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Kent and Medway Medical School Academic Appeals Policy

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Academic Appeals Policy

This Policy sets out the procedures for processing student academic appeals.

The Procedure set out in this document applies to all students of the Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) who are studying for a joint award of Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Kent, at both undergraduate and post graduate levels.

The University of Kent (referred to hereafter as ‘the University’) will oversee the Procedure set out in this document on behalf of Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Kent.

This document and associated procedures do not cover appeals against a decision of a Fitness to Practise and Fitness to Study Panel. The procedures for such appeals are established in the [KMMS Low-Level Concerns, Fitness to Study, and Fitness to Practise Procedures](#), which are overseen by Canterbury Christ Church University and excluded from the scope of this Policy.

Where an appeal relates to an external assessment where the award is conferred by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB), such as the Medical Licensing Assessment or the Prescribing Safety Assessment, students may be referred to appeals procedures associated with the PSRB.

Where the text states ‘School’ this should be understood to refer to KMMS.

PART A - General Information about Academic Appeals

1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1. An academic appeal is “a challenge to or request for reconsideration of a decision by an academic body that makes decisions on student progress, assessment and awards”¹ (Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education).
- 1.2. This Policy applies to students who wish to appeal against the decision of the following academic bodies:

¹ See [the OIA’s Good Practice Framework - Handling complaints and academic appeals](#)

1.2.1. Boards of Examiners for either an undergraduate or postgraduate taught course of study

1.2.2. Academic Misconduct Committees or their Chairs

1.3. The procedures set out in this Policy are for current students.

1.3.1. Should a former student have good reason to submit an appeal beyond the deadlines stated within this procedure, they should be aware that it may be challenging to investigate or respond to the appeal, for example because records may no longer be available. Therefore, it is advisable that an appeal is submitted within the given deadlines to ensure that it can be considered effectively.

2. General Information about Academic Appeals

2.1. Students who submit an appeal can expect to do so without risk of disadvantage or of unfair treatment. The University recognises that pursuing an appeal may be stressful and aims to finalise the process as quickly and efficiently as possible. Student wellbeing will be considered throughout the process, and reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to ensure equality and accessibility for all students submitting an appeal.

2.2. Students have the right to withdraw their appeal at any time.

2.3. Students may not appeal against the academic judgement of the academic body or its academic nominee. Academic judgement is defined as an opinion that can only be given by an academic expert, for example, a judgement about marks awarded for assessment, progression, degree classification or the achievement of course outcomes.

2.4. Students should normally submit their appeals themselves.

2.4.1. However, there may be times when a student wishes or needs to be represented by a third party, for example a member of staff, a member of the Students' Union, a student adviser, or a relative.

2.4.2. Where the student is represented by a third party, the student must give formal written permission for this representation and for the University to

discuss personal information with the third-party representative.

2.4.3. Where written permission is not provided, the University will decline to accept a third-party appeal submission.

2.5. All staff involved in the consideration of appeals are required to undertake Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity training.

2.6. All appeals will be dealt with confidentially. All information and evidence submitted as part of an appeal will be treated as sensitive personal data under GDPR legislation ('special category data') and processed as such. Materials will be kept securely, with access restricted to those staff in the University who have a legitimate reason for accessing it to process the appeal.

3. Advice on the Appeals Process for Students

- 3.1. Advice and support for students is available from their Students' Union ([Kent Students' Union Advice Service](#) or [CCSU Advice](#)). Students considering an appeal are strongly encouraged to contact the Students' Union at the earliest opportunity to discuss their submission. Students may also wish to seek support from within the School from their Personal Academic Tutor/Clinical Academic Tutor or the Student Life and Guidance Team. Advice on the procedure itself can also be sought from the [KMMS Student Procedures and Quality Officer](#) and/or the Kent Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office.
- 3.2. Appeals are not legal proceedings and legal representation at an Appeal Review hearing (see section 22) would only be appropriate in very exceptional circumstances. The involvement of a legal representative has the potential to change the nature of the procedure or delay the process. However, if a student asks to use a legal representative, the University will carefully consider whether it would be reasonable in the circumstances of the case to allow them to do so.

