

Goldsmiths SU Advice - Academic Appeal Guide 2021

Students will be getting their end of year results in July 2021 and some of you may be considering appealing these results. We have put together this online guide and a video presentation to help you understand what Academic Appeals are all about and to help you navigate through the process. We will also explain about the SU Advice Service and what you can expect when you reach out to us. There is a FAQ section at the bottom of this guide where we answer 5 common questions on appeals we get from students.

1. What is Academic Appeal?

Academic Appeal is an official college procedure for students to challenge their academic assessment results. This could include marks, progression decisions and degree classifications.

The Academic Appeal procedure has 3 stages. Stage 1 is the “informal resolution” stage where you are encouraged to first contact your department to seek clarification of the assessment outcomes you got and to discuss any concerns you have. Your department can explain how the assessment outcomes came about and what may be achievable if you decide to submit a formal Stage 2 Appeal.

Formal Stage 2 Appeal can only be submitted after your transcript of results has been released. You will need to meet valid grounds to appeal formally and you must submit your Stage 2 Appeal within 21 days of your transcript being published. We will explain Stage 2 in more detail below.

At the end of Stage 2, you will receive a formal outcome letter from the college. If you are unhappy with the outcome, you may go for a Stage 3 to request a final internal panel review of your appeal.

At the end of Stage 3, if you are still unhappy with the college’s decision, you may be able to take your appeal to the Higher Education ombudsman, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, known as the OIA, for an independent review.

2. I've spoken with my department and I want to go for a Stage 2 appeal.

What should I do next?

You will need to complete and submit the Stage 2 Appeal form, which can be found on Goldsmiths website: [Academic Appeals \(Stage Two\)](#) On the website, there is also guidance on how to complete the form and a Stage 2 process overview; we recommend you give it a read.

When filling out the Stage 2 Appeal form, you need to clearly explain the grounds of your appeal and submit support evidence where necessary. You must submit the Stage 2 Appeal form within 21 days of your transcript being published in order for the college to consider your case.

We encourage you to retain a copy of your Stage 2 appeal form. This is for your own record keeping and, in the case where you decide to contact the SU Advice Service for help, for us to see what you wrote in order to advise you more fully. You can ask for a copy of your form by emailing the Appeals team at appeals@gold.ac.uk

3. I have to explain my grounds of appeal? What are those?

The college will only look at a Stage 2 appeal if it meets certain criteria. These criteria are known as “grounds” of appeal.

Under the college regulations, there are 3 permissible grounds:

- Extenuating circumstances not disclosed earlier

Goldsmiths defines Extenuating circumstances (EC) as short-term, unexpected, and unpreventable events that affect your academic performance or ability to study. The categories of EC recognised by the college can be found on here: [Categories of acceptable and unacceptable Extenuating Circumstances](#)

Administrative error or procedural irregularity

Some examples of administrative errors are miscalculation of degree classification, wrong module mark recorded or penalty cap applied incorrectly.

Procedural irregularity may relate to irregularities in the ways an assessment was set up or in the marking process. An example could be if a piece of work was not marked in accordance with the college [marking procedure](#) and [feedback policy](#).

Evidence of prejudice or bias by examiners

Bias can be a personal dislike or prejudice against a protected characteristic. To appeal under this ground, you need evidence to show that an examiner's marking has been affected by prejudice or bias.

You must meet one or more of the 3 grounds to appeal formally. An appeal made without valid grounds will be dismissed by the college, so we strongly recommend you read the [college Academic Appeal guide](#) and this guide to better familiarize yourself with the grounds.

It is important to remember that an appeal will not be considered valid if you are questioning academic judgement. For example, if you simply disagree with the mark you were given, or if you think the feedback you got is incorrect.

Having a borderline degree classification is not in itself a valid appeal ground either and you would still need at least one of the 3 grounds to be present.

You may feel that a number of issues that are not grounds of appeal have affected your academic performance and want to make a [complaint](#) as well as an appeal.

4. What if I've missed the 21-day deadline to appeal?

A Stage 2 Appeal submitted outside the 21-day window normally will not be accepted by the college. If you've missed the deadline, when you submit your appeal

form, you will need to give clear reasons why you were unable to engage with the appeal procedure within the prescribed time frame and provide evidence to support your reasons. The college will exercise discretion to accept a late appeal, but there is no guarantee.

This year, undergraduate and postgraduate transcripts will be published on a rolling basis from Monday 5 July to Friday 23 July 2021. The Assessments team will send a notification to your Goldsmiths email when your transcript is available on My Goldsmiths, so keep your eyes peeled!

