

## Examination Regulations 2017/18

### Nominees

Unless the context indicates otherwise, under these regulations a University officer or the chair of a board of examiners may act through his or her properly appointed nominee.

### 2. Conduct of formal examinations

#### 2.1 Attendance

Failure to attend an examination without reasonable cause may result in the award of no marks for that examination. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of the details of the examination timetable and to arrive at the venue in good time for an examination. The regulations governing the absence of students for medical or other cause are provided in the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes.

#### 2.2 Entering the examination room

Candidates may not normally enter the examination room to sit a written examination nor undertake the written examination in any other location after it has been in progress for more than thirty minutes. Late candidates will be referred to their home school<sup>1</sup> for advice on the next course of action.

#### 2.3 Leaving the examination room

No candidate may leave the examination room within thirty minutes of the beginning of the examination, save in exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of the invigilator. In order to avoid disturbing other candidates, candidates may not leave the examination room during the last fifteen minutes of the examination, save in exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of the invigilator. The Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes cover the leaving of an examination by a student because of illness.

#### 2.4 Supervised absence

No candidate may leave and return to the examination room during an examination unless supervised by an invigilator while absent.

#### 2.5 Communication during the examination

Unless an invigilator has given permission otherwise, during the course of the examination a candidate may communicate with no other person but the invigilator.

#### 2.6 Permitted items and texts

A candidate may take to his or her desk only those items and texts that are permitted for the examination he or she is sitting. Advice about which objects other than writing implements are permitted may be found in the "Code of Conduct for Examinations" maintained by the Academic Registry. The interpretation of this Code is within the discretion of invigilators and students must follow

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<sup>1</sup> 'School' should be taken to mean 'School or Department', whichever is more appropriate, throughout the Examination Regulations

their instructions. All non-permitted items must not be taken to the examination desk, but must be deposited elsewhere, as instructed by the invigilator.

It is the responsibility of the student's faculty or school to provide guidance to students about items, for example calculators, they may take into examinations and the responsibility of the student to establish which items and texts are permitted. Such guidance should be provided in a format and location easily accessible to the student, including in student handbooks or on school websites and should indicate to students the circumstances in which it is likely they will be granted permission and the types of materials they may be allowed to use.

If the usual practice of the faculty or school is to allow students who do not have English as a first language to use a translation dictionary during written examinations, then the school should ensure that an "Authorisation for the use of dictionaries in examinations" form is completed and signed by the Head of School or nominee for each student. Where a student is studying across schools then the form should be signed by the Head of School for each of their units. This form should be returned to the student and it **MUST** be displayed on the examination desk when a dictionary is being used. Failure to display the authorisation will result in the confiscation of the material. All dictionaries used in examinations will be checked for annotations and markings and any dictionary deemed to contravene regulations will be removed from the student.

## 2.7 Distracting behaviour

Candidates may not behave in any way which is distracting to other candidates. A candidate who ignores a request from an invigilator not to behave disruptively may be required to leave the examination room. The candidate's examination scripts will be submitted to the board of examiners as they were at the time when the candidate was required to leave. The invigilator will annotate the scripts with the time at which the candidate left, and submit a report to the chair of the board of examiners.

## 2.8 Examination scripts

It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that all his or her scripts are appropriately marked with an identifying name and number. No candidate may remove an examination script from the examination room. No candidate may remove any other examination materials without permission.

A school may invite a candidate to transcribe or dictate an illegible script. Any transcription or dictation must be verbatim, and the student should be asked to sign the transcript to confirm that it is a true copy of the original script. The transcription or dictation will be treated as part of the formal examination process. Schools may also invite the student to undertake an oral examination.

Where a student provides an answer to more questions than is required by the examination paper, the marker should mark all the answers and use the marks from the highest scoring answers to calculate the assessment mark.

## 2.9 Cheating

Cheating in an examination will be dealt with as a disciplinary offence under these regulations.

