Appeals Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to specify the principles and process for managing appeals against academic and administrative decisions of the University.

(2) For appeals relating to academic misconduct and general misconduct refer to the Student Conduct Procedure and for appeals relating to research misconduct refer to Macquarie University Research Code Complaints, Breaches and Investigation Procedure.

Background

(3) Macquarie University (the University) is committed to providing transparent, equitable, timely, and consistent mechanisms for students to appeal decisions that affect their studies.

(4) The University's actions under this Policy are in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth), the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth), and the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000. All appeal actions and decisions made sit under and are accountable to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) regulated Standards and are consistent with TEQSA's Statement of Regulatory Expectations: Student grievance and complaint mechanisms (2025).

Scope

(5) This Policy applies to decisions made by the University affecting students (including graduates) enrolled in coursework awards, non-award courses, units of study, preparatory or other programs, and participants in microcredential offerings or research degrees (subsequently referred to as appellants within this Policy) regarding decisions on:

a. academic integrity breaches or a sanction decision under the Academic Integrity Policy and Academic Integrity Breach Procedure;
b. special consideration under the Special Consideration Policy;
c. recognition of prior learning under the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy;
d. procedural irregularities in the outcome of final grade appeals under the Assessment Procedure;
e. enrolment, course transfer, leave of absence, suspension of studies, and withdrawal decisions under the Enrolment Policy, Course Transfer Policy, Leave of Absence and Suspension of Studies Procedure, Withdrawal Procedure, and the Graduate Research Rule and Graduate Research Variations to Candidature Policy;
f. Notice of Intent to Report decisions issued for reasons of non-enrolment in units or non-payment of fees;
g. academic pause and exclusion under the Academic Progression Policy;
h. exclusion under the General Coursework Rule;
i. termination of Graduate Research candidature under the Graduate Research Rule;
j. decisions relating to the award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) or Master of Research (MRes) degrees under the Graduate Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy;

k. decisions relating to the award of aegrotat and posthumous awards under the Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards Policy; and
l. fitness to practice requirements under the Fitness to Practice Procedure.

(6) This Policy does not apply to:

a. admission and readmission under the Admission Policy (refer to Complaints Resolution Policy for Students and Members of the Public);
b. matters under the Macquarie University College Academic Progression Policy, Macquarie University College Academic Progression Policy - ELICOS Students, Macquarie University College Attendance Policy - ELICOS Students, and Macquarie University College Attendance Policy - Standard Foundation Program;
c. misconduct (refer to Student Conduct Rule and Student Conduct Procedure for information on appealing academic misconduct and general misconduct decisions);
d. research misconduct (refer to Macquarie University Research Code Complaints, Breaches and Investigation Procedure);
e. transfer and release decisions made under the Transfer and Release for International Students Policy and Transfer and Release for International Students Procedure;
f. refunds considered under the International Fee Refund Policy and the Higher Degree Research International Fee Refund Policy; and
g. student grievances and complaints (refer to the Complaints Resolution Policy for Students and Members of the Public).

Section 2 - Policy

(7) Appellants have the opportunity to submit an appeal against a relevant decision without fear of disadvantage or discrimination and in the knowledge that confidentiality will be respected.

(8) Appellants are able to access assistance and support including the University's Student Advocacy services throughout the appeals process.

(9) With the exception of academic pause or exclusion appeals, a permissible appeal against an applicable decision may only be made on the grounds that:

a. the procedure for dealing with the matter was unfair in the circumstances because one or more of the following things occurred:
    i. the required procedure for making the decision was not followed;
    ii. the decision was not based on the merits of the information available;
    iii. the decision was not procedurally fair (i.e. the decision maker had a bias, and/or the appellant was not given an opportunity to respond to an allegation, and/or the reasons for the decision were not provided); and/or
    iv. new and relevant information has become available that was not able to be obtained at the time of the decision and which should be taken into consideration.

