



## Foundation Year Academic Appeal Policy

### Rationale

Decisions made in the course of administering academic policy may be appealed by students to the Foundation Year Academic Appeals Committee under this Foundation Year-specific policy.

### Principles

1. This committee considers appeals relating to academic matters within Foundation Year; different avenues exist to appeal other decisions (for example refund of fees).
2. Students will have access to a process of appeal in academic matters that is independent from the decision making process of the matter of concern.
3. A formal appeal is the last stage of attempts to address the matter, after all other steps are exhausted.
4. Students have the opportunity to be supported in the process of an academic appeal.

### Conclusion

Appeals will be heard fairly, taking relevant matters into consideration, in a supportive manner, and in good time. Outcomes of appeals will be communicated to all parties.

### Guidelines

1. The Foundation Year Academic Appeals committee will consist of the following members:
  - The Foundation Year Academic Committee (FYAC)
  - The staff representative on the Academic Board of Studies (ABS)

*It is noted that where members of the Academic Appeals committee have been directly involved in events leading to an appeal, they should withdraw from the committee as having a conflict of interest.*

2. Concerns about assessment processes will be raised directly with the staff member responsible for the action giving concern, then if necessary with higher authorities. The usual sequence of action is: class teacher, Head of Department/Assessment Manager, appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee.

*It is noted that a student is also able to use the complaints process through the student support system.*

3. The Divisional Manager should take steps to ensure that students are aware that there is an appeals process.
4. Students must lodge appeals using the Academic Appeals Application Form (attached) within the time frame specified, and must attach relevant and supporting documentation such as medical certificates.

- Students have 10 working days to appeal after notification of an action. Notification is deemed to have occurred three working days after a letter and an email have been sent to the student.
- If a matter is under appeal, then the 'status quo' for the student should continue (usually, this would mean that the student is eligible to attend class, participate in assessment etc). In matters involving health and safety, this may be waived and alternative arrangements made; in these cases, this will be approved by the Divisional Manager.

5. There are four general grounds for appeal:

- The published marks or grades are wrong
- There was some administrative error or irregularity relevant to the assessment process
- The assessments were not conducted in accordance with the current approved procedures
- Some other exceptional circumstance

*The Academic Appeals committee may choose, in exceptional circumstances, to consider an appeal that may not strictly meet these grounds.*

*Academic judgement - simply disagreeing with the academic judgement of an assessor is NOT grounds for appeal.*

6. Students will have the option of having a support person with them through the appeal process. In most cases this will be a student support staff member, though it may be any staff member without a conflict of interest (for example, being on the Appeals Committee, or being a party to the matter in hand). This support person may also attend any meetings with the student as their support person. A support person does not have speaking rights.

The student may also choose to use a person from 'outside' Foundation Studies Ltd to fill this role, and the Academic Appeal committee should be sympathetic to a whanau/support style interview - see the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust website for an example of this: <http://www.eeotrust.org.nz/toolkits/Maori.cfm?section=howtotapthepotentialofmaori>

7. The Academic Appeals Committee will develop its own procedures, but the following principles should be observed:

- Minutes shall be kept of all meetings
- Students should not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of making an appeal in good faith
- Students are supported throughout and after the appeals process
- All parties have the right to respectful consideration including confidentiality and privacy
- Students should be fully informed of processes, timelines, options, choices, and consequences throughout the appeal process
- Appeals are considered and decisions communicated as quickly as possible while allowing for integrity of process
- Staff responsible for administering relevant policies will be informed of decisions and the reasons for those decisions to assist with administration of those policies in the future

8. Medical certificates and documentary evidence

- Medical certificates must come from a New Zealand registered health practitioner, and should arise from an 'in-person' consultation with the signatory of the certificate at the time of the condition. Other than in exceptional cases, retrospective medical certification will not be accepted as valid. In any case, a

medical certificate is no guarantee of the success of an appeal; it constitutes one of a variety of aspects the Committee may consider.

- The Committee may check the validity of a medical certificate with the issuer (without seeking detail regarding the condition involved)
- Other documentary evidence will be considered and given weight at the Academic Appeals committee's discretion

#### 9. Communication

- Communication from the Committee to a student must be in writing via letter and email (verbal communication must be followed up in writing)
- In line with general company policy, official communication channels are via letter to the student's last given addresses and their University of Otago email address. It is the student's responsibility to notify Foundation Year reception of any change in postal address, and it is the student's responsibility to check their student email.
- Students are deemed to have received all information provided in scheduled classes regardless of their attendance.
- Communication will be sent by post and by email, and the student shall be deemed to have received it after three working days of a letter being posted.

#### 10. Recourse beyond the Academic Appeals Committee

If a student is unsatisfied with a decision arrived at by the Academic Appeals Committee, they may make a final written appeal to the Foundation Studies Academic Board of Studies. This must be lodged within 5 working days of notification of the decision of the Academic Appeals committee.