In addition it is a disciplinary offence for a candidate to:

- a. Have unauthorised items or texts that may be accessed from their desk in the examination room during the examination
- b. Make use of unauthorised items or texts during the examination
- c. Copy from the script of another candidate during the examination

- d. Dishonestly receive help from another person during the examination
- e. Dishonestly give help to another person during the examination
- f. Act dishonestly in any way, whether before, during or after the examination, so as to obtain an unfair advantage in the examination
- g. Act dishonestly in any way, whether before, during or after the examination, so as to assist another candidate to obtain an unfair advantage in the examination.

#### 2.10 Suspicion of cheating during the examination

Should a candidate be suspected of cheating during the examination, the invigilator will confiscate any unauthorised material, indicate on the candidate's script that it has been confiscated due to suspected cheating, and remove the script. The candidate will then be given further examination books and permitted to complete the examination. The student must discuss the incident with the invigilator at the end of the examination. The invigilator will submit an incident report to the University Examinations Officer who will notify the chair of the school board of examiners from the student's home school.

### **3. Conduct in other assessed work**

#### 3.1 Work must be that of the student

3.1.1 Any thesis, dissertation, essay, or other coursework must be the student's own work and must not contain plagiarised material. Any instance of plagiarism in coursework will be treated as an offence under these regulations.

#### 3.2 Plagiarism

3.2.1 Plagiarism is the unacknowledged inclusion in a student's work of material derived from the published or unpublished work of another. This constitutes plagiarism whether it is intentional or unintentional. "Work" includes internet sources as well as printed material.

3.2.2 Examples of plagiarism (this list is not intended to be exhaustive) include:

- Quoting another's work "word for word" without placing the phrase(s), sentence(s) or paragraph(s) in quotation marks and providing a reference for the source.
- Using statistics, tables, figures, formulae, data, diagrams, questionnaires, images, musical notation, computer code, etc, created by others without acknowledging and referencing the original source.
- Summarising or paraphrasing the work or ideas of another without acknowledging and referencing the original source. "Paraphrasing" means re-stating another author's ideas, meaning or information in a student's own words.
- Copying the work of another student, with or without that student's agreement.
- Collaborating with another student, even where the initial collaboration is legitimate, e.g., joint project work, and then presenting the resulting work as one's own. If students are unclear about the extent of collaboration which is permitted in joint work they should consult the relevant tutor.
- Submitting, in whole or in part, work which has previously been submitted for assessment at the University of Bristol or elsewhere, without fully referencing the earlier work. This includes unacknowledged reuse of the student's own submitted work.

- Buying or commissioning an essay or other piece of work and presenting it as a student's own.
- Unauthorised joint or group working on a piece of work that is to be assessed individually.

3.2.3 A student who knowingly allows their work to be copied will be treated with equal seriousness to the student by whom the work is copied.

### 3.3 Avoidance of plagiarism

3.3.1 Schools may provide further discipline-specific definitions of plagiarism and guidance on how to avoid it, including advice on proper referencing practice.

3.3.2 Schools must explicitly specify when joint or group working is permissible for an assessment.

3.3.3 Schools must explicitly specify when it is permissible to incorporate publicly available material into assessments (e.g. computer code snippets) and give explicit guidance on what is permissible and how it should be referenced.

3.3.4 It is the responsibility of the individual student to familiarise him- or herself with these regulations and with any guidelines issued by the school, to attend any relevant induction or other sessions and to avoid plagiarism.

### 3.4 Cases of bad academic practice

3.4.1 Where a marker detects minor irregularities within a piece of work, and feels that it is a case of poor academic practice rather than a deliberate attempt to deceive, appropriate other people's work or gain an unearned advantage, and where the student has not disregarded explicit instructions, the case should be referred to the unit director.

3.4.2 If the unit director agrees with the marker and feels that the poor academic practice may be addressed appropriately within the marking scheme for the unit, then no further process should be pursued.

3.4.3 In such cases explicit feedback should be given to the student, with further instruction, as necessary, on proper academic practice, and a note put on the student's record for future reference.

3.4.4 If the unit director suspects that the irregularity may amount to more than poor academic practice they should consult with the designated member(s) of staff in the school, and refer the matter to the appropriate Faculty Education Director.

## **4. Procedure for cases of cheating and plagiarism in undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes of study (including any taught component of a professional or other doctoral degree)**

### 4.1 Roles and responsibilities

4.1.1 The overall responsibility for dealing with allegations of plagiarism or cheating lies with the appropriate Undergraduate or Graduate Faculty Education Director or their nominee (as applicable throughout these regulations).

