



2024-25

Central Film School

Academic Appeals Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Central Film School (CFS) defines an 'academic appeal' as a student request for a review of a decision made by an Exam Board, Awards Board or Academic Misconduct Panel
- 1.2. Appeals must be submitted as per the Appeals Procedure, to allow the School to deal with matters as quickly and efficiently as possible, and ensure parity for all parties involved.
- 1.3. The School expects all parties involved in the raising and investigation of an appeal to act reasonably and fairly towards each other in the spirit of conciliation, and to treat the procedures with respect in line with our shared values.
- 1.4. This policy and procedure applies to all students enrolled with CFS on accredited programmes, and applies to summative assessment.

2. Grounds for appeal

- 2.1. There are two grounds for appealing the decision of an Exam Board, Awards Board or Academic Misconduct Panel:
 - That there has been a material error or irregularity in the formal conduct of the process in reaching the decisionand/or

- That your performance was adversely affected by extenuating circumstances which you were unable, or for valid reasons, unwilling to divulge before the decision concerned was reached.
- 2.2. If you are adversely affected by extenuating circumstances, it is your responsibility to make use of the School's Mitigating Circumstances Policy. If you choose not to reveal any medical or other problem prior to an assessment or an exam board, you will only be able to use this information as the grounds for a subsequent appeal in the most exceptional circumstances, and must provide evidence as to why you did not divulge such information at the time.
- 2.3. This policy cannot be used to make a complaint about teaching or another service provided by the School. Students wishing to raise a complaint should read the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.
- 2.4. You may not appeal the decision of an Exam Board, Awards Board or Academic Misconduct Panel on the grounds of alleged defective judgement or non-competence of a properly convened and constituted Assessment Board (or other decision-making body).

This would constitute a challenge to academic judgement. Academic judgement is a judgment that is made about a matter where only the opinion of an academic expert is sufficient. Academic judgement may relate to, but is not limited to:

- Assessment marks
 - Assessment feedback
 - Degree classifications
 - Academic misconduct
 - Research methodology
 - Course content and/or learning outcomes
- 2.5. Formal Stage 1 appeals should be submitted within twenty (20) working days of the date the decision being challenged is communicated to you.
- 2.6. Appeals received prior to the decision being communicated to you will not be considered; you will be required to resubmit the appeal at the appropriate time.
- 2.7. Appeals submitted after the deadline will not normally be considered, unless you can evidence a valid reason why you were unable to submit

the appeal by the deadline.

- 2.8. All students are expected and required to be aware of and abide by the School's regulations, policies and procedures, and ignorance of any particular regulation, policy or procedure is not valid grounds for appeal.
- 2.9. Consequences resulting from a failure to check your School email and/or act upon instructions from the School are not valid grounds for appeal.
- 2.10. If any aspect of your appeal is shown to be malicious, dishonest and/or vexatious, the appeal will not be considered. Examples 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 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.
- 2.11. If your appeal is deemed to be malicious, dishonest and/or vexatious the School will issue a Completion of Procedures letter.

3. Third-party communication

- 3.1. The School's relationship is with you as a student, irrespective of who pays your fees. The School will not deal with a third-party appeal made on your behalf unless there is a valid reason, for example, a reasonable adjustment for a diagnosed disability.
- 3.2. Students can be supported, advised, and accompanied by a third party at any stage of the appeals procedure. Students can seek advice from their Student Representative or the Student Council and [Citizens Advice](#).
- 3.3. In cases where a third-party appeal is appropriate, you will be required to complete a [Third-Party Consent Form](#) in order to formally authorise a third party (such as a parent or guardian, carer, spouse or significant other) to act on your behalf.
- 3.4. Where a [Third Party Consent Form](#) is received, the School will only

correspond with the individual authorised to act on your behalf.

- 3.5. In line with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations, the School has a policy on the confidentiality of information held about individual students. Therefore, information relating to an appeal cannot be released to a third party other than when required by law or with the written consent of the student. If you would like to give your consent for the School to discuss your appeal with a third party, please complete a Third Party Consent Form.

4. Communications

- 4.1. All communications regarding appeals, including receipt confirmation and outcome notifications, will be conducted by email.

