

# Student Appeals Procedure

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<b>Version</b>	1.0		
<b>Changes</b>	<p><b>Combined Sections:</b> Merged Parts A–E into a single section titled “<i>Grounds and Timeliness of Appeal</i>” for clarity and structural consistency.</p> <p><b>Edited for Concision and Consistency:</b> Removed duplicate phrasing, standardised terminology and formatting, and added cross-references to relevant procedures in line with the <b>OIA Good Practice Framework</b>.</p> <p><b>Expanded Equity Statement:</b> Strengthened wording to confirm that appeals will be “<i>considered fairly, transparently, and without discrimination, in line with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.</i>”</p> <p><b>Standardised Timelines:</b> Applied consistent timeframes across all awarding bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage One: 20 working days (+10 for complex cases)</li> <li>• Stage Two: 30 working days (+10 for complex cases)</li> </ul> <p><b>Refined Grounds for Appeal:</b> Updated grounds to include new clauses for bias or improper conduct and failure to apply reasonable adjustments, alongside existing academic and procedural grounds.</p> <p><b>Out-of-Time Appeals:</b> Introduced clear process for late submissions, requiring a CoP letter for rejections and recording accepted late appeals in outcome letters for transparency.</p> <p><b>Improved Accessibility and Tone:</b> Reworded in a more student-facing style, using consistent instructions.</p>		
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<b>Implementation date</b>	June 2026	<b>Date of next review</b>	May 2027

<p><b>Related internal policy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Complaints Procedure</li> <li>• Student Disciplinary Procedure</li> <li>• Academic Misconduct Procedure</li> <li>• Assessment Regulations &amp; Assessment Board Procedures</li> <li>• Mitigating Circumstances Procedure</li> <li>• Fitness to Study Policy &amp; Procedure</li> <li>• Fitness to Practise Procedure (where applicable)</li> <li>• Student Engagement &amp; Attendance Policy (UK and International)</li> <li>• Student Transfer and Change of Status Policy</li> <li>• Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Policy</li> <li>• DPDP Act 2023</li> </ul>
<p><b>Related external policies and regulations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pearson Centre Handbook - Higher Nationals (Global)</li> <li>• UGC (University Grants Commission) - Redressal of Grievances of Students Regulations, 2023 - Core Practices (Concerns, Complaints, and Appeals)</li> <li>• RPwD Act 2016 (disability rights)</li> <li>• POSH Act 2013</li> <li>• Constitution of India: Articles 14 - 17</li> <li>• Consumer Protection Act 2019</li> <li>• DPDP Act 2023</li> </ul>

## Contents

Overview .....	4
1. Purpose.....	4
2. Scope and Definitions.....	5
Scope.....	5
Key Definitions .....	5
3. Principles.....	6
4. Support and Accessibility Statement.....	6
5. Eligibility Matrix.....	6
6. Grounds for Appeal.....	7
7. Exclusions .....	7
8. Timelines .....	8
9. How to Appeal .....	8
10. Appeals Process.....	8
Stage One: Initial Review.....	8
Stage Two: Appeals Panel .....	9
Panel Composition .....	9
Process.....	9
Possible outcomes .....	10
Timescales and Completion of Procedures .....	10
11. Important Rules.....	10
12. Appeal Types: Specific Notes and Grounds of Appeal .....	11
Table 12 A Forms and Grounds by Appeal Type .....	11
Precedence rule .....	13
Forms status .....	13
Annex A: Appeals Panel – Terms of Reference.....	15

## Overview

This Student Appeals Procedure sets out how RCL Mumbai students can appeal decisions that significantly affect their academic progress or status. The procedure ensures fairness, transparency, and compliance with regulatory requirements.

## Key Points

- Appeals may be submitted for decisions relating to assessment outcomes, disciplinary actions, mitigating circumstances, suspension or withdrawal, and non-engagement.

Complaint outcomes are subject to review, where applicable, in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure.

- Appeals must be based on specific grounds, such as procedural errors, new evidence, or outcomes that are unreasonable in the circumstances. Appeals cannot challenge academic judgement.
- The process consists of two stages:
  1. **Stage One:** Initial review by Academic Quality, with a written outcome provided within 20 working days.
  2. **Stage Two:** Independent Appeals Panel review, with a written outcome provided within 30 working days.
- Appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the decision being appealed.
- If an appeal is rejected or not resolved to the student's satisfaction, a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter will be issued, enabling the student to seek external review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
- Support and reasonable adjustments are available throughout the process.

### 1. Purpose

This procedure explains how students can appeal decisions that significantly affect them, ensuring fairness, transparency, and compliance with regulatory requirements.