4.1.2 The process will be conducted by the school and faculty responsible for the student involved.

4.1.3 If the allegation covers units from more than one school or faculty then the relevant Undergraduate or Graduate Faculty Education Director should determine which school or faculty should handle the investigation.

4.1.4 Where this procedure results in a board of examiners making a decision, this will be made by the boards responsible for the programme on which the student is registered.

4.1.5 The Head of School shall be responsible for nominating a member or members of staff to discharge the responsibilities outlined in these regulations, including organising the school plagiarism and cheating panels, ensuring that penalties are brought forward to the School Board of Examiners, and liaising with the Faculty Education Directors.

#### 4.2 Standard of proof

4.2.1 The applicable standard of proof will be the balance of probabilities. A student will be found guilty of cheating or plagiarism if, on the evidence available, it is more likely than not that the offence was committed.

#### 4.3 Consideration of allegations of plagiarism or cheating

4.3.1 All allegations of cheating or plagiarism referred by a unit director, the Examinations Office, or from any other source shall be considered by the Undergraduate or Graduate Faculty Education Director responsible for the home school of the student (i.e. the school for which the student is registered).

4.3.2. The Undergraduate or Graduate Faculty Education Director will consider the case promptly and either:

- a. determine that there is no case to answer,
- b. convene a School Plagiarism and Cheating panel under section 4.4,
- c. convene a Faculty Plagiarism and Cheating panel under section 4.5 ,or
- d. refer the case for disposal under the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

4.3.3 Initial determination of how the allegation of plagiarism and cheating will be dealt with must take place within fifteen working days of an allegation being received by the Undergraduate or Graduate Faculty Education Director.

#### 4.4 School Plagiarism and Cheating panels ("SPC")

4.4.1 If the Undergraduate or Graduate Faculty Education Director decides under section 4.3 to convene a SPC panel, the designated member(s) of staff in the school (see 4.1.5) will notify the student in writing of the pieces of work affected and the holding of an interview.

4.4.2 The SPC will consist of two academic members of staff nominated by the designated member of the school. The panel should not include the student's personal tutor.

4.4.3 Where a panel requires advice on procedures and regulations, it should consult the Faculty Education Manager.

4.4.4 A note of the interview will be taken, which will be circulated after the interview to all parties.

4.4.5 The unit director or nominee of the unit affected or other appropriate witness may be required to attend the SPC in order to explain the allegation and provide specialist knowledge.

4.4.6 The student may be accompanied at the interview by an adviser, friend or other representative.

4.4.7 The purpose of the interview shall be to determine whether or not there has been cheating or plagiarism and to allow the student to make representations and to present any mitigating factors.

4.4.8 Once the interview is complete, the SPC may decide to defer a decision until further investigation has taken place. Otherwise the panel shall determine whether or not there has been cheating or

plagiarism and either make a recommendation to the Undergraduate or Graduate Faculty Education Director or to the board of examiners:

- a. to dismiss the case entirely;
- b. to refer it back to the unit director to be dealt with as poor academic practice;
- c. to impose no penalty beyond recording the case on the student's record for future reference;
- d. to disregard the original mark for the examination or piece of assessed work;
- e. to award the student lower marks than those which they would otherwise have been awarded, down to the pass mark for the examination or the piece of assessed work being considered.

4.4.9 For penalties (d) and (e), the SPC should also decide whether the student must submit an equivalent piece of work in order to obtain credit for the unit affected.

4.4.10 The SPC may decide to refer the matter back to the Undergraduate or Graduate Faculty Education Director with a recommendation that the allegations be referred to a Faculty Cheating and Plagiarism Panel if it considers that the offence merits a penalty which the SPC does not have the power to impose or if it considers that the matter should be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

4.4.11 The penalty for an offence should be decided on the individual circumstances of the case.

4.4.12 When considering a penalty, the SPC should take into account the seriousness of the offence (examination cheating should normally be considered as serious). Factors that also should be considered include:

- a. The student's year of study.
- b. Whether this is a first or subsequent offence.
- c. The amount of credit attached to the assessment.
- d. The extent and significance of the plagiarism in the piece of work.
- e. The extent to which the plagiarism or cheating undermines the learning objectives of the work.
- f. Whether the assessment contributes significantly to the student's progress or degree classification.
- g. The degree of dishonesty and the effects of the dishonesty e.g. the implicating of other students in the act.

