

De Montfort University Kazakhstan

Student Academic Appeals Policy

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Appendix I

De Montfort University Kazakhstan Student Academic Appeals Policy

1. Introduction

- A. DMUK will appoint a senior academic member of staff to act in the role of Student Appeals Officer whose role will be the first point of contact for students wishing to lodge an academic appeal and to guide students through the process. He/she can also dismiss an appeal on the basis that it does not adhere to this policy.
- B. A student has the right to appeal for reconsideration of an academic decision made by DMUK.

1.1 Generally appeals will fall into two areas:

- i. Concerning an assessment outcome in a course or courses.
- ii. Concerning the determination of progression or non-progression, or determination of an intermediate or final award, or a decision not to make an award or additionally, in the case of a research student, a decision to terminate his/her registration.
- iii. Concerning an University Initiated Withdrawal or Interruption of Study

1.2 A student whose appeal is pending retains student status and is entitled to proceed (provided that his/her other results do not bar the student from doing so) until the appeal is resolved. Entitlement to proceed relates to theoretical work only and not to work-based learning (e.g., placement or practice).

1.3 The specific grounds on which a student can appeal for reconsideration of a decision are limited to one or more of the grounds set out below:

1.3.1 During the examination or assessment

There were demonstrable errors in the conduct of the assessment or decision-making processes which are of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result would have been different had they not occurred. Examples of this may include irregularities in a formal examination, irregularities in the setting or conduct of some other form of assessment, defective communications about an assessment or non-compliance with published documentation. Where possible, students should provide evidence to substantiate any claims of demonstrable errors by the University during the assessment process.

1.3.2 During the marking and decision-making process

There are alleged errors in the process of marking and/or

consequent decision-making. The outcome of the assessment differs so markedly from the candidate's reasonable expectations as to raise reasonable doubt as to whether the process has been properly conducted.

1.3.3 In considering whether the circumstances put forward by the student fulfil this ground for appeal the Student Appeals Officer will expect the student to provide evidence that their expectations of the outcome of the assessment were based on, for example:

- Their performance in a course which was a core component of the programme in question.
- Their performance in all other courses in programme.

1.3.4 These are examples of acceptable circumstances in relation to this ground for appeal but they do not represent an exhaustive definition of such circumstances. For example, appeals may also include objections to the grounds on which University initiated withdrawal or interruption of study were made. In such cases the procedure described in this document will be followed with slight modifications to accommodate the circumstances in question.

1.4 Students should note that simply questioning the academic judgement of their assessors does not constitute grounds for an academic appeal; in such cases the Student Appeals Officer reserves the right to dismiss the appeal as being without substance (see paragraph 2.3).

1.6 Given that there are procedures for complaint and redress during the study period which students should use at the time issues arise, allegations of inadequacy of tuition or supervision or any other arrangements during the period of study will not constitute grounds of appeal unless there are exceptional reasons why the matter was not raised until after the assessment.

1.7 Students should note that extenuating circumstances are not grounds for an academic appeal and will not usually be considered by the University once a student's marks (and/or award) have been verified by the Academic Board.

1.8 In exceptional circumstances where a student receives a retrospective diagnosis of a health condition or learning difficulty which he/she could not reasonably have known about at the time of their assessments the Student Appeals Officer will consider such cases taking into account the individual circumstances of the student and the medical and/or professional evidence supplied.

1.9 The Student Appeals Officer's decision in such cases shall be final and not subject to review by any other University forum.

