

UCL Academic Manual 2023-24

Chapter 6: Student Casework Framework

Section 7: Academic Appeals Procedure

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Grounds for Academic Appeal	3
	The Procedure	5
3.	Stage 1 Appeal	5
4.	Stage 2 Appeal Review	9
5.	Completion of Procedures (COP).....	12
6.	Proceedings for an Appeals Panel and/or an Appeal Review Panel Hearing	12
7.	Disclosure and Confidentiality	14

Contact: Casework Team, Student and Registry Services (casework@ucl.ac.uk)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Academic Appeals Procedure is a formal process in which students can request a review of a decision made by the Board of Examiners or an equivalent academic body (for Postgraduate Research Students) responsible for making decisions about student assessment, progression or award. A review of a decision may include the results of examinations including confirmation of PhD status from MPhil to PhD, marks, viva outcome, award or degree classification.
- 1.2 If a student wishes to express their dissatisfaction about an action of UCL, lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by UCL. The Student Complaints Procedure should be used.
- 1.3 This procedure applies to all registered students at UCL taking a programme of study leading to a formal award. Recent graduates may also submit an appeal within **10 working days** of the date of the official notification of the decision.
- 1.4 Students on programmes delivered with an external partnership institution should use the procedures referred to in their programme-specific terms and conditions, where these apply to the programme, or refer to the additional terms of the Memorandum of Agreement of the partnership.
- 1.5 The purpose of the Procedure is not to dispute academic judgement, that is the decision made by academic staff on the quality of the work or the criteria applied to the work or disagree with a professional judgement, that is a decision reached in due process of an extenuating circumstances panel. It is to ensure that consideration can be given to whether UCL applied its Regulations and Procedures correctly and whether any decision was reasonable and proportionate.
- 1.6 It is the responsibility of a student to draw to the attention of UCL any factors which they consider may have adversely affected the decision of a Board of Examiners or an equivalent academic body (Postgraduate Research).
- 1.7 Students are expected to set out their concerns clearly, succinctly and in accordance with the grounds that are relevant to their appeal.
- 1.8 The appeals process is evidence-based and circumstances mentioned in the statement including the impact on the students studies should be supported by independent evidence. It is the student's responsibility to provide evidence to support their appeal. The Casework Team cannot obtain evidence on a student's behalf. A translation (undertaken by an accredited translator) must be provided for any material not in English – untranslated documents cannot be considered. Faculty responses requested at any stage of this procedure must also be corroborated by evidence when a decision is made not to uphold an appeal.
- 1.9 UCL may further investigate any evidence provided by the student to confirm its authenticity, including (but not limited to) conducting internet searches or third-party verification checks. Where there is evidence that a student or their representative may have provided false evidence or misinformation to deceive or influence the outcome of an appeal the student will normally be informed by an Appeal Assessor in writing within 10 working days of such concerns and of any action that may be taken, such as referring the matter for consideration under another Procedure. UCL reserves the right to pause the Academic Appeals Procedure pending conclusion of such other Procedure.
- 1.10 An appeal raised by a third party on behalf of a student, (this includes parents, guardians, relatives, the spouse or partner of a student or other third parties) will only

be considered in exceptional circumstances. Written authorisation and valid reasons for the third party acting as the student's representative must be provided by the student. UCL's consent to such arrangements may be withdrawn at any time if the behaviour of a third party is not appropriate. A third party supporting, advising, or representing the student should not delay the process. This provision does not extend to legal representation. For the position with regards to legal representation, see Section 6.3.

- 1.11 Students and their representatives are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner. UCL may apply restrictions to the Procedure, a student's access to staff or terminate consideration of an appeal where their behaviour is considered unacceptable as set out in Appendix 3. A student can appeal a decision to terminate the consideration of an appeal in writing to the Executive Director of Student Services and Registrar by email to casework@ucl.ac.uk within **10 working days** of the date of the decision.
- 1.12 An appeal that is raised by several students on the same issue can be considered as one collective appeal. In such circumstances, the names of all students must be included on the Appeal Form. The group are advised to appoint a representative (no more than two students) to facilitate communication for the purposes of the formal Procedure.
- 1.13 Where an appeal has been submitted, the original decision of the relevant Board of Examiners or an equivalent academic body (Postgraduate Research) shall stand until the outcome of this Procedure reached.
- 1.14 A student can submit an appeal without risk of disadvantage as a result of their submission of an academic appeal. Equally, this Procedure shall not form or be seen to form a disciplinary process against the member(s) of staff concerned in the initial decision being appealed.
- 1.15 A student considering submitting an appeal may seek advice from Students' Union. The Casework Team can provide procedural advice but cannot advise on the substance of an appeal.
- 1.16 The Casework team are responsible for the day-to-day operation of this Procedure and can be contacted at casework@ucl.ac.uk.