4.4.13 The school must write promptly to the student informing him or her of the SPC's decision and any recommendations.

4.4.14 Where there is a case to answer and the student is registered on a professional programme for which there is a Fitness to Practice procedure, the fact of the case of plagiarism or cheating will also be subject to that procedure.

#### 4.5 Faculty Plagiarism and Cheating panels ("FPC")

4.5.1 If the Undergraduate or Graduate Faculty Education Director decides under section 4.3 to convene a FPC, the Faculty Education Manager will notify the student in writing of the pieces of work affected and the holding of an interview.

4.5.2 The FPC will consist of at least three academic members of staff without previous direct involvement with the student as a personal tutor or supervisor, including:

- a member of the student's home school;
- a member of a school other than the student's.

4.5.3 The Faculty Education Manager or nominee will be in attendance to advise the panel on procedures and regulations.

4.5.4 The unit director or nominee of the unit affected or other appropriate witness may be required to attend the FPC in order to explain the allegation and provide specialist knowledge.

4.5.5. The student may be accompanied at the interview by an adviser, friend or other representative.

4.5.6 Notes will be taken of the interview and subsequently circulated to all parties.

4.5.7 The purpose of the interview shall be to determine whether or not there has been cheating or plagiarism and to allow the student to make representations and to present any mitigating factors.

4.5.8 Once the interview is complete, the FPC may decide to defer a decision until further investigation has taken place. Otherwise it shall determine whether or not there has been cheating or plagiarism and make a recommendation to the board of examiners:

- a. to dismiss the case entirely;
- b. to refer it back to the unit director to be dealt with as poor academic practice;
- c. to impose no penalty beyond recording the case on the student's record for future reference;
- d. to disregard the original mark for the examination or piece of assessed work;
- e. to award the student lower marks than those which they would otherwise have been awarded, or award no marks, for the examination or the piece of assessed work being considered.
- f. to award the student lower marks than those which they would otherwise have been awarded, or award no marks, for the unit of which the examination or piece of assessed work was part.

4.5.9 For penalties (d), (e) and (f), the FPC should also decide whether the student must submit an equivalent piece of work in order to obtain credit for the unit affected.

4.5.10 The penalty for an offence should be decided on the individual circumstances of the case.

4.5.11 When considering a penalty, the FPC should take into account the seriousness of the offence (examination cheating should normally be considered as serious). Factors that also should be considered include:

- a. The student's year of study.
- b. Whether this is a first or subsequent offence.
- c. The amount of credit attached to the assessment.
- d. The extent and significance of the plagiarism in the piece of work.
- e. The extent to which the plagiarism or cheating undermines the learning objectives of the work.
- f. Whether the assessment contributes significantly to the student's progress or degree classification.
- g. The degree of dishonesty and the effects of the dishonesty e.g. the implicating of other students in the act.

4.5.12 Where the panel considers that the penalties set out in section 4.5.8 may not be appropriate to the seriousness of the offence, then the panel may refer the case for consideration under the Student Disciplinary Regulations under section 4.8 below.

4.5.13 The faculty must write to the student informing him or her of the panel's decision and any recommendations.

4.5.14 Where there is a case to answer and the student is registered on a professional programme for which there is a Fitness to Practice procedure, the fact of the case of plagiarism or cheating will also be subject to that procedure.

#### 4.6 Consideration of recommendations from plagiarism and cheating panels by Boards of Examiners

4.6.1 When a plagiarism or cheating panel makes a recommendation, it should be considered by the school and faculty boards of examiners.

4.6.2 The ultimate decision on the penalty applied shall be taken by the Faculty Board of Examiners.

4.6.3 The Board shall determine whether any original material from the submitted work meets the necessary standard for the award of credit for a unit, separate to applying any penalty.

4.6.4 It will normally be assumed that mitigating circumstances will have been raised by the student and taken into account in the recommendation made. However, any exceptional mitigating circumstances will be taken into account by boards of examiners when determining the penalty.

