

Black Mountains College

Academic Appeals Policy

1. Purpose

Black Mountains College is committed to ensuring that academic decisions are fair, transparent, consistent and made in accordance with the College's regulations and those of its awarding organisations and higher education partners.

This policy provides students with the opportunity to request a review of an academic decision where there is evidence that the decision may have been affected by procedural error, administrative error or exceptional circumstances.

The College is committed to handling all appeals fairly, impartially and within reasonable timescales.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled on further education and higher education programmes delivered by Black Mountains College.

Where the regulations of an awarding organisation, professional body or higher education partner differ from this policy, those regulations shall take precedence.

3. What is an Academic Appeal?

An academic appeal is a request for the College to review an academic decision.

Examples of academic decisions include:

- assessment or assignment outcomes;
- unit or module results;
- qualification outcomes;
- progression decisions;
- decisions relating to academic awards.

An academic appeal is different from a complaint.

Concerns about teaching quality, learning resources, facilities, student support, customer service or other aspects of the student experience should be raised through the College's Complaints Policy.

4. Grounds for Appeal

A student may submit an academic appeal where one or more of the following grounds apply:

- there was a procedural irregularity during the assessment or decision-making process that may have affected the outcome;
- there was an administrative or clerical error that affected the academic decision;
- there were exceptional or mitigating circumstances that the student was unable to disclose at the appropriate time for valid reasons and which may have materially affected their performance;
- there is evidence that College regulations or the requirements of the relevant awarding organisation or higher education partner were not correctly applied.

5. Grounds that will not normally be accepted

An appeal will not normally be considered where it is based solely upon:

- disagreement with the academic or professional judgement of an assessor, tutor, examiner or assessment panel;
- dissatisfaction with marks awarded where no procedural or administrative error has occurred;
- issues that should instead be considered under another College policy, such as the Complaints Policy or Student Conduct Policy.

6. Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, students are encouraged to discuss concerns promptly with their tutor or another appropriate member of staff before submitting a formal appeal.

Many issues can be resolved quickly through clarification or review without the need for a formal appeal.

Seeking informal resolution does not prevent a student from submitting a formal appeal within the required timescale.

7. Submitting an Appeal

Formal academic appeals must normally be submitted in writing within **28 calendar days** of the student being formally notified of the academic decision.

Appeals should:

- clearly identify the decision being appealed;
- state the grounds for appeal;
- explain why the student believes the appeal should be upheld;
- include any supporting evidence available.

Late appeals will only be considered where there is good reason for the delay.

8. Appeal Process

Upon receipt of an appeal, the College will:

- acknowledge receipt of the appeal;
- review whether the appeal falls within the permitted grounds;
- investigate the matters raised where appropriate;
- consider all relevant evidence;
- notify the student of the outcome in writing, including the reasons for the decision.

Where necessary, additional information may be requested from the student before a decision is reached.

Individuals involved in determining an appeal will not have had prior involvement in the academic decision wherever reasonably practicable.

9. Outcomes

If an appeal is upheld, the College will take appropriate action to remedy the situation.

Depending upon the circumstances, this may include:

- correcting an administrative error;
- reviewing the assessment decision;
- arranging reassessment where appropriate;
- reconsidering progression or award decisions;
- any other appropriate academic remedy.

If the appeal is not upheld, the student will receive a written explanation of the reasons for the decision and details of any further review or external appeal available through the relevant awarding organisation or higher education partner.

10. Timescales

The College aims to acknowledge receipt of an appeal within **five working days**.

The College aims to complete the appeals process within **90 calendar days** of receiving all relevant information.

Complex cases or delays in receiving evidence may result in longer timescales. Where this occurs, students will be kept informed of progress and provided with revised timescales where possible.

11. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information submitted as part of an academic appeal will be handled confidentially and only shared with those who need access to consider the appeal.

Personal information will be processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the College's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.

12. Monitoring and Review

The College will monitor academic appeals to identify themes, trends and opportunities for quality improvement.

This policy will normally be reviewed every three years, or sooner where changes to legislation, awarding organisation requirements or College procedures make this necessary.

Version	Date Reviewed	Who reviewed	Next review date
1	15/6/26	Christianne Wakeham	July 2029