

Querying Academic Feedback or Marks

General Advice & Guidance for Learners

What this guidance is for:

- Provides insight into the **academic marking Quality Assurance process**
- Clarifies the steps you should follow if you want to **query your marks or feedback**
- Sets out how to distinguish between a **complaint** and an **academic appeal**
- Sets out how QA will approach these two processes

BEFORE WE GET STARTED...

Before reading on, it is important to keep this in mind:

There is an important distinction to make when considering what constitutes a **complaint**:

I am not satisfied with the feedback I have received and the academic team have not addressed my concerns

and what constitutes an **appeal**:

I have identified a procedural irregularity in the assessment process which I can provide evidence for

QUERYING FEEDBACK OR MARKS:

ACADEMIC MARKING QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

All assessments go through several stages of academic scrutiny:

1. First Marking

- Undertaken by the Tutor, Module Leader, or Digital Learning Consultant (DLC)

2. Internal Moderation

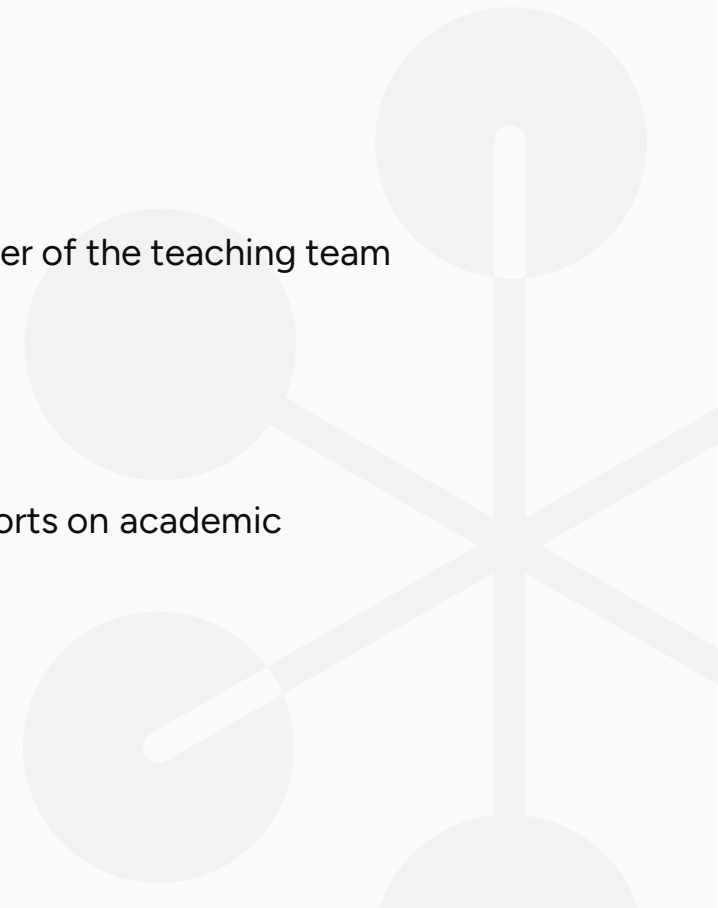
- Randomly chosen sample of assessments across the range of marks, undertaken by a different member of the teaching team

3. External Moderation & External Examiner

- Sample of QA internal moderated assessments
- Some university partners conduct additional moderation
- The external examiner is a subject expert with appropriate academic and industry experience and reports on academic decisions/judgements

4. Examination & Progression Board (held 6-8 weeks after marks release)

- All marks formally confirmed
- External Examiners provide feedback on samples viewed and write report
- External Examiner Report is discussed at Programme Board (or equivalent)



QUERYING FEEDBACK OR MARKS:

KEEPING IT INFORMAL

- QA, like all Higher Education institutions, places trust in our markers and the academic rigour of our assessment regimes, so we take formal complaints about these **very seriously**.
- We usually find that we can solve the majority of academic issues **without** requiring a formal process.
- Quite often a **conversation with the marker**, Module Leader, or Programme Leader can go a long way to providing you with insight into how you were assessed.
- You should follow the steps we outline on the next page **before** triggering a formal complaint or appeal. Complaints and appeals can take a long time to resolve and are very methodical and evidence-led processes.
- Should your query not be resolved, we have also outlined the **options available** to you.

QUERYING FEEDBACK OR MARKS: RAISING WITH ACADEMIC TEAM

- If you want to seek clarification on your feedback or marks, take the following steps:

1. Speak to the Marker, or try the Module Leader

The first marker is in the best position to give learners first-hand feedback



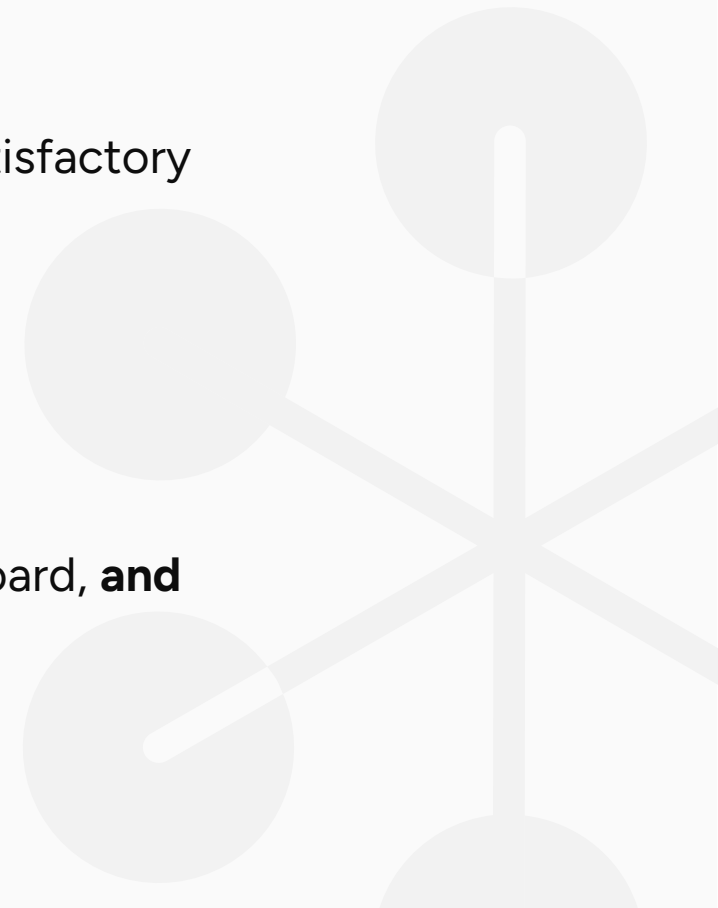
Escalate through Academic Inbox to Head of Level or Programme Leader

The academic programme leadership team review all requests and can provide appropriate advice

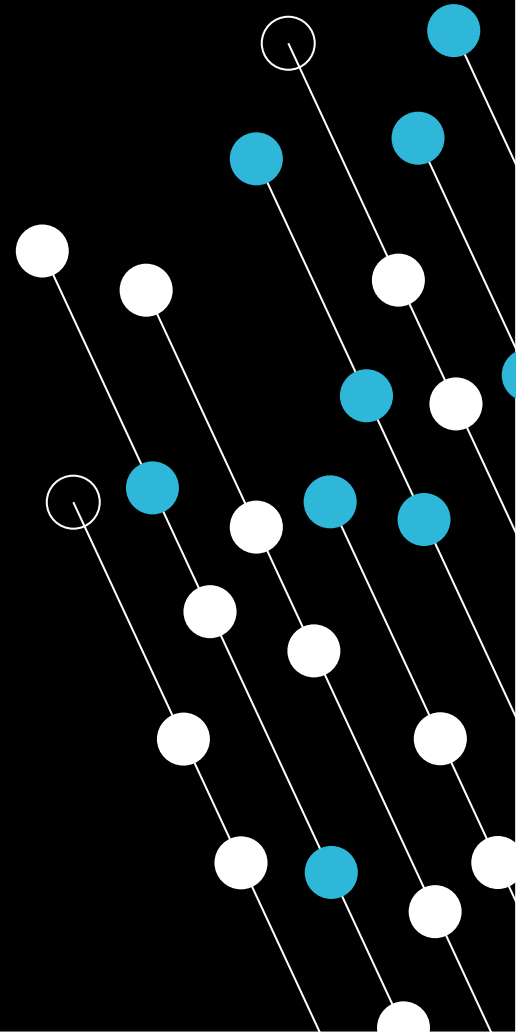


QUERYING FEEDBACK OR MARKS: KEEPING IT INFORMAL

- If your issue remains unsolved, **QA** may consider an academic complaint if:
 - All of the review stages have been completed
 - Evidence is available which makes clear why the review process was unsatisfactory
- There will usually be **one of three outcomes** to a formal complaint:
 - A.** Complaint **upheld** and recommendation made on resolution
 - B.** Complaint **dismissed**
 - C.** Student advised to **appeal**, if:
 - The mark has already been ratified at an Examination & Progression Board, **and**
 - The complaint meets the threshold for an appeal, **and**
 - Evidence meets the policy requirements



Appeals



Appeals:

THE POLICY

- There are **only three grounds** on which students can appeal their mark, which may vary slightly depending on the university partner:
 1. That a procedural irregularity or administrative error has occurred in the process of an assessment; Had the procedural irregularity or administrative error not taken place, the decision in question would have been different;
 2. That the student's academic performance was materially affected by significant, relevant and uncontrollable circumstances that were unknown to the decision maker; That the uncontrollable circumstances could not with reasonable diligence have been disclosed before the decision was made;
 3. That there is evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of the decision-maker, which is of such a nature as to create a reasonable possibility that, in the absence of any prejudice or bias, the decision in question would have been different.

Appeals:

KEY POINTS

Remember:

- You **must be certain** that you qualify for an appeal before starting the process.
- We may refer you back to the academic team or the complaints process **if you do not meet** the criteria.
- You can only formally appeal after the exam board ratifies your mark, and you **must do so within 10 days** of the date your mark is confirmed.
- If issues are identified early, we may be able to rectify them **without requiring a formal appeal-** but this can only happen if you raise this before the mark is ratified at the Exam Board.
- QA can only **advise and guide** you through the formal appeal process. The final decision whether to submit your appeal to the university is yours to take.

Appeals:

HOW TO GET STARTED

- **Before you start an appeal application you must be sure you have explored all options:**
 - Raising a query with the Academic team
 - Formal Complaint
- If after raising informal queries with the Academic team you are not satisfied that the outcome has followed University policy, you may appeal directly to your University, following the guidance found in the links below:
- [University of Roehampton - Academic Appeals](#)
- [Northumbria University - Student Appeals and Complaints](#)
- [Southampton Solent University - Student conduct, complaints and appeals](#)

To Summarise:

- Always speak to your **marker first**
- Remember the difference between an **appeal** and a **complaint**
- Appeals and complaints must be **evidence-based**