2. Grounds for Academic Appeal

- 2.1 An appeal can be submitted on one or more of the following grounds:
 - i. there were circumstances that significantly affected the student's academic performance, where for compelling reasons, the relevant Extenuating Circumstances Panel was not made aware of the circumstances through the Short-term Illness and other Extenuating Circumstances Procedure;
 - ii. there occurred a material irregularity (an administrative or procedural error) that had a significant impact on a student's performance and which had not been determined prior to a Board of Examiners;
 - iii. there is substantive evidence that one or more of the examiners can be shown to have been biased or prejudiced against the student in one or more specific assessments.

- 2.2 Medical and other circumstances that should have been reported to UCL at the time of their occurrence will not normally be considered. If a student submits an appeal on the ground that the relevant Extenuating Circumstances Panel were not made aware of circumstances through the Short-term Illness and other Extenuating Circumstances Procedure, there must be compelling reasons with independent supporting evidence, explaining why the student was unable to previously disclose the information through the appropriate Procedure. There is a strong expectation that the circumstances would have been considered through the Short-term Illness and Extenuating Circumstances Procedure prior to the meeting of a Board of Examiners or equivalent academic body for Postgraduate Research Students.

Matters that cannot be addressed under this Procedure

- 2.3 The following matters cannot be considered under this Procedure:
- i. appeals regarding admission decisions;
 - ii. appeals relating to a student's Fitness to Practise where an appeal relates to external assessment by a Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB). Appeals in these cases will be considered in its own Fitness to Practice Procedure;
 - iii. decisions relating to Support to Study, Appeals in these cases will be considered via UCL's Support to Study Procedure;
 - iv. appeals from third parties without written consent from the registered student;
 - v. complaints relating to the quality of teaching, supervision, service provision or other circumstances that relate to the delivery of a programme of study. Such matters should be considered via UCL's Student Complaint Procedure;
 - vi. issues relating to allegations of harassment and bullying. Allegations of this nature will be dealt with under the [UCL Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and should be submitted to HR via [Report and Support](#);
 - vii. appeals that are more appropriately addressed by third parties, for example the Home Office or Student Finance England. Such organisations generally have their own Procedures and it is their organisational procedure that must be followed where UCL has no role in the decision-making process;
 - viii. disagreement with academic judgement, the examiners' assessment of the performance of a student in an assessment, or against academic decisions properly arrived at in accordance with approved Procedures. In this context, disparities in a student's performance between assessments (or between examinations and a student's expectations) are not necessarily evidence of procedural irregularity or bias in the assessment process.
- 2.4 There may be circumstances where, for good reason, UCL needs to extend this timeframe. If this occurs the student will be informed of the extended timeframe. Circumstances that may delay completion of the Procedure at any stage (Appeal and Appeal Review) include but are not limited to:
- i. incomplete forms;

- ii. lack of clarity regarding the grounds relied upon;
 - iii. UCL Closure days;
 - iv. the absence of key staff members;
 - v. an appeal is put on hold to allow for matters to be considered as part of another Procedure, for instance a student complaint or student disciplinary process.
- 2.5 A student can normally expect an appeal at Stage 1 to be completed within **30 working days** of the date of receipt by the Casework Team. A further Stage 2 Appeal Review, if pursued, will normally be completed within a further **30 working days**. Overall, both processes should normally be concluded within **60 working days** of the initial receipt by the Casework Team of the original Stage 1 Appeal.
- 2.6 Any period during which an appeal is put on hold to allow for consideration of another procedure shall not be included in the timeframe referred to in paragraph 2.5 above.
- 2.7 Before deciding whether to submit a Stage 1 Appeal, students are encouraged to seek clarification of an assessment or a Board of Examiners decision following the publication of results from their Department, or Faculty.

