ACADEMIC APPEALS GUIDANCE

It is important to find out enough about the appeals process so that you can judge whether a formal appeal represents the best way forward for you. Please read and consider these guidelines and the College regulations (https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx) carefully before submitting an appeal. Please note that there are a number of circumstances in which an academic appeal may be lodged and that different grounds for appeal may apply depending upon the particular category of appeal. For ease of reference the guidelines below are provided for each of the separate categories and are listed under the following headings:

APPEALS AGAINST THE OUTCOMES OF EXAMINATIONS

APPEALS AGAINST THE PENALTIES IMPOSED UNDER THE REGULATIONS ON ASSESSMENT OFFENCES

APPEALS AGAINST TERMINATION OF REGISTRATION THROUGH THE FORMAL WARNING PROCEDURE

APPEALS AGAINST A DECISION MADE BY A FITNESS TO PRACTISE PANEL

RECONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FOR ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT

The Advice and Support Centre at the Students’ Union is also able to provide support and advice from their advisors. You may contact them by e mail at advice@su.rhul.ac.uk.

APPEALS AGAINST THE OUTCOMES OF EXAMINATIONS

Please read the following section if you are intending to appeal against:

- examination results and award classifications;
- failure to progress owing to failure in examinations;
- termination of registration by the College Board of Examiners owing to failure in examinations;
- in the case of Research Degree students, failure in a formal upgrade review or the outcome of the final examination.

Administrative error: If you suspect that an administrative error has been made in calculating or recording your results, the most effective course of action in the first instance is to contact your department informally so that the accuracy of your results can be checked. If you submit an appeal on these grounds without having checked your results with your department, you will be asked to do this first so that you can receive an answer almost immediately. An appeal can take several weeks to investigate.

Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances: If you are uncertain whether your extenuating circumstances have been considered by your Department/School’s Sub-board please check with your department/school before submitting an academic appeal.

What qualifies for consideration as an appeal?
The following are the only grounds on which an appeal can be made:

- your performance in the assessment or review was substantially affected by circumstances of which the panel or examiners had not been made aware and which you could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed before the outcome had been determined;
- there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the assessment or review, or administrative errors, which might cause reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome would have been the same if the irregularities or errors had not occurred;
- there is evidence of prejudice, bias or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners or panel members such that the outcome should not be allowed to stand.

What does not qualify for consideration as an appeal

Extenuating Circumstances: The rules regarding extenuating circumstances are explained in the Instructions to Candidates (https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/examinations/home.aspx). Students who wish to have their circumstances taken into account are expected to submit a request with supporting evidence before the deadline set by the department. Requests for special consideration are not considered retrospectively and the private or confidential nature of circumstances will not be accepted as grounds for appeal.

Requests for work to be remarked: The College will not consider appeals against academic judgement, including requests for work to be re-marked. This is because robust mechanisms exist to ensure that marking standards are appropriate. If you are uncertain why you received a particular outcome or mark you may wish to discuss this with your Personal Advisor, when they are available, who also will be able to discuss your academic progress in more general terms.

Other: The College also will not investigate appeals:

- for which there is no supporting evidence, including unsubstantiated allegations of bias or prejudice on the part of the examiners;
- of an unspecific or general nature;
- which are not submitted in writing;
- which are submitted after the deadline without an acceptable reason;
- from third parties without the written consent of the student concerned.

If an appeal is considered by the Head of Student Administration to be frivolous or malicious, you may be liable for disciplinary action under the Student Disciplinary Regulations (https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/our-college-regulations/our-college-regulations.aspx).

APPEALS AGAINST THE PENALTIES IMPOSED UNDER THE REGULATIONS ON ASSESSMENT OFFENCES

Please read the following section if you are intending to appeal against:

- a penalty imposed under the Regulations on Assessment Offences.

