

NOW YOU'RE APPEALING

Welcome to Advice Direct... the written information service from Guild Advice.

This leaflet is designed to inform students about preparing for an Academic Appeal Committee Hearing against a progress decision.

Preparing for the Academic Appeal Committee Hearing

An appeal hearing will only take place in exceptional circumstances. An appeal hearing means that your case will be heard by an **Academic Appeals Committee** and both you and your School will be given an opportunity to attend.

You will be sent notice of this hearing along with details of the appeal **panel membership**, a copy of your **appeal form** and a copy of the **School's Response**. Once you receive this you should begin to prepare for the hearing. If you need help with this, or if you want to be represented at the appeal you should contact Guild Advice as soon as possible.

Taking A "Friend"

You may take a "friend" with you to the appeal hearing – this must either be a current University of Birmingham student, a member of University staff, or a Guild Full Time Officer. It often helps to have someone to support you at an appeal hearing, as this is a private meeting with no support for you except one of these three individual types, that is permitted.

A Full Time Officer is an elected student who takes a sabbatical year, they can provide representation in any meeting with the University. This can be arranged through Guild Advice once you have confirmation of the appeal date time and venue. You can come to Guild Advice or email for advice, even if you do not want to take a Full Time Officer with you.

During the Pre-Appeal Meeting

If you have already contacted Guild Advice to be represented by a Full Time Officer, Guild Advice will contact you to inform you of the date and time of the pre-appeal meeting with the Officer. Before that meeting you will need to:

- **Re-read** your appeal submission and the School's Response.
- **Consider** how you intend to respond to the school's Response and any questions you may want to ask.
- **Prepare** a brief 5/6 bullet point summary of your case and, if necessary, include a response to the School's Response.
- **Be clear** about your desired outcome and ensure that it is in accordance with the department's and course regulations.
- **Dress smartly** for the appeal – it makes a good impression.

Who Attends The Hearing?

<u>Who</u>	<u>Role</u>
<u>Appeals Committee</u> (no fewer than 3 Academics and no more than 4)	The appeal panel is made up of three independent academics, none of which have had any involvement in the case. The Panel will have read through your appeal documents and the school's response before the actual hearing. They will ask questions of both you and the school. They will decide whether to uphold or reject the appeal. If they uphold the appeal they will make a decision which they feel is in your best interests.
<u>Chair</u>	One of the academics, normally a senior academic who will lead the panel.
<u>Secretary</u>	A non-academic member of staff who will take minutes and assist in ensuring the appeals procedure is followed.
<u>School's Representative</u>	The School's representative is someone on the School's Board of Examiners who has knowledge of the regulations and processes within the School. They will be responsible for presenting the school's case as to why they do/do not support your appeal, should this be the case.

Your Role

You are there to make the best case possible for yourself. You should try to be confident and use the appeal as an opportunity to highlight the key areas of your appeal, and if appropriate to comment on your School's response.

Remember that the Panel will have read through all the paperwork prior to the hearing, so you will not be expected to explain everything in your opening statement, should you choose to make one, although this is recommended.

Ensure that you bring all the appeal documentation with you and that you have read through all the documentation prior to the hearing.

The School's Role

The School's representative will defend the School's position. The School's response is based upon your statement and will typically address the points within the statement, clarifying or contradicting your points. It should be based upon evidence, i.e. if it mentions a letter, then they should provide a copy of the letter.

Your Friend's Role during the Hearing

Your "friend" is there to support you in your appeal. If you contact Guild Advice for representation a Full Time Officer, "your friend", and a Guild Advice Advisor will have a pre-appeal meeting with you to ensure that you can make the most of the appeal hearing.

If you would like a Guild Full Time Officer to attend as your "friend" you must contact the ARC as soon as you have confirmation of the hearing date and time