5. Early Resolution

- 5.1. Central Film School encourages all students to raise any causes for concern they may have at the earliest opportunity. Many issues can normally be resolved quickly within the related department, without need for escalation to the other stages.
- 5.2. Students wishing to discuss an academic appeal are invited to speak with their Course Leader or Head of School, in the first instance, or the Student Services Team.
- 5.3. During discussion with the student, the member of staff will seek to remedy the issue or advise that the issue should be escalated to further stages. It may be possible to resolve the concern by providing an explanation of why the issue occurred.
- 5.4. Should the student not accept the proposed remedy at the Early Resolution stage or if early resolution is not possible, they may choose to raise the appeal as outlined below.

6. Stage 1 - Formal Appeal

- 6.1. If you are unable to resolve your concerns through Early Resolution, you may make a formal appeal using the Stage 1 - Academic Appeal Form, upon completion this will be submitted to the Student Services & Registry team.
- 6.2. Formal appeals must be submitted within twenty (20) working days of

the outcome of an Exam Board, Awards Board and/or other School decision-making body.

- 6.3. An appeal outcome may not always be resolved before the start of the next study block or level of study. If you are appealing against a decision that prevents you from continuing your studies into the next study block or level, you may be permitted to provisionally continue with your studies while your appeal is under consideration on the clear understanding that this is without prejudice to the outcome of the appeal.

If you wish to request to provisionally continue with your studies pending the outcome of your appeal, please notify staff by emailing appeals@centralfilmschool.com. The request will be considered in consultation with your course team and you will be informed about whether your request to provisionally progress is approved within ten (10) working days from receipt of your appeal.

- 6.4. Once the formal appeal has been submitted, you will normally be sent an email acknowledging receipt of your appeal within five (5) working days.
- 6.5. Your Stage 1 Formal appeal will be reviewed by the Senior Registry & Quality Manager or an appropriate alternative. They may determine in the first instance that your appeal does not warrant a full investigation, according to the following criteria:
- **Early resolution:** it has been determined that your appeal is based on an administrative error (or similar) that can be rectified with immediate effect. In such cases, the issue will be corrected, and your appeal will be closed.
 - **Incorrect use of the Appeals Policy and Procedure:** it has been determined that your request does not fall under the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure. You may be directed to the appropriate alternative policy/procedure through which to pursue your request.
 - **Out of time:** it has been determined that your appeal does not meet the timeframe requirements and you have not provided a valid reason for the delay. Your appeal will not be investigated further and will be closed. The original decision will stand, and you will be issued a Completion of Procedures letter

- 6.6. All eligible appeals will be investigated by the Senior Registry & Quality Manager to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to prove your grounds for appeal. The outcome of your formal appeal will be either:
- **Upheld:** Your appeal demonstrates valid grounds, and the original decision will be reviewed in light of your successful appeal;
 - **Not upheld:** Your appeal does not demonstrate valid grounds, and the original decision will stand.
- 6.7. The Senior Registry & Quality Manager acts with delegated authority from the School's Academic Board and is authorised to make decisions on behalf of an Exam Board, Awards Board and/or other School decision-making body.
- 6.8. Where your appeal is upheld, new decisions will be made within the context of the School's regulations, policies and procedures. You will normally be notified of the outcome of your formal appeal (with reasons for the decision) within forty (40) working days of the submission of your appeal. However, this period may need to be extended depending on the nature and complexity of the investigation required.
- 6.9. Outcomes of a successful appeal can include:
- removal of a cap on a mark for late submissions or reassessments
 - another attempt at an assessment
 - another attempt at an alternative mode of assessment
 - remark of submitted work with different assessors
- 6.10. This result must be feasible in the context of the School's regulations, policies and procedures. It is not possible for the School to award extra marks on the basis of extenuating circumstances, only additional time or the removal of a capped mark. It is also not possible to request a higher mark because you disagree with the marker, as this constitutes a challenge to academic judgement.

