



Cambridge Muslim College Academic Appeals Policy

Committee: AAAC

Date of review: April 2023

1. Purpose

This document sets out the policy, and associated procedures, for dealing with academic appeals, with the aim of ensuring consistent and fair treatment for all.

2. Scope

This policy applies to students and faculty teaching on the College's OU validated provisions.

3. Principles

- 3.1. An academic appeal is a request for a review of a decision related to student progression, assessment and award.
- 3.2. The only acceptable grounds for academic appeal are that the College's policy and procedures for moderation have not been followed.
- 3.3. There must be clear evidence of a material administrative error; of the assessment not being conducted in accordance with the regulations for the programme; or some other material irregularity relevant to the assessment decision.
- 3.4. Students do not have the right to an academic appeal against academic judgement.
- 3.5. An appeal cannot be made on the grounds of unawareness of the published assessment regulations (e.g. word count, submission deadline, etc.).
- 3.6. If the student raises an issue that does not meet the grounds for appeal, the matter may be dealt with as a formal complaint. Even if a complaint is upheld, where there is no right of appeal, an assessment result or a decision of a Board of Examiners cannot be changed.
- 3.7. Where a student's appeal is based on extenuating circumstances, documentary evidence must be provided along with the appeal form to support the claim at the earliest possible

opportunity. Retrospective evidence will only be considered if a satisfactory explanation is provided as to why it was not possible to submit the evidence at the appropriate time.

- 3.8. In all cases, the published timeline for making appeals and complaints should be followed (See Appendix 1).
- 3.9. Appeals submitted after the deadline will not be considered unless there is evidence that a student was prevented from submitting the appeal by the deadline.
- 3.10. The AAAC committee will aim to respond to any appeal within published timescales. If there are good reasons for extending the timeframe, the student will be notified of any delays and regularly informed of progress and the student shall similarly notify the AAAC committee following the procedure under paragraph 6.
- 3.11. The AAAC secretary will keep detailed written records of all formal appeals in the related student records as per the College's Data Retention Policy.
- 3.12. Students will not be disadvantaged by making an appeal.
- 3.13. Students may choose to be accompanied by or represented at any meetings by a student representative, relative or friend. This must be someone independent of the circumstances. No legal professions are allowed to attend such meetings
- 3.14. Students making appeals, either informal or formal, are encouraged to seek the support of the student representatives and the College Welfare Team.
- 3.15. The option of appealing to external bodies is only available to students after they have exhausted the College's own appeals procedures.

4. References

- Appeals Timescale (Appendix 1)
- Academic Appeal Form (Appendix 2)
- Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Guidance (Appendix 3)
- [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance- Concerns, Complaints and Appeals](#) (Appendix 4)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Moderation Policy](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#)
- [Student Guidance and Support Policy](#)

5. Responsibility

- 5.1. The BA Programme Manager is responsible for the review and implementation of this policy.
- 5.2. It is the responsibility of the College Coordinator (BA) to maintain all documentation in line with this policy.

6. Procedures

6.1. Informal Appeals

- 6.1.1. Students are expected to attempt informal resolution methods initially to minimise the extent to which formal procedures need to be followed.
- 6.1.2. Students contemplating making an appeal or should speak with the BA Programme Manager to ensure they understand why a decision has been made, whether they are likely to have acceptable grounds for appeal, and what outcomes a successful appeal could lead to.
- 6.1.3. If attempts to resolve the matter informally are not successful, students may submit a formal academic appeal or formal.