The Procedure

3. Stage 1 Appeal

Student Submission and Eligibility

- 3.1 An appeal must be submitted within **10 working days** of the date of the official notification of a Board of Examiners decision or outcome of an equivalent academic body for Postgraduate Research students. Appeals received beyond this timeframe will be deemed out of time and will not be taken forward for consideration unless the student has demonstrated good reason supported by independent evidence, for any period of delay.
- 3.2 An appeal submitted by a student more than 12 months after the date of the official notification of a decision will not be considered under any circumstances. A Completion of Procedures (COP) Letter can be issued on request, noting the reason the appeal was not taken forward for consideration. The student may be able to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education.
- 3.3 An appeal must be submitted via the Stage 1 Appeal Form completing all relevant sections. Students should indicate the date of the official notification of the decision and the ground(s) which they are appealing. A clear and succinct explanation as to why they are dissatisfied with the decision should be provided. The appeal should encompass all matters within the scope of this procedure that the student would like to be considered. New aspects of an appeal cannot be introduced later in the procedure.
- 3.4 Students must submit any relevant documentation and independent evidence as appropriate when submitting an appeal. Where the documentation includes data relating to third parties, the Casework Team reserves the right to redact or remove such material before proceeding, so far as is practicable without undermining the

substance of the appeal.

- 3.5 The Casework Team cannot initiate this Procedure until a completed Stage 1 Appeal Form is received. Incomplete, missing information or unclear statements may be returned for completion or clarification.
- 3.6 Notice of an intention to appeal within the Procedural timeframe shall not be deemed to constitute submission of an appeal and will not be accepted as such. The timescales outlined in this Procedure shall only begin once a fully completed Stage 1 Appeal Form has been received.
- 3.7 The Casework Team will acknowledge receipt and will conduct an initial assessment of the appeal against the ground(s) in Section 2 and the criteria set out in the student submission and eligibility paragraphs 3.1-3.6 above.
- 3.8 If after the initial assessment, it is determined that the grounds and criteria for an appeal have not been met the Casework Team will normally reject the appeal within **10 working days** of receipt of the appeal, giving reasons for the decision. A student who is dissatisfied with this decision may request a review under Stage 2 Appeal Review based on the relevant grounds in Section 4.1 of the Procedure.
- 3.9 The list below (which is not exhaustive) are not considered valid grounds for an appeal and are reasons why an appeal is not upheld and will be rejected:
 - i. disagreement with the academic judgement of the examiners as defined in paragraphs 1.5 and 2.3 viii. Academic judgement includes the assessment mark or the pass/fail decision awarded by the markers of an assessment;
 - ii. marginal failure to attain progression or a higher class of award (where such classifications are non-discretionary and made according to published arithmetic formulae);
 - iii. the retrospective reporting of Extenuating Circumstances which could reasonably have been made known at the time of those circumstances;
 - iv. lack of awareness of the relevant UCL Regulations and/or Procedures and their associated timescales;
 - v. the appeal was received outside the deadline without good reason and evidence for the delay. In cases where a delay is unavoidable, the appeal must be submitted as soon as possible after the deadline and must include an explanation and independent supporting evidence covering the entire period affected;
 - vi. appealing unofficial results, an academic appeal can only be submitted once the decision is confirmed by a Board of Examiners or an equivalent academic body (Postgraduate Research).
- 3.10 Where matters raised do not wholly fall within the scope of this Procedure the student will be informed that the appeal will not be progressed. By agreement with the student, the matter may be referred for consideration under the relevant Procedure.
- 3.11 Where matters are multi-issues relating to decisions made by the Board of Examiners or an equivalent academic body (Postgraduate Research) and dissatisfaction with a service or other aspects of provision. UCL reserves the right to issue an outcome at Stage 1 addressing the grounds for an academic appeal and inform the student that matters that constitute a complaint cannot be considered within this procedure.

- 3.12 If, after the initial assessment it is determined that the grounds and the criteria may have been met the appeal will usually be considered at Stage 1 within **30 working days**. There may be circumstances where, for good reason, UCL needs to extend this timeframe; if this occurs the Casework Team will inform the student and provide an indication of the extended timeframe.

