

## **Policy: Student Appeals: SQA / UHI**

Units which require continuous assessment constitute the major element in the College curriculum and it is College policy to ensure that all assessments are managed professionally and that administrative procedures are in place to ensure that any dispute, arising from assessment, follows College procedure at all stages and is brought to a conclusion with the minimum of delay. Clearly understood appeals and grievance procedures not only ensure fairness but also ensure the rigour of the assessment system.

### **Responsibility**

#### **Student**

- \* To consider the facts relating to the situation as objectively as possible, to study the appeals procedures **Forms QF12** and **QF13** and to follow them
- \* To write down grounds for appeal, evidence and questions for Assessor
- \* To raise the appeal with the Quality Manager/Acting Depute Principal
- \* When requested, meet with the Assessor and discuss appeal topics
- \* If unresolved, meet, when requested, with the Internal Verifier and discuss appeal topics
- \* If unresolved, meet, when requested, with the Interim Joint Principal and present appeal

At any stage, the candidate can seek and receive help in gathering evidence and presenting facts and have representation of their choice at an appeals hearing. Representation should be either a student attending the College or a member of College staff.

#### **Lecturer/Assessor**

- \* To meet with the Candidate as soon as possible after request
- \* To study evidence objectively and seek to resolve the matter if possible
- \* To keep written records of dates, personnel, meeting issues and outcome, successful or unsuccessful
- \* To inform Quality Manager/Acting Depute Principal of the outcome
- \* To meet with the Candidate and Internal Verifier, if requested

#### **Internal Verifier**

- \* To study evidence objectively and seek to resolve the matter if possible
- \* To arrange a meeting between the three parties to seek resolution
- \* To keep written records of dates, personnel, meeting issues and outcome, successful or unsuccessful

- \* To inform the Quality Manager/Acting Depute Principal of the outcome

### **Quality Manager**

- \* To assist the Candidate if so requested
- \* To check any Awarding Body issues
- \* To keep written records of issues for External Verifier
- \* Set a date for appeal hearing within 7 working days after request
- \* To maintain independence, study evidence objectively and seek to resolve the matter by reaching a decision
- \* To invite opinion from other independent sources if deemed necessary
- \* To inform the Senior Management Team of decision
- \* To have authority to ensure remedial action is taken where an appeal is upheld
- To inform the Assessor when the appeal is raised
- To ensure that the Assessor meets with the Candidate in a timely manner
- To inform the Internal Verifier if the situation demands
- To ensure the Internal Verifier acts in a timely manner
- To act in the role of Co-ordinator as the situation demands
- To ensure the Candidate has access to all information required
- To assist the Candidate if so requested

## **Procedure: Student Appeals: SQA / UHI**

### **Introduction**

Information about the appeals and grievance procedures is an integral part of College procedure and provision at the start of each session; initially at pre-entry interview stage and later in student handout material.

The appeals and grievance procedures are discussed with full-time students at the start of the session as an integral part of the induction process. With SVQ students, these procedures are discussed on an individual basis, at pre-assessment interviews which provides another opportunity for familiarisation with these procedures.

### **Appeals**

If a candidate believes s/he has grounds for appeal s/he should contact the Quality Manager/Acting Depute Principal who will ensure that the appeals procedure is followed, as necessary, until the matter is resolved.

### **Grounds for Appeal**

When the individual is a Candidate who is registered with an Awarding Body and has been notified by the Assessor that s/he has been found 'not yet competent' in any unit of an award and disagrees with that finding.

The College has failed to make reasonable arrangements to carry out the assessment within the terms and conditions agreed between the Centre and the Candidate.

In addition, a Candidate may also appeal on the following grounds:

- \* The conduct of those providing assessment
- \* The duration of the assessment
- \* The adequacy of the assessment environment to afford the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate competence

In cases of malpractice candidates and the centre have the right to request a review by SQA Accreditation of SQA's process in reaching a decision in an appeal of a malpractice decision.

Students have the right to complain to SQA about assessment-related matters (but not assessment judgements). Once they have exhausted the colleges internal complaints procedure.

## **Appeals System**

### **SQA Vocational and FE/HE Academic Appeals**

The following statement outlines the procedures to be adopted by Shetland College UHI in the event of candidates submitting an appeal regarding assessment. All candidates have the right to appeal against the result of an internal assessment if they feel they have not been treated fairly for any reason.

All candidates and assessors will be made fully aware of the appeals procedures and how it operates during their induction to Shetland College UHI, and included in all student handbooks.

A candidate can at all stages, refer to the Guidance Coordinator for help and guidance through the process.

1. Stage 1 of an appeal against an assessment decision should be made by the candidate to the assessor at the earliest opportunity, eg during the feedback session if not before, but within 3 days of receipt of the assessment decision. A full and confidential discussion will be held with the assessor in order to try and obtain a mutually acceptable resolution.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved between the candidate or the assessor, or if the candidate feels unable to approach the assessor directly, Stage 2 of the appeals process is for the candidate to contact the Internal Verifier of the award/unit in question. This may be either verbally or in writing, as quickly as possible, but certainly within three days of the appeal arising. The candidate can obtain the name and contact details of the Internal Verifier from the Assessor, Head of Section, Quality Manager, or Guidance Coordinator

