

A Guide to the Access to HE appeals policy

All the information you'll need regarding the process for dealing with appeals can be found online in the QAA Grading Scheme handbook E

QAA Grading Scheme Handbook Section E
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http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AboutUs/Publications/Documents/Access-Grading-Scheme-Section-E.pdf

Here's what you need to know:

1. Scope of policy: distinguishing complaints and appeals

Complaints are distinct from appeals and are considered separately from appeals.

Centres are required to have procedures relating to the quality or management of provision, including transparent processes for handling complaints. Where complaints relate to the quality or management of provision, they should be dealt with by the provider's own complaints procedures.

Where complaints relate to actions taken by Gateway Qualifications this will be considered in accordance with our *Complaints Policy and Procedure*.

2. Student concerns about assessment decisions: Formal representations

If a student has concerns about assessment decisions relating to the achievement of credits or grades, they should discuss these with the relevant member of the course team when the assessed work is first returned to them.

Students may sometimes ask for unconfirmed grades to be reviewed. This situation should be managed through the formal representation process.

The procedure for **representations** applies when a student asks for unconfirmed grade indicators to be reconsidered, after work has been graded but prior to moderation.

- a) If a student wishes to ask for reconsideration of one or more of the grade indicators given by a tutor for any individual assignment, he/she must do so at the earliest opportunity. This will normally be within one week of receiving the graded work.
- b) In the first instance, the tutor will discuss the assessed work with the student to explain the grading decisions made.
- c) If the student is not satisfied with the explanation and wishes to pursue a representation, the relevant student work will be considered by the internal

moderator, or considered through such other alternative mechanisms as have been approved for the purpose by Gateway Qualifications. A formal record of the student's representation will be made.

- d) The formal records of all representations will be considered by the external moderator, who will i) confirm that the representations process has been properly operated and ii) may sample and review individual cases.
- e) Under no circumstances may a tutor make any change to grade indicators or unit grades without the involvement of the internal moderator and without a formal record (as prescribed) being made.

3. Appeals that can be taken to the Final Awards Board

The grounds for appeal about the award of credits or grades on the Access to HE Diploma are restricted to:

- evidence of administrative or procedural error
- extenuating circumstances that, for good reason, could not be notified prior to the Final Awards Board.

The Final Awards Board cannot receive new representations about academic judgements. If a student has concerns about assessment decisions relating to the achievement of credits or grades, they should discuss these with the relevant member of the course team when the assessed work is first returned to them. They may subsequently make a representation through the formal representation procedure described above. A student may, however, appeal the grading decision that results as a consequence of a representation, but only on the grounds detailed above.

Where judgements made by the Final Awards Board lead to a student being allowed further time for the submission of work, the final assessment decisions about that work and the resulting student record must be signed off by a representative from Gateway Qualifications with appropriate authority such as the lead moderator, or chair of the Final Awards Board.

4. Appeals as a consequence of decisions made by Final Awards Boards

In these circumstances the grounds for appeal are still restricted to:

- evidence of administrative or procedural error in the assessment process
- extenuating circumstances that, for good reason, could not be notified prior to the Final Awards Board.

Appeals process

- If a student is dissatisfied with the decisions of the Final Awards Board and wishes to appeal their grades, or who has identified administrative or procedural error(s), must in the first instance contact their centre. Centres who wish to support student appeals must contact Gateway Qualifications (see contact details below) outlining the circumstances and provide relevant evidence to support the appeal.
- Gateway Qualifications will only consider an appeal directly from a student if they have first appealed to their centre. If the centre does not support the appeal, the student may still appeal directly to Gateway Qualifications (see contact details below). Student initiated appeals must include a summary of the relevant appeal dialogue with the centre. The Investigating Officer (see below) will contact the centre during consideration of the appeal.
- Appeals must be received within two calendar months from the date of the Final Awards Board, although to best support the interests of the learner, it would be advisable to submit appeals as soon as possible after the date of the Final Awards Board.
- Receipt of the appeal will be acknowledged with three working days from receipt by Gateway Qualifications.
- An Investigating Officer will be appointed by Gateway Qualifications to consider the appeal. This will normally be the Director of Access to HE but, if necessary, may also be conducted by an alternative senior officer e.g. the Director of Quality.
- The Investigating Officer will contact the centre and/or student within ten working days from receipt of the appeal to confirm whether the appeal can be considered.
- The Investigating Officer may contact the student, centre, external moderator and any other relevant person(s) or organisation(s) to request any further evidence or clarification necessary to consider the appeal.
- The Investigating Officer will normally conclude the consideration of the appeal within twenty working days from receipt of the appeal and will provide a written response to the student/centre outlining their findings and decision.
- Where judgements made by the Investigating Officer lead to a student being allowed further time for the submission of work, the final assessment decisions about that work and the resulting student record must be signed off by someone with appropriate authority, such as the lead moderator, Gateway Qualifications Access Quality Manager or chair of the awards board.
- If the student/centre is dissatisfied with how the appeal has been considered, they should contact the chair of the 'Access to HE Committee' at Gateway Qualifications within two weeks of the written response from the Investigating Officer. S/he will arrange for a suitable external committee member to investigate whether the appeal has been considered in accordance with the stated procedure.

Contact details

If you wish to discuss any aspect of this policy and/or have a related query please contact the support team by:

Telephone: 0300 330 35 35
Email: leigh.sherwin@gatewayqualifications.org.uk
Post: Gateway Qualifications, Gateway House, 3 Tollgate Business Park,
COLCHESTER, CO3 8AB

Please send any appeals to:

The Access Support Officer
Gateway Qualifications

Email: leigh.sherwin@gatewayqualifications.org.uk