4. Student Complaints and Appeals Related to Protected Characteristics

4.1. Student Complaint Procedure

4.1.1. KMMS has a [complaints procedure](#) which is also overseen by the

University. This procedure is distinct from the procedure for Academic Appeals.

- 4.1.2. On occasion, students will submit both an appeal and a complaint at the same time and when this happens it may be necessary to suspend one process until the other is completed. The Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office will adopt a proportional response to ensure that the requirements of both procedures are enacted in the best interests of all parties.

4.2. Appeals Related to Protected Characteristics

If an appeal raises concerns in relation to protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010², the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office will consider the best route for the appeal. The student will be informed if this is the case.

5. Appeals that Are Identified as Having No Serious Purpose or Intended to Cause Disruption or Annoyance

- 5.1. Appeals that are identified as having no serious purpose or that are intended to cause disruption or annoyance will be dismissed. Examples include the following types of appeals:
- 5.1.1. those that the University has previously considered and decided;
 - 5.1.2. those that are about something which a fair-minded person would consider to be trivial;
 - 5.1.3. those where the student is pursuing in a way that is having a seriously negative effect on the University's staff or work;
 - 5.1.4. those where the student is looking for a remedy that lacks any serious purpose or value.
- 5.2. The Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office will decide whether an appeal is dismissed on this basis.

³ Students will be provided with the link to the online form as part of their appeal outcome, where applicable.

- 5.3. Where the appeal is dismissed, the student can submit an Appeal Review Request within **7 calendar days** of being notified.

PART B – Academic Appeals Process – General Information

6. Steps of the Academic Appeals Process

- 6.1. The KMMS appeal process consists of three steps – Early Resolution, Formal Appeal and Appeal Review as outlined in the diagram below.

Early Resolution

Designed to address a student's concerns quickly and directly with KMMS (see section 9)

Formal Appeal

Used where a student is either dissatisfied with or opted not to take up Early Informal Resolution, and has asked for formal consideration of their appeal. Specialist staff outside the KMMS consider the appeal (see section 11)

Appeal Review

Review of the process of the Formal Appeal stage by an academic Chair to make sure that appropriate procedures were followed and that the decision was reasonable (see section 18)

7. Deadlines for Submitting Academic Appeals

- 7.1. Students should submit to the following deadlines:

- 7.1.1. Early Resolution – within **7 calendar days** following receipt of the academic body's decision.
- 7.1.2. Formal Appeal – within **28 calendar days** following receipt of the academic body's decision or within 7-calendar days following receipt of the outcome of Early Resolution, whichever is the longer.
- 7.1.3. Appeal Review Request – within **7 calendar days** of receipt of their Formal Appeal Outcome.

- 7.2. There is flexibility to extend the deadlines for students set out in this procedure

if there is good reason to do so. The following are examples of what may be considered good reason:

- 7.2.1. Where a student has an Inclusive Learning Plan (ILP) that recommends adjustments to accommodate difficulties around meeting deadlines;
and/or
- 7.2.2. To provide a student with a rapid outcome and to prevent unnecessarily entering the formal stages of the appeal process (for Early Resolution only);
and/or
- 7.2.3. Extenuating circumstances substantiated with supporting evidence;
and/or
- 7.2.4. A delay in receipt of the outcome from KMMS of an Early Resolution enquiry.

This list is not exhaustive.

- 7.3. If an appeal is received beyond the deadline, the student should provide a good reason as to why the appeal is late.
 - 7.3.1. The reason stated, along with supporting evidence, will be considered by the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office.
 - 7.3.2. A decision on the validity of the good reason will normally be made within **7 calendar days** of receiving the appeal.
 - 7.3.3. If the reason is deemed valid, the appeal will be accepted for consideration.
 - 7.3.4. If the reason is deemed invalid, the appeal will be dismissed. The student can appeal this decision by submitting an Appeal Review request within **7 calendar days** (see section 18).

8. Timeframes for Processing Academic Appeals

- 8.1. The School should provide a response to Early Resolution within **7 calendar days** of receipt of the request.

- 8.2. The Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office should provide an outcome to a Formal Appeal within **28 calendar days** of receipt.
- 8.3. The Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office should provide an outcome to an Appeal Review request within **28 calendar days** of receipt unless an Academic Appeals Review Panel is convened, in which case the final outcome should be provided within **52 calendar days** of receipt.
- 8.4. The completion of the formal appeals process should normally take no longer than **90 calendar days**. At each stage of appeal, if deadlines are exceeded, the student will be kept informed.