## 2. Scope and Definitions

### Scope

The procedure applies to all RCL Mumbai students. It covers appeals relating to:

- Assessment outcomes
- Disciplinary decisions
- Mitigating circumstances
- Suspension or withdrawal
- Complaint outcome review (where this procedure is expressly identified as the review route in the Student Complaints Procedure and/or partner requirements).
- Non-engagement (UK and international)
- Other significant academic or procedural decisions

This procedure does not replace the Student Complaints Procedure. Where an issue concerns the quality of teaching, supervision, services, or general student experience, students will be directed to the Student Complaints Procedure.

If an issue is better addressed under another procedure (e.g. Student Complaints, Mitigating Circumstances, Fitness to Study), Academic Quality will advise and redirect.

### Key Definitions

Term	Meaning
<b>Academic Judgement</b>	A decision based solely on academic expertise, such as determining marks or degree classification. Appeals cannot challenge academic judgement
<b>Appeals Panel</b>	An independent group of senior staff convened at Stage Two to review an appeal. Normally includes at least two members with no prior involvement
<b>Completion of Procedures (CoP) Letter</b>	A formal letter confirming the end of the College's internal process. Required to apply to the Pearson for external review.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Procedural Error</b>	A mistake or irregularity in applying College or awarding body procedures that may affect fairness or validity
<b>Reasonable Adjustments</b>	Support or changes provided to ensure students with disabilities or specific needs are not disadvantaged.
<b>Working Day</b>	A day when the College is open for business, excluding weekends, public holidays, and official closure days

### 3. Principles

- Appeals are considered fairly, transparently, and without discrimination.
- Appeals cannot challenge academic judgement.
- Students have the right to independent advice and reasonable adjustments.

### 4. Support and Accessibility Statement

- Independent advice: Student Support Team.
- Reasonable adjustments available on request.

### 5. Eligibility Matrix

The matrix below explains which students can use this procedure for each appeal category.

<b>Appeal Type</b>	<b>Pearson</b>	<b>RCL</b>
Disciplinary/ Fitness Panels	✓	✓
Academic Misconduct	✓	✓
Assessment Board	✓	✓
Suspension of Studies	✓	✓
Mitigating Circumstances	✓	✓
Non-engagement (UK)	✓	✓
Non-engagement (International)	✓	✓
Complaint outcome review (where applicable)	✓	✓

## Key Terms in the Matrix

- **\*Extra step:** RCL Mumbai process applies, but an additional university review is required before a CoP letter can be issued.
- **\*\*Limited:** RCL Mumbai process applies only in specific cases (e.g., non-academic complaints).

## 6. Grounds for Appeal

Appeals will only be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

- The correct procedure was not followed, affecting fairness
- New, relevant evidence is available that could not reasonably have been provided earlier.
- The outcome was not reasonable in all the circumstances
- Further appeal-type-specific requirements and limitations apply and are set out in Section 12 and Table 12A.

## 7. Exclusions

Appeals against Assessment Board decisions will **not** be considered in the following circumstances:

- The Assessment Board decision has not yet been formally confirmed or published.
- The student misunderstands or is unaware of the regulations or procedures.
- The appeal relies on mitigating circumstances not supported by valid evidence.
- The appeal is based on mitigating circumstances that could reasonably have been reported earlier, without valid reason for delay.
- The appeal is based solely on disagreement with academic judgement.

- The issue concerns teaching quality, supervision, or general student experience (which should be raised under the Student Complaints Procedure).
- The appeal is deemed vexatious or frivolous.
- The appeal is submitted late without good cause.

*These exclusions are in line with the Pearson*

*Good Practice Framework and sector norms. Appeals that do not meet the accepted grounds, or are submitted late without valid cause, will be rejected and a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter will be issued.*

## **8. Timelines**

- Submit appeal: within **10 working days** of the decision.
- Stage One outcome: within **20 working days** (extendable by 10 for complex cases).
- Stage Two outcome: within **30 working days** (extendable by 10 for complex cases).

## **9. How to Appeal**

- Students must submit the relevant **Stage One Appeal Form (Forms A–H)** to Academic Quality, selecting the applicable appeal type and permitted grounds as set out in **Section 12 and Table 12A**.
- Include:
  - Grounds for appeal
  - Supporting evidence

Appeals submitted using the incorrect form or on grounds that do not apply to the relevant appeal type may be rejected.

- Academic Quality will acknowledge receipt within **2 working days**.

## **10. Appeals Process**

### **Stage One: Initial Review**

- Academic Quality checks eligibility and reviews the appeal.
- Possible outcomes:

- **Appeal upheld** (decision amended), fully or partly. Student notified in writing with reasons within 20 working days of receipt. If dissatisfied, they may request a Stage Two review.
  - **Appeal rejected**. Student notified in writing within 20 working days including options for Stage Two review.
  - **Referral to Stage Two** if the appeal is complex, introduces new issues, or needs a policy decision. No further action is required from the student.
- Written outcome provided within 20 working days.

