

Academic appeals procedure 2025/26

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Introduction

St Mary's University's Mission is to prepare its students for flourishing lives, successful careers and social commitment through excellent, research-enriched teaching in a strong community of mutual respect based on our Catholic ethos and identity.

In line with Universities throughout the United Kingdom, there is a basic principle that students are not able to challenge academic judgement per se. However, we recognise that there may be occasions where circumstances that have affected performance were not known or significant administrative irregularities have occurred, and students are entitled to query the decisions of the University Examination Board if such specific circumstances exist.

Please read these introductory notes before submitting an Academic Appeal. If you are unsure of the ground(s) for your Academic Appeal, or how to submit your Academic Appeal, you can seek advice from the Students' Union or the Registry.

Please note:

The Academic Appeals Procedure is only to be used for making an Appeal against decisions of the University Examination Board or Research Degrees Committee. Appeals will not be heard prior to these instruments communicating their decisions to the student.

The Academic Appeals Procedure is not to be used for any submissions related to the [Student Complaints Procedure](#) or the [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#), as specific provision for review is made within each of those Procedures. Students who wish to raise issues regarding the quality and standard of their educational experience must lodge a Stage One complaint with their Head of School, and such issues are not typically relevant the parameters of an Academic Appeal.

The Academic Appeals Procedure forms part of the University Regulations, (Section J) and the Regulations for Research Degrees (section 3.20)

For Academic Appeals concerning provision in a Partner Institution for which St Mary's is the awarding body:

There is an expectation that students will utilise the Academic Appeals Procedure of the partner institution in the first instance. Links to the procedures of partner institutions are available on the website, or you can contact the Centre for Teaching Excellence and Student Success at St Mary's for advice. You are required to provide the Registry of St Mary's with a copy of your Academic Appeal for monitoring purposes, and should also contact St Mary's Registry if you are still dissatisfied and they will advise you how to progress your unresolved Academic Appeal.

1. General Principles

1.1 The University aims to deal with Academic Appeals in a manner that:

- treats all Appeals objectively, transparently and with appropriate seriousness
- is carried out in a reasonable timescale
- allows all parties to learn from the experience
- is in line with University policies and practices
- has due regard to any applicable law.

1.2 The University will not normally accept third party Academic Appeals, although in exceptional circumstances, a friend, parent, relative, etc, may submit an Academic Appeal on behalf of an individual with their written permission. The Academic Registrar will provide advice about this upon written request.

1.3 The University reserves the right to reject Academic Appeals which it judges malicious, frivolous or lack clear grounds for further consideration. In such cases, the reasons will be given in writing to the appellant within 10 working days.

1.4 If you are deemed to have made a malicious Academic Appeal, you may be subject to disciplinary action under the St Mary's [Student Conduct Procedures](#).

1.5 When submitting an Academic Appeal your responsibilities are:

- to submit your Academic Appeal in as much detail and as soon as possible in order that it can be investigated and resolved without delay
- to follow the correct procedures as set out in the Academic Appeals Procedure
- demonstrate mutual respect
- to clearly indicate the remedy you seek
- to provide clear information and documentary evidence as appropriate within your Appeal submission
- to provide additional information and/or attend meetings about your Academic Appeal if required.

2. The Academic Appeals Procedure

2.1 Grounds

2.1.1 There is evidence that your assessment/examination may have been adversely affected by mitigating circumstances which you were unable, or for valid reasons unwilling, to divulge to the University Examination Board or Research Degrees Committee before its decision was reached.

If appealing under this ground, please ensure that you have provided all of the following:

- new information which the Board/Committee has not previously considered
- a reason and evidence to explain why you feel your performance may have been adversely affected by factors evidenced in the information submitted
- a reason and evidence to explain why you were unable, or for valid reasons unwilling, to submit this information before the Board/Committee reached its original decision.

2.1.2 There is clear evidence of a significant administrative error on the part of the University or in the conduct of the assessment/examination and that this accounted for your performance.