9. Early Resolution

- 9.1. Students are strongly advised to resolve any issues or concerns informally with the School before entering the formal appeals process. This can provide a speedy outcome without the stress of a formal appeal.
- 9.2. Where a student does not submit an Early Resolution request and proceeds directly to submit a Formal Appeal, they will be asked to provide a valid reason for not seeking to resolve their issues and concerns informally via Early Informal Resolution.
- 9.3. Requests for Early Resolution should be made within **7 calendar days** of receipt of the decision of the academic body to ensure the informal part of the process can be completed within the overall time period allowed for the submission of a formal appeal.
- 9.4. Students should raise their concern with their Head of Year and the [KMMS Student Procedures and Quality Officer](#) by completing a Early Resolution form found on the [student portal](#).
- 9.5. Examples of issues that may be raised directly with the Student Procedures and Quality Officer as part of the early resolution process include but are not limited to:
 - 9.5.1. Seeking clarification that marks and results have been recorded accurately

9.5.2. Seeking feedback on the way in which marks and results have been arrived at

9.5.3. Seeking an explanation of how the impact of extenuating circumstances have been acted upon by the Board of Examiners

9.5.4. Providing additional evidence to support extenuating circumstances that has been requested by a Board of Examiners

9.5.5. Providing new evidence to support extenuating circumstances that were not previously made known to the Board of Examiners.

This list is not exhaustive.

9.6. **Important:** where a successful Early Resolution outcome could allow the student to graduate at the next Congregation Ceremony, the student should submit their early informal resolution request **as soon as possible**.

However, even if a successful outcome is reached, it cannot be guaranteed that they will be able to graduate due to the short timeframe between results publication and the graduation ceremony.

Similarly, time constraints for progression to the next stage of study in the coming academic year may mean that successful requests to do so also cannot be guaranteed. The School must provide a response to the student within **7 calendar days**. This will ensure that, where Early Resolution has not proven successful, students are still able to proceed to the formal stages of the appeals process if they wish.

9.6.1. Normally, a written response should be provided to the student setting out the outcome.

9.6.2. Alternatively, the response can be provided via a face-to-face discussion with the student to explain a decision, or by asking an appropriate member of staff to handle the matter.

9.6.3. In all cases, a record of the Early Resolution request and outcome must be kept by the School.

9.6.4. Where the original decision is amended as a result of early resolution,

the Student Procedures and Quality Officer will arrange for the student's record to be amended accordingly and ensure the relevant quality assurance procedures are followed.

PART C – Formal Stages of the Academic Appeals Process

10. Important Note on Evidence for a Formal Appeal or an Appeal Review Request

10.1. New Supporting Evidence

Where an appeal includes new supporting evidence (i.e., evidence that was not made available to the academic body), original hard copy documentation may be requested before the appeal will be considered. Students will be informed if this is the case.

10.2. Supporting Evidence not in English Language

If the original documentation is not in English, the student is required to also submit a translation into English that has been provided either by an accredited organisation or verified in writing by a member of University staff fluent in the original language.

10.3. Falsified Evidence

Should the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office have cause to suspect that the documentary evidence provided with the appeal has been falsified, the case will be considered under the KMMS Non-Academic Discipline Procedures and the KMMS Low Level Concerns, Fitness to Study, and Fitness to Practise Procedures.

The appeal may be paused, or the appeal outcome withheld until the matter has been resolved.

10.4. Inclusive Learning Plans (ILP)

10.4.1. Students with a fluctuating condition that is covered by an Inclusive Learning Plan ('ILP') who suffer an acute episode or worsening of a fluctuating condition are not required to submit fresh medical or other evidence related to the condition as evidence. The ILP constitutes the already established evidence-base for such applications.

10.4.2. However, students are required to submit evidence relating to

conditions or extenuating circumstances that are not covered by that established arrangement.

10.5. Self-Certification as Evidence

Self-certification can be used as supporting evidence, where the period of self-certification coincides with non-submission of assessments, leads to late submission of assessments, and absence from examinations.