5. What kind of appeal outcomes can I ask for?

You will be able to request academic related outcomes, such as removing a penalty cap of a retake/resit, having an additional attempt at an assessment, changing individual module marks and/or a degree classification.

6. Who will be involved in deciding on my appeal?

Your Stage 2 Appeal form first goes to the Appeals and Complaints team who will check if you have valid grounds.

If they decide that your appeal is valid, they will forward your appeal to the Chair of the Board of Examiners in your Department. The Chair will decide on your appeal based on the relevant college regulations, policy and procedures.

Once the Chair has made a decision, the Appeals and Complaints team will issue you a Stage 2 Appeal outcome letter to inform you of the outcome and next steps. The outcome could be either that your appeal is upheld (successful) or dismissed.

7. How long does an academic appeal take?

The college aims to give a decision on a Stage 2 Appeal within 4-6 weeks of your appeal submission. If the appeal outcomes you are seeking are time-sensitive, for example, ones relating to late summer retakes or progression, you can ask the college to prioritize your appeal when you fill out the appeal form.

8. I think I've got the basics now but I still have some questions about my specific situation. Can the SU Advice Service help?

The SU Advice Service would be happy to speak with you about your appeal on a 121 basis. The advice and support we can offer includes:

- Advising you on the overall appeal procedures and your responsibility, so you know what to expect
- Giving suggestions on how to complete the Stage 2 Appeal form and the relevant information and evidence to include based on your specific circumstances
- Advising you on the content of your appeal
- Advising you on the college regulations, policy and procedures that may apply to you
- Helping you interpret your transcript
- In some circumstances, reviewing your appeal draft
- Signposting you to relevant support services

It is important to remember that there are some things we are unable to help you with, such as:

- Engaging in Stage 1 Appeal with your department on your behalf
- Writing your appeal for you
- Telling you if you should appeal or not. This is your personal decision.
- Making the college give you the appeal outcomes you request
- Making the college fast-track your appeal
- Telling you what your appeal outcome will be

9. I see. How can I get in contact with the SU Advice Service?

From July, we are running a same-day appointment system for students who need advice on formal appeal. We offer 121 appointments on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Here is a quick step-by-step guide on how to access our service:

Step 1 Watch our video and read the SU Advice Service guide on Academic Appeals.

Step 2 Fill out the [SU Advice Service contact form](#) so we have your contact details and basic information.

Step 3 On the day when you are available for an appointment, phone the SU at [020 7717 2511](tel:02077172511) for an appointment slot.

We advise you to phone us for an appointment as early in the day as possible on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, as these are the days we offer same-day 121 appointments and there are limited slots available on each day.

10. Is there anything else I should do before contacting the SU Advice Service?

Before you reach out to us, it will be helpful to ask yourself the following:

- Do I have a transcript of results? *(A transcript is a formal publication of your assessment results in an academic year. You can find yours on [MyGoldsmiths](#).)*
- When was my transcript released? *(You should be able to find the release date on your transcript. If you have questions about this, please contact the Assessments team at assessments@gold.ac.uk)*
- Which assessment results do I want to appeal against?
- Do I have some ideas which appeal ground(s) may apply to me? *(Remember, there are 3 grounds for appeal and you must meet at least one.)*
- What are the appeal outcomes I am seeking?

These questions can help you check whether you may be eligible for a formal Stage 2 Appeal and give you some ideas on what to put in your appeal.

FAQ on Academic Appeals

Q: I told my department about my personal difficulties in an email or in a 121 tutor meeting. Did that count as an appeal?

A: No. To appeal formally, you need to submit a Stage 2 appeal form.

Q: I got a borderline degree classification, will the college bump it up?

A: "Borderline" in the college regulations means that it is within 2% below the borderline between two classifications, for example 58% (a 2:2) is borderline to 60% (a 2:1). A short answer to this question is "it depends". Certain college regulatory criteria must be met for a borderline degree classification to be bumped up.

Q: What if my appeal is still pending when my late summer resit/retake comes around?

A: You will still need to complete the resit/retake as normal.

Q: What if my appeal is still pending but I have graduated?

A: If your appeal is upheld by the college then you will be issued an updated transcript and certificate to reflect the successful appeal outcome.

Q: How is my degree classification calculated?

A: It is calculated according to a formula, and there are different formulae for undergrads and postgrads. You can find the formula on Goldsmiths website: [Final result calculation for undergraduates](#) and [Postgraduate final result calculation](#)