Consideration of Appeal

- 3.13 The Casework Team will forward the Stage 1 Appeal Form and any supporting documentation to the relevant Faculty for consideration. This will normally be submitted to an Appeal Assessor who can be a Faculty Tutor (or nominee), a member of the Casework Team or a Faculty Tutor within another Faculty. The appeal will be considered by an Appeal Assessor who has not previously been involved in matters relating to the appeal nor has been involved in the teaching or assessment of the student to avoid actual or potential conflicts of interest.
- 3.14 The paper-based appeal will be considered on the basis of the student's written statement and supporting evidence. Relevant information from staff, other students or external agencies may be sought by an Appeals Assessor by way of response when considering the appeal. A student submitting an appeal can respond to the information sought by way of a written statement at the Review Stage. The Appeal Assessor will normally inform the Casework Team of the decision within **10 working days** of the appeal being sent to the Appeal Assessor for consideration.
- 3.15 Exceptionally, the Appeal Assessor may decide that further consideration of the appeal is necessary. That it is not possible to reach a suitably informed decision alone due to the complexities of the appeal, or it is considered reasonable on a case-by-case basis to make reasonable adjustments to the procedure to take account of the individual needs of the student. In such instances, the Appeal Assessor will refer the matter to an Appeals Panel for consideration.
- 3.16 The membership of the Appeals Panel shall comprise no fewer than two and no more than three members of academic staff with the provision of a nominee where necessary, and will be as follows:
- a senior member of staff (Chair) drawn from a list approved by Academic Committee, usually a Faculty Tutor from a Faculty other than that in which the student is registered;
 - a Departmental Graduate Tutor from a Department other than that in which the student is registered and/or
 - an elected member of Research Degrees Committee
- 3.17 The paper-based Appeals Panel does not require the student to attend. The Panel is permitted to conduct its discussions electronically or virtually to ensure the case is considered in a timely manner. Exceptionally, when the Appeals Panel considers it appropriate, a hearing will be required, to which the student will be invited.
- 3.18 In the event of an Appeal Panel hearing, the proceedings will be conducted in accordance with Section 6. The student will be informed no later than **10 working days** in advance of the hearing taking place. It is expected that the student will attend in person. UCL may, at its discretion approve alternative arrangements for the student to attend virtually online where it is not possible for the student to attend in person.

Appeal Outcome

- 3.19 Where an appeal is accepted and upheld in part or in full, dependent upon the grounds that the appeal was submitted, the Appeal Assessor, or exceptionally, an Appeals Panel shall reach one of the following decisions:
- i. request that the Board of Examiners review its decision, with a recommendation to provide a deferred assessment or reassessment in accordance with the Academic Manual;
 - ii. request the Board of Examiners to review or revise its decision where the grounds of appeal are considered to have had a material impact on the performance or progression of a student, with recommendations as required;
 - iii. request the Board of Examiners or relevant Faculty Extenuating Circumstances Panel to implement the outcome or mitigation that the student is seeking in accordance with the relevant Procedure;
 - iv. refer the decision back to the relevant Faculty Extenuating Circumstances Panel or the Vice-Provost Education and Student Experience (or nominee) for reconsideration to determine a revised outcome in accordance with the Short-term Illness and other Extenuating Circumstances Procedure;
 - v. require the equivalent academic body for Postgraduate Research Students to consider an appropriate outcome. In cases where a candidate has been denied upgrade or a thesis has been examined (for Postgraduate Research students) this may include but is not limited to:
 - a. the Upgrade Panel/Examiners being invited to reconsider their decision;
 - b. the appointment of a new Upgrade Panel/new Examiners.
- 3.20 Where an appeal is not upheld and is rejected the Appeal Assessor or Appeals Panel shall provide a clear reason for any decisions reached and confirm that the original decision being appealed against shall stand;
- 3.21 An Appeal Assessor or Appeals Panel cannot change marks, change a degree classification or recommend award.
- 3.22 If an appeal outcome leads to a revised decision of a Board of Examiners that changes a degree or award following due process and the student has received their certificate, the student will be required to return any original certificate within **10 working days** before a revised certificate is reissued.
- 3.23 A revised decision of a Board of Examiners or equivalent academic body (for Postgraduate Research) resulting from this procedure shall be final and may not be subject to further appeal, unless it can be evidenced that the appeal relates to the implementation of the earlier appeal outcome.
- 3.24 Evidence should also be provided when a decision is made not to uphold an appeal to support the reason for any decision reached. In appropriate cases the Appeals Assessor or Appeals Panel may provide a single decision in response to a group appeal.
- 3.25 Where it is not possible to provide the outcome of the Stage 1 Appeal within **30 working days** the Casework Team will notify the student of the progress of the

consideration of the appeal.