10.5.1. Where the School has already **accepted** self-certification as evidence to support the extenuating circumstances that the student is referring to in their appeal, there is no need for the student to provide additional evidence. This is because it can be assumed that, in accepting the original self-certificate, the School is acknowledging that the student was impacted by the extenuating circumstances at that time. However, if the student's extenuating circumstances extend beyond the period accepted by the School, additional evidence will be required.

10.5.2. Students cannot normally use self-certification retrospectively to evidence non-attendance at examinations. This is because students must inform the Curriculum and Assessment Team of their absence on the first day that they are unable to attend their examination(s).

For more information and limitations of self-certification, please see the [KMMS Mitigation of Extenuating Circumstances procedures](#)

11. Formal Appeal

11.1. Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of their Early Resolution attempt, they can submit a Formal Appeal.

11.2. Where a student does not submit an Early Resolution request and proceeds directly to submit a Formal Appeal, they will be asked to provide a valid reason for not seeking to resolve their issues and concerns informally via Early Resolution. The Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office may refer the matter to the School for Early Resolution if they feel it would provide a speedier outcome.

- 11.3. The submission of an appeal is not a guarantee of a successful outcome. The decision the student is appealing against remains in force until the appeal is completed.
- 11.4. Formal Appeals should be submitted within **28 calendar days** from the date the University informed the student of the academic body's decision.
- 11.5. The Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office will let the student know the outcome of their appeal within **28 calendar days** of receipt of their appeal. If it is likely to take longer than this, the student will be kept informed.
- 11.6. All appeals are assessed for level of urgency upon receipt. This is to ensure that urgent appeals are dealt with first. Where appeals are assessed as less urgent, they will be processed in the order in which they were received. Examples of urgent appeals are normally those where a successful outcome will allow a student to continue with their studies or graduate with their cohort, where there are visa implications, or there are concerns about the impact on the student's health.
- 11.7. Where an appeal affects more than one student, the students concerned may make a single appeal submission as a 'group' appeal. Each student concerned must confirm their participation in the appeal. The students concerned may wish to nominate one of the group to act as the group representative during the appeal. If this is the case, it should be clearly stated in the group appeal submission.
- 11.8. There may be circumstances under which a student may wish to submit an appeal anonymously. In such cases, the student concerned is advised to discuss this in advance with the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office or their Students' Union advisor, as there could be difficulties investigating this type of appeal with the limited information likely to be provided.

12. Grounds for Making a Formal Appeal

- 12.1. Formal Appeals can only be made if they meet the specified grounds.
- 12.2. . The grounds for appealing against the decision of the Board of Examiners are:

12.2.1. **Ground 1: Administrative, Clerical or Procedural Error:**

where there are reasonable grounds, supported by objective evidence, to believe that there has been an administrative, procedural, or clerical error of such a nature as to have affected the recommendation of the Board;

12.2.2. **Ground 2: Illness or Other Extenuating Circumstances:**

where there is evidence of illness or other extenuating circumstances that have impacted negatively on academic performance and which the student was, for good reason, unable to submit by the published deadlines;

12.2.3. **Ground 3: Bias:** where there is evidence of bias or a reasonable perception of bias in the assessment. That is that the students' work has not been impartially assessed on its merits.

12.3. For appeals against the decision of an Academic Misconduct Committee (or Chair) please see the [KMMS Academic Misconduct Procedures](#)

12.4. The following matters are not grounds for appeal:

12.4.1. Academic judgement of the examiners or markers. Academic judgement is defined as an opinion that can only be given by an academic expert, for example, a judgement about marks awarded for assessment, progression, degree classification or the achievement of course outcomes.

12.4.2. Lack of awareness of the relevant procedure or regulations,

12.4.3. Matters that would be more appropriately addressed through the [KMMS Complaints Procedure](#)

13. Technical Conditions for the Submission of a Formal Appeal or an Appeal Review Request

13.1. Appeals will be considered only if submitted in accordance with these technical conditions:

13.1.1. it is submitted using the [online appeal form](#);

- 13.1.2. includes all necessary documentary evidence substantiating the grounds of the appeal;
- 13.1.3. within the applicable deadline (see point 7.3 for exceptions);
- 13.1.4. includes a clear explanation of how it meets one or more of the grounds for appeal as per the relevant appendix;
- 13.1.5. includes an explanation of the outcome that is being requested;

This means that the student clearly lays out the reasons why they believe the outcome is appropriate to their situation and how it is permissible within KMMS's Regulations and procedures;
- 13.1.6. (for Formal Appeals only) the inclusion of the Early Resolution outcome or provides a good reason Early Resolution has not been sought.

