

Academic Appeals

City University appeal form and guidance notes for research students

Occasionally things might go wrong or you will experience circumstances outside your control which impact on your academic assessment, award or progression. City has a number of support mechanisms in place to ensure these are dealt with as quickly as possible and you should make use of these at the earliest possible opportunity. The appeals process is intended for the very rare cases where no resolution or remedy was possible at an earlier stage (i.e. prior to you receiving formal notification of your progression or examination results).

See the **Guide for Research Students**, the **Student Centre intranet**, the **Union Support Service** (<http://www.culsu.co.uk/advice/>) and additional information supplied to you by your **Department** for the full range of advice and services available to you.

Introduction

Please read through the guidance notes before making your appeal. This will help ensure your form is complete and your appeal can be dealt with efficiently.

IMPORTANT STEPS BEFORE YOU APPEAL

Before you appeal you should make sure that you have sought advice and guidance about your concerns. It may be that there are quick steps that can be taken to resolve your problem or that the appeals process is not the best way forward. Your **Supervisor** and **Senior Tutor for Research** will be able to advise you and the **Union Support Service** (<http://www.culsu.co.uk/advice/>) is an excellent source of independent guidance and support about problems in general, as well as about appeals.

Use the quick guide below as well as the guidance given for each section of the form to help ensure you avoid some of the common problems people have when preparing an appeal.

GUIDANCE NOTES

Data Protection Privacy Notice

City, University of London is the data controller for the personal data processed to investigate your complaint/appeal/extenuating circumstances. City considers that the lawful basis for processing your personal data falls under Article 6(1)(b) (performance of a contract) of GDPR because it is necessary as part of the contract between City, University of London and its students. In addition, City considers the processing of any special category personal data – (race, ethnic origin, politics, religion, trade union membership, genetics, biometrics (where used for ID purposes, health, sex life or sexual orientation) provided as part of the complaints/appeals/extenuating circumstances process will fall under Article 9(2)(a) (explicit consent) of the GDPR as the personal data is provided on a voluntary basis by the student to support their complaint/appeal/extenuating circumstances.

City will share your data with those conducting and assisting the investigation and resolution of your complaint/appeal/case/extenuating circumstances. This will always been done under a duty of confidence and expectation that confidentiality will remain in place once the complaint, appeal, case and/or extenuating circumstances has been resolved. Your personal data will be retained for 6 years after the last action on the case.

The rights you have under the data protection legislation are listed below, but not all of the rights may apply in all circumstances.

- right to be informed
- right of access
- right to rectification
- right to erasure
- right to restrict processing
- right to object to data processing
- right to data portability
- right to object
- rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling

For more information, please visit www.city.ac.uk/about/city-information/legal

If you have any concerns about how your personal data is processed, you can raise them with the ACE team or, you may contact the Information Compliance Team at dataprotection@city.ac.uk or phone 0207 040 4000, who will liaise with City's Data Protection Officer to answer your query. If you are dissatisfied with City's response you may also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.org.uk

GUIDANCE NOTES

Quick guide to preparing an appeal

- Read through the form carefully and make sure you follow each instruction.
- Check how much time you have to prepare your appeal straight away so you are not rushed.
- Keep all of your supporting statements clear and to the point. A longer statement does not increase your chances of your appeal being upheld and may make it difficult for the reviewers to identify the key elements in your case. Ask the **Union Support Service** for help if you are struggling to prepare your supporting statements.
- Make sure all your supporting evidence is directly relevant to your case and is objective, independent, third party evidence (see Section 3 page 14 for more guidance). Only send COPIES of your evidence, keep the originals yourself.
- Make sure that you have completed every section. If in doubt ask someone else to read your appeal form for you so they can give you feedback on whether they think the form is complete, correct and clearly states the grounds for your appeal.
- Keep a copy of your appeal form for your records.
- Where possible submit all of your documents together, either by email or in hard copy so that there is less chance of any items going astray.