4.6.5 The boards of examiners will take explicit consideration of the impact of the penalty on the student's credit points and, where applicable, degree classification and whether this impact, in the context of the student's overall performance, is proportionate to the offence.

4.6.6 Where a student is not permitted to resubmit the piece of work in question and the final mark for the assessment or the unit is less than that required to be awarded credit for a unit, then the student should be treated in exactly the same way as if they had obtained the same mark through academic failure.

4.6.7 The student will have the usual right of appeal against a decision of the board of examiners.

#### 4.7 Recording the penalty

4.7.1 The final decision of each of the board of examiners, with supporting rationale, will be recorded in its minutes.

#### 4.8 Disposal under Student Disciplinary Regulations

4.8.1 At any point in the process before the student has been informed of a final decision or recommendation, the matter may be referred to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) to be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

4.8.2 Plagiarism and cheating offences will be subject to the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

4.8.3 Where an offence has been referred under these regulations to be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations, the Board of Examiners may not impose any penalty under these Regulations in place of or in addition to the penalty or penalties that the Board is directed to implement under the Disciplinary Regulations in respect of that offence.

#### 4.9 Students taking University of Bristol assessment, but not in attendance at the University

4.9.1 All the above regulations will apply to students not in attendance at the University, including distance learning students, students on a year abroad, or international students who have temporarily

returned home. In these circumstances it may be appropriate to replace the interview with written correspondence or a conference call with the student.

## **5. Procedures for cases of plagiarism in a thesis submitted for a research degree**

*Please see the Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.*

## **6. Students taking University of Bristol assessment, but not in attendance at the University**

6.1 All the above regulations will apply to students not in attendance at the University, including distance learning students, students on a year abroad, or international students who have temporarily returned home. In these circumstances it may be appropriate to replace the interview with written correspondence or a conference call with the student.

## **7. Disposal under Student Disciplinary Regulations**

7.1 If the interview panel considers that the matter should be dealt with under student disciplinary regulations, it may, in place of a report to the board of examiners, make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor, through the University Secretary, to this effect. Examination offences which disclose gross dishonesty, such as substantial and premeditated attempt to gain unfair advantage, or cases in which the candidate and the interview panel are not able to agree an account of the incident, are appropriately dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

7.2 Where an offence of plagiarism or other examination offence has been referred under these Regulations to be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations, the Board of Examiners may not impose any penalty under these Regulations in place of or in addition to the penalty or penalties that the Board is directed to implement under the Disciplinary Regulations in respect of that offence.

## **8. Factors to be taken into account when deciding whether to use the procedures for minor or serious cases for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students**

- a. The student's year of study. First year cases are more likely to be considered minor. Finalist and taught masters student cases will normally be considered serious;
- b. Whether this is a first or subsequent offence;
- c. The extent and significance of the plagiarism in the piece of work. Plagiarism accounting for less than 30% of the piece of work and where there is evidence of independent argument and thought might reasonably be classed as minor;
- d. Whether the assessment contributes significantly to the student's progress or degree classification;
- e. Examination cheating should normally be handled under the "serious" procedures.

## **9. Guidance on the Procedures**

Guidance and advice on the implementation of the cheating and plagiarism regulations will be available from the Academic Registrar.

## **10. Extenuating Circumstances**

### **10.1 Procedure for consideration of extenuating circumstances in taught programmes**

Boards of examiners shall establish a committee (which will meet before the Board of Examiners meets) to consider any relevant matters, for example personal matters such as illness or bereavement, that may have affected a student's performance in assessment.

## 10.2 Evidence

If a student wishes a board of examiners to take any such matters into account, he or she must complete and submit the relevant form **before** the meeting of the board at which the student's performance in assessment is to be considered. A written record must be kept of such matters. Any such matters which could have been raised before the meeting of the board, but, without good reason, were not raised, will not be considered in the event of an appeal.

The committee may require a student to submit such other evidence as it deems necessary to substantiate any matter raised by the student.