3. The Internal Verifier will undertake to investigate and discuss the matter with both the candidate and assessor individually and communicate the appeal decision in writing to the candidate within five working days. A copy of the decision letter and any relevant documentation shall be placed in the Students File.
4. If the candidate's appeal cannot be resolved at the informal levels of assessor (Stage 1) and internal verifier (Stage 2), the candidate should raise a formal appeal to the Shetland College UHI Quality Manager (Stage 3). This should be either in writing or by e-mail within 10 days of the student receiving the assessment decision from the assessor. The Guidance Coordinator can be contacted for assistance in this process, and for contact details of the Quality Manager.
5. Your complaint will be formally acknowledged in writing within three working days.
6. The Quality Manager will carry out a full investigation of the appeal and a report of the findings prepared.
7. Within 15 working days of receiving the acknowledgement of your appeal, you will receive from the Quality Manager a full written response detailing the key findings of the appeals investigation and final decision.
8. For non-regulated qualifications i.e SfW, NC, HNC and HND the decision outcome from Stage 3 is final. SQA will not accept internal assessment appeals for these qualifications.
9. If the candidate is still dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 3 appeal and is undertaking a regulated SQA SVQ award, then the final stage of the appeals process is for the appeal to be raised with either:-
  - SQA the awarding body
  - SQA Accreditation and/or Ofqual if you feel that the centre and/or SQA (awarding body) have not dealt with your appeal appropriately.
10. SQA Accreditation and/or Ofqual cannot overturn assessment decisions or academic judgements but may investigate the effectiveness of the centre and/or SQA's appeals process and require corrective action.
11. The Shetland College UHI Quality Manger will provide details of who the candidate should contact at SQA.

The following should be noted:

- Any decision given by the Co-ordinator will be regarded as final
- All appeals, at all stages, will be recorded in writing, even if successfully resolved

- Candidates have the right to ask for and receive help to assemble their evidence
- The Co-ordinator will make use of evidence gathered during the assessment
- The Co-ordinator is answerable to Awarding Bodies

## **Records**

Evidence of appeals procedure implementation includes:

- Student induction programme
- Induction programme attendance log
- Record of Appeal **Forms QF12, QF13**

## **Evaluation/Review**

Monitoring the implementation of the College's appeals procedure is undertaken by the College SQA Co-ordinator throughout the session and reviewed by the Quality Improvement Committee.

If students require to be made aware of any changes this will be done by the following methods:

- \* Student services noticeboard
- \* By lecturers to each student group
- \* Individual email/handout to each student
- \* Any alteration implemented will be mentioned at first guidance interview following the change

Details of the Student Appeals Policy are included in the Student Handbook.

## **UHI Student Appeals**

### **Introduction**

Student Appeals or requests for the review of a decision of a Board of Examiners are normally subject to the regulations of the validating authority but the procedure defined within UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2017-18 will normally be followed.

### **Grounds for Appeal**

Appeals against the decision of a Board of Examiners will be considered only on the following grounds:

- a That a student's performance was adversely affected by illness or other factors that s/he was unable or, with valid reason, unwilling to divulge to the Board of Examiners when it made its decision. The student's appeal must be accompanied by documentary evidence acceptable to the

- Academic Board.
- b That evidence is produced that there was a material administrative error or that the assessments were not conducted in accordance with the programme regulations.
  - c That evidence is produced that some other material irregularity has occurred.

Appeals that question the academic judgement of a Board of Examiners will not be entertained.

If a student is pursuing a grievance against the College and also wishes to appeal then the grievance shall be resolved prior to consideration of the appeal. However, evidence relevant to the appeal produced during the resolution of the grievance may then be considered if the student wishes to present that evidence.

### **UHI Appeals Procedure**

A student who is dissatisfied with the assessments is advised in the first instance to discuss the matter with the Programme Team Leader and/or the Student Welfare Officer or equivalent in the partner institution at which the student is enrolled.

A student who wishes to appeal should do so in writing as defined in the UHI Academic Standards and Quality Regulations 2017-18 (SQA awards and degree awards).

### **Policy: Appeals: In-House Courses Short Courses / Non-SQA/UHI Courses**

Some of Shetland College UHI's courses are not subject to appeal to any external awarding body because they have been developed in-house to meet needs or the relevant external awarding/approval body does not have appeals procedures. You have the right to appeal against any decisions made on your assessments by any member of our staff (or an instructor we have hired to train you), which you have completed on one of our in-house courses.

### **Grounds for Appeal**

You may appeal if you consider an assessment has not been carried out properly/fairly and you also appeal if you disagree with any decisions made about your assessments.

### **Procedure: Appeals: In-House Courses Short Courses / Non-SQA/UHI Courses**

Where possible, you should initially raise your objection with the assessor at the initial feedback session. The assessor will discuss the objection with his/her internal verifier (if applicable) and seek a solution that is mutually agreeable (if there is no other member of staff within the department who has the relevant subject

knowledge). If you are still unhappy with the assessment decision/alternative solution, then you have the right to appeal as set out below:

1. Appeals must be made in writing to your Head of Section/Course Leader.
2. The appeal must be lodged within 14 days of the notification of the assessment decision.
3. The Head of Section/Course Leader will appoint an Appeals Committee comprising: the Head of Department (or the Interim Joint Principal if the Course Leader is the Head of Department); the Course Leader; Internal Verifier (if applicable) and/or another member of staff with relevant subject knowledge. There will be a minimum of three members and a maximum of four members on the Appeals Committee. The Head of Department (or Interim Joint Principal) will Chair the Committee. The meeting will be recorded in the form of written Minutes.
4. The Appeals Committee will meet within seven days of the appeal being lodged and give a judgement. The Appeals Committee will endeavour to meet a unanimous decision, however, if this is not possible the decision will be put to a vote. If the vote is tied then the Chair has the casting vote.
5. The Chair will report back to you in writing, informing you of the Committee's decision within three days of the meeting being held.
6. The decision of the Appeals committee is final.
7. If the appeal is successful it may still be necessary to re-assess you in order to establish competence.