6.2. Formal Appeals

- 6.2.1. To make a formal appeal the student completes the Academic Appeal Form and send it by email, with any supporting evidence, to the secretary of the AAAC according to the timescales below.
- 6.2.2. The members of AAAC review the appeal request and determines whether the student has acceptable grounds for an appeal. If there are no acceptable grounds for an appeal, secretary of the AAAC will inform the student in writing of the decision, its reasons, and their right to request a review of the decision.
- 6.2.3. If the appeal meets the criteria for acceptable grounds, the Academic Director, as a member of the AAAC shall discuss the appeal with the First and Second Markers to set recommendations for the AAAC; if agreement cannot be reached, the matter will be referred to a member of the Board of Examiner, who was not involved in the marking of the related assignment, for a final decision. In the case of final award appeals, the appeal will be referred to the Examination Board for discussion and final decision. If mitigating circumstances or incorrect following of College procedure have been proven, the appeal will be upheld, and the original assessment decision will be reconsidered.
- 6.2.4. For both formal appeals , the secretary of the AAAC informs the student in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the decision as per the timeline in Appendix 1. If the original decision is upheld, the student will be informed of any further processes which may be available.
- 6.2.5. If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of their appeal due to evidence of procedural irregularities, they may request a review of the decision via the formal Review Request process.

6.3. Request for Review of Decision

- 6.3.1. The student should submit the request in writing, outlining the alleged procedural irregularities in the initial consideration of the appeal or and, where appropriate, including any relevant new information along with the reason why this was not made available previously. They should give this, with any new supporting evidence, to the secretary of the AAAC via email, according to the timescales in

Appendix 1.

- 6.3.2. The Chair of the AAAC will nominate a member of staff who was not involved in the original consideration of the case to review the request. The member of staff can be academic; i.e. another member of Examination board, or non-academic; i.e. Equality and Diversity Officer-Staff for cases in relation to Extenuating Circumstances.
 - 6.3.3. If the decision is that no valid ground for further review has been established, the case will be dismissed, and this will conclude the College's procedures.
 - 6.3.4. Alternatively, the decision may be that grounds for further review have been established, and the case will be referred for review by an Faculty Board with the presence of the nominated member of staff. After considering the evidence, Faculty Board may decide either to dismiss the review or to uphold the review. In the case of an Appeal review being upheld, Faculty Board will require the Board of Examiners to reconsider its decision, taking into account such findings that the Panel deems appropriate.
 - 6.3.5. The student will be informed in writing by the secretary of the AAAC of the outcome, the reasons for the decision and, if the original decision is upheld, any further external process which may still be available.
 - 6.3.6. The AAAC Chair will issue a Closure Letter to the student.
- 6.4. Appeal to the Awarding body (The Open University)
- 6.4.1. If a student is dissatisfied with the way their appeal was handled and have exhausted all appropriate internal procedures at the college, they may raise the issue with the following external bodies:
 - 6.4.1.1. The Open University (OU)
The Open University will conduct its procedures for appeals as detailed in Appendix 1 in the [OU Handbook](#).
- 6.5. Appeal to External Bodies
- 6.5.1. If a student is still dissatisfied with the way their appeal or complaint was handled and have exhausted all appropriate internal procedures at the college, they may raise the issue with to the following external bodies:
 - 6.5.1.1.1. The Open University (OU)- the **Awarding body**, will conduct its procedures for appeals and complaints as detailed in Appendix 1 in the [OU](#)

[Handbook](#). The student should follow the OU procedure within 6 months from receiving their Closure Letter.

6.5.2.

6.45.1.2. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education ([OIA](#))

6.4.1.2.1. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) can be contacted at: www.oiahe.org.uk. The OIA was set up under the Higher Education Act 2004 to provide an independent student complaints scheme.

6.4.2.2. In order to appeal to the OIA, the student will need to complete the OIA's own complaint form, which is available from www.oiahe.org.uk, and submit this to the OIA within 6 months of the date of receiving decision from receiving the OU as [er 6.4.1.1.1 CoP.

