

P221: Further Education Academic Appeals Policy

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	CAFRE Quality Manual Index	CAFRE Website (Tick as appropriate)
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This document can also be produced in alternative formats upon request.

P221: Further Education Academic Appeals Policy

Version History

Version	Description of Changes	Date
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1. Introduction

CAFRE is committed to providing Further Education learners with the right to appeal, in the appropriate circumstances, against an academic decision. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a clear explanation of the appeals procedure.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all CAFRE Further Education Programmes.

Service-related complaints are dealt with using the DAERA Customer Complaints procedure.

3. Learner Appeals Procedures

The learner has the right to appeal a formal decision made by CAFRE. This means that the learner is requesting another individual (or a number of individuals) with the appropriate authority to review the previous decision.

Before progressing to submit a formal appeal, it is very important that the learner tries to resolve the matter on an informal basis. To do this, the learner should contact their Lecturer/Instructor, Year Manager or Programme Manager i.e. whoever made the original decision. They should do this as soon as is practicably possible after the original decision has been made and no later than 10 working days after the date of the original decision.

If the learner is still not satisfied with the outcome, they can submit a formal appeal. A formal appeal must be supported with evidence to confirm at least one of the following:

- There has been a significant procedural irregularity,
- New evidence is available which was unavailable at the time the original decision or penalty was being considered,
- The penalty applied is disproportionate or that the original decision was demonstrably unreasonable.

To commence the process of submitting an appeal, the learner should:

- Ensure that they have valid grounds and evidence to support the request,
- Ensure that the appeal falls into the category of eligible Academic Appeals (see the list below for further guidance),

Eligible Further Education Academic Appeals

- They are a current learner and wish to appeal a grade, or
- They are a current learner and are disputing a work placement report or grade.

The appeal will be dealt with in the following order as applicable:

- Consideration by the Programme Manager/Internal Verifier/Moderator.
- Consideration by the relevant Head of Branch.
- Referral to the relevant Awarding Organisation.

or as stipulated in the Awarding Organisation's Academic Appeal procedure. Where this is the case, any charges levied by the Awarding Organisation in relation to the appeal will be charged to the learner.

The appeal must be submitted in writing by post or email to CAFREappeals@daera-ni.gov.uk within 10 days of the original decision being made.

If the learner does not appeal within 10 working days from the date of the original decision, the learner will be deemed to have accepted the original decision as being fair and will forfeit the right to make an appeal (unless exceptional circumstances can be proven and permitted by the designated Appeals Officer).

As academic appeals will invariably involve several layers of consideration and decision, it is not possible to provide a definitive timescale for notification of the overall outcome of the appeal. However, in general the appeal decision will be communicated to the learner within 2-3 weeks of the receipt of the appeal. CAFRE will aim to complete this process and notify the learner of the outcome as quickly as possible. Where appeals are likely to take longer than this CAFRE will notify the learner of the likely timescale for the decision.

In the event of the appeal being successful and the outcome being of benefit to other learners, the outcome shall be applied to all learners involved.

4. Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman (NIPSO)

The decision of the respective appeals panel is final and there is no right to appeal to CAFRE. However, if the learner remains dissatisfied they have the right to refer the appeal to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman. Further information about these processes can be found at www.nipso.org.uk

5. Customer Complaints Procedure

CAFRE is committed to providing its customers with a high standard of service. We welcome comments on the quality of service received and suggestions on how we can improve our service.

A customer service complaint is any communication to us, which expresses dissatisfaction with the quality of our service. It does **not** deal with academic issues or issues relating to educational needs, bullying or harassment or disciplinary matters.

To make a complaint about the quality of service provided by CAFRE, the procedures as outlined in the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) website on 'How do I make a complaint', referring to the link below should be followed.

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/how-do-i-make-complaint-if-i-am-unhappy-quality-service-i-received>