



DistanceLearningCentre.com Ltd

Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

This document sets out the DistanceLearningCentre.com Ltd.'s policy and procedure for cases where a learner disputes and challenges assessment/exam decisions of a tutor/assessor, and decisions of academic misconduct (malpractice and plagiarism).

2. Scope of policy

2.1 Appeals of internal assessment/exam and academic misconduct decisions apply to all externally moderated accredited programmes and pathways at the DistanceLearningCentre.com with the exception of appeals relating to the situation outlined in point 2.2 below.

2.2 If a learner undertaking a work-based placement is suspended from duty pending a disciplinary enquiry by the workplace; no further assessments/exams will take place until the issue(s) of concern have been resolved.

2.3 Learners have a right to approach the Awarding Body through the Quality Department for appeals related to external assessments.

2.4 Learners are assured that they will not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of making an appeal in good faith.

2.5 This policy and procedure is applicable to all learners on externally moderated accredited learning programmes or pathways at the DistanceLearningCentre.com, specifically level 3 diplomas/courses, full or partial achievements, as well as the Progression Awards qualifications.

3. Definitions

3.1 A **learner** is any person who is enrolled on a programme or pathway of study leading to a recognised qualification with the DistanceLearningCentre.com.

3.2 A **tutor** or **assessor** is a member of staff facilitating any assessment/exam and/or grading activity.

3.3 **Lead internal verifiers (also known as internal moderators)** are nominated persons in the Organisation who provide advice and guidance on assessment decisions, and learner appeals.

4. Procedure

Appeals against internal assessment/exam decisions

4.1 In such cases where a learner disputes the grading decision of his/her formally submitted work the learner can appeal against the decision of the tutor/assessor.

Appeals will follow a number of stages as outlined below:

4.2 Stage 1

4.2.1 In the first instance the learner must lodge an appeal regarding the assessment/exam decision to the relevant tutor/assessor. The appeal must be forwarded to the tutor/assessor within 5 working days of receipt of the assessment/exam decision, except under exceptional or extenuating circumstances, where the appeal can be forwarded after 5 working days. However, the learner must provide details of the exceptional or extenuating circumstances, which have resulted in the appeal being forwarded outside of the 5 working days.

4.2.2 The tutor/assessor will respond within 5 working days of receiving the appeal. If a tutor/assessor is on leave this period may be longer as it must be the tutor/assessor who marked the work to whom stage 1 of the appeal is made. The response from the tutor/assessor will be one of the following:

- A further explanation of the assessment/exam decision and a reaffirmation of the grade awarded.
- A re-grading and amendment to the learner's assessment feedback sheet and assessment record. Please note your assessment/exam grade(s) can be either increased or lowered.
- If an administrative error has been made (for example, in the completion or calculation of the unit grade profile) the error will be corrected.
- If none of the above then the tutor/assessor will refer the learner to stage 2 below and the completion of the Academic Appeal Form.

4.3 Stage 2

4.3.1 On receipt of a completed Academic Appeal Form (Section 1 completed by the learner) the tutor/assessor will forward this appeal form to the Quality Department who will contact the learner for confirmation that they would like to proceed. In addition, the tutor/assessor will also provide the original assessment/exam, the original assessment feedback sheet and, if appropriate, the candidate's evidence for the appeal.

4.3.2 Please note that there is a charge of £20.00 for each assessment/exam to be re-marked which must be paid along with the submission of the Academic Appeal Form. The £20.00 fee is non-refundable if after the re-marking of the assessment/exam the overall grade of the assessment/exam remains unchanged. If, however, after the re-marking of the assessment/exam the overall grade of the assessment/exam changes (increases or decreases) then the £20.00 fee will be refunded to the learner.

4.3.3 Upon receipt of the learner's Academic Appeal Form the lead internal verifier will review the original assessment/exam decision by evaluating all the evidence presented. This activity will be completed within 5 working days (assuming the lead internal verifier is not on leave).