What qualifies for consideration as an appeal

The appeal process is the framework in which the College can investigate any genuine concerns about the decisions reached by either an academic department, or the Vice-Principal in relation to an assessment offence. College regulations set out the only grounds on which an appeal can be made:

- that there is evidence of a failure to follow the procedures set out in these regulations which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of the decision;
- that fresh evidence can be presented which the student could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed before the decision was made and which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of that decision;
- that the decision was perverse given the evidence which was available at the time.
The College will not investigate appeals:

- for which there is no supporting evidence, including unsubstantiated allegations of bias or prejudice on the part of staff involved in the case;
- of an unspecific or general nature;
- which are not submitted in writing;
- from third parties without the written consent of the student concerned.

APPEALS AGAINST TERMINATION OF REGISTRATION THROUGH THE FORMAL WARNING PROCEDURE

Please read the following section if you are intending to appeal against:

- a decision to terminate their registration through the formal warning procedure.

What qualifies for consideration as an appeal

College regulations set out the only grounds on which an appeal can be made:

- that there is evidence of a failure to follow the procedures set out in these regulations which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of the decision;
- that fresh evidence can be presented which the student could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed before the decision was made and which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of that decision;

The College will not investigate appeals:

- for which there is no supporting evidence, including unsubstantiated allegations of bias or prejudice on the part of staff involved in the case;
- of an unspecific or general nature;
- which are not submitted in writing;
- from third parties without the written consent of the student concerned.

APPEALS AGAINST A DECISION MADE BY A FITNESS TO PRACTISE PANEL

Please read the following section if you are intending to appeal against:

- a decision made under the fitness to practise procedures.

What qualifies for consideration as an appeal

The Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures set out the only grounds on which an appeal can be made:

- There is evidence of a failure to follow procedures which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of the Fitness to Practise Panel's decision
- Fresh evidence can be presented which the student could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed before the Fitness to Practise Panel's decision was made which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of that decision
- The panel's decision was perverse given the evidence which was available at the time.

The College will not investigate appeals:

- for which there is no supporting evidence, including unsubstantiated allegations of bias or prejudice on the part of staff involved in the case;
• of an unspecific or general nature;
• which are not submitted in writing;
• from third parties without the written consent of the student concerned.

RECONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS FOR ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT

Please read the following section if you are intending to:
• request a reconsideration of a decision made about access arrangements for assessment.

What qualifies for consideration as a request for reconsideration?

College regulations set out the only grounds on which such a request for reconsideration can be made:

• There is new documentary evidence to be taken into account which s/he could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed at the time of the original application
• There is evidence of administrative or procedural errors, which might cause reasonable doubt as to whether the outcome would have been the same if the irregularities or errors had not occurred
• The original conclusion reached by the College Board of Examiners Executive Committee was unreasonable given the evidence with which it was presented

The College will not investigate requests:

• for which there is no supporting evidence, including unsubstantiated allegations of bias or prejudice on the part of staff involved in the case;
• of an unspecific or general nature;
• which are not submitted in writing;
• from third parties without the written consent of the student concerned.

HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPEAL

All appeals (including reconsideration of requests for access arrangements for assessment) must be submitted in writing to appeals@rhul.ac.uk within 15 working days of the date on which you were formally notified of the decision against which you are appealing.

Originals of any supporting documentary evidence must be sent, accompanied by a copy of your appeal form, to:

Student Administration
Arts Annexe
Royal Holloway University of London
Egham
Surrey
TW20 0EX

If you wish to request an extension to the submission deadline, please contact the Student Administration before the deadline, stating the reasons for your request. Once you have submitted your full appeal, all communication must be made in writing (letter or e-mail).

Your submission must include the appeals form, completed in full, and all documentary evidence on which you wish to rely in the appeal. It is important that you include in your submission all the issues and supporting evidence which you wish to be investigated and considered. The College may refuse to take on any additional matters which are introduced later in the process. All medical/ personal evidence must be written in English, certified translations must be provided where the originals are in another language.
In general, students are expected to act on their own behalf when dealing with offices and departments within the College, and when requesting services or making complaints. However, there may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a friend or family member to deal with your appeal on your behalf. In such cases you must still complete and sign the appeals form, after which we will only communicate with your representative. If you do appoint a representative you must be sure that s/he knows about your appeal and is able to devote sufficient time to it. Please note that it is not considered appropriate to appoint someone from the legal profession on a professional basis to act on your behalf as this is an internal process.

