

Appeals and complaints

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What is an appeal?

“A challenge to or request for reconsideration of a decision by an academic body that makes decisions on student progress, assessment and awards”

(The Office of the Independent Adjudicator)

Appeals at LJMU: A two-stage process

- Initial assessment
- Stage 1. Nominated respondent
- Stage 2. Final internal review
- External review and adjudication by the OIA

What are students able to appeal?

- Academic Appeals
- Academic Misconduct Appeals
- Personal Circumstances Appeals
- Leave of Absence Appeals

What are the grounds for appeal at LJMU?

- that there has been a material administrative error, or
- that the assessment, in whatever format, was not conducted in accordance with current regulations, or
- that some other material irregularity has occurred, or
- that the decision of a Personal Circumstance Panel in considering a personal circumstances claim was unreasonable.

What are not grounds for appeal at LJMU?

- Personal or medical circumstances.
- A disagreement with the judgement of a marker or the judgement of an Academic Misconduct Panel.

What is a nominated respondent?

- A senior member of academic staff nominated by the Director of School.
- Nominated respondents are not substantially associated with a student.
- A nominated respondent is not expected to have any subject-specific knowledge, their role is to ascertain if work was assessed in accordance with University regulation and policy.

What is academic judgement?

- A matter of judgement about a matter where only the opinion of an academic expert is sufficient.
- For example, a judgement about what the mark for an individual piece of work should be or whether a student has plagiarised a piece of work.

(<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/information/glossary>)

What is not a matter of academic judgement?

- Decisions about the fairness of procedures.
- Whether regulations and policies have been correctly interpreted.
- What the facts are.
- How a provider has communicated with a student.
- Whether there has been bias or maladministration.

(<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/information/glossary>)

Complaints at LJMU: A three-stage procedure

Stage 1: Complaint to the partner ('local resolution')

Stage 2: Complaint to the University

Stage 3: Final Internal Review

Complaint to the OIA if still dissatisfied.

Except....

- If a partner subscribes to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, complaints are only ever considered under your own procedures.
- If a student's complaint relates solely to the actions or inactions of LJMU, the student may complain directly to the University.

What is a complaint?

Examples of complaints include:

- Failure by either the university or an academic partner of the university to meet its obligations as specified in the programme or module handbook.
- Misleading or incorrect information in documentation provided to a student.
- Concerns about the delivery of a programme, associated teaching or administration.
- The quality of facilities, learning resources or other services provided directly by either the university or an academic partner of the university.
- The behaviour of a member of staff at either the university or an academic partner of the university.
- The behaviour of another student.

Stage 1 - local resolution at the partner

- All partners are required to inform students in writing that they are able to make a complaint.
- In order to resolve concerns as quickly as possible, students are expected to try and resolve complaints locally by complaining directly to the partner.
- Where a complaint has not been resolved or satisfactorily dealt with by the academic partner of the university, a student can submit a formal complaint to LJMU.
- If the issues that a student wishes to raise relate solely to the actions of LJMU or relate solely to events that occurred at LJMU and not at a partner of the university, the student should complain directly to LJMU, and any complaint will be dealt with at all stages by LJMU.

Stages 2 and 3

Stage 2: Complaint to the University

Stage 3: Final Internal Review

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator

- Any student who exhausts the appeals or complaints procedure is entitled to take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator up to 365 days after the University issues a Completion of Procedures (COP) Letter.