

Academic Appeals Procedure



1 Introduction

1.1 Students have a right of appeal against academic decisions and recommendations made by Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training Ltd that affect their academic progress. These procedures set out the grounds of appeal permitted and the mechanisms by which that right can be exercised. These procedures also set out the grounds on which an academic appeal is not permissible.

1.2 Complaints relating to the quality of teaching or supervision, or other circumstances that relate to the delivery of a programme of study before the point of assessment or the submission of assignments are not subject to these procedures. They should instead be raised under the Complaints Procedure. Where an appeal depends on the resolution of a complaint, both the appeal and complaint should be submitted within specified timescales but the complaint will take place precedence and the appeal wait for the outcome of the complaint.

1.3 These procedures describe how students may submit an academic appeal to Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training and the grounds under which they may do so. It is important for students to distinguish between those grounds when making their case and also between an appeal and a complaint (for which different procedures are in place).

1.4 Academic appeals come under the authority of the Directors of Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training. The Directors have the right to delegate others to act on its behalf in such matters. These procedures explain how appeals should be submitted, and who will consider academic appeals on behalf of Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training.

1.5 Appeals will be treated with due diligence and confidentiality, but you should understand that those considering an appeal will normally require access to the documentation presented in support of it in order to come to an informed decision.

1.6 You will not be disadvantaged because of making an academic appeal. However, if it is later discovered that an appeal was frivolous, malicious or vexatious, Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training may consider referring you to its Disciplinary Procedure. This may include:

- appeals which are obsessive, harassing, or repetitive
- insistence on pursuing non-meritorious appeals and/or unrealistic, unreasonable outcomes
- insistence on pursuing what may be non-meritorious appeals in an unreasonable manner
- appeals which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance
- demands for redress which lack any serious purpose or value

1.7 Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training has a responsibility to protect its self against unacceptable behaviour and provide a working environment that is safe, respectful and tolerant. Consequently, it is expected that students, their representatives and staff members should act reasonably and fairly towards each other and treat the process with respect. Behaviour that is unreasonable, aggressive or abusive, verbal or written, will not be tolerated and may result in your access to the procedure or to staff connected with your appeal being limited or withdrawn.

The decision to limit or withdraw access is not taken lightly. In the event that this decision is taken we will provide this in writing, including the reason(s) why this decision has been taken.

In the event that your access to staff or to the complaints procedure is limited or withdrawn you may appeal the decision by submitting your grounds in writing to the Directors who will review the appeal with an approved impartial external body. The Directors (or their nominee) will request copies of all documentation.

1.8 You should send copies of all relevant documentation with the Appeal against withdrawal of Procedure form.

2 Right of Appeal

2.1 Appeals may be made in respect of the following areas relating to the process of assessment:

1. a formal assessment result
2. a decision consequential to an academic failure (e.g. termination of registration)
3. a decision consequential to unsatisfactory academic progress

2.2 For the following areas of potential dispute, separate procedures apply:

1. Equality and Diversity Policy
2. Complaints (see para 4.3 below)

2.3 The submission of an appeal will not be to the detriment of your academic position.

3 Grounds of Appeal

3.1 Grounds of appeal in relation to the areas listed under para 2.1 above are allowed as follows:

- (a) Procedural irregularities in the formal conduct of an assessment or in reaching another academic decision; and/or
- (b) Evidence of prejudice or of bias on the part of one or more examiners and/or markers.

4 Exclusions from Appeal

4.1 The following grounds cannot be considered as the basis for an appeal:

- (a) Dissatisfaction with the academic judgment of the internal examiners and/or markers including the Board of Examiners (see 4.2);
- (b) Dissatisfaction with the formative assessment of work by academic staff (i.e. marks that have no bearing on a student's formal progress). Such concerns should be raised through the Complaints Procedure;
- (c) Matters of dispute that are dealt with under the Student Complaints Procedure (see also 4.3).

4.2 The inclusion of an independent element in the assessment of work through internal second marking (or single marking and moderation internally or externally) is normally sufficient to refute the argument that there have been inadequate checks on the accuracy and appropriateness of the marking, and to preclude an appeal on the ground of prejudice and bias.

4.3 You should note that complaints relating to the quality of teaching or supervision, or other circumstances that relate to the delivery of a programme of study before the point of assessment or the submission of a thesis or dissertation, are not subject to these procedures. They should instead be raised under the Complaints Procedure.

4.4 Academic appeals submitted outside of the timeframe set out in 6.1 will normally be excluded from consideration unless you can present reasonable grounds for why the appeal was not submitted within the normal deadline.

4.5 You should be aware that anyone making unwarranted and unsubstantiated allegations concerning the reputation or conduct of members of staff may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

5 Responsibilities of Students

5.1 You should note with care the time constraints outlined in these procedures. You are responsible for compiling documentation in support of an appeal.

5.2 The appeals procedure is principally for the use of individual students. Where however the issues raised affect a number of students, they may submit an appeal as a group. To do so, they will need to identify one of their number to act as a spokesperson. It will be the spokesperson who will act on behalf of the group and normally only the spokesperson will attend meetings on behalf of the group. At each of the formal stages, each member of the group must sign the statement of the appeal for it to be accepted as a valid group appeal.

