

Appeals Process

**Information for appeals on
estimated assessment grades
by students and providers**



Appeals Process - Extraordinary Regulatory Framework 2020

The following document sets out the procedure for considering appeals from students and providers against **calculated assessment grades (grades awarded to assessments submitted after 20 March 2020)**.

1 Appeals against administrative or procedural errors made before 20 March 2020 and appeals against **actual assessment grades** (grades awarded to work submitted before 20 March 2020) are not covered through the Extraordinary Regulatory Framework and therefore out of scope for this process. **A student appeal about an actual assessment grade must be initially addressed to the provider.**

Introduction

2 We recognise that some students may feel disappointed that they have not been able to complete their assessments. We are focused on making sure students are not disadvantaged by these unprecedented circumstances. This includes the right to appeal, where appropriate.

3 This document sets out the procedures for considering appeals relating to students due to complete the Access to HE Diploma before 31 July 2020 who receive **calculated assessment grades**.

4 If students do not feel that the calculated grades awarded reflect the grades they were likely to have achieved in normal circumstances, they have the opportunity to appeal. Provider representatives have a right to appeal on behalf of a student.

5 The grounds for appeal on the Access to HE Diploma are restricted to:

- evidence of administrative error (for example, incorrect recording of actual or estimated grades submitted to the AVA by tutor, not all available evidence used to make judgement, unit midpoint grade not calculated correctly), or
- evidence of procedural error (for example, estimated grades not tested correctly by provider or AVA, AVA adjustment of grades not based on threshold indicators).

6 Appeals will be considered by an Access Validating Agency (AVA). The AVA will not accept appeals against:

- professional judgements of course tutors
- the efficacy of the evidence presented to support such professional judgements.

7 Provider representatives may appeal on behalf of students or in their own right. The grounds for appeals from Access to HE providers are restricted to:

- evidence of administrative error by AVA (for example, AVA did not review all available evidence used to support estimations)
- evidence of procedural error by AVA (for example, incorrect processing of actual or estimated grades, adjustment of grades not based on threshold indicators)
- sanctions applied as a result of maladministration or malpractice allegations.

The process for making an appeal

8 The Appeal Submission Form must be used to lodge an appeal with the AVA (this form can be downloaded from the AVA website). Appeals must be submitted within 10 days of publication of results.

9 The appeal submission should include the basis and grounds for the appeal and all supporting evidence must be provided. Evidence supplied must be appropriate to the nature of the appeal and should clearly be applicable to the case. Where possible, the appellant's narrative should refer to evidence explicitly and explain any contextual issues arising such that the evidence is clearly linked to the nature of the specific appeal.

10 Appellants are also asked to emphasise facts when they are detailing points of appeal and should not engage in unnecessary reference to opinion or emotive argument which cannot be substantiated by evidence. Issues being appealed against should be clearly identified as separate points.

Timescale

11 All appeals will be acknowledged within 10 working days.

12 An AVA investigating officer will conduct an assessment and review of the appeal. Should the appeal not fall within the scope described in paragraphs 5 and 7 above, the appellant will be notified within 10 working days of initial receipt.

13 The investigating officer will write to the appellant providing a judgement. This will be issued within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal.

14 All appeals must be submitted to the AVA no later than **Monday 27 July 2020**.

Regulations in relation to appeals

15 This appeals process falls within the QAA Extraordinary Regulatory Framework for the award of Access to HE Diplomas.

Investigation of appeals

16 The investigating officer will investigate the appeal based upon the narrative statement of the student, the chronology of events and the evidence associated. The decision will be based upon due consideration of **all** evidence submitted by the appellant and/or referred to in the submission form.

17 It is the responsibility of the AVA to ensure that the investigating officer is suitably competent and has no personal interest in the decision being appealed.

18 It is the responsibility of QAA to ensure that all panel members considering complaints against the outcomes of appeals are suitably competent and have no personal interest in the decision being appealed.

Outcome of appeals

19 The appellant will receive the outcome of the appeal in writing within five working days of completion of the investigation.

20 There are three potential outcomes of an appeal regarding a student's results:

- The appeal is upheld and the student's grades are amended. An amended grade profile and a revised transcript will be provided in line with the AVA's usual procedures.
- The appeal is upheld, but the student's grades are not amended as a result. This would be a possible outcome if a review of evidence, which was previously available but not considered, did not affect the final grade judgement.
- The appeal is not upheld. The student's calculated grades are confirmed.

21 There are two potential outcomes of a provider appeal against sanctions applied as a result of maladministration or malpractice allegations:

- The appeal is upheld and sanctions are dropped.
- The appeal is not upheld and sanctions are maintained.

22 If the outcome of the appeal from one appellant is upheld and the investigating officer has reason to believe that other students may have been similarly affected, further investigations will be held. The outcomes of these investigations may affect the calculated grades of other students and may result in sanctions being placed on the provider.

Appeals against the outcome

23 Appellants cannot appeal the outcome. If the appellant believes the appeals process has not been followed, they should make a written complaint to QAA within 15 working days of receipt of the outcome letter. Any such complaint will be managed through [QAA complaints processes](#). Once a complaint has been received by QAA, the complaint is logged and acknowledged within three working days of receipt.

24 Should the complaint fall outside the scope of QAA, the appellant will be advised of this in writing within five working days of receipt of complaint.

25 QAA will investigate a complaint and seek any further information that may be required. When consideration of the complaint is complete, we will contact the appellant via their preferred means of communication to explain the outcome. We aim to respond to complaints within 20 working days of receipt. However, if a conclusion cannot be reached within this timeframe, the appellant will be notified in writing of the reasons why.

26 The outcome of the complaint will be communicated to the appellant. Please note the conclusions drawn will be final.

Students wishing to sit assessments

27 Subject to availability and provider approval, students may choose to sit their assessments at the earliest reasonable opportunity when all providers are operating normally. Students should be aware that taking their assessments later may impact their progression to university in September.