- 3.26 Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome reached at Stage 1 may request a review of the decision under Stage 2. This stage is a paper-based review which the student does not attend. No new issues may be introduced at Stage 2.
- 3.27 Appeals that do not proceed to the Stage 2 Appeal Review process after the elapse of **10 working days** after the notification of the Stage 1 decision will be considered as closed. A Completions of Procedure (COP) letter can be provided upon request, although students should be aware that the University's internal processes are not complete at this stage.
- 3.28 An Appeal Review Form received beyond this timeframe will be deemed out of time and will not be taken forward for consideration unless the student has demonstrated good reason supported by independent evidence for any period of delay. A COP Letter will be issued upon request noting the reason the appeal review not taken forward for consideration. The student may be able to submit a complaint to the OIA.

4. Stage 2 Appeal Review

Grounds for Appeal Review

- 4.1 A student may request a review of the Stage 1 Appeal decision on the following grounds:
- i. that there is a material irregularity (an administrative or procedural error) in the handling of the appeal at Stage 1;
 - ii. there is new and relevant evidence to support the appeal which for good reason was not available and could not reasonably have been provided at the time the appeal was submitted;
 - iii. there is a response by way of written representation to the information sought by the Appeal Assessor at the appeal stage that demonstrates that the decision reached at the earlier stage was not reasonable given the circumstances of the case.

Student Submission and Eligibility

- 4.2 A request for a review can only be submitted following the completion of the Stage 1 Appeal. A request for a review will not be considered if Stage 1 of the procedure has not been completed.
- 4.3 A request for a review must be submitted within **10 working days** of the date of the notification of the Stage 1 decision. An appeal review received beyond this timeframe will be deemed out of time and will not be taken forward for consideration unless the student has demonstrated good reason supported by independent evidence, for any period of delay.
- 4.4 A request for a review must be submitted via the Stage 2 Appeal Review Form completing all relevant sections. Students should indicate the date of the official notification of the decision and the ground(s) which they are appealing. A clear and succinct explanation as to why they are dissatisfied with the decision should be

provided.

- 4.5 Students must submit any relevant documentation and independent evidence where relevant at this stage when submitting an appeal review. Where the documentation includes data relating to third parties, before proceeding, the Casework Team reserves the right to redact or remove such material, so far as is practicable without undermining the substance of the appeal.
- 4.6 The Casework Team cannot initiate this Procedure until a completed Stage 2 Appeal Review Form is received. Incomplete, missing information or unclear statements may be returned for completion or clarification. The timescales outlined in this Procedure for the Stage 2 Appeal Review will only begin once a fully completed Stage 2 Appeal Review Form has been received.
- 4.7 Notice of an intention to appeal within the Procedural timeframe shall not be deemed to constitute submission of a request for a review and will not be accepted as such.
- 4.8 The Casework Team will acknowledge receipt and will conduct an initial assessment of the appeal review against the ground(s) in Section 4 and the criteria set out in the student submission and eligibility paragraphs 4.2-4.6 above.
- 4.9 If after the initial assessment, it is determined that the grounds and criteria for an appeal review have not been met, the Casework Team will normally reject the appeal review within **10 working days** of receipt, giving reasons for the decision. A COP Letter will be issued upon request noting the reason the appeal review was not taken forward for consideration. The student may be able to submit a complaint to the OIA.
- 4.10 If after the initial assessment, it is determined that the grounds and the criteria may have been met, the request for a review will usually be considered at Stage 2 within **30 working days**. There may be circumstances where, for good reason, UCL needs to extend this timeframe; if this occurs the Casework Team will inform the student and provide an indication of the extended timeframe.

Consideration of Appeal Review

- 4.11 Where it is determined that the grounds and criteria may have been met, the Casework Team shall accept the request for a review and refer the matter for consideration by an Appeal Review Panel.
- 4.12 The Review will not entail a reconsideration of the appeal. Instead, it will consider the matters raised about the Stage 1 decision and the grounds for the request of review.
- 4.13 The Review Panel will conduct a paper-based review and shall base its decision on the information provided by the Student and the Faculty, if applicable.
- 4.14 Neither the student nor the Faculty will normally be permitted to introduce new further material at the Stage 2 Appeal Review stage unless it was not known to the student or Faculty at Stage 1 and the Chair deems it permissible.
- 4.15 The membership of the Appeal Review Panel with the provision of a nominee where necessary will be as follows:
 - the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) (Chair);
 - a senior member of staff from a list approved by the Academic Committee, usually a Faculty Tutor or Faculty Graduate Tutor, as appropriate to the status of the appellant;