5.3 Exceptionally, where a group wishes to appeal but no individual is willing to act as the group's spokesperson, its members may collectively ask the Students representative at Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training to act on their behalf.

5.4 It is your responsibility to inform the Directors in writing and without delay of any circumstances that you think may have affected your performance in an assessment. These will be considered and judgements made.

5.5 You are reminded that for the disclosure of assessment results, you have access to your marks through the academic year. General feedback on your performance should be offered by the Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training, thereby possibly reassuring you of the appropriateness of the outcome of an assessment.

5.6 You should be aware that your appeal will be considered on the evidence that you submit. You should ensure that all relevant evidence which you wish to be considered is submitted with your application. Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training will not gather evidence on your behalf.

6 STAGE 1: APPEAL

6.1 A formal appeal must be submitted using the Appeal Form to the Directors (or their representative) within 10 working days of being notified of an academic decision relating to paragraph 2.1. All supporting evidence should be attached to the form. Where possible you should indicate what remedy you seek.

6.2 Colleges should normally aim to resolve an academic appeal within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal, or otherwise inform you of the expected delay.

6.3 On receipt of the appeal the Director or nominated representative shall decide whether you have presented a prima facie (the meaning of which is to be read as 'on the face of it') case for appeal as set out under 3.1. Should an appeal materially involve the Director, another senior member of staff of the College will consider the case.

6.4 If no prima facie grounds for appeal are found, the Director or their representative can dismiss the appeal, informing you in writing of the reasons for doing so. Colleges should aim to fully address all issues raised in the student's Stage 1 appeal in their response letter.

6.5 If the Director/representative decides that there is a prima facie case for appeal, the case will be investigated by a College appeal panel consisting of the external representative and Director. The majority of the panel should not be materially involved in the substance of the appeal. The student will be sent a copy of the minutes of the meeting.

6.6 If the panel upholds the appeal, the case will normally be referred to the Directors. In most cases, this could be achieved via electronic means. Care should be taken to ensure student confidentiality and equity in the treatment of marks.

6.7 The Directors will normally inform you of the outcome of the consideration.

7 STAGE 2: ACADEMIC APPEAL COMMITTEE

7.1 An appeal will only be accepted if:

- (a) you submit further material circumstances which could not reasonably have been expected to have been submitted for consideration to a College appeal panel during the Stage 1 process;
- (b) there is evidence of procedural irregularity during the Stage 1 process;
- (c) there is evidence of bias during the Stage 1 process;
- (d) the decision reached during the Stage 1 process is one that no reasonable body (properly directing itself, and taking into account all relevant factors) could have arrived at.

7.2 You should submit a Stage 2 Appeal to the Directors by sending an Academic Appeal Form together with a written statement detailing the grounds for appeal (reference Paragraph 7.1) within 10 working days of being notified of a Stage 1 Academic Appeal decision. You should also enclose a copy of your Stage 1 appeal and any correspondence from the College in respect of their decision.

7.3 Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training should aim to resolve an academic appeal within 30 calendar days of receipt of the appeal, or otherwise inform you of the expected delay.

7.4 A nominated representative will consider whether there are prima facie grounds for considering the case before a Committee of Academic Appeal.

7.5 If no prima facie grounds for appeal are found, Directors will dismiss the appeal, informing you in writing of the reasons for doing so.

7.6 If it is decided that there are prima facie grounds for a stage 2 appeal, a nominated representative will arrange for a (non standing) appeal to be convened.

7.7 Appeal will normally only consider the appeal against the grounds specified in 7.1 and will not take the form of a re-hearing of the original appeal except in so far as is necessary to decide the merit of the appeal.

8 STAGE 2: ACADEMIC APPEAL COMMITTEE PROTOCOL

8.1 No person shall serve as a member of the academic appeal who is also associated with your programme of study.

8.2 You will be informed of the date of the meeting at least 5 working days in advance. You may choose to attend the meeting but the representative may also hear a case in your absence. You may attend the meeting in person or via telephone or other electronic means.

8.3 You may be accompanied by a colleague or friend, normally a member of Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training. You must inform the representative of the name of anyone you wish to accompany you at least 5 working days before the meeting. The person accompanying you may speak on your behalf with the agreement of the Chair.

8.4 Copies of all documents to be considered will be circulated to you and to the Appeal Committee at least five working days before the meeting.

8.5 The meeting will begin with private discussions by the appeal representative to clarify matters of process.

8.6 You and the Director will be invited to join the meeting. You will first be invited to present your statement about the case. The Committee will then question you about your case. The Director will then be invited to present a statement for the College. Any other relevant parties who have been called to attend the meeting (eg academic or other staff) will then be invited to give their testimony and answer questions put to them by the Committee.

8.7 The Committee will then retire to consider their verdict on the case. The Committee, having heard the evidence, may uphold the appeal, partially uphold or reject the appeal. The decision reached by the Committee will be final.

