



Student Services: Academic Appeals Hearing Procedure

1 Circulation of information

1.1 A case handler will circulate documentation for the appeal prior to the hearing to the Sub-Committee members, the student, the decision making body's representative (and others if appropriate). The documentation will comprise of the student's written case, comments from the decision making body, any further information sought by the Chair and factual information about the student's academic career.

1.2 The student must make arrangements for any further written evidence s/he wishes to bring in support of his/her case to be received by the case handler before the hearing. Written material will not normally be circulated to the Sub-Committee if it is received by the case handler less than 5 working days before the date of the Appeal. Written evidence submitted at a later time may be circulated, at the discretion of the Chair - for example, if it responds to written comments from the School received too late for the student to comply with the five day rule.

1.3 All attendees will normally have access to the same written material, with no privileged access to documentation being given to the Sub-Committee or representative of the decision making body. Exceptionally, and with the prior agreement of the Chair, the student may submit additional written evidence which will be circulated to members of the Sub-Committee only. This exceptional arrangement might be invoked, for example, in the case of properly certified medical evidence which a student felt unable to share with his/her School.

2 Student attendance at the Appeal Hearing

2.1 The student will receive a written invitation from a case handler to attend the Appeal Hearing in person at least 10 working days in advance of the hearing. They will be asked to confirm his/her intention to attend, or not, in writing. The case handler will also inform the student of the names and status of the members of the Sub-Committee for their hearing. The student should inform the case handler of any conflicts of interest, such as Committee members who have been involved in the original decision making.

2.2 The student should inform the case handler if they do not wish, or if they want to insist, that a student delegate to be included on the Sub-Committee for their hearing.

2.3 While the Appeal will take place even if the student does not wish to attend, the Sub-Committee regards it as very important to be able to hear the student's point of view expressed in their own words, if at all possible, and the student is therefore encouraged to attend.

2.4 The student is entitled to bring a supporter. The supporter must be either; an Education Adviser from the SU (or equivalent at UNNC/UMNC), a fellow student, a member of staff, or a Union representative (eg BMA, RCN). The supporter may take notes on the student's behalf, make representations on the student's behalf and ask questions, but may not answer questions on the student's behalf.

The student must inform the case handler of the name and status of their supporter at least 5 working days prior to the Hearing. The student may be asked to choose a different supporter if, for example, it is perceived that the chosen supporter may cause a conflict of interest or if their presence may prejudice the meeting.

3 Staff attendance at the Appeal Hearing

3.1 The School will be requested to send a representative to attend the Hearing. The School Representative should have detailed knowledge of the case, of the student's academic career and of the arrangements for the student's course.

3.2 Where the appeal is against the Quality & Standards Committee, a relevant member of the Quality & Standards Committee should attend.

4 Absence of the student or staff from the Hearing

4.1 If the student has appealed but has indicated that s/he does not wish to attend, the Chair has a duty to ensure that members of the Sub-Committee are fully aware of all the facts, and will rehearse the points made in the student's letter. The Chair will ensure that the Sub-Committee follows the relevant procedures in section 5.

4.2 If the student chooses not to attend, they may elect to have an SU Education Adviser attend on their behalf. Only SU Education Advisers may attend in lieu of the student

4.3 If the student has indicated his/her intention to attend, but is prevented from doing so for good reason and contacts the case handler before the meeting to that effect, the Chair will agree to defer consideration of the case and will agree alternative arrangements for an Appeal. The Chair will have discretion as to what constitutes "good reason".

4.4 If the student has indicated his/her intention to attend, but fails to attend without reasonable explanation, the Sub-Committee will consider the case in the student's absence. The Chair will have discretion as to what constitutes a "reasonable explanation".

4.5 If a member of staff has indicated his/her intention to be present, or has been required to attend, but is absent from the Appeal, the Chair will have discretion as to whether the Appeal should proceed in their absence, or should be deferred.

5 Procedure for conduct of the Hearing

This section defines the steps which should be followed during the Appeal Hearing itself. The Chair has discretion to vary the practicalities of these arrangements as s/he thinks fit as long as any changes do not contravene the basic principles set out in the Quality Manual Academic Appeals Policy.

a) A case handler will meet the student (if attending) outside the meeting before the Hearing and will offer to explain the procedure, check that the student has copies of the documents circulated to members of the Sub-Committee and, if not, provide a set.

b) If either the decision making body representative and/or the student has obtained prior agreement from the Chair to call upon other persons to attend the Appeal (see sections 2

and 3 above), the Chair will decide if they may attend throughout the proceedings until all parties withdraw, or whether they shall attend the meeting only while they give such relevant information.

c) The Chair will ask if any member has been personally involved in the student's case at any prior stage and, if so, will ask them to withdraw for the duration of the case.

d) A case handler will escort the student (if attending), the supporter (if attending), and the decision making body representative into the meeting.

e) The Chair will introduce by name and explain the functions of the members of the Sub-Committee, the decision making body representative, and any others present.

f) The Chair will explain the powers of the Sub-Committee.

g) The Chair will tell the student that the Sub-Committee will take their case to be as set out in their letter, and will ask if they wish to make a brief opening statement, or whether they wish the supporter to do so on their behalf. If the supporter makes the statement, the Chair will ask the student if they wish to add anything. The Chair will then explain that the Sub-Committee wishes to hear directly from the student in their own words, and that they will be expected to answer questions.

h) Members of the Sub-Committee will be invited to question the student.

i) The Chair will invite the decision making body representative to make a brief opening statement, and will then invite the Committee to ask questions. If the decision making body representative is accompanied by other colleagues, they will be afforded the same opportunity, and questioned.

j) At each stage the Chair has discretion to allow reciprocal questioning by the various parties.

k) The Chair will ensure that the members of the Sub-Committee have completed their questioning.

l) The Chair will ask each member of staff, in turn, and finally the student (or the supporter) if they wish to make any closing statement, and if they are satisfied that they have had a full opportunity to explain their case to the Sub-Committee.

m) The Chair will ask everyone except the members and Officers to leave the meeting, and will ask them to wait pending the Sub-Committee's decision.

n) The Sub-Committee will discuss the case.

o) If for any reason during its discussion the Sub-Committee requires clarification of any aspect of the case, by further questioning either the student or the staff, they must all be invited back into the meeting while the questioning takes place. They will then all leave the meeting again.

p) The Sub-Committee will make its decision.

6 After the Hearing

- a) The decision, and any findings of fact, will be conveyed to the student and the other parties in writing, within 5 working days. If an appeal is disallowed reasons will be given in writing.
- b) If the decision is to require the decision making body to review the original recommendation, or if the decision is to substitute another decision, Chair of the Sub-Committee will write to the Head of School or equivalent giving reasons for the Sub-Committee's decision and including guidance as to a revised recommendation, if appropriate.
- c) A report on the outcome of the appeal will be made to Teaching & Learning Board as appropriate.
- d) The Sub-Committee may, if appropriate, provide a written report to Teaching & Learning Board or one of its sub-committees raising such matters as shortcomings in School procedures or requesting advice on dealing with technical matters in hearings.