## 10.3 Extenuating circumstances in research degree programmes

The treatment of extenuating circumstances in research degree programmes is set out in the Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

## 11. Appeal against a decision of a Board of Examiners

**A student may not have a degree or other academic qualification conferred until all his or her outstanding examination or assessment appeals have been resolved. If the degree or other qualification has already been conferred, whether the student has attended the graduation ceremony in person or not, no appeal will be considered.**

### 11.1 Right to appeal

A student registered on a taught (undergraduate or postgraduate) programme may make an academic appeal against an appealable decision made by one of the following (referred to in this Regulation as a "board of examiners"):

- a. A faculty board of examiners (including a faculty progress committee or equivalent)
- b. A school board of examiners in relation to a case of minor plagiarism.

A postgraduate research student may make an academic appeal against an appealable decision made by any of the following (also referred to in this Regulation as a "board of examiners"):

- a. The University Research Degrees Examination Board
- b. The Dean of the relevant faculty, on the recommendation of a registration review panel
- c. An upgrade or progression panel.

An academic appeal is a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards.

An appealable decision is a decision in respect of:

- a. An examination or other form of assessment
- b. A student's progress, including a decision in respect of a suspension or a requirement to withdraw from the University
- c. In the case of a research postgraduate student, a decision by a Dean relating to termination or change of registration
- d. A penalty imposed for a cheating or plagiarism offence dealt with under these Regulations.

No student shall be treated less favourably as a result of bringing an academic appeal under this procedure.

## 11.2 Permissible grounds of appeal

Appeals may only be made on the basis of one or more of the following permissible grounds:

1. There has been a material irregularity in the decision making process sufficient to require that the decision can be reconsidered.

For example:

a. the assessment and subsequent decision making process were not conducted in accordance with the relevant regulations;

b. an adverse decision has been taken because of an administrative error;

c. the student has not been given the opportunity to draw relevant matters to the attention of the board of examiners; and/or

d. appropriate account was not taken of illness or other extenuating circumstances known to the board of examiners.

2. A student's performance in assessment has been affected by illness or other factors which the student was unable, for good reason, to divulge before the meeting of the board of examiners (see section 10 of these Regulations).

3. A penalty for cheating or plagiarism, imposed under the examination regulations by the school or faculty is wrong or disproportionate. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no right of appeal under these Regulations in respect of a penalty or penalties imposed under the Student Disciplinary Regulations and implemented by the board of examiners on the direction of the Vice-Chancellor or a Disciplinary Committee.

## 11.3 Grounds of appeal that are not permissible

1. Disagreement with the academic judgment of the board of examiners will not constitute a ground for appeal.

2. No appeal will be considered if it raises for the first time issues concerning the supervision or teaching of a student. Such matters will only be considered if they have been raised by the student promptly, at the time they first arose and pursued under the Student Complaints Procedure.

## 11.4 The Appeal Process

The appeal process has two stages:

i The Local Stage

ii The University Stage.

Those hearing the appeal at either stage will not attempt to re-examine the student, nor to appraise professional academic judgments, but will consider whether the decision made was fair and reasonable in all the circumstances of the case, and whether all relevant factors were taken into account.

Appeals should be resolved at the earliest possible stage and with minimum formality. The University Stage of the process may only be invoked if the student has pursued the appeal through the Local Stage and remains dissatisfied with the outcome.

## 11.5 The Appeal Form

In order to start the appeal process, the student must complete the Appeal Form and submit it to the Faculty Education Manager within 15 working days of the notification of the appealable decision to the

student after the meeting of the board of examiners. An extension of this time limit will be allowed, by the University Secretary, only in exceptional circumstances.

The Appeal Form must set out:

- a. the reason(s) for the student's dissatisfaction with the appealable decision;
- b. the student's grounds for appeal; and
- c. the outcome sought by the student.

All the evidence on which the student seeks to rely **must** be submitted with the Appeal Form unless there are good reasons why this is not possible.

The student is encouraged to seek assistance from the Students' Union Advisory Service [ubujtask@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ubujtask@bristol.ac.uk) when preparing the Appeal Form.

### 11.6 The Local Stage

On receipt of the completed Appeal Form and any accompanying evidence, the Faculty Undergraduate or Graduate Education Director (as appropriate) will review the appeal on behalf of the Dean of the Faculty (who may also act in person if he or she considers it appropriate) with a view to considering whether the appeal can be resolved at the Local Stage.