The lead internal verifier will complete section 2 of the Academic Appeal Form and will respond with one of the following:

- Conclude there is no case for re-grading the assessment/exam (that is the tutor/assessor's original decision is confirmed), the grade indicators are included in the unit grade profile, and the decision is recorded.
- Recommend a change in the assessment/exam grade if the lead internal verifier's evaluation concludes that there may be a case for re-grading. Please note that your assessment/exam grade(s) can be increased or lowered.

4.3.4 If the learner disputes the decision of the lead internal verifier, then the learner's assessment/exam will be referred by the Quality Department to the external verifier (also known as an external moderator or external quality reviewer) of the relevant awarding body.

The tutor/assessor will inform the learner of the next stage of the process and refer the learner to stage 3.

4.4 Stage 3

- In these circumstances, the external verifier will need to consider the assessed work (assessment/exam) directly and satisfy him/herself that an error of judgement has been made in order to approve a change to the assessment/exam grade. Any such changes will be formally recorded.
- Please note, additional fees will be incurred in order for the external verifier to consider the assessed work. This may vary depending on the awarding body and the learner will be made aware of any additional fees before proceeding.
- No adjustment to tutor/assessor grades can be made without the written agreement of the external verifier.
- Please note that the external verifier can increase or lower your assessment/exam grade(s).
- The external verifier will complete section 4 of the Academic Appeal Form is completed.
- The external verifier's judgement is final.

5. Procedure

Appeals against internal academic misconduct decisions

5.1 In such cases where a learner disputes the decision resulting from academic misconduct (malpractice and plagiarism) of his/her formally submitted work the learner can appeal against the decision of the Quality Department.

Appeals will follow a number of stages as outlined below:

5.2 Stage 1

5.2.1 The learner must complete section 2 of the Academic Appeal Form and forward this to their tutor/assessor who will in turn forward the completed Academic Appeal Form to the Quality Department. The appeal must be forwarded to the tutor/assessor within 5 working days of receipt of the academic misconduct decision, except under exceptional or extenuating circumstances, where the appeal can be forwarded after 5 working days. However, the learner must provide details of the exceptional or extenuating circumstances, which have resulted in the appeal being forwarded outside of the 5 working days.

5.2.2 Upon receipt of the learner's Academic Appeal Form the Quality Department will review the original academic misconduct decision by evaluating all the evidence presented, including any new evidence made available. This activity will be completed within 5 working days (assuming no members of the Quality Department are on leave. If members of the Quality Department are on leave the learner will be informed of when he/she will be contacted by the Quality Department with the outcome of the appeal).

The Quality Department will complete section 5 of the Academic Appeal Form and will respond with one of the following:

- that the original academic misconduct decision is upheld and the decision is recorded.
- that the original academic misconduct decision is not upheld, but rather the appeal is upheld and the decision is recorded. In this case the Quality Department will liaise with the tutor to facilitate the return of the learner to resume their studies.

5.2.3 If the learner disputes the decision of the Quality Department, the Quality Department will refer the matter to the external verifier of the relevant awarding body.

The Quality Department will inform the learner of the next stage of the process and refer the learner to stage 2, below.

5.3 Stage 2

- In these circumstances, the external verifier will need to consider the details of the academic misconduct and satisfy him/herself that an error of judgement has been made in considering the academic misconduct. Any such decisions will be formally recorded.
- Please note, additional fees will be incurred in order for the external verifier to consider the academic misconduct. This may vary depending on the awarding body and the learner will be made aware of any additional fees before proceeding.
- No adjustment can be made without the written agreement of the external verifier.
- The external verifier will complete section 6 of the Academic Appeal Form.
- The external verifier's judgement is final.

**DistanceLearningCentre.com Ltd: Dates revised: 02/10/12; 22/01/14; 13/11/15; 07/12/17;
31/07/18; 06/08/18; 12/12/19; 11/11/20; 04/05/22; 31/08/22; 08/02/2023; 12/05/23**