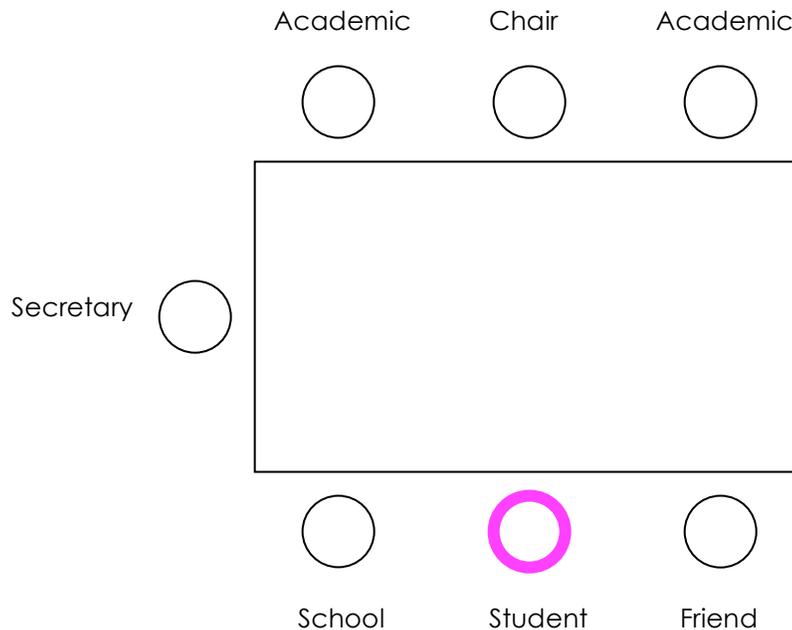
Before The Hearing

You should meet the Guild Advice Advisor and your Guild Full time Officer about half an hour before the hearing, as per the instructions from Guild Advice advisors. You and your “friend” should:

- Go through your statement and the response to your School's decision (where possible you should email this to your Guild Advice Advisor before the day of the hearing).
- Be clear about the decision you are hoping for.

You will then walk across to the appeal room and wait outside. You will be called in by the Secretary; do not knock on the door. Be aware that you may have to wait for a while as there may be other appeal hearings taking place, and some appeals or the decision-making can take time.

At The Appeal Hearing



During The Hearing

The Chair will introduce her/himself, the panel and the Secretary. The Chair will then go through the rules of the hearing (as below), ask if you have any questions, and then the hearing will start.

1. The Chair will summarise the procedure to be adopted and ask you if you would like will be invited to make an opening statement or make any points you feel are important.
2. The School/Department representative will be invited to comment on your statement – *this will be brief and will address the School's Response and any key points that you have made.*

3. The Committee may question you in order to prompt or clarify elements – *the Chair will lead this.*
4. The Committee may question the School/Department representative.
5. You, through the Chair, may question the School/Department representative can ask any questions of the representative too.
6. The School/Department representative, through the Chair, may question you.
7. The Committee may request any final clarification on issues raised.
8. The Chair shall ask you or your “friend” if you have any points which you wish to clarify – this is not a time to introduce new evidence or material, it is an opportunity to summarise your appeal and any issues that have arisen during the hearing itself – *it may be a good idea if your friend does this if s/he has made notes throughout.*

Appeal Hearing Checklist

- Have you prepared a statement?
- Have you arranged for someone to accompany you to your hearing?
- Are you familiar with your School/Department’s statement?
- Are you clear about what you would like the panel to decide?

When the panel has finished with its questions and final statements have been made, you and the School’s representative will be asked to leave. You should leave and thank the panel, you will be notified of their decision **in writing** normally within 5 working days after the Academic Appeal Committee Hearing.

Will I Win My Appeal?

The honest answer is that no one can predict whether you will win the appeal or not. Appeals are entirely individual and that means that Guild Advice cannot answer this

What Decision Can The Academic Appeal Committee Hearing Panel Make?

The appeals panel will discuss and decide your case after you leave the room. They can make a decision from within these (very broad) categories and place conditions on any decision:

- Reject the appeal
- Uphold the appeal and permit re-assessment, specifying the form of assessment, i.e. first sit, re-sit, repeat, or resubmission in the case of assignments
- Any deadlines should also be agreed by the Chair in consultation with the School
- Exceptionally, to permit the student to proceed without reassessment, possibly with requirements outstanding (this would be very unusual)
- Exceptionally, refer back to the Board of Examiners (appeal against degree classification); or other award.

What About Degree Classifications?

Where the appeal is related to your degree classification, the appeals committee cannot increase the classification. It can refer the decision back to the Board of Examiners who will then reconsider your classification. This will take place at the nearest possible date, if you appeal in the summer this will not be until September. The appeal committee's decision gives no guarantee that your degree classification will be increased.

Sources Of Help

Guild Advice, Guild of Students

Email: thearc@guild.bham.ac.uk

Visit the website at: <http://www.guildofstudents.com/support/thearc/>

Opening Hours

Monday – Friday Term: 10am-4pm Vacatio: 12pm-2pm

Drop In Clinics

Monday - Friday

12 – 2pm

Saturday/Sunday

CLOSED

Academic Policy & Standards

For information on appeals and to contact the Appeals Co-ordinator call: 0121 414 7684

Email: appeals@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Visit the website at: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/complaint-appeal/appeals/index.aspx>

Code of Practice on Academic Appeals Procedures:

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/university/legal/15-16/code-of-practice-academic-appeals.pdf>

Counselling & Wellbeing, Student Hub Aston Webb Building

Website: www.studenthelp.bham.ac.uk

Telephone: 0121 414 5130

ISAS (International Students Advisory Service)

Web:

<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/student-services/international/contact/index.aspx>

Telephone: 0121 414 8464

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