In the case of an appeal by a postgraduate research student, the Faculty Education Manager will forward the Appeal Form and any accompanying evidence to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) who will review the appeal at the Local Stage.

Students may be invited to attend a meeting at the Local Stage to provide further information about their appeal. If invited to attend, the student may bring an adviser, friend or representative to the review meeting. The Faculty Education Manager (or in the case of an appeal against a decision of the Research Degrees Examinations Board another appropriate person) will provide administrative support.

Appeals must be considered under all applicable permissible grounds, whether or not specified by the student in the Appeal Form.

If the person reviewing the appeal considers that the appeal can be resolved at the Local Stage, he or she may take such action to resolve the appeal as is fair and reasonable in all the circumstances of the case, including but not limited to any or all of the following:

- a. refer the student's extenuating circumstances to be reconsidered by a committee under section 10 of these Regulations, if the person reviewing the appeal considers that insufficient weight was given to the student's circumstances by the committee;
- b. allow the student to submit late evidence of extenuating circumstances, if the person reviewing the appeal considers that the student had good reason for his or her failure to submit the evidence at the appropriate time;
- c. refer the appealable decision for reconsideration by the board of examiners, with or without a recommendation as to the outcome of such reconsideration;
- d. where the person reviewing the appeal considers it appropriate, vary the appealable decision without referring it to the board of examiners and report the variation to the board of examiners.

If the person reviewing the appeal does not consider that the appeal can be resolved at the Local Stage the student may request that the appeal be progressed to the University Stage under section 11.7.

The Local Stage will normally be dealt with and the student informed, in writing, of the outcome of the review and the reasons for the decisions made, within 25 working days of the Appeal Form being submitted to the Faculty Education Manager (or, in the case of an Appeal Form which has been submitted out of time, within 25 working days from the date of notification, to the Faculty Education Manager, of the University Secretary's decision to allow an extension of time for submission of the appeal).

### 11.7 Progression to the University Stage

If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Local Stage, or has not received the Local Stage decision by the prescribed time limit set out in section 11.6 above, he or she may request that the appeal is progressed to the University Stage. The student should make the request in writing to the Student Complaints Officer at [student-complaints@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:student-complaints@bristol.ac.uk) within five working days of the Local Stage decision or, if earlier, the expiry of the prescribed time limit. Upon receipt of the written request to progress to the University Stage, the Student Complaints Officer will obtain the Appeal Form and supporting evidence from the Faculty Education Manager, together with all of the evidence considered at the Local Stage and a copy of any decision letter sent to the student. If the Student Complaints Officer considers that further information from the student, school or faculty is required in order for the appeal to be considered, he or she may call for such information and this must be provided promptly.

The Student Complaints Officer may invite the student to respond to the Local Stage decision. If substantive new information is provided by the student after the Local Stage decision has been made, the Student Complaints Officer will normally refer this information back to the Local Stage for reconsideration before referring the appeal to the University Stage. Where appropriate, the Student Complaints Officer may also intervene to suggest a resolution of the appeal before referring it to the University Stage.

Upon receipt of the Appeal Form and other documentation from the Local Stage, the Student Complaints Officer shall refer the student's appeal to a Review Panel for consideration.

### 11.8 Appeal Review Panel

The Review Panel shall normally consist of three members of the academic staff who have had no prior involvement with the appealable decision or the Local Stage.

The proceedings of the Review Panel will not involve a hearing. The Review Panel may call for additional information from the student, school or faculty, which must be provided promptly. The Review Panel will consider the Appeal Form and other evidence and may:

- a. refer the matter back to the faculty (or in the case of postgraduate research students, to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)) for reconsideration with, or without, a recommendation for resolution. If following reconsideration at the Local Stage the original decision is not altered, the student may request that the matter be further reviewed by the Review Panel. If the original decision is altered, but the outcome is not acceptable to the student, the student may request that the new decision is referred to the Review Panel for further review, unless the new decision results in an outcome requested by the student in the Appeal Form, in which case there shall be no further right of appeal;
- b. dismiss the appeal, giving reasons, and issue a Completion of Procedures letter; or
- c. recommend that a committee be appointed by Council to hear the appeal.

