

This guidance applies to making appeals on the Access to HE Diploma only.

### Who makes the appeal?

Appeals to OCN London are made by the centre, normally under the supervision of the Access Coordinator. Appeals can be made on behalf of an individual learner or a group of learners.

Learners should not make appeals directly to OCN London unless they have exhausted their centre's appeals process. Where a learner makes an appeal then they will be directed back to the Access Coordinator to follow the internal centre appeals process.

Where learners appeal internally, they should be provided with a written response to their appeal.

### When are appeals made to OCN London?

Appeals are made at the awards board using the appropriate appeals form:

- Appeal – data entry error
- Appeal form (all other requests)

Post-awards board appeals can be made by the centre. OCN London advises that post-awards board appeals are made by the first Friday in August if the learner has to confirm a university place. This gives sufficient time for OCN London to consider the appeal, request and externally moderate evidence and input any changes to results.

The final deadline when OCN London accepts work for external moderation and awarding within the same academic year is the second Friday in September (8 September in 2023).

### What are the grounds for appeal to OCN London?

The grounds for appeal to OCN London are restricted to:

- Evidence of an administrative error.
- Evidence of a procedural error.
- Extenuating circumstances that, for good reason, could not be notified prior to the awards board.

### What is an administrative error?

An administrative error can include:

- The grade achieved by the learner on their assessed work is different from the grade on their certificate.
- A grade change due to internal moderation was not entered.
- A unit achieved by the learner is missing from the certificate.
- The learner was registered on the wrong units by the centre.

Administrative errors will normally be dealt with using the 'Appeal – data entry error' form.

## What is a procedural error?

Procedural errors can include:

- Assessment processes that were not in line with the regulations in the QAA Grading Scheme Handbook. The centre was unaware of or unable to fully resolve the error before final moderation.
- Error made by a tutor in following centre's own procedures, such as the internal appeals process.
- Evidence requested by the external moderator unavailable for final moderation but is now available.
- Error made by external moderator during final moderation, such as overlooking provided evidence when making a decision.
- (For a post-awards board appeal) the centre allocated tutors insufficient time to put together an appeal for the awards board.

## What are extenuating circumstances?

Extenuating circumstances (ECs) are significant personal difficulties beyond a learner's control that may impact on a learner's ability to complete the Access to HE Diploma. The circumstances or the impact of existing circumstances on the learner is normally unforeseen when the learner starts the course.

Where the significant personal difficulties exist or are expected when the learner starts the course, they are advised to bring them to the attention of the centre so that they can put in place arrangements to support the learner during the course. These arrangements may include extensions or reasonable adjustments.

Where an EC occurred too late in the year for the centre to be able to put in place arrangements for the learner to finish on time then the centre can request an extension. This is dealt with through the 'request for an extension beyond final moderation due to extenuating circumstances' form. If the centre only becomes aware of the EC after final moderation then an appeal can be made to the awards board or a post-awards board appeal made.

It is expected that the learner will provide some evidence to demonstrate that they have an EC, such as:

Example of circumstance	Relevant evidence
<b>Personal medical condition</b>	<p>Where possible, a medical certificate or statement – e.g. letter from GP, letter from specialist, hospital appointment letter, copy of prescription.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This should be written by an appropriately qualified professional who is independent to the learner.</li> <li>• It should be dated and on headed paper.</li> </ul> <p>A statement from the learner and/or tutor specifying the impact of this medical condition on the learner's ability to complete the course by Final Moderation.</p>

<b>Medical condition of a close family member</b>	<p>Medical evidence as above</p> <p>Statement from the learner and/or tutor specifying the impact of this medical condition on the learner.</p>
<b>Bereavement</b>	<p>Death certificate, order of service, newspaper announcement or travel documentation (where the learner has had to attend a funeral abroad).</p> <p>Statement from learner and/or tutor stating the impact that the bereavement has had on the learner.</p>
<b>Major personal disruption</b> (e.g. fire, burglary, flooding, eviction, victim of crime, court appearance, relationship breakdown, unexpected care responsibilities)	<p>Third party evidence of the serious disruption e.g. letter from police, solicitor's letter, letter from courts, letter from housing authority. Where possible, this should specify the date(s) of the disruption.</p> <p>Where supporting evidence for the disruption does not exist or cannot be obtained, then a detailed statement from the learner and/or tutor will be required setting out the nature of the disruption and the impact on the learner.</p>

Evidence can also be provided by the centre to support the EC, such as: EC log, EC form completed during the year, emails from the learner to the tutor, attendance records

### Which outcomes to an appeal can OCN London agree?

An appeal to OCN London may result in:

- Grade change.
- Addition of results not entered at final moderation.
- Extension to completion date, allowing a learner with extenuating circumstances to finish the course.

OCN London cannot:

- Teach, set and assess units (this is the role of the centre, OCN London will externally moderate assessment decisions made by the centre).
- Allow assessment practices to take place that contravene the QAA regulations for the Access to HE Diploma (such as allowing a learner to improve submitted work in order to get a higher grade, have more than one resubmission opportunity or be awarded more than 60 credits).

### How can we submit an appeal to OCN London?

Download the relevant form from the OCN London website:

<https://www.ocnlondon.org.uk/Access-to-HE/Access-Centre-Area/Awards-Boards-Forms>

Please complete the form and email it to: [AccesstoHEAppeals@ocnlondon.org.uk](mailto:AccesstoHEAppeals@ocnlondon.org.uk)

All appeals forms received before the awards board will be dealt with at the awards board.

Post-awards board appeals must be submitted within four weeks of the learner receiving notification of results.

Post-awards board appeals will be:

- Acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.
- If the appeal falls outside of the scope of the appeals process, then the centre will be informed within 10 working days of receipt. No further action will be taken by OCN London but the centre can restart the appeals process.
- If the appeal is within the scope of the appeals process, within 15 working days of receipt, OCN London will seek relevant information and documentation from the centre and other parties, such as the external moderator.
- Within 10 working days of receipt of the documentation, OCN London will consider whether the evidence presented is sufficient to reach a decision. If not, further documentation may be requested from relevant parties. If assessed work needs to be externally moderated then this will be arranged. If timescales need to be extended then the centre will be informed.
- When a decision is reached, the outcome will be communicated to the centre. Where grade changes need to be made, these will be inputted on OCN London's systems within 5 working days.

If the centre would like the appeal to be resolved in order to meet a deadline (e.g. university deadline or when a tutor is available), then this should be included in the cover email that is sent with the appeal.

This guidance has been written in line with:

- OCN London Appeals Procedure
- QAA Grading Scheme Handbook Section E: Student Results and Awards Boards