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**Avon College**

**Academic Appeals Policy**

**2025–2028**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Avon College like to deliver different academic programmes ( FE and HE) in partnership with a number of UK awarding institutions. In line with these partnerships and sector expectations, this policy outlines the framework through which students may request a review of academic decisions, particularly relating to assessment outcomes, progression, or awards.

1.2 The College is committed to handling academic appeals in a fair, timely, and transparent manner. While certain procedures may be specific to the awarding body, the principles outlined in this document apply across all academic programmes.

1.3 This policy is informed by the **QAA UK Quality Code**, sector good practice, and the requirements of the College’s validating partners.

**2. Definition of an Academic Appeal**

2.1 An academic appeal is a formal request by a student for a review of a decision made by an academic board responsible for assessment outcomes, progression, or the conferment of an award.

2.2 Appeals may only be submitted on specific grounds, which include:

* **Procedural Error**: Where academic or administrative procedures were not followed correctly and had a material impact on the outcome.
* **Irregularities in Assessment**: Where instructions or assessment arrangements were flawed in a way that affected student performance.
* **Exceptional Circumstances**: Where unforeseen personal circumstances negatively affected the student’s performance and could not be disclosed at the time of assessment for valid reasons.

2.3 Appeals based purely on disagreement with academic judgement (e.g. marks awarded) are not considered valid grounds and will not be accepted.

**3. Submitting an Academic Appeal**

3.1 Appeals should be raised as soon as possible, and no later than **20 working days** from the date of the decision being appealed.

3.2 Appeals are considered through a three-stage process:

**Stage 1: Informal Resolution**

Students are encouraged to first discuss concerns informally with the relevant lecturer, tutor, or Programme Leader to clarify the rationale behind the academic decision. Many queries are resolved at this stage without the need for formal procedures.

**Stage 2: Formal Academic Appeal**

If unresolved, students may submit a formal appeal using the **Academic Appeal Form** available from the Registry or Student Services. This must include:

* The decision being appealed
* Grounds for appeal, clearly stated
* Supporting evidence
* A summary of any prior informal attempts at resolution

An academic manager or nominated official, not previously involved in the matter, will review the appeal. A written response will be issued within **21 working days**.

**Stage 3: Review Panel Hearing**

Where a student remains dissatisfied and has grounds to believe the appeal was not handled appropriately at Stage 2, they may request a hearing. A panel comprising senior academic staff not previously involved in the decision will be convened to assess whether the appeal process was properly followed.

The panel may recommend the decision be reconsidered. The outcome will be confirmed in writing.

**4. External Review (Validating Partner or OIA)**

4.1 Once Avon College’s internal appeal procedures are exhausted, students may pursue external review, either through:

* **The Awarding Partner**: If the appeal concerns an award validated by a partner institution, the student may be referred to that institution’s own appeals procedure.
* **The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)**: Eligible students may request a review via the OIA once a **Completion of Procedures (CoP)** letter has been issued.

4.2 The CoP letter summarises the case, confirms internal completion, and provides guidance on how to contact the OIA. Students have **12 months** from the date of the CoP letter to lodge an appeal with the OIA.

Website: [www.oiahe.org.uk](https://www.oiahe.org.uk)

**5. Responsibilities**

* **Students**: Responsible for submitting appeals on time, with full supporting documentation.
* **Academic Tutors and Programme Leaders**: Handle informal resolution and advise students.
* **Academic Registry**: Coordinates appeal submissions and correspondence.
* **Senior Academic Staff**: Conduct formal reviews and chair panel hearings.
* **Awarding Bodies**: Oversee external appeal procedures and issue final decisions as needed.

**6. Managing Unreasonable Behaviour**

Avon College recognises that academic appeals can be stressful; however, all parties are expected to act reasonably and courteously. The College may take action if a student:

* Submits excessive, repetitive, or unsubstantiated appeals
* Behaves in a hostile or abusive manner
* Makes unreasonable demands or refuses to engage constructively

In such cases, the College reserves the right to limit or terminate the consideration of the appeal and, where necessary, invoke disciplinary procedures.

**7. Confidentiality and Record-Keeping**

All appeals are handled with due regard to confidentiality. Records are securely maintained for a minimum of **18 months** and will be used for quality assurance and monitoring purposes