

This guidance applies to making appeals on the Access to HE Diploma only. The term ‘centre’ is used – this means the college or learning provider where you studied on the Access to HE Diploma.

Can I appeal directly to OCN London?

Appeals to OCN London can only be made directly by learners where the centre’s own appeals or representations process has been exhausted. Each centre will have their own appeals process for learners to follow.

Outcomes of the centre’s appeal process may be:

- Your appeal is upheld. The centre appeals to OCN London on your behalf.
- Your appeal is upheld. The centre takes action to support you but the appeal does not meet the grounds to appeal to OCN London.
- Your appeal is not upheld.

Your centre will provide you with a written response for the outcome of your appeal. If you have concerns that your centre has not responded to some part of your appeal, then you should request a written response to that part of the appeal.

If you have exhausted your centre’s appeals process and still have concerns that your appeal has not been addressed then you may submit an appeal to OCN London. Appeals must be made to OCN London within 4 weeks of receiving the written outcome of your appeal from your centre.

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.

If your appeal is not connected to assessment and achievement of units on the course then it is likely that it is outside of the scope of the OCN London appeals process. For example, concerns about a tutor’s behaviour or a financial dispute should be dealt with through your centre’s complaints procedures. You can [make a complaint to OCN London](#) if you have exhausted your centre’s complaints process.

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 unit achieved by the learner is missing from the certificate.
- The learner was registered on the wrong units by the centre.

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 representations 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.

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 you start the course, you are advised to bring them to the attention of your centre so that they can put in place arrangements to support you during the course.

Appeals about ECs are normally only made where the EC occurred too late in the year for the centre to be able to put in place arrangements to address them.

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

Example of circumstance	Relevant evidence
Personal medical condition	<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"> • This should be written by an appropriately qualified professional who is independent to the learner. • It should be dated and on headed paper. <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>
Medical condition of a close family member	<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>
Bereavement	<p>Where possible, third party evidence of the death such as death certificate, funeral 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>

<p>Major personal disruption (e.g. fire, burglary, flooding, eviction, victim of crime, court appearance, relationship breakdown, unexpected care responsibilities)</p>	<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>
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What is a representation and how is it different from an appeal?

The representations process applies when a learner requests review of the unconfirmed grades for a unit after the unit has been graded but before it has been through the process of internal or external moderation. A representation request must be made to the centre. The process for representations is set out in the [QAA Grading Scheme Handbook Section C](#).

Outcomes of representations are sampled by OCN London moderators. Where a learner disagrees with the internal moderator's decision with regard to their representation case then a request can be sent to OCN London (through the appeals email address – AccesstoHEAppeals@ocnlondon.org.uk) for the representation to be reviewed by the awards board. Such requests must be made before final moderation so the external moderator's decision about the representation can be considered by the awards board when making the final decision. You should make this request within 1 week of receiving the representation outcome so that you can meet these deadlines.

If a learner can demonstrate that they did not receive the outcome of their representation in advance of final moderation, then the request will be dealt with as an appeal due to a procedural error and must be made within 4 weeks of receiving the outcome of the representation.

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. (This will require your centre to agree that your work can be assessed within the timescales set by OCN London).

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, be awarded more than 60 credits or change or add results based on a learner's potential). The award of credits and grades must be supported by assessed work evidence at the standard awarded.

When can I submit an appeal to OCN London?

Representations or appeals against the outcomes of internal assessment should be made as soon as possible to your centre following the assessment decision, normally within one week of receiving the assessed work. You may start this informally through a discussion with your tutor. Where an informal discussion has not addressed your concerns then you should follow your centre's appeal process, which will normally require you to set out in writing the reason(s) that you think that the assessment decision is unsound. The centre will inform you of the actions that they have taken to investigate your appeal, including whether it is classed as a representation and thus they will be following the process in the [QAA Grading Scheme Handbook Section C](#), and the outcome.

If you have exhausted the internal appeals process and still have concerns, you may appeal to OCN London. The appeal must be made to OCN London within 4 weeks of receiving the outcomes of the centre's appeal process. You must provide OCN London with the written outcome of your appeal.

OCN London will consider your appeal and communicate with your centre whether there are actions that they need to take, for example, internally moderating your work or responding to a concern that was not addressed in the written outcome of your appeal.

Your work may be selected for sampling at the next planned external moderation engagement (mid-year or final moderation). All learner results are provisional until they are agreed at the awards board at the end of the academic year.

If you want to make a representation after the awards board or you have received your certificate, you must still go through your centre's internal appeals process before making an appeal to OCN London. It is expected that your centre will not consider new representations after results have been submitted for final moderation unless it was not possible to inform you of the assessment outcome in advance.

If you are appealing for another reason after the awards board or you have received your certificate, then you are advised to start your centre appeal as soon as you receive your results. You should expect to receive your results by the first week in August (if not earlier) – please contact your centre if you have not received a paper or e-certificate by that point. If you have a university place, then it is advised that you submit your appeal to OCN London before the first Friday in August. This will ensure that OCN London has sufficient time to investigate and take actions to resolve your appeal before you need to confirm your results to your university at the beginning of September.

OCN London does not accept appeals where learners started the appeals process with their centre more than four weeks after being notified of their results.

All appeals made after the awards board are considered by a Post-Awards Board Appeals Board consisting of at least two members drawn from OCN London staff and the external moderation team. Where the appeal is against a decision made by an Awards Board (for example, not to grant an extension to a learner) then the board members will not have been involved as Chair or Centre Moderator in the original decision. In some cases, it may be appropriate for appeals to be considered through the processes of the formal consideration stage of OCN London's general Appeals Procedure rather than by the Access to HE Post-Awards Board Appeals Board.

If this is the case then you will be informed and provided with relevant guidance about how your appeal will proceed.

What is the timescale for my appeal?

- Your appeal will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.
- If your appeal falls outside of the scope of the appeals process or you have not been through your centre's appeals process first, then you will be informed within 10 working days of receipt. No further action will be taken by OCN London on the appeal. If you resubmit your appeal, then you will restart the appeals process.
- If your appeal appears to be within the scope of the appeals process, within 15 working days of receipt, OCN London will seek relevant information and documentation from the learner and other parties, such as your centre or 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 – the learner will be informed if the timescale needs to be extended.
- When a decision is reached, the outcome will be communicated to the learner and the centre.

How can I make an appeal to OCN London?

Please email AccesstoHEAppeals@ocnlondon.org.uk

In your email you should set out:

- Your name, college and Diploma title.
- The grounds for your appeal (administrative error, procedural error, extenuating circumstances or if you would like the outcome of a representation to be reviewed).
- Which units are covered by your appeal.
- A summary of the appeal – if you are appealing about more than one unit or for more than one reason, please set this out unit by unit or reason by reason. Ensure each reason is linked to one of the grounds for appeal.
- The action that you have taken with your centre to try to resolve the appeal. Please attach to the email correspondence that you have had with your centre about the appeal, including the final outcome where the centre indicates that you have exhausted the appeals process.
- Your expected outcome.

If the centre or learner believes the appeals process has not been followed by OCN London, a written complaint to QAA can be made within 15 working days of receipt of the outcome of the appeal from OCN London. The complaint is made through the [QAA Access to HE Concerns Scheme](#).

This guidance has been written in line with:

- OCN London Appeals Procedure
- QAA Grading Scheme Handbook Section C: Using the Grading Standards in Assessment
- QAA Grading Scheme Handbook Section E: Student Results and Awards Boards