Academic progress status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 review process was procedurally irregular or unfair. • Availability of new information that could not have been provided at the review stage and that, in all likelihood, would have affected the review outcome.
Other academic decision (e.g., credit or special consideration in assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 2 review process was procedurally irregular or unfair. • Availability of new information that could not have been provided at the review stage(s) and that, in all likelihood, would have affected the review outcome.

3.2 Lodging applications for appeals

A student wishing to appeal must lodge an application for appeal in 20 business days of receiving notification of the outcome of a review.

Applications for appeal are made by the student using the application form available from the [Student Portal](#).

3.3 University Appeals Panel

Applications for appeal are considered by the Chair of the University Appeals Panel.

Academic Senate will appoint a University Appeals Panel of at least 15 members, who will serve for a period of three years. Academic Senate will ensure, before end of each year, that there is a full complement of members for the following year.

The Chair of Academic Senate or their delegate will ensure that the University Appeals Panel considering an appeal consists of **at least** (gender balanced where possible):

- the Chair or Deputy Chair of Academic Senate (who will chair the meeting);

- one student representative;
- one Head of Academic Unit;
- one academic staff member (who is not Head of Academic Unit); and
- one professional member of staff appointed at HEO 10 or above.

The Secretary of Academic Senate will assist with the appeal process.

The Secretary must ensure that no member of the Panel has been previously involved or associated with the circumstances relating to the appeal or have any close association with the parties involved.

Where a Panel is convened, the membership of the Panel must remain the same throughout the consideration of the appeal, notwithstanding any adjournment. A quorum for a panel is three members.

At any time during the consideration of an appeal, the Panel may consult with or seek advice from anyone they consider appropriate, including legal advice.

A decision of the Panel will be by a simple majority.

The University will provide and/or facilitate appropriate training to members of the University Appeals Panel.

3.4 Appeal process

The Chair of the University Appeals Panel has delegated authority to either:

- a) progress the appeal to the full University Appeals Panel at which the student, who may be accompanied by a support person, is asked to present their case. The student may submit a written response in lieu of attending the meeting. The student may not send a representative in their place. If the student chooses to not attend the meeting, the Panel must consider the appeal based on the documentation provided; or
- b) summarily dismiss an appeal if:
 - i. the appeal is made on grounds other than those specified in Schedule B of this procedure; and/or
 - ii. a review process as specified in this procedure has not taken place; and/or
 - iii. the appeal lacks merit; and/or
 - iv. the appeal is considered to be frivolous or vexatious.

The decision of the Chair of the University Appeals Panel or the full University Appeals Panel is final within the University in the sense that the student does not have any further recourse relating to the outcome of the appeal to any authority within the University.

A notice of the outcome of an appeal will include, at a minimum:

- a) the basis on which the decision was made;
- b) documentation and materials considered by the Panel; and
- c) advice that, if the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they may refer their case for consideration by an external body, such as [Ombudsman Tasmania](#).

4 External Review

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they may refer their case to an external body, such as [Ombudsman Tasmania](#) for consideration .

Students may, in writing, request the State Ombudsman to review the manner in which their application was handled by the University. The Ombudsman will not normally investigate until all University internal avenues of review or appeal have been completed.

The Ombudsman will usually only consider whether or not the University has followed its own policies and procedures and whether the handling of an individual case has been fair and reasonable.

The Ombudsman does not have the power to make a new decision (for example, change a final unit result) to replace a decision by the University. However, the Ombudsman may recommend that the University reconsider its decisions or actions.

Related procedures

Credit Procedure

Assessment and Results Procedure

Versions

Version	Action	Approved By	Responsible Officer/s	Approval Date
1	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Director, Academic Quality and Standards	6 July 2022
2	Approved	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Director, Academic Quality and Standards	10 July 2023

Schedule A: Review Stages and Requirements

Review Stage	Details	Review of Mark	Review of Overall Final Unit Result	Review of Academic Progress Status	Review of Other Academic Decision (e.g., credit)
Stage 1	Permissible grounds for Stage 1 review:	a) error in the application of marking standard; or b) error in the application of the stated marking process; or c) error in application of approved special consideration for specific task or tasks	a) procedural or numerical error in the determination of the overall final unit result	a) progress status has not been assigned in accordance with University ordinance, policy or procedure or the course rules	a) original decision was not made in accordance with University ordinance, policy or procedure; or b) student requires further information to understand how the original decision was reached
	Request for review must be submitted by student to reviewer within:	10 business days from the day after receipt of official release of a mark or overall final result for a unit		20 business days from the day after the official release of the progress status	10 business days from the day after receipt of an academic decision
	Reviewer	Unit Coordinator / Associate Head (Learning and Teaching) if former is unavailable	Unit Coordinator / Head of Academic Unit if former is unavailable	Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching Performance)	Original decision-maker or the appropriate University Officer
	Notification of outcome of review must occur within:	10 business days from the day after receipt of the request for a Stage 1 review		10 business days from the day after receipt of the request for a Stage 1 review	10 business days from the day after receipt of the request for a Stage 1 review
Stage 2	Permissible grounds for Stage 2 review:	Not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 review because: a) error in marking standard or marking process has occurred, which has not been adequately dealt with in the Stage 1 review	Not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 review because: a) there have been one or more procedural errors, which have not been adequately dealt with in the Stage 1 review.	Not Applicable	Not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 review because: a) the original decision was not made in accordance with relevant University ordinance or policy or procedure; or b) the decision (at Stage 1) was not fair or reasonable
	Reviewer:	College Executive Dean or delegated College reviewer (who has not been involved in the Stage 1 review)	Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching Performance)		Senior Officer in relevant organisational unit
	Request for review must be submitted by student within:	10 business days from the day after notification of the outcome of the Stage 1 review			10 business days from the day after notification of the outcome of the Stage 1 review
	Notification of progress of review must occur within:	10 business days from the day after receipt of the request for a Stage 2 review			10 business days from the day after receipt of the request for a Stage 2 review

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Schedule B: Student Appeal Requirements

Details	Appeal Against Outcome of Review of Mark	Appeal Against Outcome of Review of Overall Final Unit Result	Appeal Against Outcome of Review of Progress Status	Appeal Against Outcome of Review of Other Academic Decision (e.g., credit)
Prerequisite	Stage 2 review	Stage 2 review	Stage 1 review	Stage 2 review
Permissible grounds for appeal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Stage 2 review process was procedurally irregular or unfair; or b) availability of new information that could not have been provided at the review stage(s) and that, in all likelihood, would have affected the review outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Stage 2 review process was procedurally irregular or unfair; or b) availability of new information that could not have been provided at the review stage(s) and that, in all likelihood, would have affected the review outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Stage 1 review process was procedurally irregular or unfair; or b) availability of new information that could not have been provided at the review stage and that, in all likelihood, would have affected the review outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Stage 2 review process was procedurally irregular or unfair; or b) availability of new information that could not have been provided at the review stage(s) and that, in all likelihood, would have affected the review outcome.
Application for appeal must be submitted by the student within:*	20 business days from the day after receipt of the outcome of a review			
If Chair of University Appeals Panel decides to dismiss the application for appeal, the Panel Executive Officer notifies student of the dismissal within:	10 business days from the day after the Chair has made the decision to dismiss the application for appeal			
If not dismissed, the appeal is considered by:	University Appeals Panel			
Appeal meeting occurs within:	25 business days from the day after the Chair has decided to refer the appeal to a meeting			
Panel Executive Officer notifies student of appeal outcome within:	10 business days from the day after the University Appeals Panel meeting			

* Failure to meet the timelines set out in this schedule may result in an automatic dismissal of the application for appeal