If you require advice on the appeals process, the grounds for appeal or on requirements for documentary evidence, contact Student Administration in the first instance so that you can be put in touch with somebody who is able to help. The Advice and Support Centre at the Students’ Union is also able to provide support and advice from their advisors. You may contact them by e mail at advice@su.rhul.ac.uk.

HOW YOUR APPEAL WILL BE INVESTIGATED

Your appeal will be investigated by an Investigating Officer from Student Administration, who will decide in the first instance whether or not the issues you have raised fall within the remit of the appeals procedure, and whether or not you have presented reasonable grounds and provided sufficient evidence in support of your claims. Where there are inadequate grounds for an appeal or insufficient evidence, your appeal may be dismissed without further investigation. Please note that in certain circumstances it may be more appropriate for your concerns to be investigated under the Complaints Procedure for Students http://www.rhul.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/academicappealsandcollegecomplaints.aspx or some other procedure. We will inform you if we believe this is the case and will provide further guidance at that stage.

If the Investigating Officer decides to proceed with the investigation, this will normally be done through written correspondence. Please note: Staff in your department may be shown all or part of your appeal submission and be asked to comment in writing. Exceptionally the Investigating Officer may decide to meet with one or more individuals as part of the investigation, in which case a written record is kept of any matters arising during the meeting which are relevant to the investigation and would be likely to influence the outcome.

We will try to reach a decision on your appeal as quickly as possible; however, a thorough investigation takes time, and there are times of year when staff are not easily available. In general we aim to provide an initial response within two months, though it may not always be possible to do so. If it is not possible to provide an initial response within two months you can expect to receive a letter from us advising you of the delay. Students who are continuing their studies with the College should therefore make sure that they make appropriate plans. For example, you should register and prepare for examinations (including Summer rests) at the specified time, even if you are waiting to find out from the appeal whether or not you will actually sit the examinations. You can seek advice on this from Student Administration (e-mail student-administration@royalholloway.ac.uk), which will make any necessary arrangements once the outcome of your appeal is known.

OUTCOMES OF THE APPEAL PROCESS AND REQUESTING A REVIEW

The Investigating Officer will write to you with the initial findings from their investigation, setting out the pertinent facts and judgements, and giving reasons for any conclusions.

The Investigating Officer may decide not to uphold your appeal, in which case the original decision will stand.

If your appeal is partially or fully upheld, the Investigating Officer and/or the Director of Academic Services or nominee will normally make recommendations on what should be done before informing you of the initial findings. For example, the examination board or review panel may be asked to review some specific aspect of its original decision. If your appeal is against termination of registration, recommendations may be made to a Vice-Principal about whether, and under what conditions, you might be permitted to return to College.
If procedural irregularities are discovered, but the irregularities do not cast doubt over the original decision, your appeal will not be upheld. However, this may still result in College processes being reviewed and changed in the future.

You will be given 10 working days in which to comment on the officer’s initial findings. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome set out in the Initial Findings letter, you may request a review of the decision by completing this form https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/assets/docs/doc/request-for-a-review-form-2016-17.docx

Please be aware that the only grounds on which you may request a review are as follows:

- fresh evidence can be presented which you could not with reasonable diligence have submitted with your initial appeal and which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of that decision;
- there is evidence of a failure to follow the procedures set out in the Regulations which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of the decision;
- the decision was perverse given the evidence which was available at the time.

A review will not normally result in a full reinvestigation of your case.

Once the Head of Student Administration is satisfied that the investigation is complete, you will be sent a Completion of Procedures Letter confirming the College’s final decision on your appeal.

THE OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR (OIA)

Once a decision has been reached on your appeal the College will not act on any further requests to investigate the matter. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, however, you may be able to ask for your case to be reviewed by the OIA. This usually happens only after the College’s internal procedures have been completed. You will be advised by the College on how you may request a Completion of Procedures Letter and you will be provided with information about the OIA at the appropriate time. You will have twelve months from the date upon which you are issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter in which to refer your case to the OIA.