## Stage Two: Appeals Panel

### Grounds for Stage Two

- New evidence not previously available.
- Stage One procedure not followed correctly.
- Stage One outcome unreasonable in light of the evidence.

*Note: Dissatisfaction with the outcome of Stage One alone is not sufficient grounds for a Stage Two review.*

- *Where a student is seeking a Stage Two review, they must submit the Appeal Form – Stage Two within 10 working days of the Stage One outcome notification.*
- *Requests for Stage Two review that do not meet the permitted Stage Two grounds will be rejected and a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter will be issued where applicable.*

### Panel Composition

- Independent panel of at least two senior staff with no prior involvement
- Constituted in line with OfS expectations for fairness and independence
- Panel membership disclosed to the student, who may object on grounds such as bias.

### Process

- Panel reviews the Stage One outcome, appeal submissions, and all evidence
- Decisions are made on the papers; oral hearings will not normally be held.

## Possible outcomes

- Reject the appeal (original decision upheld)
- Overturn the decision and substitute its own permitted decision
- Refer the matter back to the original or a new decision-maker with directions
- Uphold the appeal with recommendations (e.g. service improvements, procedural changes).

## Timescales and Completion of Procedures

- Written outcome issued within **30 working days** (extendable by 10 for complex cases).
- **For RCL Mumbai and Pearson awards:** Stage Two is the final stage of the College's internal process. **A Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter** will confirm this and explain the student's right to refer the matter to **Pearson**
- **Completion of Procedures:** At the end of the internal process, students receive a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter, enabling them to seek external review by **Pearson** within 12 months.

## 11. Important Rules

- **Out of Time Appeals:** Appeals submitted after the deadline will normally be rejected, unless there is a good cause (e.g. serious illness, bereavement) supported by evidence. If accepted, this will be recorded in the outcome letter.
- **Vexatious or Frivolous Appeals:** Appeals that are malicious, repetitive, or without merit may be summarily rejected. A CoP letter will confirm this decision.
- **Evidence Requirements:** Students must provide clear, relevant evidence to support their appeal.
- **Transparency:** All decisions will include written reasons.

## 12. Appeal Types: Specific Notes and Grounds of Appeal

This section provides additional notes and eligibility points by appeal type. The authoritative list of permitted grounds and forms is provided below.

### Table 12 A Forms and Grounds by Appeal Type

This table provides an at-a-glance guide to the correct **appeal type**, the **permitted grounds at each stage**, and the **correct form** to use.

Students must rely only on the grounds applicable to the type of decision being appealed and the stage of the process. Appeals submitted using the incorrect form or on grounds that do not apply to the relevant appeal type or stage will not be accepted.

Appeal type / Form	Stage One – permitted grounds	Stage Two – permitted grounds	Stage Two – form to use
<b>A. Disciplinary / Fitness Panels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant procedure not followed properly such that the legitimacy of the decision is called into question</li> <li>Outcome not permitted under the relevant procedure</li> <li>New material evidence that could not reasonably have been provided earlier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New evidence not previously available</li> <li>Stage One procedure not followed correctly</li> <li>Stage One outcome not reasonable in light of the evidence</li> </ul>	<b>Appeal Form – Stage Two</b>
<b>B. Academic Misconduct</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant procedure not followed properly such that the legitimacy of the decision is called into question</li> <li>Outcome not permitted under the relevant procedure</li> <li>New material evidence that could not reasonably have been provided earlier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New evidence not previously available</li> <li>Stage One procedure not followed correctly</li> <li>Stage One outcome not reasonable in light of the evidence</li> </ul>	<b>Appeal Form – Stage Two</b>

Appeal type / Form	Stage One – permitted grounds	Stage Two – permitted grounds	Stage Two – form to use
<b>C. Assessment Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative error or material irregularity affecting the decision</li> <li>• Assessment regulations/procedures not followed properly (including conduct of the Board)</li> <li>• Bias or improper conduct by staff involved</li> <li>• Reasonable adjustments not applied</li> <li>• New evidence that could not reasonably have been provided earlier</li> <li>• Outcome not reasonable in all the circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New evidence not previously available</li> <li>• Stage One procedure not followed correctly</li> <li>• Stage One outcome not reasonable in light of the evidence</li> </ul>	<b>Appeal Form – Stage Two</b>
<b>D. Suspension of Studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant procedure (Transfer/Change of Status) not followed properly such that the legitimacy of the decision is called into question</li> <li>• New material evidence that could not reasonably have been provided earlier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New evidence not previously available</li> <li>• Stage One procedure not followed correctly</li> <li>• Stage One outcome not reasonable in light of the evidence</li> </ul>	<b>Appeal Form – Stage Two</b>
<b>E. Mitigating Circumstances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigating Circumstances procedure not followed properly such that the legitimacy of the outcome is called into question</li> <li>• New supporting evidence that could not reasonably have been provided earlier</li> <li>• Decision not reasonable in all the circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New evidence not previously available</li> <li>• Stage One procedure not followed correctly</li> <li>• Stage One outcome not reasonable in light of the evidence</li> </ul>	<b>Appeal Form – Stage Two</b>
<b>F. Non-engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance/Engagement procedure not followed properly such that the legitimacy of the decision is called into question</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New evidence not previously available</li> <li>• Stage One procedure not followed correctly</li> </ul>	<b>Appeal Form – Stage Two</b>

