SPARSHOLT COLLEGE GROUP SPARSHOLT CAMPUS ANDOVER CAMPUS UNIVERSITY CENTRE SPARSHOLT

University Centre Sparsholt Appeals Policy

Our Mission

Raising Aspirations, Unlocking Potential, Advancing Futures

Our Values

Excellence, Passion, Teamwork, Integrity, Innovation,

Sustainability, Valuing Others and Supportiveness

Sparsholt College Group

The Sparsholt College Group (the College Group) includes Sparsholt College, Andover College, University Centre Sparsholt, Sparsholt College Services, Westley Enterprises and Andover Town Football Club. College Group policies apply to each part of the group unless specified otherwise.

The University Centre Sparsholt Appeals Policy was approved by the Board of Governors in 2023 and supersedes previous versions.

Originator:	Dean of Higher Education
Located:	College Group Websites
	College Group Intranet
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UNIVERSITY CENTRE SPARSHOLT
APPEALS POLICY

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UNIVERSITY CENTRE SPARSHOLT
APPEALS POLICY

1. What is this policy about?

This document explains the process you should follow if you are unhappy with a decision made by the organisation about you, by an assessment board or a mark awarded for a piece of work and feel you have grounds for an appeal.

There are many types of appeal, but all follow the same general process and may include:

- an academic appeal against a mark or exam board decision.
- an appeal against a decision of an Extenuating Circumstances claim.
- an appeal against decisions made under the Student Conduct Policy and the Fitness to Practice Policy.
- an appeal against a decision of an Extenuating Circumstances claim.
- a student fee appeal.
- an End Point Assessment appeal.

2. Accessibility Statement

The appeals procedure is designed to be accessible to all students. If you have any additional needs that mean you are unable to use the appeals procedure in the way set out in this procedure, please contact degrees@sparsholt.ac.uk to discuss reasonable adjustments.

3. Support for those using this policy

There are many people that can support you with the policy including your personal tutor and course leader. If you do not feel comfortable with approaching these individuals, then you may seek support from the curriculum leads or your success coach. Details of these individuals are found in your handbook located on the Ledge VLE.

In certain circumstances you may consider approaching the University of Portsmouth Students' Union Advice Centre by emailing advice@upsu.net or by telephoning them on 023 9284 3478.

University Centre Sparsholt (UCS) is proud to be inclusive for all individuals, you will not be discriminated against or treated differently as a result or raising a complaint. If for any reason you believe this not to be the case, then you should make a complaint following the UCS Complaints Policy & Procedures.

4. Appeals Procedure

4.1. When to appeal

You can use the appeals procedure if you need to challenge the decision of:

- An academic appeal against a mark or exam board decision.
- An appeal against a decision of an Extenuating Circumstances claim.
- An appeal against decisions made under the Student Conduct Policy and the Fitness to Practice Policy.
- An appeal against a decision of an Extenuating Circumstances claim.
- A student fee appeal.
- An End Point Assessment appeal.

4.2. **What are the grounds for appeal?**

There are two possible reasons why an appeal might be made:

- The Institution or End Point Assessment Organisation[1], for those taking an apprenticeship, has made an administration error / not followed its own procedures (which you can evidence) or demonstrated bias or a reasonable perception of bias.
- You were prevented from completing a process / procedure for reasons related to your personal circumstances, that you were unable to disclose, for a sound and acceptable reason related to the circumstances themselves, before the deadline for making an appeal has expired.

Some professional bodies, such as the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), will have insisted that the organisation makes changes to its academic regulations to comply with their rules. You will be informed about this by your course teams. It will not be possible to appeal against these changes as they are necessary for you to achieve the relevant qualifying status with the professional body.

4.3 How the appeal will be managed:

- An appeal should be raised in the first instance by the student impacted. In subsequent meetings, you will then be able to bring with you a fellow student, a friend, a UPSU representative or a family member. This appeals procedure is not a legal process and so it is not normal for your representative to be a member of the legal profession.
- All parties will endeavour to keep to the published timescales however there may on occasion be legitimate reasons for a delay. In these circumstances all parties will be informed of the reason for the delay along with a revised estimate of timescales.
- We will treat your concern confidentially and expect the student raising the concern to behave similarly. We will treat you with respect and expect the same in return. If in the process any party become abusive, disruptive or fails to engage constructively in the process then we reserve the right to issue a Completion of Procedures letter to allow you to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education.

5. How to make an appeal

At all times we would seek to address any appeal in a fair and timely fashion. The initial step, Stage 1, aims to provide the opportunity for an early and swift resolution to the appeal and forms the informal stage of the process. If required, the appeal

will move on to the formal investigation at Stage 2, with the final stage, Stage 3, being an opportunity to review the outcomes of Stage 2 if the individual making the appeal is not satisfied with the outcome.