2. Process for conducting an appeal for reconsideration of a decision by a Programme Committee

- 2.1 Any student wishing to appeal for reconsideration of the decision of a Programme Examinations Committee shall give notice of the appeal in writing, using a standard University appeal form. The appeal form is available from the Head of Admissions. It must be signed by the student and submitted to the Student Appeals Officer (or their Deputy) via post, in person or by email. The form must indicate the grounds on which the student is appealing, as listed in 1.3 above, and be accompanied by any available documentary evidence. The student must also state on the form whether s/he wishes either: the appeal to be referred directly to the Academic Appeals Panel; or, where appropriate that s/he wishes to attempt to resolve the issue(s) through the mediation process.
- 2.2 The appeal form, together with all the necessary documentation, should reach the Student Appeals Officer within 21 calendar days of the published date for issuing the academic results.
- 2.3 The Student Appeals Officer is empowered to dismiss an appeal at this stage if it should appear in their absolute opinion that the grounds of appeal are so lacking in substance that further consideration would not be justified.
- 2.4 If necessary, the Student Appeals Officer shall seek an initial response to the appeal from the student's Academic Advisor and/or Programme Leader. The Student Appeals Officer's decision to dismiss in accordance with paragraph 2.3 above shall be final and not subject to review by any other University forum.
- 2.5 A student whose appeal has been dismissed by the Student Appeals Officer at this stage may not seek reconsideration of this decision.
- 2.6 Where it appears to the Student Appeals Officer that further consideration of the appeal is justified, s/he shall note whether the student has stated a wish to resolve the matter by mediation. If so, and mediation is appropriate, the Student Appeals Officer shall select an independent mediator to deal with the case. The appointed mediator will arrange a meeting between the mediator, the student and, if they so wish, a student companion (whose role is set out in the Glossary to these Regulations) and a representative of the relevant programme, nominated by the Programme Leader. This first meeting should take place within three weeks of the receipt of the appeal form, whenever possible, subject to the availability of the persons involved.
- 2.7 The meeting will be chaired by the mediator and will involve firstly a discussion between the mediator and the student (and the student companion if the student has one) then the mediator and the programme representative, and finally the mediator with the student and programme representative together. The aim is to reach a resolution which will be documented and signed by the student and the programme representative. The student will be given 7 working days to consult and consider the proposed resolution before accepting it. If the

parties agree and sign a statement setting out how the matter has been resolved, there can be no subsequent recourse to an Academic Appeals Panel.

- 2.8 Where a student has elected not to attempt to resolve an appeal through the mediation process, or where the outcome of mediation has been a failure to agree, the Student Appeals Officer shall refer the appeal to a **Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel**.
- 2.9 The Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel shall comprise:
- Chair: the Rector or Pro-Rector
 - A Programme Leader from another discipline
 - The President of the Students' Union or his/her nominee who shall be a member of the Students' Union Executive Committee
 - A member of the Academic Board
- 2.10 No panel members shall have been connected with the case.
- 2.11 The Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel is empowered to examine appeals made to it under the grounds cited in sections 1.3.
- 2.12 The Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel will meet within 4 weeks of the mediation stage wherever possible, subject to staff availability.
- 2.13 The student will be given notice of the hearing and the members of the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel in writing. Due notice will be deemed to have been given if the notice and supporting information was sent by first class post and/or email to the student's last recorded address no less than 10 working days before the date of the hearing. If the student does not attend the hearing, the hearing will go ahead in their absence.
- 2.14 The student is entitled to be accompanied by a student companion who will be a non-participating observer.
- 2.15 The procedure adopted by the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel shall be as follows:
- 2.15.1 The Panel will be sent all necessary and appropriate documentation 7 days prior to the hearing date.
- 2.15.2 First the student then programme representative may state their case, without any questioning by each other or the Panel.
- 2.15.3 Once both have stated their case, Panel members may ask questions of the student and the programme representative and the student and programme representative may ask questions, provided that questions are for clarification rather than cross-examination. All questions should be addressed through the Panel Chair.