- 6.6. Whilst the student may wish some details to remain confidential, this may not always be possible without hampering a thorough investigation of the facts. In these circumstances, the College will discuss with the student the best way to approach the submission of evidence.
- 6.7. The appeal may be withdrawn without causing any bias against the student at any time during the process. In this event, the student must inform the secretary of the AAAC in writing via email on AAAC@cambridgemuslimcollege.ac.uk. Any decision made by the College at the previous stage in the procedure will then be upheld and become the outcome.
- 6.8. Group appeals are permissible where the same issue affects several students. In such circumstances, the group will be asked to nominate one student to act as a group representative.
- 6.9. All cases of academic appeals must be reported to the Faculty Board to allow an institution-wide overview and reported to the OU as part of the Institutional and Programme monitoring process

REVISION HISTORY

Revision #	Effective Date	Description of Change
00	March 2017	New Document

01	25 April 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formatting change 2. Policy number assignment 3. Changes to forms
02	28 November 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appeals and complaints must be reported to the Faculty Board not the Advisor Board.to allow an institution-wide overview. 2. Timescales moved to Appendix 1
03	March 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update the Referencing for QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education
04	April 2022	<p>Response to Admin Audit conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarify that this policy deals with complaints in relation to Academic matters and assessment 2. Change the name of the final letter to “Closure Letter” instead of the CPL letter to be in line with the OIA guidance 3. Add the Open University (OU) as an External body for Appeals
05	June 2022	<p>Policy has been updated as a response to IR conditions as following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All Appeal cases to be looked at by the newly established AAAC 2. Respond to detailed comments from the OU 1. Update the time for external appeal to be within 6 months for the OU and 6 months for the OIA. <p>Policy has been updated as a response to 2nd set of conditions of the Admin Audit as following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This policy deals with Appeals only and not complaints 2. Change the OU from External Body to an Awarding body

**Appendix 1
Appeals and complaints Timescale**

Appeals must be initiated within the timescales below.

Deadline	Who	Appeal	
Submit	Student	within 14 calendar days of publishing the mark or grade	
Acknowledge receipt by email	College Coordinator (BA)	within 7 calendar days of the formal Appeal date	
Investigate	Chair of AAAC and/or Academic Director	within 30 Calendar days of the formal Appeal datedate	
Complete the procedure	BA Programme Manager	within 50 Calendar days of the formal Appeal date	
Inform student of outcome	BA Programme Manager	within 7 days of outcome becoming known	
Request review of decision	Student	within 14 calendar days of being told the outcome	
Issue a Closure Letter	Chair of AAAC	within 14 days of internal processes being completed	
Raise the issue withto the Open University OU	Student	Within 6 months of the date of receiving the Closure Letter	
Raise the issue with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education	Student	within 6 months of the date of receiving the OU Responsereceiving the Open University decision/	

Appendix 2



**Cambridge Muslim College
Academic Appeal Form**

This form is designed for use with the College’s Academic Appeals Policy. Please ensure that you have read and understood the document before completing this form. This sets out the acceptable grounds for appeal, the procedure, and timescales that will be followed.

The deadline for submitting an appeal is within 14 calendar days of publishing the mark. Appeals submitted after the deadline will not be considered unless there is clear evidence that you were prevented from submitting the appeal by the deadline.

Before submitting a formal academic appeal or you are strongly encouraged to seek advice from the BA Programme Manager. If possible, you should attempt to resolve matters informally.

1. Have you checked the College Academic Appeals Policy?
2. Have you completed all sections of this form?
3. Have you included all supporting documents (if appropriate)?
4. Please pass this completed and signed form to the College Coordinator (BA).