14. Process of Formal Appeals by the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office

- 14.1. On receipt of a Formal Appeal, the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office will undertake an initial assessment to determine whether it meets the technical conditions outlined in section 13, above.
- 14.2. If the appeal meets the technical conditions, it will go forward for investigation in line section 15, below.
- 14.3. In exceptional circumstances, the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office may contact the student for additional information to be submitted by a given deadline. If the student fails to respond, the appeal may be dismissed.
- 14.4. Where the appeal does not meet the technical conditions, at the discretion of the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office, it will be dismissed. The student can ask for a review of the decision by submitting an Appeal Review request which will be considered in line with section 18, below.

15. Investigation of the Formal Appeal

- 15.1. The Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office will assign Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Officer or Advisor to investigate the Formal Appeal.
 - 15.1.1. If there is a conflict of interest that would prevent any staff member

from dealing with the case and any subsequent reviews (see section 18), the case will be assigned to other members of staff outside of the Office who have the required training, experience, and authority to process the appeal.

15.2. The Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Officer/Adviser will compile a case file, which normally contains the evidence base for the appeal:

- 15.2.1. Appeal form submitted by the student;
- 15.2.2. supporting evidence submitted by the student with their appeal form;
- 15.2.3. information relating to the decision made by the academic body that is the subject of the appeal;
- 15.2.4. any other relevant information gathered by the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Officer/Adviser.

16. Formal Appeal Outcomes

16.1. When the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Officer/Adviser has investigated the case, they will come to one of three outcomes. The outcomes are:

- 16.1.1. that the appeal is upheld in full; i.e., the student's appeal has been successful and the outcome that they requested has been achieved;
- 16.1.2. that the appeal is partially upheld; i.e., the student's appeal has been partially successful and they have achieved part of the outcome they requested, or an alternative outcome has been reached that has changed the original decision of the academic body to the benefit of the student;
- 16.1.3. that the appeal is dismissed for one or more of the reasons outlined in section 17, below, i.e., the students' appeal has not been successful, and they have not achieved the outcome they requested or any alternative outcomes.

17. Reasons for Dismissing the Formal Appeal

17.1. The Formal Appeal can be dismissed for one or more of the following reasons:

- 17.1.1. that the grounds cited for the appeal are not consistent with the technical conditions for appeals;
- 17.1.2. that no evidence, or no relevant evidence, has been submitted to support the appeal;
- 17.1.3. that the appeal is based on evidence that relates to extenuating circumstances that could have been reported to KMMS at the time they occurred, but were not, and the student is unable to provide a valid reason for not having provided the evidence at the time;
- 17.1.4. that the appeal is against the academic judgement of the academic body;
- 17.1.5. that the outcome requested is not achievable or permissible within KMMS's Regulations;
- 17.1.6. that the recommendation against which the appeal is directed has yet to be made or, if made, has yet to be confirmed.

18. Request for a Review of the Decision made at Formal Appeal Stage (Appeal Review)

- 18.1. The purpose of the Appeal Review stage is to review the decision taken at the Formal Appeal stage. The matter of the Formal Appeal itself will not normally be considered afresh, and no new investigation will be carried out.
- 18.2. An Academic Chair of an Appeal Review Panel will undertake the Appeal Review.
- 18.3. Where a Formal Appeal is dismissed or partially upheld by the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Officer/Adviser, the student may submit a request for a review of this decision within **7 calendar days** of being notified of it.
- 18.4. Requests should be submitted to the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office using the online form³.
- 18.5. Students are encouraged to enter the Appeal Review stage if they believe they

³ Students will be provided with the link to the online form as part of their appeal outcome, where applicable.

have grounds (as per section 19, below).