- a senior member of staff usually a Director or Head from a Professional Services Division, Department or Faculty;
 - a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer, UCL.
- 4.16 The quorum of an Appeal Review Panel is three, including the Chair. At the discretion of the Chair the Panel may proceed in the event of no Sabbatical Officer being in attendance.
- 4.17 No member of the Panel shall have had any previous involvement in the case being considered, nor shall be from the Faculty in which the student is registered.
- 4.18 The paper-based Review Panel does not require the student to attend. The Panel is permitted to conduct its discussions electronically or virtually to ensure the case is considered in a timely manner. Exceptionally, when the Review Panel considers it appropriate, a hearing will be required to which the student will be invited.
- 4.19 A member of staff from UCL Student and Registry Services will be appointed to act as Secretary to the Review Panel. The Secretary will not act as a member of the Panel but will provide guidance on the Procedure where appropriate.
- 4.20 In the event of a hearing, the proceedings will be conducted in accordance with Section 6. The student will be informed no later than **10 working days** in advance of the hearing taking place. It is expected that the student will attend in person. UCL may, at its discretion approve alternative arrangements for the student to attend virtually online where it is not possible for the student to attend in person.

Appeal Review Outcome

- 4.21 Where an appeal is accepted and upheld in part or in full, dependent upon the grounds on which the appeal was submitted, the Appeal Review Panel shall reach one of the following decisions:
- i. request that the Board of Examiners review its decision, with a recommendation to provide a deferred assessment or reassessment in accordance with the Academic Manual;
 - ii. request the Board of Examiners to review or revise its decision where the grounds of appeal are considered to have had a material impact on the performance or progression of a student, with recommendations as required;
 - iii. recommend the Board of Examiners or relevant Faculty Extenuating Circumstances Panel to implement the outcome or mitigation that the student is seeking in accordance with the relevant Procedure;
 - iv. refer the decision back to the relevant Faculty Extenuating Circumstances Panel or the Vice-Provost Education and Student Experience (or nominee) for reconsideration to determine a revised outcome in accordance with the Short-term Illness and other Extenuating Circumstances Procedure;
 - v. require the equivalent academic body for Postgraduate Research Students to consider an appropriate outcome. In cases where a candidate has been denied upgrade or a thesis has been examined (for Postgraduate Research students) this may include but is not limited to:
 - a) the Upgrade Panel/Examiners being invited to reconsider their decision; or

b) the appointment of a new Upgrade Panel/Examiners.

- 4.22 Where a request for a review is not upheld and is rejected, the Appeal Review Panel shall provide a clear reason for any decisions reached and confirm that the original decision being appealed against shall stand.
- 4.23 The student will normally be informed of the outcome of the Review Panel within **30 working days** of the Appeal Review Form being received by the Casework Team. There may be circumstances where, for good reason, UCL needs to extend this timeframe; if this occurs the Casework Team will inform the student and provide an indication of the extended timeframe.

5. Completion of Procedures (COP)

- 5.1 The decision of an Appeal Review Panel is the final stage of this Procedure for consideration of an academic appeal. At this point, students who remain dissatisfied with the outcome have the right to submit a complaint to the OIA for Higher Education. Students should refer to the [OIA Website](#) to establish whether their complaint is something that the OIA would consider. A complaint must be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the UCL's final decision.
- 5.2 A Completions of Procedures (COP) letter will be provided where a decision not to uphold (reject) an appeal as an outcome at Stage 2. A COP letter will not automatically be issued where an appeal is deemed out of time, considered to have no grounds, is concluded at Stage 1, or is upheld at any stage of the Procedure. A COP letter can be issued to a student upon request.

6. Proceedings for an Appeals Panel and/or an Appeal Review Panel Hearing

- 6.1 In cases where an in-person hearing is considered necessary, the process relating to the proceedings of a hearing and outcome decisions set out in paragraph 3.19 by the Appeals Panel and/or paragraph 4.21 by the Appeal Review Panel will apply.
- 6.2 The student will be invited to attend the hearing and is entitled to be accompanied by a "Friend". A "Friend" who must be a UCL student or member of staff of UCL or Students' Union UCL by way of support. The accompanying person's capacity at the hearing is to provide moral support and would not normally make representations nor cross-examine on behalf of the student at the panel hearing.
- 6.3 Legal representation is not normally permitted at any stage of the procedure; the Academic Appeals Procedure is internal to UCL and is not considered unduly formal. If the student requests to be legally represented at a panel hearing because of the complexity of the case, UCL will consider this on an exceptional basis. The student must make their request at least 5 working days before the panel hearing and must include details of their proposed representative. UCL reserves the right to arrange its own legal representation in connection with the case. The student remains responsible for ensuring that any statements, evidence, or representations made throughout the Procedure by their legal representative are accurate and are responsible for meeting any costs associated with their own representation.

