

# Review and Appeal of Academic Decisions

## FAQs for Students

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### 1. What is an academic decision?

There are lots of decisions that staff or committees of the university make that affect your progress in your studies at the university. Academic decisions are typically those that relate directly to teaching, learning and the delivery of subjects in which you are engaged.

Staff and committees aim to act in accordance with university policy and in the best interests of the student when making academic decisions. However, you may have reason to question a decision we've made or action we've taken e.g. did we fail to do something that we should have done and has this directly and demonstrably affected your academic progress in your subject?

Academic decisions and academic policy issue students commonly request to have reviewed include:

- Not being granted Academic Consideration or not being satisfied with the consideration given ([Student Academic Consideration](#))
- Not being offered an opportunity to take a Supplementary Assessment e.g. supplementary exam if you failed the subject ([Supplementary Assessment Procedures](#))
- Not being provided with feedback or task marks within the specified time frames ([Teaching and Assessment: Assessment and Feedback Policy](#))

- The assessment task given differed, to a lesser or greater extent, from what was presented in the Subject Outline ([Teaching and Assessment: Subject Delivery Policy](#))
- Being given incorrect or misleading information about the requirements of the subject e.g. minimum attendance or performance requirements ([Coursework Rules](#))
- Specific issues with the delivery of the subject ([Teaching and Assessment: Subject Delivery Policy](#))
- Policy or procedures were unfairly or incorrectly applied e.g. in a way that disadvantaged you as compared to others - such as the submission method, assessment criteria, attendance requirements, late changes to the assessment, granting of extensions etc.

There are also more serious academic decisions which have their own appeals pathway (so they are not in scope of the Review of Academic Decisions Policy) for example:

- A finding of Academic Misconduct ([Academic Integrity and Misconduct](#))
- Being excluded from the university for not meeting the minimum rate of progress in your course ([Course Progress](#))

Always check any communications you are sent or consult a [Student Support Advisor](#) or the [Student Advocacy Service](#) if you have any questions about how to appeal any decision, including the application of academic policies.

Not considered to be an academic decision under the review and appeals policy are:

- Decisions about fees and scholarships ([Fees Policy](#))
- Decisions about admission to the university ([Admission Procedures \(Coursework\)](#))
- Alleged misconduct by a student ([Student Conduct Rules](#))
- Alleged misconduct by a staff member ([Grievance Policy](#))
- Alleged research misconduct ([Research Misconduct and Complaint Management Procedure](#))
- Complaints about services of the university ([Complaints Management Centre](#))
- Complaints about facilities and parking([Complaints Management Centre](#))

## 2. What can I do if my issue is not really a review of a mark, grade or academic decision?

If you have a concern that does not directly relate to an academic decision affecting your academic progress, but it's still serious and you want to report your issue (or you'd just like to be heard), there are a number of options available:

- For all general (non-academic) complaints – contact the [Complaints Management Centre](#)
- For questions or concerns about an academic policy - contact Academic Quality and Standards unit via [quality@uow.edu.au](mailto:quality@uow.edu.au)
- The [Safe and Respectful Communities](#) webpage provides key contacts for reporting serious incidents and seeking help
- To provide feedback on any aspect of your experience at UOW see [Feedback@UOW](#)

### 3. What do I do if I believe a staff member or a committee has not followed the university policy?

Student policies can be found on the [UOW Policy Directory](#). In the first instance try to resolve your issue informally by speaking to the relevant decisionmaker or a staff member with knowledge of the issue, like the Subject Coordinator.

You can also ask staff in your Faculty or School such as the [Head of Students](#) or [Student Support Advisor](#) to help you assess your issue or concern.

If you want help understanding university policy, or you would like to provide feedback on academic policy, you can also contact Academic Quality and Standards via [quality@uow.edu.au](mailto:quality@uow.edu.au).

### 4. What are my responsibilities in resolving my issue?

Have you sought to resolve your issue or concern informally? When you submit a formal review of academic decision, including a mark or grade, you will be asked how you sought an informal resolution, who you communicated with and the advice you were given.

You are also encouraged to keep records of communication on your issue and present relevant documents to support your review or appeal.

### 5. How do I seek an informal resolution?

You are encouraged to first raise your issue or concern with an appropriate staff member e.g. someone that has knowledge of the issue and is in a position to do something about it. The Subject Coordinator is usually the first person you would contact. You can contact your Subject Coordinator or member of the teaching team via the method detailed in your Subject Outline.

