

ACADEMIC APPEALS POLICY

Policy Review Date: 1 April 2026

Next Review Date: 1 April 2027

1. Purpose and Scope

Footprint School of Business (FSOB) is committed to ensuring that all learners are assessed fairly, consistently, and transparently. This Academic Appeals Policy provides a formal mechanism through which learners may challenge assessment decisions where there is valid justification.

The policy applies to:

- All learners registered on FSOB programmes
- All internally assessed qualifications and units
- All staff involved in assessment, internal quality assurance, and academic decision-making

This policy ensures alignment with:

- Awarding Organisation requirements (e.g. NCFE)
- Principles of natural justice and procedural fairness
- UK higher education quality expectations

2. Principles Underpinning the Appeals Process

The appeals process is governed by the following principles:

- **Fairness:** All appeals are considered objectively and without bias
- **Transparency:** Processes and outcomes are clearly communicated
- **Timeliness:** Appeals are processed within defined timescales
- **Confidentiality:** Information is handled in accordance with data protection requirements
- **Right to be heard:** Learners are given full opportunity to present their case
- **Independence:** Appeals are reviewed by individuals not involved in the original decision

3. Right to Appeal

Learners have the right to appeal against:

- Assessment decisions contributing to final grades
- Decisions affecting progression or completion
- Final qualification or certification outcomes

However, appeals must be based on valid grounds (see Section 4).

4. Grounds for Appeal

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

4.1 Procedural Irregularity

Where there is evidence that assessment procedures were not followed correctly, including:

- Failure to apply assessment criteria appropriately
- Deviation from published processes
- Administrative errors affecting outcomes

4.2 Insufficient Opportunity to Demonstrate Competence

Where a learner can demonstrate that:

- They were not given fair opportunity to complete assessments
- Extenuating circumstances were not considered appropriately

4.3 Manifestly Unreasonable Decision

Where the decision is one that no reasonable assessor would have reached based on the available evidence.

4.4 Bias or Prejudice

Where there is credible evidence of:

- Discrimination
- Conflict of interest
- Unfair treatment

5. Invalid Grounds for Appeal

Appeals will **not** be accepted on the following grounds:

5.1 Academic Judgement

Disagreement with the professional judgement of an assessor, where proper procedures have been followed.

5.2 Teaching Quality

Concerns regarding delivery should be addressed through the complaints procedure, not the appeals process.

5.3 Disputing Marks Without Evidence

Appeals must be supported by evidence and cannot be based solely on dissatisfaction with outcomes.

5.4 Administrative Issues Without Impact

Minor administrative errors that do not affect the assessment outcome.

6. Submission of Appeals

- Appeals must be submitted **in writing** using the official Appeals Form
- Appeals must be submitted within **20 working days** of the assessment decision
- Appeals must clearly state:
 - The grounds for appeal
 - Supporting evidence
 - Desired outcome

Late submissions will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and must be supported by evidence.

7. Appeals Procedure

The appeals process consists of three formal stages:

Stage 1: Informal Resolution / Initial Review

- The learner first raises the issue with the Assessor

- The Assessor reviews the decision and provides a written response within 5 working days
- Outcomes may include:
 - Confirmation of original decision
 - Revision of assessment decision
 - Recommendation for further review

All outcomes are recorded and communicated formally.

Stage 2: Internal Quality Assurance Review (IQA)

If unresolved, the appeal is escalated to the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA).

The IQA will:

- Review all assessment evidence and documentation
- Confirm whether assessment decisions were fair, valid, and reliable
- Ensure procedures were correctly followed

A written outcome is provided within 10 working days, including:

- Decision rationale
- Any corrective actions

Stage 3: Appeals Panel Review

If the learner remains dissatisfied, the appeal is referred to an Appeals Panel.

Composition of Panel:

- Chair (Senior Manager or Quality Lead)
- Independent member not previously involved
- Subject specialist (where appropriate)

Panel Responsibilities:

- Review all evidence independently
- Conduct hearings if required
- Ensure procedural fairness

Outcomes:

- Appeal upheld
- Appeal partially upheld
- Appeal rejected

The decision of the Appeals Panel is final at centre level and will be issued within 15 working days.

8. Escalation to Awarding Organisation

If the learner remains dissatisfied after Stage 3, they may escalate the appeal to the Awarding Organisation (e.g. NCFE) in line with their published procedures.

FSOB will cooperate fully with any external investigation.

9. Record Keeping and Documentation

The centre maintains comprehensive records of all appeals, including:

- Appeal forms and supporting evidence
- Assessment and IQA documentation
- Correspondence and decisions
- Action plans and outcomes

Records are retained in line with data protection and awarding body requirements.

10. Monitoring and Quality Improvement

Appeal data is reviewed regularly to identify trends and inform improvement.

This includes:

- Analysis of recurring issues
- Identification of staff training needs
- Improvements to assessment practices

Findings are incorporated into:

- Self-Assessment Report (SAR)
- Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Assessors:

- Provide clear, constructive feedback
- Participate in Stage 1 reviews

Internal Quality Assurers (IQA):

- Conduct independent reviews
- Ensure compliance with standards

Senior Management:

- Oversee appeals process
- Chair Appeals Panel

Learners:

- Submit appeals in line with policy
- Provide accurate and honest information

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

FSOB is committed to ensuring that the appeals process is:

- Inclusive and accessible
- Free from discrimination
- Supportive of individual learner needs

Reasonable adjustments will be made where required.

13. Contact Information

Email: info@fsob.co.uk