Completing and submitting your form

This is a digital version of the form. You can save a copy and complete it in your own time. If you need the form to be provided in an alternative format please email ace@city.ac.uk.

If you wish to add information or expand on your appeal, you can do so on a separate sheet of paper but it is helpful if you explain your appeal as concisely as possible.

The form is in four sections:

- 1) **My details**
- 2) **Grounds for my appeal**
- 3) **Supporting evidence**
- 4) **Declaration**

Sections 1, 2 and 3 each have a guidance note before the section of the form telling you how to complete the section. There is also a **Feedback** section which is optional and does not form part of your appeal, and an additional guidance note at the end of the document which tells you what to expect after you have submitted your appeal.

If you are submitting your form in hard copy you don't have to print off any pages headed 'Guidance Notes' – but you can if you prefer.

You must submit your form within **28 calendar days** of the formal notification of the decision concerning your registration/ progression status or the outcome of your examination.

Where do I send my form?

Research students in Schools should check with their School Office to whom they should submit their form to. Students registered on validated research degree programmes should submit their form to Academic

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Services by emailing ace@city.ac.uk or submit it in hard copy for the attention of the Appeals Administrator (see <http://www.city.ac.uk/about/education/academic-services> for address).

You can submit your form by email with your attachments or by hard copy with your documents enclosed with the form. We would recommend that you send your form and accompanying documents together so you can be sure they have all been received.

What happens next?

You will be sent an acknowledgement of receipt of your appeal. At the end of the form on page 18 there is guidance on the possible outcomes of your appeal.

Useful information

You are encouraged to read through the **Regulation and Policy** related to appeals as these govern the way that your appeal will be processed and considered.

- **Regulation 21 – Appeals Procedures: Research Programmes OR Regulation 21b – Appeals Procedures: Research Programmes in Validated Institutions**
- **Student Appeals Policy**
- **Student Appeals Flowchart: Research Programmes**

<http://www.city.ac.uk/about/education/academic-services/academic-policies-and-regulation/assessment/appeals>

Case studies and FAQs

The **case studies** and **FAQs** are designed to help students avoid common problems and identify the right route to follow when encountering problems. You may find these useful to refer to when considering whether to appeal and subsequently preparing your appeal documentation. You will find them on the Academic Services web pages <http://www.city.ac.uk/about/education/academic-services/student-appeals-and-complaints>.

Further advice and support

Please check the **Guide for Research Students** and other information supplied to you by your **Department** for more information on the sources of advice, guidance and support in your School or Validated Institution.

The **Union Support Service (USS)** provides advice to students on appeals. It is a free and confidential service for students experiencing academic issues including appeals. Visit <http://www.culsu.co.uk/advice/> or telephone 020 7040 5600.

The **Learning Success team** has four teams: Disability Services, Dyslexia Support, Student Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Academic Learning Support. Visit <https://intranet.city.ac.uk/students/learning-success/index.html> or telephone 020 7040 0246.

GUIDANCE NOTES

Section 1: My details

Contact details

You are asked to supply your most up-to-date contact details to ensure that all correspondence concerning your appeal reaches you.

You will need to inform us of any changes in your contact details while your appeal is being considered. It is helpful to let us know in advance if you are going to be away, or unavailable while we are dealing with your appeal.

Preferred contact method

After supplying your contact details you should select your preferred contact method for correspondence concerning your appeal. **Many students use personal email addresses, however, we will send your appeal acknowledgement to your University email address to prevent any possibility that an appeal has been lodged without your knowledge** – all further correspondence will be sent via your preferred method of contact.

Your School/ Validated Institution and Programme of study

Select your School/ Validated Institution from the drop down list and indicate your programme of study.

APPEAL FORM**Section 1: My details**

Surname/ Family Name	
First Name	
Student ID number	
University email	
Alternative email	
Telephone	

Address

Street	
Town	
County	
Country	
Postcode	

Preferred contact method

University email

Alternative email (supplied above)

Hard copy

School/ Validated Institution and programme:

My School / Validated Institution: _____

My programme of study: _____

GUIDANCE NOTES

Section 2: Grounds for my appeal

You may appeal if:

- you have been advised of a change to your registration status OR;
- you have been notified formally of the outcome of your examination.