Appeal type / Form	Stage One – permitted grounds	Stage Two – permitted grounds	Stage Two – form to use
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement affected by mitigating/extenuating circumstances that could not be reported at the time for valid reasons and have not yet been considered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage One outcome not reasonable in light of the evidence</li> </ul>	
<b>G. Complaint outcome review (where applicable)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints procedure not followed properly such that the legitimacy of the outcome is called into question</li> <li>Outcome not permitted under that procedure</li> <li>New material evidence that could not reasonably have been provided earlier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New evidence not previously available</li> <li>Review procedure not followed correctly</li> <li>Review outcome not reasonable in light of the evidence</li> </ul>	<b>Appeal Form – Stage Two</b>
<b>H. Non-engagement (International)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Attendance/Engagement procedure not followed properly such that the legitimacy of the decision is called into question</li> <li>Engagement affected by mitigating/extenuating circumstances that could not be reported at the time for valid reasons and have not yet been considered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New evidence not previously available</li> <li>Stage One procedure not followed correctly</li> <li>Stage One outcome not reasonable in light of the evidence</li> </ul>	<b>Appeal Form – Stage Two</b>

### Precedence rule

Where there is any inconsistency between the general grounds set out in Section 6 and the appeal-type-specific grounds in Section 12 and Table 12A above, the appeal-type-specific grounds shall take precedence.

### Forms status

Appeal forms are operational documents that support this procedure. Updates to the format or layout of appeal forms do not require a formal revision of this procedure, provided that the grounds and stages set out in this document are not altered.

## **Annex A: Appeals Panel – Terms of Reference**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of a Stage Two Appeals Panel is to provide an independent review of Stage One decisions under this procedure. The Panel ensures that appeals are considered fairly, consistently, and in line with College policies, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Good Practice Framework, the QAA Quality Code, and the OfS regulatory framework.

### **Membership**

1. An Appeals Panel will normally consist of at least two senior members of College staff with no prior involvement in the case.
2. One member will act as Chair. The Chair will normally be a senior academic or professional services lead with experience in governance or quality assurance.
3. Additional expertise may be co-opted where necessary (for example, a subject specialist or independent adviser), provided that such members have had no prior involvement in the matter under consideration.

### **Independence and Conflicts of Interest**

4. Panel members must be independent of the case and free from conflicts of interest.
5. Membership will be disclosed to the student before the Panel considers the case. Students may object to a Panel member on grounds such as bias or conflict of interest. Any valid objection will result in the substitution of that member.

### **Quorum**

6. The quorum for a Panel will be two members, one of whom must act as Chair.

## **Remit and Authority**

7. The Panel will consider:
  - (a) Whether the grounds for Stage Two review have been met.
  - (b) Whether the Stage One decision was reasonable in light of the evidence.
  - (c) Whether the correct process was followed at Stage One.
  - (d) Whether any new evidence should change the outcome.
  
8. Following its consideration, the Panel may:
  - (a) Reject the appeal, thereby upholding the Stage One decision.
  - (b) Uphold the appeal in full or in part, overturning or varying the Stage One decision.
  - (c) Remit the matter to the original decision-maker or a new independent decision-maker for reconsideration.
  - (d) Uphold the appeal with recommendations (for example, improvements to policy, procedure, or service delivery).

## **Procedure**

9. Panels will normally consider appeals on the basis of written evidence only. Oral hearings will not normally take place.
  
10. Decisions will be made by majority vote. Where necessary, the Chair will have a casting vote.
  
11. The Panel will base its decision on the written submissions of the student, the Stage One outcome, and any additional evidence relevant to the grounds of appeal.

## **Timescales**

12. Panel outcomes will normally be issued within 30 working days of the appeal being accepted for Stage Two. In complex cases, this timeframe may be extended by up to 10 working days, with written notice to the student explaining the reason for the extension.

## **Reporting**

13. The student will receive a written statement of the Panel's decision and the reasons for it. Where relevant, the notification will include a Completion of Procedures letter and details of how to apply to the OIA.
  
14. Panels may also make recommendations for institutional learning or procedural improvement. These will be reported in anonymised form to the Academic Council or relevant subcommittee.
  
15. Anonymised data on appeals, outcomes, and recommendations will be reviewed annually by Academic Council to support institutional monitoring and enhancement.