(10) Appeals of academic pause or exclusion may only be made on the permissible grounds that:

a. an appellant can demonstrate with evidence that they experienced circumstances beyond their control that significantly impacted their ability to succeed in their enrolled units during the study periods concerned; and
b. an appellant can demonstrate with evidence that circumstances have changed sufficiently such that they will be able to succeed in their future enrolment in units.

This document may be varied, withdrawn, or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to Policy Central (https://policies.mq.edu.au) for the latest version.

(11) An appeal will not proceed where it does not disclose a permissible ground, is not accompanied by sufficient information to allow assessment, is frivolous, vexatious or misconceived, or is outside the scope of this Policy.

(12) If an appeal cannot be resolved with the relevant Faculty or business unit, the Registrar will appoint a Chair of the Appeals Panel (Chair) to consider the appeal. Upon reviewing the appeal application, the Chair may request the Registrar to appoint a full Appeals Panel to determine the appeal.

(13) Appeals considered by either a Chair or by an Appeals Panel will:

a. be conducted according to the principles of procedural fairness and provide reasons for their decision;
b. in complex or serious matters, provide an opportunity for the appellant to attend the Appeals Panel meeting with a support person (other than a legal practitioner);
c. decide whether the appeal should be upheld or dismissed; and
d. where upheld, decide whether the original matter should be considered by an alternate decision maker, or amend the outcome of the original decision with amendments within scope of the original decision.

(14) The decision of a Chair or an Appeals Panel is final and supersedes any decision made previously. A decision made by a Chair or an Appeals Panel completes the process for a respective appeal.

(15) If an appellant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal or the way it has been handled by the University, the appellant may consult external agencies. These include but are not limited to the NSW Ombudsman or the National Student Ombudsman. In general, appellants should exhaust all internal appeal processes before pursuing external review.

Reporting

(16) An annual report on appeals will be prepared by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Dean of Students) for Academic Senate and its Committees.

Section 3 - Procedures

Lodging an appeal

(17) An appellant wishing to lodge an appeal against an academic or administrative decision of the University must do so via the Service Connect portal setting out the details of the grounds for appeal.

(18) In their application, an appellant must:

a. identify the original decision being appealed and attach a copy of any relevant correspondence;
b. specify the ground or grounds for appeal and explain how each ground applies to the current appeal; and
c. include any available evidence to support their appeal.

(19) An appellant must lodge an application no later than ten (10) Working Days after the original decision has been communicated for:

a. a breach or a sanction decision (that is not suspension or exclusion from the University) under the Academic Integrity Policy and Academic Integrity Breach Procedure;
b. special consideration under the Special Consideration Policy;
c. recognition of prior learning under the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy;
d. procedural irregularities in final grade appeal decisions under the Assessment Procedure;
e. enrolment, course transfer, leave of absence, suspension of studies, and withdrawal decisions under the

Enrolment Policy, Course Transfer Policy, Leave of Absence and Suspension of Studies Procedure, and Withdrawal Procedure; and

f. Notice of Intent to Report decisions under the Enrolment Policy.

(20) An appellant must lodge an appeal application no later than twenty (20) Working Days after the original decision has been communicated for:

a. academic pause and exclusion under the Academic Progression Policy;
b. exclusion under the General Coursework Rule;
c. fitness to practice requirements under the Fitness to Practice Procedure;
d. a sanction decision to suspend or exclude the student from the University under the Academic Integrity Policy and Academic Integrity Breach Procedure;
e. termination of Graduate Research candidature under the Graduate Research Rule;
f. a decision relating to the award of PhD, MPhil or MRes degrees under the Graduate Research Thesis Preparation, Submission and Examination Policy; and
g. research degree enrolment, leave of absence and withdrawal decisions under the Graduate Research Variations to Candidature Policy.

(21) Late appeal applications will be rejected unless:

a. the appellant has requested an extension before the due date of the appeal application (by emailing appeals@mq.edu.au) and the Registrar approves the extended date; or
b. the appellant can show that circumstances beyond their control have prevented them from submitting an appeal application within the applicable timeframe. In such circumstances, the Registrar will approve or deny the appeal application from being considered.