Things you can ask your teacher, or the Subject Coordinator, might include:

- To help you understand feedback you received on your work.
- To show you how the assessment criteria was applied to your work.
- How are the tasks in your subject marked to ensure fairness and consistency between students and across different classes?
- To see a copy of your final exam and review the calculation of marks.
- To explain the attendance policy for the subject and how this will impact your results.
- How was a late penalty applied to your work?

A subject Coordinator is able to take remedial action in line with the responsibilities of their role, such as approving academic consideration or amending a mark for an assessment task. They can also recommend remedial action to the delegated authority in the Faculty, such as the offer of a supplementary assessment or a change to a student's final mark or grade - but this still needs to be approved.

If you're unable to contact your Subject Coordinator, or you want to talk to someone else, you can also seek informal advice from other staff, such as:

- another member of the teaching team;
- a [Faculty client services officer](#);
- the Faculty [Student Support Advisor](#);
- the School or Faculty [Head of Students](#); or

- a [Student Advocacy Officer](#)

## 6. I tried to resolve my issue informally but could not, what do I do now?

If you were unable to successfully resolve your issue e.g. you were unable to contact the Subject Coordinator or you don't believe they gave you an appropriate response, then you should let us know this if you submit a formal request.

You can also speak with other staff in your Faculty or School such as the [Head of Students](#) or [Student Support Advisor](#), as your issue could be resolved without submitting a formal review or appeal.

If you're unable to achieve an informal resolution you can submit a formal review request via the [Review of Academic Decisions System \(RoADS\)](#). The RoADS form will ask you if your review is for an assessment task or subject mark or grade, or for another academic decision.

## 7. What are the acceptable reasons to request a formal review of a mark or grade?

You may lodge a formal request for a review of a mark or grade based on one or more of the following reasons:

- You believe that your work was not assessed in accordance with the assessment criteria in the relevant Subject Outline;
- The assessment requirements in the relevant Subject Outline were varied in an unreasonable way;
- The assessment requirements specified in the relevant Subject Outline were unreasonably or prejudicially applied;
- An administrative or computation error has occurred in the finalisation of the mark or grade.

When you submit your request or appeal, you will need to:

- Say how you tried to solve your issue informally;
- Give the reason for your request or appeal (as per those above)
- Clearly explain why and how this reason applies to your request/appeal (i.e. your rationale);
- Describe the outcome you are seeking; and
- Include relevant evidence to support your case.

## 8. What are the acceptable reasons to request a formal review of academic decision?

You can submit a formal request for a review of an academic decision with regard to such academic policies and procedures as:

- Code of Practice – Honours
- Code of Practice – Work Integrated Learning (Professional Experience)
- Coursework Rules
- Credit for Prior Learning Policy
- Standards for the Finalisation of Student Results
- Student Academic Consideration Policy
- Supplementary Assessment Procedures

- Teaching and Assessment: Assessment and Feedback Policy
- Teaching and Assessment: Code of Practice – Teaching
- Teaching and Assessment: Subject Delivery Policy

The formal request must:

- Say what is the academic decision, action or omission that is the basis for the request;
- Where possible to do so, refer to the relevant [UOW policy or procedures](#) to make clear your issue or concern;
- Clearly present the rationale for the request, identifying how this has affected your academic progress;
- Describe the outcome that you are seeking; and
- Include relevant evidence to support the case.

### **9. What sort of evidence must I provide with my request or my appeal?**

To help you resolve your matter we need to understand the issue you've experienced. Evidence could include copies of any relevant documents that demonstrate the case you are making, such as:

- A decision letter or email you received
- The Subject Outline or faculty handbook
- Assessment criteria and workbooks
- Marking rubrics/guides or your graded work
- Feedback on your work
- Copies of medical certificates
- Communications you received about your issue

You must also explain how the evidence you include supports your case. This explanation forms a part of the rationale for your request or appeal e.g. why you are seeking a review. It helps us see your point of view and understand your concern.

You should, where possible to do so, also refer to the relevant [UOW policy or procedures](#) to make clear your issue or concern.

### **10. Can I remain anonymous when submitting a review or an appeal?**

Although we understand you might be concerned about being identified, in order to assist you with resolving a matter that has affected your academic progress, we do need to know who you are. We will treat your review request confidentially and only share information with those involved in resolving your case.

