

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Academic Judgement:** relates to the considered application of academic expertise in the assessment and grading of a student's academic work. It is a matter solely for the person or committee that has made that academic judgement. The University's academic judgement procedures are approved by the UK Quality Assurance Agency. The University will not normally consider appeals concerning the academic judgement of any of its examiners or committees unless it can be shown that they have not followed correct procedures or that their decision was perverse (i.e. that the decision was one that no reasonable person, properly advised, could have reached). Where a student disagrees, or is unhappy with a decision of academic judgement, for example the award of a particular CAS mark, that student cannot submit an appeal solely because they disagree or are unhappy. To submit an appeal there must be valid grounds, for example, if the procedure used in reaching the decision was flawed.

**Appeal Panel:** the body of trained staff and student representatives that will hear an appeal at the 'Further Stage' of the University's Appeals process.

**Case Officer:** a University Officer assigned by Registry to a student's appeal. This person will be a student's main point of contact throughout their appeal.

**Class Certificate:** confirmation that a candidate has attended and duly performed the work prescribed for a course.

**Code of Practice of Student Discipline (Academic) and (non-Academic):** refers to the procedures of the University in relation to prescribing sanctions against misconduct by students which interferes with the proper functioning of the University, its activities, or with the legitimate interests of those who work or study in the University.

**Discrimination:** there are nine 'protected characteristics' in equality and diversity related legislation that make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of: sex; age; race; disability; religion & belief; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; pregnancy & maternity; and marriage & civil partnership.

**Extenuating or Mitigating Circumstances:** circumstances or events which may be considered to have had a disadvantageous effect (e.g. serious illness supported by a medical certificate)

**Evidence:** supporting statements or information which must be independent (e.g. provided by a medical practice).

**File Record:** the case documents compiled during an appeal and consisting of a Form for Appeals and Complaints, supplementary evidence (e.g. medical certification), formal outcome letters and other related correspondence.

**Fitness to Practise:** refers to the guidance of the General Medical Council (GMC), the General Dental Council (GDC), and the General Teaching Council (GTC) on the fitness (or suitability) of students undertaking medical, dentistry and teaching qualifications to go on to work with the public in those fields.

**Grounds to Proceed:** the procedural grounds (or basis) upon which an appeal is considered suitable to proceed to a formal hearing by an Appeal Panel. This decision will be made by the Grounds to Proceed Panel, consisting of the Case Officer and a senior member of University staff. The decision will be based on whether the appeal satisfies the criteria for such an action (e.g. it relates to procedures rather than the questioning of academic judgement).

**Head of School or Service:** the head of an academic 'School' (e.g. the School of Social Sciences or the School of Biological Sciences). Where an appeal involves the Head of School, or where deemed appropriate, the Head of School may nominate another member of staff to lead on an appeal.

**Hearing:** a meeting of an Appeal Panel to hear and decide a case at the Further Stage of the University's appeals process.

**Material disadvantage:** is the verifiable disadvantage that a student feels they have suffered. For example, where an irregularity has resulted in a student failing to be admitted to an Honours programme, or where an Honours classification has been adversely affected by problems with an individual course. Material disadvantage must have resulted from a breach of procedure or lack of competency or prejudice.

**Policy on Undergraduate Student Progress:** refers to the University's policy on Undergraduate Student Progress and applies to those undergraduate students<sup>1</sup> wishing to put forward a case against not being permitted to progress to the next Programme Year of their undergraduate degree programme or a requirement that they discontinue attendance on courses as set out in the relevant Degree Regulations;

**Registry:** the Registry is part of the University's central administration and has responsibility for many aspects of student and academic administration, including appeals.

**Remedy/Remedies:** the agreed action to be taken as a result of an upheld appeal. For example, a student who had an appeal against an academic decision upheld (e.g. a CAS mark) would be advised that the decision in question would be returned to the examiners for review. This is because a decision of the examiners can only be altered by the examiners (see Academic Judgement above). The examiners would be invited to re-consider their academic judgement in light of the grounds of appeal and of the Appeal Panel's decision and will only be asked to do so where it can be shown that they have not followed correct procedures or that their decision was perverse (again, see Academic Judgement above). Students should note that in reviewing an academic decision the examiners may decide not to revise an award, or may revise it up or down.

**Senate:** the Senatus Academicus (or University Senate) is the supreme academic body of the University of Aberdeen.

**Students' Association:** the Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) is the organisation that represents and serves the interests of all Aberdeen University students. It is an independent body to the University but works closely with it.

**University Court:** the University Court is the supreme governing body of the University of Aberdeen.

**University Partnership Agreement:** a partnership stating the expectations, on both sides, of the relationship between the University and its students.

**Vexatious:** where an action that has been deemed to be without merit is pursued with undue persistence or is pursued in a manner that harasses a member of University staff or a fellow student.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy, the term 'undergraduate student' includes students registered on the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education