

Complaints and Appeals procedure

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**Introduction**

If a student has a complaint or grievance about any matter, academic or non-academic, he or she is encouraged to raise the matter at an early stage with an appropriate member of staff. There is a right of appeal against the decision of a Board of Assessors (in this case the Core Tutor Group).

Informal complaints

Students are encouraged to approach those concerned for an informal discussion. The Course Coordinator and the other Core Tutors are available to discuss issues that students may have.

Formal complaints

If a resolution has not been found following the steps of the informal complaints procedure, the student can contact the Course Coordinator, stating the nature of the problem and steps taken so far. The Course Coordinator will arrange a meeting with a Complaints Committee. A Complaints Committee may consist of:

* The Course Coordinator
* The petitioner
* An advocate for the petitioner, approved by all parties, who may be internal or external to the training
* The tutor/student in question
* An advocate for a tutor may be any member of staff including the Course Coordinator, an advocate for a student must be approved by all parties and may be internal or external to the training
* A secretary to take minutes

Following the meeting, a letter will be sent to the petitioner outlining the resolution from the Complaints Committee.

Appeals Procedure for Students

NESWEC Core Tutors have to take decisions that affect you personally, perhaps to do with an application for extenuating circumstances, a request for a fee refund, or an assignment assessment. If you think that your case has not been properly considered or that a decision is unfair, you have the right to query and then to appeal against it. This policy explains the general procedure for querying and appealing against decisions made by the NESWEC Core Tutor group.

There are three stages to our appeals procedure:

Stage 1 – Query

When you first query a decision it is usually referred back to the individual who conveyed it to you. In your query, state the decision which you are concerned about, set out the grounds for your query, appeal or request for review and the sequence of events, and refer to any earlier communication. Concise numbered points can be a helpful way to set the situation out clearly and you should provide any supporting evidence available to you. If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to put your query in writing, please contact the Course Coordinator or any Core Tutor so that we can discuss alternative arrangements.

We are only able to accept queries made in writing and this ensures that we have an accurate record of your concerns. The Course Coordinator will confirm that your query has been received within 3 working days of receiving it, and send a response to your appeal within ten working days of the date of our confirmation. We will respond to your query using the method by which it was made i.e. by post or email, unless otherwise agreed.

If, when you receive a full answer, you remain dissatisfied and either you have additional information that has not previously been taken into consideration or you have evidence that there has been a procedural irregularity you might want to escalate your query to a Stage 2 Appeal.

Stage 2 – Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your query and you think that you have grounds, you can make a formal appeal. To make a formal appeal you should write to the Course Coordinator within 28 days of the date of the response to your query.

You should explain the grounds for your appeal and attach any information or correspondence that you consider relevant. The Course Coordinator will send an acknowledgement of your appeal within three working days of receiving it and tell you who has been asked to consider your appeal. Assessment outcome appeals will investigate the procedures followed and will not include a review of your work. Your documentation will be retained during the Appeal procedure.

The person who is asked to consider your appeal will look at:

1. Whether there are grounds for upholding your appeal
2. Whether the decision was taken fairly and correctly in accordance with the NESWEC’s policy and procedures
3. Whether all the appropriate information was taken into account

Rights and responsibilities

The person who is asked to consider your appeal will

1. Make sure that all the points you raise are properly and impartially considered, and that there is no potential conflict of interest
2. Explain the outcome clearly, and ensure that you know what further steps are open to you
3. Allow a friend to accompany you to any hearing
4. Respect confidentiality by disclosing only the information that is necessary to consider and respond to your appeal, and only to staff who need it for those purposes
5. The person appointed may rule that there are no grounds for the appeal to be considered, and you will then be advised accordingly.

Once your appeal has been considered you will be sent a reply directly from the person who has considered your case.

Stage 3 – Review

Following the outcome of your appeal, if you remain dissatisfied you can ask Crossfields Institute to review your case (see the Crossfields Institute website).