18.5.1. Students should be aware that entering the Appeal Review stage of the formal appeals process might impact upon their ability to proceed to the next stage of their course or graduate with their cohort. This is because of the additional time that the Appeal Review will add to the overall timescale for completion of the formal appeals process.

18.6. The Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office will let the student know the outcome of their Appeal Review request within **28 calendar days** of receipt of their appeal. If it is likely to take longer than this, the student will be kept informed.

19. Grounds for Requesting an Appeal Review

19.1. When requesting a review of the decision taken at the Formal Appeal stage, the student is required to show that they have evidence to demonstrate that one or more of the following grounds apply:

19.1.1. that, in making their decision, the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Officer failed to follow the University's conventions and/or the Academic Appeals Policy, or failed to follow them with due care;

19.1.2. that relevant new evidence has become available that should be considered and there are valid reasons why it was not presented at the time of the appeal;

19.1.3. that there are reasonable grounds to suggest that the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office has shown bias against the student in the way that the decision was taken;

19.1.4. that the decision of the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office was unreasonable. Note that a reasonable decision is defined as one that is made based on the evidence and possible outcomes available at the Formal Appeal stage.

20. Submission of an Appeal Review Request – Technical Conditions

- 20.1. On receipt of an Appeal Review request, the Academic Chair of the Academic Appeals Review Panel will assess whether it meets the technical conditions outlined in section 13 above.
- 20.2. If the Appeal Review request **does not** meet the technical conditions set out in section 13 above, it will be dismissed, and the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.
- 20.3. If the Appeal Review request meets the technical conditions for an Appeal Review, the Academic Chair will review it.
- 20.4. In exceptional circumstances, the student may be contacted for additional information to be submitted by a given deadline. If the student fails to respond, the appeal may be dismissed.

21. Academic Chair of an Appeal Review Panel

- 21.1. The Academic Chair will be a Director of Education and (UG) Student Experience (or nominee) or a Director of Graduate Studies and (PG) Student Experience (or nominee) outside of KMMS.
- 21.2. The Academic Chair of the Panel will assess the Appeal Review request. The Academic Chair is empowered to come to one of the following decisions:
- 21.2.1. Uphold the Appeal Review Request, i.e., the student's appeal review request has been successful and the outcome that they requested has been achieved;
- 21.2.2. Partially uphold the Appeal Review Request; i.e., the student's appeal review request has been partially successful, and they have achieved part of the outcome they requested or an alternative outcome has been reached that has changed the original decision of the academic body to the benefit of the student;
- 21.2.3. Dismiss the Appeal Review Request, i.e., the students' appeal has not been successful, and they have not achieved the outcome they requested or any alternative outcomes.

21.3. In reaching the outcome as outlined above, the Academic Chair will take one of the following actions:

21.3.1. Convene a hearing of the Academic Appeal Review Panel;

21.3.2. Refer the appeal request to the academic body for reconsideration;

21.3.3. Refer the appeal request back to the formal stage.

This list is not exhaustive.

21.4. The Academic Chair will normally not have the power to alter decisions related to academic judgement.

21.4.1. Where the Appeal Review request relates to academic judgement, the Academic Chair will normally refer the appeal request to the academic body for reconsideration.

21.4.2. Where the academic body does not wish to revise its decision, the Academic Chair may decide to convene an Academic Appeal Review Panel hearing if they deem that the academic body's decision is not reasonable.

21.4.3. The Academic Appeal Review Panel will have the power to vary any of the academic body's decisions, including those related to academic judgement (see 22.2).

22. Academic Appeal Review Panel

22.1. The Academic Appeal Review Panel is an independent body convened to consider the student's Appeal Review request, where the Academic Chair decides it is appropriate to do so.

22.2. An Academic Appeal Review Panel is empowered to alter the academic body's decision and, in such cases, will direct the appropriate academic body to amend its decision.

22.3. The membership of an Academic Appeal Review Panel comprises three members from a pool of trained panel members as follows:

5.1.1. Divisional Director of Education and (UG) Student Experience (or

nominee) or a Divisional Director of Graduate Studies and (PG) Student Experience (or nominee) from a Division which does not have responsibility for the student's course of study, who would normally act as the Chair;

- 5.1.2. a member of academic staff outside of the student's School
- 5.1.3. a sabbatical officer or a student member nominated by the Students' Union;
- 5.1.4. the Appeals Conduct and Complaints Officer/Adviser is in attendance as Secretary to the Panel.