5.1 Stage 1 – Early Resolution Opportunity

- Regardless of the type of appeal you wish to make, you will have received an official communication from the organisation, outlining the decision you are unhappy about. You have **10 working days** from the date of this official communication in which to submit your appeal to the member of staff listed in this official communication as the person to whom appeals must be submitted, if you are in doubt, please email degrees@sparsholt.ac.uk
- If the member of staff to whom appeals should be submitted identifies an obvious error on behalf of the organisation, that individual will take appropriate steps to address this in a timely manner and inform you in writing of the steps that were taken and it will be assumed that the appeal is resolved. The letter will inform you that there is a 10-day period in which to appeal the outcome of the Stage 1 appeal.

When it is not possible to resolve the matter quickly, then the matter will proceed to Stage 2.

5.2 Stage 2 – Formal Appeal

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your Stage 1 Early Resolution Opportunity, then you will have 10 working days to submit a Stage 2 Formal Appeal:

- You cannot make a formal appeal until the early resolution (informal Stage 1) process has been completed. You can then submit a Stage 2 Formal Appeal via the Appeal Form at Academic Appeal Proforma - Stage 2 Formal Appeal
- Once the information required above has been checked, your appeal will be processed as appropriate.
- If you apply and are using the wrong process, such as a complaint rather than an appeal, then we will inform you and start that process if appropriate.
- If your appeal meets the criteria, then your case will be assigned to a senior member of staff. You will be informed that your appeal has been accepted and the investigating officer in a letter within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal.
- Your case may be rejected, the reason for this would be explained, and then you would have 10 working days in which to appeal this decision and to request a review of the decision (Stage 3).
- In order to carry out a Stage 2 appeal investigation, the investigating officer will consider your appeal documentation and look at any other documents they need. It may be necessary to talk to staff, as well as yourself, in carrying out this investigation.
- The meetings will be documented and notes will be made available to you after the meeting. We would aim to provide 5 working days' notice of any meetings and you will be informed about the purpose of the meeting and who will be present and given a copy of the procedure; as well as being provided with the opportunity to be supported by a fellow student, a friend or a Portsmouth

Student Union representative. It will be possible to hold meetings face-to-face as well as via MS Teams.

- All participants at a virtual meeting must appear on the screen at least at the beginning of the meeting to ensure the correct people are attending.
- Recordings using MS Teams may be made of virtual meetings by the institution until notes of the meeting have been agreed. No other recording of the meeting should take place. Once agreed, the notes of the meeting will be used in reaching a decision on your appeal.

The member of staff dealing with your appeal will advise you in writing of the outcome and decision. The member of staff will advise you of:

- Whether or not they have upheld your appeal supported by their reasons for reaching their decision.
- Any actions that need to be taken.
- If you are unhappy with the outcome, then you have 10 working days from being notified of the outcome of the Stage 2 formal investigation, in which to request a review (Stage 3).
- The grounds available to you for requesting a review and the time limit for submitting a request for a review (moving to Stage 3) is 10 working days from when you were told the outcome of your Stage 2 appeal.

Stage 2 investigations should ordinarily be **completed within 20 working days.** Any unforeseen delays will be explained in writing and an estimate of the revised completion date identified.

If no appeal is received within the 10-working day appeal window without good reason, then a completion of procedures letter will be provided so that you may submit a complaint about this decision to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

5.3 Stage 3 – Review Stage

If you are unhappy with a decision made at either stage 1 (informal resolution) or stage 2 (formal investigation), you may request a review of these decisions within 10 working days of being informed of the decision by submitting a review request to the Dean of Higher Education. The Dean of Higher Education will consider all requests for a review of an appeal decision to allow for continuity and consistency, although this review stage may be delegated to another senior manager.

Appropriate grounds for requesting a review of a decision will be:

- the fact that you do not believe the appeal procedure was followed correctly.
- you do not believe that the decision reached was reasonable in all of the circumstances.
- the fact that the investigation was not completed within the indicated time period or if you have new evidence which you were unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.

The reviewing manager will check that the procedures were followed properly and determine whether the outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances. If you supply new evidence at this stage, it will be necessary for you to explain why it was not possible to provide this evidence earlier in the process.

If you wish to request a review, you will need to explain your reasons for your request and provide evidence (if appropriate) of your reasons.

The Dean of Higher Education will write to you to confirm what is to be reviewed. This must be done within 5 working days of receipt of review and agreement reached within 10 working days of receipt of review.

The Dean of Higher Education will then carry out a paper review of the Stage 2 - formal appeal investigation and report, and your reasons for requesting a review. They will write to you within 10 working days of agreeing the grounds of review, to provide their decision (with reasons).

Either the review is accepted and the outcome actions are required to remedy the situation or the review is rejected, then you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter which would allow you to lodge a complaint with to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

6. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

You may apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) once we have issued a CoP letter.

You must fill in an electronic OIA Complaint Form and submit it to the OIA within 12 months of the date of the CoP letter. Further information on how to do this can be found at www.oiahe.org.uk.