Appeal deadline:

An appeal must be made within **28 calendar days** of formal notification. Exceptions to this deadline would be unfair to fellow students so if you are having problems preparing your evidence contact the Appeals Administrator immediately to seek advice (contact your School Office or ace@city.ac.uk for students at Validated Institutions). You will still need to submit your form by the deadline but may be given an extension for submission of your evidence.

Grounds

You can appeal on one or more of the following grounds:

1. That there was a **material error**, including a material procedural irregularity, an administrative error and/or prejudice, bias or inadequate assessment in the conduct of the monitoring and assessment of your **progress** i.e. relating to: withdrawal or suspension of registration; transfer between MPhil and PhD; extension of registration beyond the maximum period of candidature; or transfer to writing-up status.
2. That there was a **material error**, including a material procedural irregularity, an administrative error and/ or prejudice, bias or inadequate assessment in the conduct of an **examination**.
3. That there were **previously undisclosed circumstances** affecting your academic progress during the period of candidature or during the examination which:
 - were not made known to the School/ Validated Institution for a demonstrated, valid and overriding reason outside your control AND
 - had an adverse effect on your performance during the period of candidature or the examination.

Appeals are only considered when one or more of the above grounds are met; you cannot appeal simply because you are unhappy with your progress or results.

Appeals cannot be made against academic judgement. In this context academic judgement is the considered application of academic expertise in the assessment and grading of a student's academic work.

What is a material error?

A 'material error' is an error that is both relevant and significant to the decision made in respect of your award or progression.

'Relevance' indicates that the error is directly relevant to the case you are making. 'Significance' means that the error is likely to impact on the decision made regarding your progression or award.

What are undisclosed circumstances?

Students are expected to report any difficulties affecting their academic progress at the time they occur. This is so that action may be taken and advice given at the most relevant time. If you did not do this, your appeal will need to demonstrate that there was a valid and over-riding reason why not.

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Your appeal must also show that the circumstances had an adverse effect on your performance during the period of candidature or examination in question.

In some cases you may be able to demonstrate that the circumstances which affected your performance were unknown or unrecognised by you at the time. In other cases the circumstances may have been known to you but you chose not to disclose them at the time. In both cases you will need to put forward a case for why it would not have been reasonable for the University to expect you to disclose the circumstances at the time of the examination or during your period of candidature.

Possible remedies

The possible outcomes of an appeal are laid out in the **Appeal Regulations 21 for research programmes** and **Appeal Regulations 21b for research programmes at Validated Institutions** which you can find on the **Academic Services** web pages: <http://www.city.ac.uk/about/education/academic-services>. A short guide is also provided on page 18.

You may indicate your preferred outcome in your supporting statement/s and this will be considered if your appeal is accepted. However, you should be aware that the recommendations arising from a successful appeal will depend upon your particular circumstances and the academic requirements of the programme.



APPEAL FORM

Section 2: Grounds for my appeal

Date of formal notification:

Select all that apply

I am appealing on the grounds of **MATERIAL ERROR** in the conduct of the monitoring and assessment of my **progress** and have completed section 2a.

I am appealing on the grounds of **MATERIAL ERROR** in the conduct of my **examination** and have completed section 2b.

I am appealing on the grounds of **UNDISCLOSED CIRCUMSTANCES** and have completed section 2c.



APPEAL FORM

Section 2a: MATERIAL ERROR relating to progress

My appeal relates to:

withdrawal or suspension of registration

transfer between MPhil and PhD

extension of registration beyond the maximum period of candidature

transfer to writing-up status

Give a concise statement of the basis of your appeal:

If you don't have enough room continue on another sheet of paper marked with your student ID number



APPEAL FORM

Section 2b: MATERIAL ERROR relating to an examination

Give a concise statement of the basis of your appeal:

If you don't have enough room continue on another sheet of paper marked with your student ID number



APPEAL FORM

Section 2c: UNDISCLOSED CIRCUMSTANCES

Please select one

I believe that my circumstances have adversely affected my **registration status or progress**.