8.8 Such a decision may include a recommendation to annul a decision of the Directors and substitute it with an alternative decision.

8.9 The Appeal Committee will keep a record of its deliberations and decisions and submit a report to the Directors. You will be notified in writing of the Committee's decision and the reasons for it, within five working days of the meeting.

9 Appeals against decisions made under the Code of Good Practice - Unsatisfactory Progress

9.1 You should submit an Academic Appeal Form – to the Directors detailing your grounds for appeal within 10 working days of being notified of the final decision.

9.2 An appeal will only be accepted if

- (a) you submit further material circumstances which could not reasonably have been expected to have been submitted for consideration by Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training at an earlier stage;
- (b) there is evidence of procedural irregularity;
- (c) there is evidence of bias;
- (d) the decision reached is wholly unreasonable in all the circumstances.

9.3 Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training aims to resolve your appeal within 30 calendar days of receipt or otherwise inform you of the expected delay.

9.4 An external representative who has not previously been involved in the case will consider whether there are grounds for appeal.

9.5 The external representative may either uphold the appeal, dismiss the appeal or refer the matter to the Directors.

9.6 If the appeal is dismissed, this exhausts the colleges internal appeals process and a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued which will contain details of an Independent Adjudicator.

10 Completion of Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training Academic Appeal Process

10.1 There are no other appeal procedures beyond those stages detailed above. If you are not satisfied with the outcome after the completion of the University's procedure, you can apply to the appointed Independent Adjudicator

11 Annual Report

11.1 Each year a report will be prepared detailing general matters or issues arising from recent academic appeals.

Academic Appeals Procedures: Appeals Form

The completion and submission of this form initiates the **formal** Academic Appeals Procedure. Before submitting a formal appeal, you should discuss the matter with your personal tutor, programme director or other appropriate person at the College to understand better the reason for the result or decision against which you wish to appeal and to seek to resolve the matter **informally**. If the matter remains unresolved, you may invoke the formal Appeals Procedure.

Important notes:

You may only appeal on your own behalf. An appeal submitted by a third party will not be accepted unless accompanied by written authorisation from you.

The Appeal Form must be submitted to the Directors within 20 working days.

[Note: In the case of refusal to allow a student permission to take an examination on the grounds of unsatisfactory work and attendance, the appeal must be submitted within **10** working days of notification of the decision to allow sufficient time for the appeal to be considered.]

About You:

Full Name:	
CQ Enrolment Number: RCVS Enrolment Number:	
Programme of Study:	
Year of Study:	
Address for correspondence:	
Tel no:	Mobile no:
E-mail:	

1. About Your Appeal

<p>Please indicate stage of Appeal</p> <p>Stage 1 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Stage 2 <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>a) Please state the decision against which you are appealing (eg exclusion, requirement to resit year etc):</p>	
<p>b) Please tick the box(es) below to indicate on what grounds you are appealing: <i>An appeal which questions the academic or professional judgement of those charged with the responsibility for assessing a student's academic performance or professional competence will not be permitted. This means that you may not challenge marks or grades awarded unless you believe that they may have been affected by factors under i-iv below.</i></p>	
<p>(i) There exists or existed circumstances affecting the student's performance of which, for a credible and compelling reason.</p> <p>Please explain here any credible and compelling reasons with supporting documentation as to why this information was not made available prior to the decision being made.</p> <p>(continue on a separate sheet if necessary):</p>	

<p>(ii) There has been a material administrative error or procedural irregularity in the assessment process or in putting into effect the regulations for the programme of study of such a nature as to cause significant doubt as to whether the decision might have been different if the error or irregularity had not occurred.</p>	
<p>(iii) There is evidence of prejudice or bias or lack of proper assessment on the part of one or more of the assessors/examiners.</p>	
<p>(iv) The supervision or training in respect of research for an assignment or equivalent work was unsatisfactory to the point that your performance was seriously affected.</p> <p>Note: if students wish to appeal on such grounds but the supervisory concerns arose significantly before the assessment result against which they are appealing, and without it having been raised in writing with the Collegel before the appeal, the student must provide credible and compelling reasons for only raising these concerns at appeal</p>	
<p>c) Please give details of your appeal here, including the date of the matter under appeal arising and your desired outcome (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).</p>	

d) Please indicate what supporting documentation you are submitting in support of your appeal (eg medical certificate, emails and other correspondence etc) that you wish to be considered in the appeal and attach it to a hard-copy of this form, duly signed. This should normally be contemporaneous, and capable of verification. All evidence should be written in English, or, if not, certifiably translated.

e) Please outline any steps that you have already taken to address the issues raised in your appeal informally with Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training (please include the names of staff with whom you have been in contact and attach any correspondence that you have had with them). If you have not contacted your School informally please provide the reason why.

Declaration:

I declare that the information given in this form is true. I have consulted the Academic Appeals Procedure before completing the form.

Signed:

Date:

Note: In order to consider your academic appeal fully, Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training will need to disclose the appeal to members of staff whose input may be required.