If you'd like to submit an anonymous complaint to the university, you can contact the [Complaints Management Centre](#)

### **11. Who else will see the details of my formal review or appeal?**

We will treat your review request confidentially and only share information with those involved in resolving your case and those with a need to know. This may include discussing

your case with the Subject Coordinator, tutor, marker or the person responsible for making the decision you are appealing.

For information on how the University manages privacy please see our [Privacy webpage](#).

If you'd like to submit an anonymous complaint to the university, you can contact the [Complaints Management Centre](#)

## 12. Is there a time limit to submit a request for a formal review request or to appeal an outcome I received?

Yes, there are time limits applied for submitting a review or appeal at each stage of the process. This ensures we have the best opportunity to resolve your issue and minimise any ongoing impact on your academic progress.

### Stage 1a

Submit Review Request to the Head of School or nominee	Within ten (10) business days of the date you received the mark or grade, or you were made aware of the academic decision, action or omission.
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### Stage 1b

Submit Appeal to the Faculty Designate	Within ten (10) business days of the date you received a Stage 1a outcome.
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### Stage 2

Submit Appeal to the Student Ombudsman	Within ten (10) business days of the date you received a Stage 1b outcome.
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### Stage 3

Submit Appeal to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Within ten (10) business days of the date you received a Stage 2 outcome.
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## 13. Can I still submit a request or appeal an outcome if it's after the time limit?

You may be allowed to submit a review request or an appeal after ten business days if you are able to demonstrate there were compassionate or compelling circumstances that prevented you from submitting the request within the time limit. For more information on **compassionate and compelling circumstances** please see the [Compassionate and Compelling Circumstances Guideline](#).

If you are claiming compassionate or compelling circumstances have impacted you, please submit an explanation and evidence to support your claim in your review request.

If you are unable to submit an appeal in the online Review of Academic Decisions System (RoADS), contact your [Faculty Office](#) to ask that your case be reopened so you can submit your appeal. You'll need to submit an explanation and evidence to support your claim.

**14. How long will it take for my review or my appeal to be completed?**

We aim to complete our reviews in a timely manner as outlined in our procedures. The response times are:

**Stage 1a**

Head of School or nominee decision and Outcome	Within ten (10) business days of the date the Stage 1a review request was submitted
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**Stage 1b**

Faculty Designate decision and Outcome	Within ten (10) business days of the date the Stage 1b appeal was submitted
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**Stage 2**

Student Ombudsman decision and Outcome	Within twenty (20) business days of the date the Stage 2 appeal was submitted
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**Stage 3**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) decision and Outcome	Within ten (10) business days of the date the Stage 3 appeal was submitted
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If we are unable to complete our investigation in the usual time limits, we'll attempt to contact you and let you know what's going on and how long we think it will take.

For example, we might not have enough information, or we might need to speak to you or someone else involved in the case before reaching a decision. Please make sure you respond promptly to any requests for further information.

If you haven't heard from us within the usual time limits, please contact your [Faculty Office](#) and let us know you're still waiting. It may be that we've tried to get in touch with you already.

Please be mindful of [Key Dates like Public Holidays and UOW Closure Periods](#) as this will also impact the date we are due to respond to your request.

**15. Can I appeal the outcome of my review or appeal if I don't agree with the decision or didn't get what I wanted?**

Yes, you can appeal even if your review request or appeal was upheld in your favour e.g. if you believe the outcome was unfair, not what you were seeking, or we didn't follow our policy or procedures. However, you must have grounds for a further appeal and provide a rationale and any supporting evidence. You also need to respond and submit your appeal within the time limits provided.

**16. Is there anyone I can ask for help with my request for a formal review or appeal?**

It's not always easy to read and interpret university policy and procedures. You may also have difficulty understanding the decision or feedback you've been given.

In the first instance you should always try to resolve your concerns or have questions answered by your teacher or subject coordinator. If you are still unsure what to do or how to proceed you can consult a [Student Support Advisor](#) in your faculty.

The University also provides a [Student Advocacy Service](#). Student Advocacy Officers are able to provide advice on UOW's policies and procedures and how they impact you. The Student Advocacy Officer will work with you to try and achieve a solution (including preparing documents and attending meetings with you) or they can refer you to other support services within the University and externally.