I believe that my circumstances have adversely affected the **outcome of my examination**.

Please confirm all of the below:

I could not have reasonably been expected to make my circumstances known during the period of my candidature and/ or at the time of my examination

My reasons for not disclosing the circumstances at the time of the assessment were outside my control

I have submitted evidence in support of my circumstances (*see Section 3*)

I am submitting evidence in support of my reasons for non-disclosure (*see Section 3*)



APPEAL FORM

Statements regarding my reasons for non-disclosure

What were your **reasons** for not disclosing your circumstances during your period of candidature/ at the time of your examination?

If you don't have enough room continue on another sheet of paper marked with your student ID number

Please explain why the reasons for non-disclosure were **outside your control**.

If you don't have enough room continue on another sheet of paper marked with your student ID number

APPEAL FORM

Statement about my circumstances

In your statement you should cover:

- What your circumstances were including the relevant dates
- How the circumstances affected your performance
- Why the circumstances were unforeseen and outside your control
- The steps you took to address the circumstances at the time (e.g. seeing a doctor/ counsellor, seeking support through relevant agencies)
- Advice and guidance you sought at the time (e.g. consulting your Supervisor)

Your supporting statement alone will not normally be sufficient without supporting evidence which meets the conditions set out in the Guidance attached to this form (see Section 3 for more information).

A longer statement does not increase the chances of your case being accepted and may make it difficult for the reviewers to identify the key elements in your case. Normally half a page, and no more than one page, of A4 is expected.

Continue on a separate page if required. Make sure you label the page with your student ID number.

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Section 3: Supporting evidence

You must provide evidence in support of your appeal. Statements made without supporting evidence will not be considered.

You must provide a copy of the **formal notification of the decision regarding your registration, progress or examination**.

If your supporting evidence is in a language other than English then you will need to submit a **certified translation**.

List the supporting evidence you are submitting and mark whether it is being submitted by **email** or in **hard copy**. Where possible send your form and supporting evidence in a single email or letter. Mark all supporting evidence with your **student number**.

Where you cannot get the evidence in time for the deadline mark it as 'To follow'. **You must still submit your form by the deadline** and you must notify your School or Validated Institution in advance to agree a deadline for submission of the late evidence.

What constitutes 'evidence'

Evidence should be both relevant and significant. Evidence normally takes the form of written confirmation from an objective, independent, third party. Evidence should relate to facts, not personal opinions. Evidence will often come from an expert or person in authority and will be provided in the form of an official document (e.g. a police report or doctor's note). When you are providing a piece of evidence check its relevance and significance and try to ensure it includes some, if not all, of the following:

- Date that the document was written
- Signature or evidence that it comes from the person making the statement (e.g. from an official email address)
- Evidence that it is independent and verifiable (e.g. the name and address of their company or organisation)
- Evidence that the person has the experience or expertise to make the statement (e.g. their job title or qualifications)

APPEAL FORM

Section 4: Declaration

Please confirm both of the following statements:

I confirm that I have read the guidance accompanying this form

I confirm that the information I have given is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge

In submitting this appeal, I understand that the information I provide and information held by City, University of London will be shared in a confidential way with those managing and considering the appeal and resolution of my case.

Signature:

Date:

A signature is not required if you have sent your form via email. Your appeal acknowledgement will be sent to your University email account (as well as to your preferred contact) to confirm your identity.

Advice and guidance

It will help us improve our services if you let us know which sources of advice and guidance you consulted when preparing your appeal. **This section is optional and your answers will not affect the conduct or outcome of your appeal.**

Union Support Service

Learning Success

Supervisor

Senior Tutor for Research

Other academic advisor in the School/ Validated Institution

School/ Validated Institution Office

School/ Validated Institution Welfare Officer

Other

For 'Other' please provide details below:

Feedback

If you have any comments and suggestions that could help us improve this form or the advice and guidance you have received when preparing your appeal please email ace@city.ac.uk. Your feedback will not affect the conduct or outcome of your appeal.