- 2.15.4 The Panel will retire to consider its decision in private. Once a decision has been reached the student (and the student companion if present) and the programme representative(s) return to the meeting room. The Panel Chair will read the decision of the Panel. The decision will be confirmed formally in writing thereafter.
- 2.15.5 The Chair has general discretion to adjourn proceedings if necessary, for instance to seek expert advice where it is thought that the appeal is straying into technical areas of knowledge, and after such advice is received is entitled to reconvene the meeting. The Panel will share any further information, evidence or advice it has obtained with the student and the programme representative. The Panel will give both the appellant and the Programme an opportunity to question any further information, evidence or advice for the clarification of matters of fact.
- 2.16 The Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel is empowered to reach one of the following decisions:
- 2.16.1 That there are no grounds for the appeal and the original decision of the Programme Examination Committee should stand.
- 2.16.2 That the appeal is upheld and the decision giving rise to the appeal is set aside. The Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel requires any assessed work concerned to be newly examined, either by the original examiners or by new examiners as determined by the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel. The Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel shall also determine the conditions of this examination.
- 2.16.3 The appeal is upheld and the decision giving rise to the appeal is set aside. The Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel grants the student the opportunity to submit work for assessment as if for the first time, in the assessment concerned. The Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel shall determine the conditions for this replacement assessment.
- 2.16.4 The Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel is also empowered to make recommendations to an assessment board and/or Research Degrees Committee regarding the conduct of business.
- 2.17 The decision of the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel is final, except that a student has the right of appeal on the following grounds only:
- 2.17.1 That there is new and relevant evidence which the student was demonstrably and for the most exceptional reason unable to present to the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel hearing. Such new evidence must be submitted with the student's written statement of appeal.
- 2.17.2 That the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel did not comply with its procedures as set out in section 2.15 above, or in some other material

way conducted itself in an unfair manner, so that it might cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result would have been different had the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel complied.

3. Process for conducting an appeal against a decision of the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel

- 3.1 Any student wishing to appeal against a decision of the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel shall give notice in writing, stating clearly the specific grounds on which the appeal is based as listed in section 2.17 above, and providing appropriate documentary evidence. This notice of appeal must be submitted to the Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or their Deputy) in writing within 10 working days of the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel hearing.
- 3.2 In the event of an appeal notice being received in accordance with paragraph 3.1, the decision of the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel will not be carried out until the further appeal process is concluded
- 3.3 On receipt of such a notice the Student Appeals Officer shall convene a Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel and arrange for the further appeal to be heard. The Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel shall comprise:
 - Chair: the Rector or Pro-Rector
 - A Programme Leader from another discipline
 - The President of the Students' Union or his/her nominee who shall be a member of the Students' Union Executive Committee
 - A member of the Academic Board
- 3.4 No person who has been consulted or involved in the particular case at any previous stage shall act as a member of the Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel.
- 3.5 The student and the Department will be given notice in writing of the hearing and the members of the Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel. Due notice will be deemed to have been given if the notice and supporting information was sent by first class post and/or email to the student's last recorded address no less than 10 working days before the date of the hearing. If the student does not attend the hearing, the appeal shall be considered to have lapsed.
- 3.6 If the student wishes to object to any member of the Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel, the student shall submit his/her objections in writing setting out the grounds for the objection to be received by the Student Appeals Officer at least 5 working days before the hearing. If the grounds for objection are upheld, an alternative member of the Panel will be identified.
- 3.7 The procedure adopted by the Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel shall be determined by the Panel and shall provide for the following:

- 3.7.1 The student has the right to appear and be heard and to be accompanied by a student companion who will be present as a non-participating observer.
- 3.7.2 The Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel has the right to call witnesses and to examine any documentation it considers necessary.
- 3.7.3 The Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel is empowered to reach one of the following decisions:
- That there are no grounds for this further appeal and the original decision of the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel should stand.
 - That the appeal is upheld and that the decision giving rise to the appeal is set aside. In which case the Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel will either require the assessed work concerned to be newly examined or grant the student the opportunity to submit work for the assessment concerned as if for the first time, in accordance with the decisions available to the Stage 1 Academic Appeals Panel as explained in paragraph 2.16 above.
- 3.7.4 The Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel is empowered to make recommendations to a Programme Examination Committee regarding the conduct of business.
- 3.8 The Stage 2 Academic Appeals Panel's decision in such cases shall be final and not subject to review by any other University body.
- 3.9 Notwithstanding the above, the Rector may dismiss an appeal at this stage if in his/her reasonable opinion the grounds of appeal are so lacking in substance that further consideration would not be justified.
- 3.10 The Rector's decision made in accordance with paragraph 3.9 shall be final and not subject to review by any other University forum.

4. Records of academic appeals

- 4.1 The Student Appeals and Conduct Officer (or their Deputy) shall keep appeal files for a minimum of 2 years, together with any mediator notes, allowing Chairs of Panels to consult them as an archive resource if so required.