2.2 Appeal Procedures

2.2.1 A candidate wishing to submit an Academic Appeal must do so in writing, on the Academic Appeal form (Appendix A), to the Academic Registrar of St Mary's University within ten (10) working days of the dispatch of the result(s) being appealed against. Students should submit their Academic Appeal form to the Registry (academicappeals@stmarys.ac.uk) via email or Recorded Delivery post only, in order to ensure safe receipt. Academic Appeals lodged up to three months after deadline will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Evidence as to the justifiable cause for such a delay in submitting your Academic Appeal must be provided in writing to the Registry. The decision as to whether or not to accept your late submission rests with the Academic Registrar.

2.2.2 In the case of an appeal under 2.1.2 above, the Academic Registrar or nominee, in consultation with the appropriate Chair of the University Examinations Board/ Research Degrees Committee shall, where appropriate, consider whether the marks or grades had been correctly recorded and aggregated in accordance with the relevant Regulations. If an error is found which affects the award, or the class of degree, then the Chair of the University Examination Board/ Research Degrees Committee has authority to approve the award or a reclassification. When an error is found the matter shall be reported to the University Examination Board/ Research Degrees Committee.

2.2.3 The Academic Registrar (or nominee) will investigate Academic Appeals made under 2.1.1.

Where the investigation substantiates the Academic Appeal, the appellant's programme will be re- instated or any other appropriate action taken, and reported to the University Examinations Board/ Research Degrees Committee.

2.2.4 In the case of an Academic Appeal under 2.1.1 above, the Academic Registrar, in their capacity as the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Board shall determine whether the

alleged grounds satisfy St Mary's University "Guidelines for Extenuating Circumstances". Where there are fully evidenced Extenuating Circumstances which satisfy ground 2.1.1, a recommendation will be made to the Chair of the appropriate University Examination Board that the decision be rescinded. Where there are no valid Extenuating Circumstances, the Academic Appeal shall be dismissed. In the case of an Academic Appeal against a decision made by the Extenuating Circumstances Board, the Provost shall determine whether the alleged grounds satisfy St Mary's University "Guidelines for Extenuating Circumstances".

2.3 Timescales for the Academic Appeals Procedure

The University endeavours to resolve all Academic Appeals within ten (10) working days of receiving the Appeal submission, and for students to receive a written response during this time. At key times of year this may not be possible, and students will be advised of the expected timescale in writing within the same ten (10) working days.

3. Right to Remain on the Programme

Students who have made an appeal against the termination of their programme of study shall normally have the right to remain on their programme of study until the Academic Appeal is decided (subject to University Regulations, Section J, paragraph 2).

4. Right of Review of the Outcome of the Academic Appeal

4.1 In order to request a review of the outcome of the original Academic Appeal the student must contact the Provost in writing within five (5) working days. Please send your request to academicappeals@stmarys.ac.uk

4.2 Appellants requesting a review must provide the Provost with full details of the grounds for requesting a review, which can only be one or both of the following:

(i) the appellant is in possession of additional evidence to support their claim which was not available at the time of the original Appeal submission

and/or

(ii) the appellant has reason to believe that the Academic Registrar was prejudiced or unreasonably biased in assessing the merits of the original Academic Appeal submission.

4.3 Appellants must provide documentary evidence to support the ground(s) under which they are submitting a request for a review of the outcome of the original Academic Appeal.

4.4 The Provost will normally provide the Appellant with a written response to their request for a review within ten (10) working days. Where this is not possible, students will be advised of the expected timescale in writing within the same ten working days.

4.5 The decision of the Provost is final and will conclude the internal procedures of St Mary's University. In cases where the Provost upholds the ground(s) for review, the original Academic Appeal submission will be fully reconsidered by the Provost or nominee. In cases

where the Provost does not uphold the ground(s) for review, Appellants will be provided with a Completion of Procedures letter in order to be able to consider making a submission to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Details of the OIA scheme will be provided to Appellants in the Completion of Procedures letter.