Contact information	
First name	
Family name	
Preferred telephone number	
Preferred email address	

Do you have a disability or specific learning difficulty you would like us to be aware of when considering your Appeal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please give details of adjustments that will assist you.
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What informal steps have you taken to resolve your appeal? Please provide information about who you have already discussed your appeal with, and when.
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What was the outcome of your informal discussions? Please indicate why you are still unsatisfied.
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I am making an academic appeal relating to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Assignment mark <input type="checkbox"/> Examination mark <input type="checkbox"/> Module mark
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(what academic decision do you feel was wrong or unfair?)	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Award <input type="checkbox"/> Other
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I am making an academic appeal based on: (The following reasons are the only permissible grounds for academic appeal)	
<input type="checkbox"/> There has been a material administrative error (eg failure to apply the College regulations in calculating the final mark)	State clearly the precise nature of the error
<input type="checkbox"/> The assessment was not conducted in accordance with the regulations for the programme	State clearly in what way
<input type="checkbox"/> Unfair or inconsistent application of the College’s published grading criteria	State clearly the precise nature of the error
<input type="checkbox"/> Incorrectly informed of the required assessment or deadline	State clearly the precise nature of the error
<input type="checkbox"/> Some other material irregularity relevant to the Board of Examiner’s decision has occurred	State clearly the precise nature of the irregularity
<input type="checkbox"/> You have material evidence in support of a claim that your performance in the assessment was adversely affected by extenuating circumstances (illness or other factors) which you were unable or, for valid reasons,	Material evidence is information that might have the potential to change a decision, although this cannot be guaranteed. State the evidence and explain why this information was not given to the College at the correct time.

unwilling to divulge before the Board of Examiners reached its decision	
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<p>List any documents you are attaching to support your appeal/ For example, independent medical evidence, reports by professionals, financial information or witness statements. You must explain why any additional supporting evidence was not submitted previously. Without a reasonable explanation, further evidence will not be accepted.</p>

<p>What remedy are you seekingg Please provide information about the steps you would like the College to take to resolve your /appeal (a requested remedy will be considered but cannot be guaranteed).</p>

Please check:

- I have completed all sections of this form.
- I have included all supporting documents, where necessary.

Signature	
Date	

Appendix 3

Admissions Appeals and the Law

Introduction

The College is committed to understanding its responsibilities as an HE provider under consumer protection law. In creating this policy, the College has referred to the compliance advice *UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law*, published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), which sets out minimum standards that apply to various aspects of an HE provider's dealings with students.

The College has a legal obligation to ensure that its handling processes and practices are accessible, clear and fair to students.

The College must ensure that:

- its procedure is easily located and accessible to applicants, for example on its website
- applicants are provided with information about the College's process before they accept an offer of a course
- applicants and students are provided with clear and accurate information about the College's handling procedures in writing and (where applicable) verbally
- where a programme is in partnership with, or awarded by, another HE provider it should be clear where responsibility for handling lies
- accurate details of any external or redress scheme that students can access should be provided
- where students raise concerns at an informal level, they should be informed that they can make a under the College's formal process if the matter is not satisfactorily resolved
- it follows any guidelines published by any third-party redress or schemes of which the College is a member
- staff are trained in and follow the handling procedures in practice.

The College should also ensure that its handling processes are fair, which is more likely to be achieved where it:

- sets out clear and reasonable timescales in which students can expect to hear back about their at each stage of the process
- sets out clear and reasonable timescales relating to how long students will be given to respond to any requests for further information
- does not create unreasonable barriers for students pursuing a
- provides the ability for students to escalate the matter if they are unhappy and, where the regulatory framework allows it, ultimately to appeal if the matter is not satisfactorily resolved.

Appendix 4

QAA UK Quality Code

[QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance- Concerns, s and Appeals](#), states the following Expectations, Practice and Principles:

Expectations for Quality

Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

Standards for Core Practice

The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling s and appeals which are accessible to all students.

Guiding Principles

1. Concerns, s and appeals are used to improve the student experience.
2. Concerns, s and appeals procedures are accessible and inclusive.
3. Information is clear and transparent.
4. People raising concerns or making s or appeals are treated with dignity and respect, and their well-being is properly considered.
5. Concerns, s and appeals processes are proportionate and allow for cases to be resolved as early as possible.
6. Concerns, s and appeals procedures are fair and impartial.
7. Confidentiality and anonymity are appropriately assured.
8. Concerns, s and appeals are resolved in as timely a way as possible.