

## Procedures for the Student Appeals Committee

### Principles

- **Advice** Students are encouraged to seek independent and confidential advice from the Advice Service in Reading University Students' Union. [http://www.rusu.co.uk/advice/academic\\_advice/](http://www.rusu.co.uk/advice/academic_advice/).
  - **Fairness** The student will have a fair opportunity to present their appeal and will be provided with clear reasons for the outcome of each stage of the process.
  - **Confidentiality** Appropriate levels of confidentiality will be maintained.
  - **Reporting** Appeals will be recorded, anonymised and reported within the University.
  - **Reasonable adjustments** The University will make reasonable adjustments to the process where appropriate.
1. The Student Appeals Committee "the Committee" has the power and duty to consider appeals against penalties imposed by:
    - i. the Dean of Student Discipline;
    - ii. the Student Disciplinary Committee;
    - iii. the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct;
    - iv. the Standing Committee on Academic Engagement and Fitness to Study;
    - v. the Standing Committee on Fitness to Practise;
    - vi. The Procedure for appeals against termination of registration resulting from non-submission of a thesis by the Maximum Registration Date

### How to submit an appeal

2. If the student wishes to submit an appeal against the penalty that has been imposed under the procedures set out in section 1, they must email an appeal statement to [studentappeals@reading.ac.uk](mailto:studentappeals@reading.ac.uk) within the time frame specified in the relevant procedure. If a timeframe is not specified in the relevant procedure, the student shall have five working days to submit an appeal.
3. The student will be expected to comply with the penalty imposed under the procedures listed in section 1 regardless of whether the student chooses to appeal the penalty. If the student appeals the penalty and the penalty is reduced, the University will not provide any compensation or any other remedy. The student's RISIS record will record the outcome of the appeal.
4. The appeal statement shall set out the grounds for appeal. The student can appeal on the following grounds:
  - i. If the penalty has been imposed on insufficient evidence;
  - ii. If the penalty is not reasonable and proportionate;
  - iii. If there has been a procedural error;
  - iv. If the penalty did not take the student's mitigating circumstances into account.

### Role of the Committee

**5. The Student Appeals Committee will not re-hear the case that has already been considered. Rather, the Committee will consider whether there has been any failure of procedure and whether the decision reached was fair and reasonable in all of the circumstances.**

6. The Student Appeals Committee will have the power to:

Overturn the penalty that has been imposed e.g. decision made on lack of evidence.

OR

Confirm or reduce the penalty that has been imposed. If the Committee reduces the penalty, the Committee will receive a copy of the relevant procedures and will impose an appropriate penalty set out in the relevant procedure.

### **Membership of the Committee**

7. The membership of the Committee will be: the Vice-Chancellor (Chair), a member appointed by the Council, two members appointed by the Senate and a RUSU Student Officer. The Secretary will be the University Secretary or his or her nominee.

### **Before the appeal hearing**

8. On receipt of the appeal statement, the Secretary will request a written response to the student's statement of appeal from the Dean of Student Discipline or the Committee responsible for imposing the penalty that the student wishes to appeal against. This will normally be the Chair of the relevant Committee, or a member of that Committee.

9. The Secretary will write to the student to invite them to the appeal hearing normally at least seven days before the hearing. The student will be invited to attend the hearing on a specified date and time. If the student demonstrates a good reason for being unable to attend in person, they may attend via telephone or skype. For example, distance learners may attend via telephone or skype.

10. The student and the Committee shall receive a copy of the appeal file in advance of the meeting. This shall normally contain the following:

- the student's appeal statement;
- any evidence submitted by the student in support of his or her appeal;
- a written response to the student's appeal statement as described in section 8 of this procedure;
- a copy of all documents considered by the relevant Committee or the Dean of Student Discipline when the penalty was imposed;
- a copy of the procedures that have been applied;
- Other documents may also be included where appropriate.

11. In addition to this, the student shall normally be informed of the following in advance of the meeting:

- i. How to access advice from RUSU Advice Service;
- ii. The composition of the Committee;
- iii. The student's right to be accompanied by a 'friend' which for this purpose is defined as: an adviser from Reading University Students' Union Advice Service team, a current member of staff of the University of Reading, a currently registered student of the University of Reading, or a University of Reading Students' Union Student Officer. A person who does not fall within these categories will not be able to act as a 'friend' unless otherwise agreed by the Dean of Student Discipline.

The role of the 'friend' is to support the student in preparation for the hearing; accompany the student at the hearing; the 'friend' may speak on the behalf of a student, with the permission of the Chair.. It is not the role of the 'friend' to present the student's case on their behalf, except in the most exceptional circumstances. Disabled Students may also be accompanied by a Support Worker in addition to a 'friend', as appropriate to their needs.

- iv. The student has the right to request that one or more witnesses attend the meeting to attest to fact or to the student's character. The student must ask the Chair for permission in advance of the meeting and the Chair may request that this evidence be given in writing rather than presented in person at the hearing
- v. If the student has any special requirements to allow them to attend and/or participate fully in the hearing he or she should notify the Secretary in advance of the meeting so that the University can make appropriate reasonable adjustments.

**12.** The advice of the Head of Counselling and Wellbeing Service or an appropriate professional will be available in appropriate cases. Where a student does not consent to medical information being provided to the University, the investigation will proceed on the basis of the information available to the University at the time.

### **During the appeal hearing**

**13.** The student and 'friend' and will normally be present throughout the Committee's hearing of evidence but the Chair may ask them to withdraw at any stage at the Committee's proceedings if the Committee wishes to consider privately any matter or point. If any person obstructs the proceedings, the Chair may require all or any of those present to leave the hearing.

**14.** The proceedings of the Committee will not be invalidated by the failure of the student or the 'friend' to attend the hearing or by their exclusion from the meeting.

**15.** The Committee has the power to adjourn a hearing for a reasonable period.

16. No act or ruling of the Committee will be invalidated by reason only of vacancy in the Committee or by reason of absence of one member from any meeting provided always that the Committee will not proceed to consider any case unless three of its members are present.

**After the appeal hearing**

17. The Secretary will normally send the Minutes of the hearing to the student within seven days.
18. The appeal to the Student Appeals Committee concludes the University's procedures, and will normally result in the issue of a Completion of Procedures Letter. If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the procedures the student may submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) providing that the complaint is eligible under the OIA rules. Students who wish to do so must submit a complaint to the OIA within twelve months of the date of the University's Completion of Procedures letter