7. Stage 2 - Review

- 7.1. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1 you may request a review of the procedure undertaken at Stage 1, on the following

grounds:

- a material error or irregularity in the conduct of Stage 1 of the Appeals Procedure

and/or

- you have material new evidence that has become available since the commencement of Stage 1 that you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide by the original Stage 1 appeals deadline

- 7.2. You should make your request for a Review by completing a Review Request Form, to be submitted within ten (10) working days of the completion of Stage 1.
- 7.3. Review requests which do not use the standard form will not be considered.
- 7.4. Once received, you will normally be sent an email acknowledging receipt of your Review request within five (5) working days.
- 7.5. Review requests received by the deadline will be considered by the next available Appeals Review Board, and you will normally receive the final outcome in a Completion of Procedures letter within sixty (60) working days of the submission of your appeal.
- 7.6. If you submitted your request outside of the specified deadline, and have not provided a valid reason for the delay, your Review request will be considered out of time, and you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter
- 7.7. If you decide you do not have grounds to proceed with a Review you can request a Completion of Procedures letter from the School within forty (40) working days of the Stage 1 outcome notification.

8. Appeals Review Board

- 8.1. The purpose of an Appeals Review Board is to consider your appeal review request and determine whether you have presented sufficient evidence to warrant a reconsideration of the Stage 1 outcome, taking into account the statements in your form and documentary evidence provided.

- 8.2. The Appeals Review Board is a delegated authority of the School's Academic Board and is authorised to make decisions on behalf of an Exam Board, Awards Board and/or other School decision-making body.
- 8.3. Where your appeal is upheld, please note that all new decisions will be made within the context of the School's regulations, policies and procedures.
- 8.4. The Appeals Review Board will normally meet within sixty (60) working days of the applicable appeals deadline, subject to staff availability. However, this period may need to be extended in line with School vacations and/or depending on the nature and complexity of the review required.
- 8.5. The membership of an Appeals Review Board shall comprise:
- The CEO or their nominee, who will act as Chair
 - Two senior members of staff of the School to include at least one senior academic member of staff
 - The Senior Registry & Quality Manager who will act as secretary
- 8.6. Quorum for the Appeals Review Board shall be the Chair, Secretary and one senior member of staff.
- 8.7. Staff who were involved in the original decision-making process of the appeal cannot be included in the membership of the Appeals Review Board.
- 8.8. The Appeals Review Board decision in each case shall be either
- **Upheld:** Your review request demonstrate valid grounds, and the Stage 1 decision and/or the original decision being appealed against will be reviewed in light of those grounds;
- Or
- **Not upheld:** your review request does not demonstrate valid grounds, and the Stage 1 decision and the original decision being appealed against will stand.
- 8.9. You will be notified of the Review outcome with reasons for the decision within ten (10) working days of the meeting.

9. Validated Provision

- 9.1. For validated provision, where you are studying for a Falmouth University qualification, but are enrolled and registered on a course that is owned and delivered by Central Film School, you will be subject to the Central Film School's appeals policy and procedure in the first instance.
- 9.2. Falmouth University will only consider appeals related to the assessment process and/or a decision reached by a formal assessment of your academic work from students in validated provision, and this will be at Step 3 (review) of their [process](#).
- 9.3. In this case Falmouth University will be responsible for issuing you with a Completion of Procedures letter.

10. Completion of Procedures Letter

- 10.1. The completion of Stage 2 marks the conclusion of the School's internal processes and you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.
- 10.2. A Completion of Procedures letter will also be issued in the following circumstances:
 - Where your Stage 1 appeal was submitted outside of the specified deadline and you were unable to evidence a valid reason for missing the deadline;
 - Where your Stage 2 Review request was submitted outside of the specified deadline and you were unable to evidence a valid reason for missing the deadline.
 - Where you decide that you do not have grounds to proceed with a Stage 2 Review and request a Completion of Procedures letter within forty (40) working days of the Stage 1 outcome notification.
 - Where your appeal has been deemed to be malicious, dishonest and/or vexatious.
- 10.3. In the last three cases the letter will confirm that the School's procedures have not been completed.

11. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

- 11.1. Central Film School subscribes to an independent scheme for the review of student complaints provided by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
- 11.2. If, following receipt of your Completion of Procedures letter, you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal, you may be able to apply to the OIA for a review of your case.
- 11.3. Should you decide to raise your case with the OIA, you must do so within 12 months of receipt of your Completion of Procedures letter, using the OIA's complaint form.
- 11.4. The OIA will normally only consider cases which have been through the School's own procedures first.
- 11.5. Further details can be found on the OIA website at www.oiahe.org.uk.

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