Appeal process

(22) The appellant will receive notification by email of receipt of their appeal within twenty-four (24) hours after the appeal is received.

(23) The University's Complaints, Appeals, and Misconduct (CAM) Unit will commence processing an appeal within ten (10) Working Days of receiving the appeal application.

(24) Appellants may review the progress of their appeal in the Service Connect portal.

(25) Upon receipt of an appeal, the CAM Unit will assess the appeal to ensure it meets the permissible grounds provided in this Policy, and that sufficient information has been provided to support the appeal.

(26) After an appeal assessment is conducted, the CAM Unit may:

a. seek further evidence from the appellant and/or the area responsible for the decision being appealed;
b. seek a local resolution of the appeal with the relevant Faculty or business unit;
c. dismiss the appeal as lacking permissible grounds or supporting evidence; or
d. dismiss the appeal because the appeal has been lodged outside stated timeframes.

(27) If an appeal cannot be resolved with the relevant Faculty or business unit, the Registrar will appoint a Chair of the Appeals Panel (Chair) to consider the appeal. Upon reviewing the appeal application, the Chair may request the Registrar to appoint a full Appeals Panel to determine the appeal.

(28) If a Chair is appointed to review the appeal application, they may request further information from the appellant

or the Faculty or the business unit that made the original decision, and will give the appellant written notice of their decision to either:

a. dismiss the appeal if it is frivolous, vexatious, misconceived, outside scope, or not supported by sufficient evidence to proceed;
b. determine the appeal where the issues are clear, the record is complete, and procedural fairness can be afforded without a hearing; or
c. request the Registrar to appoint an Appeals Panel to determine the appeal.

(29) In cases where an Appeals Panel is appointed, the Chair will determine if the appeal is complex or serious in nature. Such matters may include those relating to exclusion, termination, academic pause or other appeals deemed sufficiently complex or serious in the circumstances.

(30) An Appeals Panel consists of a Chair and at least two (2) other members, having regard to the nature of the matter under consideration.

Appeal decision

(31) Prior to considering an appeal or making a decision, the Chair or any member of an Appeals Panel may seek advice or information from appropriate staff as to the interpretation and implementation of the University's policies/procedures for the purpose of the appeal in question.

(32) Following consideration of an appeal, a Chair or an Appeals Panel will:

a. dismiss the appeal by affirming the original decision; or
b. uphold the appeal by setting aside the original decision and refer the matter to a new decision maker; or
c. vary the outcome of the original decision within the limits of the original decision, University policy, and relevant legislation.

(33) Decisions of the Appeals Panel will be a majority decision of the panel members.

(34) The Chair will provide a written statement to the appellant of the reason/s for any decision.

(35) Appellants will generally receive notification by email of their appeal outcome within forty (40) University business days after the appeal is received for serious or complex appeals, and twenty (20) University business days for all other appeals.

(36) An appeal will not be upheld on the ground that an appellant does not agree with the original decision made.

(37) Any actions required as a result of an appeal decision will be communicated to the relevant Faculty or business unit as soon as practicable after the decision is made.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(38) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(39) The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

a. Notice of Intention to Report means the written communication sent to a student notifying them of the

University's intention to report them to the Department of Home Affairs when required under the Education Services for Overseas Students Framework.

b. Working day means Monday-Friday inclusive other than: public holidays in New South Wales; or any other day when the University is closed for business as published on the University's website.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	25th November 2025
Review Date	25th November 2030
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	25th November 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Rorden Wilkinson Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Responsible Officer	Leanne Piggott Pro Vice-Chancellor (Dean of Students)
Enquiries Contact	Kane Murdoch Manager, Complaints, Appeals and Misconduct

This document may be varied, withdrawn, or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to Policy Central (https://policies.mq.edu.au) for the latest version.