22.4. Members of an Academic Appeal Review Panel will have no current academic or personal connection with the student (or students) considered by the Panel.

22.5. The Panel hearing will normally be held within **14 calendar days** of the student being informed that a Panel will be convened.

22.6. The Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office arrange Academic Appeal Review Panels.

23. Academic Appeal Review Panel Hearing

23.1. The student has the right to attend the Academic Appeal Review Panel hearing.

23.2. Where a student attends a meeting of the Review Panel, they may be accompanied by a member of staff, a student of either University, a Student Union representative, or a relative.

23.3. Where a student attends a hearing, that attendance will either be in person or via video link.

23.4. A student who does not take up the opportunity to attend the hearing should be aware that the Academic Chair of the Review Panel will have discretion either to proceed with the hearing in the student's absence or to reconvene the Review Panel later.

23.5. The student will be informed of the outcome of the Academic Appeals Review Panel within **7 calendar days** of the meeting.

24. Appeal Review Outcomes Following a Hearing

24.1. An Academic Appeal Review Panel is empowered to come to one of three outcomes:

24.1.1. Uphold the Appeal Review Request, i.e., the student's appeal review request has been successful and the outcome that they requested has been achieved;

24.1.2. Partially uphold the Appeal Review Request, i.e., the student's appeal review request has been partially successful, and they have achieved part of the outcome they requested or an alternative outcome has been reached that has changed the original decision of the academic body to the benefit of the student;

24.1.3. Dismiss the Appeal Review Request, i.e., the students' appeal has not been successful, and they have not achieved the outcome they requested or any alternative outcomes.

PART D – Completion of Procedures Letters

25. Issuing Completion of Procedures Letters

25.1. Completion of Procedures Letters are only issued when the student reaches the end of the internal appeals process and there is no further route available to pursue their case.

25.2. A Completion of Procedures letter⁴ will allow the student to take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)⁵ and will only be automatically issued at the end of the Appeal Review stage where the Appeal Review has been dismissed. This includes cases where the appeal was dismissed due to not meeting the technical conditions for an Appeal Review (Section 13, above).

⁴ A Completion of Procedures Letter is a letter which a provider sends to a student when they have reached the end of the provider's internal processes, whenever there is no further avenue for the student internally ([See Guidance Note for Completion of Procedures Letters](#))

⁵ The OIA is an independent body set up to review student complaints about higher education providers in England and Wales (See [OIA main page](#)).

26. Process for Requesting a Completion of Procedures Letter

- 26.1. A student whose **Formal Appeal** was **upheld**, can request a Completion of Procedures letter by emailing appeals@kent.ac.uk within 28 calendar days of receipt of the Formal Appeal outcome.
- 26.2. A student whose **Formal Appeal** was **partially upheld** or **dismissed** and does not have grounds to submit an Appeal Review request, can request a Completion of Procedures letter by emailing appeals@kent.ac.uk within 7-calendar days of receipt of their Formal Appeal outcome.
- 26.3. A student whose **Appeal Review** request was **upheld or partially upheld**, can request a Completion of Procedures letter by emailing appeals@kent.ac.uk within 28-calendar days of receipt of their Appeal Review outcome.

PART E - Reporting Processes and Improving the Student Experience**27. Ensuring Consistency and Improving Student Experience**

- 27.1. The Head of Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints will have oversight and will closely monitor all aspects of the procedure to ensure compliance, consistency, and fairness.
- 27.2. The Head of Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints will liaise with the Student Union and School to share areas of learning to improve the student experience.

28. Appeals Statistics

- 28.1. On an annual basis, the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints Office will analyse appeals statistics for report to the Education and Academic Standards Committee, Graduate and Researcher College Board, Senate, and Council. Areas of concern will be identified and addressed as required; areas of good practice will be highlighted and disseminated as appropriate.
- 28.2. It is the responsibility of the School to keep data on the number of early informal resolution requests that it receives along with the resulting outcomes. These statistics will be analysed by the Appeals, Conduct, and Complaints and incorporated into the annual report (as per point 28.1, above).

Appendix 1: Flowchart of appeal process