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What happens next?

You will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your appeal. The majority of cases can be dealt with via our 'initial scrutiny' stage which normally takes up to 28 calendar days from receipt. Some material error cases, and all undisclosed circumstances cases where your reasons for non-disclosure are accepted, will be referred to a School/ Validated Institution Appeal Panel which you will be invited to attend.

Initial Scrutiny

The possible outcomes are:

UPHELD with a recommendation made to the Senior Tutor for Research for immediate corrective action (material error cases only)

REJECTED because your form was incomplete, incorrect, not accompanied by supporting evidence, or you have not met the grounds for appeal

REFERRED to full School/ Validated Institution Panel for a hearing which you will be invited to attend. For undisclosed circumstances, all applications where your reasons for non-disclosure have been accepted at Initial Scrutiny will be referred to Panel.

RETURNED with the opportunity to re-submit because your form was incomplete, incorrect, not accompanied by supporting evidence, or the grounds for your appeal were not clear (you will have 14 calendar days from the date of notification to re-submit). Normally reviewers reserve this option for cases where they have reason to believe a re-submission may demonstrate a more substantive case for appeal. The reviewers are *not* obliged to offer this option and do so at their discretion.

School/ Validated Institution Panel

More complex cases and all cases where the reasons for non-disclosure of circumstances have been accepted at Initial Scrutiny will be referred to a panel to which you will be invited. It will normally take up to 28 calendar days to convene the appeal panel following referral from the initial scrutiny reviewers. You will be informed of the outcome of the panel within 14 calendar days of it meeting.

The possible outcomes will depend on the context of your appeal:

If your appeal is related to registration or progress your appeal may be:

UPHELD with a **recommendation to the Chair of the Board of Studies** that its decision be amended to: re-registration/ transfer between MPhil and PhD/ extension of candidature/ transfer to writing-up status

UPHELD with a **recommendation to the Chair of the Board of Studies** that you be asked to provide additional work within a maximum specific time period for further assessment of academic progress or work to date

REJECTED as it is clear that you have **not met the grounds for appeal**

If your appeal is related to the outcome of an examination your appeal may be:

UPHELD with a **recommendation to the Chair of the Board of Studies** that the original examiners be asked to reconsider their recommendations

UPHELD with a **recommendation to the Chair of the Board of Studies** that you be permitted to revise your thesis and resubmit for re-examination either to the original examiners or new examiners as the Panel sees fit within a specified time

UPHELD with a **recommendation to the Chair of the Board of Studies** that new examiners be appointed

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REJECTED as it is clear that you have **not met the grounds for appeal**

When will I hear?

You will receive an acknowledgement of receipt. The Initial Scrutiny stage normally takes no more than 28 calendar days following receipt.

The School/ Validated Institution Appeal Panel stage normally takes no more than 28 calendar days and you will be informed of the outcome of the Panel within 14 days of the panel meeting.

You can also look at the Appeals Flowchart for research programmes: <http://www.city.ac.uk/about/education/academic-services/academic-policies-and-regulation/assessment/appeals> .

You will receive written notification of the outcome of your appeal which will include feedback on the reasons for the decision. The University does its best to ensure that appeals are considered swiftly and you will be notified if we are not able to meet the standard deadlines.

What are my options after my appeal?

If you have evidence that there has been material error (i.e. a significant and relevant error) in the handling of your School/ Validated Institution appeal, or you have new information that you could not reasonably have been expected to provide at the time of your appeal, then you can submit a request for review to the University within 21 calendar days of the date of your notification letter. The University review will decide whether to uphold your case and, where the request for review is upheld, can either take executive action (normally in consultation with your School/ Validated Institution) or refer your appeal back to your School/ Validated Institution for further consideration.