

## APPEALS - PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

### INFORMATION FOR STAFF

#### Student Appeals

The first step in the appeals process is a Preliminary Discussion within the Faculty. This consists of two stages: a face-to-face meeting (Preliminary Discussion Meeting) with a Faculty Member, followed by a staff-only investigation of the student's case. A decision will be made whether the appeal is fully or partially upheld or rejected. When an outcome letter is sent to the student the Preliminary Discussion is completed.

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of this Preliminary Discussion, he/she has the right to submit a formal Academic Appeal. This involves a panel chaired by an Associate Dean from another Faculty. Formal appeals can only be lodged after completing the Preliminary Discussion stage.

For full details, see: <http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/student-appeals.html>  
or: <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/studentadmin/appeals/>

#### Stage A - Preliminary Discussion Meeting

Since 2011/2012 the Calendar states that there needs to be a written record of a conversation with an appropriate person in the Faculty. For a student on a taught course this could be his/her tutor, senior tutor or programme leader. For postgraduate research students this could be a member of the supervisory team. Not that academics who are involved in the case or who play a role in further stages in the appeals process cannot participate in the Discussion Meeting.

The University recommends to use a template, "Academic Appeal - Preliminary Meeting". This template enables the student to organize their appeal. In FPAS, the student is asked to fill out the edited template ("Preliminary Meeting Form") before meeting with a staff member. Note that the student can bring a SUAIC adviser or a student support representative along to the meeting.

At the Preliminary Discussion Meeting, the Faculty Member should first check whether the student is fully aware of the information given in the Introduction section of the Preliminary Meeting Form.

Next, the academic should go through the case. The students is encouraged to put his/her case in writing prior to the meeting. It is helpful to check that the student has clearly explained how his/her case and evidence relate to the grounds for appeal. If anything is unclear, ask the student to amend this with hand-written notes (in case of minor additions or corrections) or ask the student to make notes and come back with an edited electronic version.

If the academic feels that the student's case is weak, this should be noted in the Discussion section of the form, but it is the decision of the student to proceed or not to proceed with the case. If the tutor has additional background information or wants to support the student's case, he/she can send a 'letter of support' to the Senior Curriculum & QA Officer.

The signed form (amended or not amended) will serve as a record of the Preliminary Discussion Meeting. The student needs to bring the form and the supporting documents to the FPAS Student Office.

#### Stage B - Internal investigation

When the Preliminary Meeting Form has been submitted to the Student Office, in ECS the Appeals Officer (Maurits de Planque) and the Examinations Officer (Richard Crowder) will take over the case as 'Faculty Member involved in the preliminary discussion'. In Physics this is done by the Appeals Officer (Jonathan Flynn). They will consult with the Chair of the Relevant Body that made the decision that the student is appealing against. Based on the information provided by the student, additional information provided by staff members, the University regulations (usually those for the year of entry) and previous cases, a decision is made about the appeal.

#### End of Preliminary Discussion

The FPAS Senior Curriculum & QA Officer (Ben Connell) will sent an outcome letter to the student, which will be copied to the Faculty Member involved in the face-to-face meeting. The student will also receive a copy of the Preliminary Meeting Form. If the proposed outcome of the Preliminary Discussion was not upheld, the student can now lodge a formal Academic Appeal.