A decision by the Review Panel that the student has provided a good reason for failure to submit extenuating circumstances at the appropriate time shall be binding.

Recommendations by the Review Panel should normally be followed, unless based on inaccurate information or a manifest misunderstanding of the facts of the case. If after reconsideration at the Local Stage, a recommendation is not followed, evidence of the reconsideration must be provided and reasons given for the decision not to follow the Review Panel recommendation.

### 11.9 Council Committee

If the Review Panel recommends that a committee be appointed to hear the appeal, Council will appoint a committee which shall normally consist of three members, including at least one academic member of Council or member of Senate, and which may include among its members University staff who are not members of Council. At the request of the student, Council may appoint a student sabbatical officer as an additional member. In the event of the Committee being divided in its view, the chair will have the casting vote. The Committee will normally be chaired by a lay member of Council. Wherever possible the Committee should include at least one member of the same gender as the student.

### 11.10 Clerk

The University Secretary will appoint a clerk to the Appeal Review Panel and to the Council Committee. The role of the clerk is to assist the Panel or Committee by collating the evidence, preparing the documentation, making arrangements for the hearing, taking a note of the proceedings and advising the Panel or Committee on the relevant regulations and procedures. The clerk may, on behalf of the Panel or Committee, ask for written witness statements or documents such as medical certificates to be produced. The student, the school and the faculty will be entitled to see all statements and documents seen by the Panel or Committee.

### 11.11 Nature of hearing

The Committee will decide its own procedure. The student may present his or her appeal in person or in writing as he or she chooses. Witnesses may be asked to give evidence.

### 11.12 Representation

The student may be accompanied at the appeal hearing by an adviser, friend or representative for support or representation. The Students' Union employs student advisers who may be asked to act in this capacity. In the event that the student fails to attend, without good reason, the hearing may be held in the student's absence. If the student has a good reason for not attending, the hearing will be rescheduled.

### 11.13 Time limits

The University will normally comply with the following time limits:

- a. the Local Stage will be completed within 25 working days of receipt of the student's Appeal Form. Where the Local Stage has involved a meeting with the student, the Local Stage decision will be issued to the student within five working days of the meeting (these five days being included within the 25 day limit set out above);
- b. The Appeal Review Panel will meet within 25 working days of the student's request for progression to the University Stage;
- c. The Council Committee hearing will be arranged as soon as is practicable after the Review Panel's recommendation that a Committee be appointed. The Committee's report will normally be issued within 10 working days of the hearing.

If the University is unable to meet these time limits it will inform the student of the reasons for the delay.

If at any time during the appeal procedure, the student fails to pursue the appeal or to respond to enquiries in a timely manner without good reason, the University Secretary may after a delay of more than 20 working days on the part of the student, determine that no further action should be taken in respect of the appeal and that the appeal procedure is concluded.

#### 11.14 Nominees

Unless the context indicates otherwise, under these Regulations an Officer of the University or other designated member of staff may act through his or her properly appointed nominee.

#### 11.15 Report to Senate and Council

The Council Committee will report to Council, setting out, in summary, the grounds of the appeal, the evidence received, the Committee's findings and any recommendations or instructions to be made by Council to the board of examiners. A copy of the report will be sent to the student and to the Faculty (via the Faculty Education Manager) or to the Chair of the Research Degrees Examination Board, as appropriate. The Student Complaints Officer will present an annual report on appeals under these regulations to both Senate and Council and will inform the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) of any general recommendations made by Council Committees during the year.

#### 11.16 Powers of Council

On receipt of the report of the Committee, Council may refer the matter back to the faculty (or the Research Degrees Examination Board, as appropriate) with a recommendation or instruction to the relevant board to amend its original decision.

#### 11.17 Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

The OIA provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints. The OIA will only consider cases when the University's internal procedures have been exhausted. It will not intervene in matters which turn purely on academic judgment.

At the end of the appeal process the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter which will confirm the outcome of the appeal.

Following receipt of the Completion of Procedures letter the student is entitled to make an application to the [OIA](http://oiahe.org.uk) (oiahe.org.uk).