- 6.4 If a student does not attend a panel hearing, having declared an intention to do so, the Panel has the right to reach a decision in the absence of the student without further notice. In this event, the student shall have no grounds for appeal, or for seeking a further hearing solely based on their non-attendance at the panel hearing.
- 6.5 A representative from the relevant Faculty will be invited to attend the hearing to present the reason for the Board of Examiners of the equivalent academic body (Postgraduate Research) decision, to provide any necessary information which might not have been included in the Faculty response and to respond to any new material introduced, which at the Stage 2 Appeal Review stage is only permissible by the Chair. If the Faculty representative is unable to attend, the panel hearing may proceed in their absence.
- 6.6 The student will be informed no later than **10 working days** in advance of the hearing taking place. A student may object procedurally to any member of the panel hearing on one or more of the criteria specified in paragraphs 3.13, 3.16, 4.15 or 4.17. Any procedural objections must be submitted to the Casework Team within **3 working days** from the notification of the hearing membership being sent. That member may, at the discretion of the Casework Team, be required to withdraw and may be replaced.
- 6.7 All documentation relating to the appeal will normally be received by all parties no later than **5 working days** before the panel hearing. No further documentation will be accepted for consideration by the Panel after this time except at the discretion of the Chair.
- 6.8 A member of staff from UCL Student and Registry Services will be appointed to act as Secretary to the Panel. All documentation will be passed through the Secretary and there will be no direct communication, either written or verbal between the Panel and the student or the Faculty representative.
- 6.9 An additional member of staff from UCL Student and Registry Services may be appointed by the Registrar to support and advise a Panel as necessary in respect of the UCL Academic Regulations for Manual and/or other relevant UCL regulations and procedures, according to the nature of the appeal.
- 6.10 Where necessary, an independent expert in the field of study or related discipline may be appointed, subject to the agreement of all parties, to advise the Panel either verbally or in writing.
- 6.11 At the start of the panel hearing, the Chair shall summarise the procedure and the conduct of the panel hearing. The Chair has the discretion to manage the panel hearing as they consider appropriate to ensure:
- (i) Fairness, allowing each party an equal opportunity to make statements and to be questioned about the appeal, or the appeal review;
 - (ii) seek further clarification of the written evidence or statement from one or both parties, where considered appropriate;
 - (iii) that the student, if present, is given the opportunity to make the final statement before concluding the hearing.
- 6.12 The student and the Faculty representative will each be present when the other is speaking. Only in exceptional circumstances, and with the agreement of all parties, will individuals be heard separately.
- 6.13 Neither party shall be present when the Panel deliberates on its decision. The decision of a Panel will be reached by a majority vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair of the

Panel shall have a second or casting vote. The standard of proof for the Panel when reaching a decision is on the balance of probabilities.

- 6.14 The votes of individual Panel members shall always be treated as confidential and there shall be no disclosure either of such votes or of information showing whether the decision was reached by a unanimous or a majority vote.
- 6.15 The Panel members, in the absence of all other parties except the Secretary to the panel hearing, can consider the matter and reach a decision in accordance with this Procedure.
- 6.16 A single written record of the meeting and reasons for any decision reached will normally be made by the Secretary for the purpose of providing a factual record.
- 6.17 The Panel may adjourn for a period not exceeding **5 working days** for the purpose of reaching its decision and/or deciding upon the appropriate action to be taken.

7. Disclosure and Confidentiality

- 7.1 UCL will process all information in accordance with its [Student Privacy Notice](#) the principles the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Appeals will be handled with an appropriate level of confidentiality. Information should only be released for the purposes of consideration or responding to the appeal. No third party should be told more than is necessary about the appeal to obtain the required information from them. The outcome of the Procedure will be communicated to members of staff deemed appropriate by the Casework Team, for instance, to implement upheld appeals, either after, or at the same time as the student has been informed.
- 7.2 The outcomes and recommendations from appeals may be shared across the University for institutional learning and reporting purposes, for instance to Academic Board. However, personal information will be removed and handled in accordance with the Student Privacy Notice.