ACADEMIC APPEALS
APPLICATION FORM

This form is applicable for student appeals against:

- Board of Examiners decisions (degree classification, final module results, stage or other progression decisions etc)
- Decisions about Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC)
- Unsatisfactory Progress sanctions

Please note: before completing this form, read the ‘Academic Appeals Procedure for Students’ (including supplementary guidance) attached. This is also available from Student Progress Service, King’s Gate, or on the University website at www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/. You are strongly advised to discuss your case with your tutor / supervisor before submitting an appeal. This form must be submitted within 21 calendar days of the original publication of your examination results, or the relevant decision about which you are appealing. Late applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances (see guidance note 2).

SECTION 1 - PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: ____________________________  Student Number: ____________________________

Email address: ____________________________

(email is the main way we will contact you. Please provide an email address that you check regularly and will have access to for the foreseeable future)

Address for Correspondence: ____________________________________________________________

Telephone: ____________________________  School: ____________________________

Programme Title and Stage/Year of Study: ____________________________________________________

It is your responsibility to keep the University updated with changes to contact details throughout the academic appeal process.

SECTION 2 – APPEAL DETAILS

What are you appealing against?

Tick 1 box:

Give detail (eg: 2:2 class, academic failure, extension, repeat stage, etc)

Then go to:

Board of Examiners Decision

PEC Decision

Unsatisfactory Progress Decision

Date of pass list / PEC outcome/ other relevant decision: _______________________________________

Please state with which member(s) of staff you have already discussed your appeal:

(e.g. Personal Tutor, Degree Programme Director, Supervisor etc. – provide their name and role.)

Academic Appeal Procedure – approved by ULTSEC September 2012
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SECTION 3 - GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

Please indicate by ticking the appropriate box(es) the grounds on which you wish to appeal. For each box you tick, you must provide a brief explanation (full details should be provided in your letter of appeal – to be submitted with this form).

3A) Grounds for appeal following Board of Examiners decisions:

| (i) Personal Extenuating Circumstances that you were unable to disclose in advance of the Board of Examiners meeting via a Personal Extenuating Circumstance (PEC) application, or were unable to provide evidence for at that time, or of which you were previously unaware (see guidance note 3) | □ |
| Brief details: | |

3B) Grounds for appeal following PEC Committee decisions:

Please note that you cannot appeal on the basis of new evidence. You should submit a new PEC application to the PEC Committee for consideration. If the Board of Examiners have considered the PEC Committee’s recommendation however, and new evidence is now available, you should tick the relevant ground under 3A) above – grounds for appeal following Board of Examiners decisions. If you are unsure about any aspect of a PEC appeal, please contact the Casework Team (casework@ncl.ac.uk) for assistance.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a PEC decision which has not been considered by a Board of Examiners, the following grounds of appeal are available:

| (i) Procedural irregularity or other error on the part of the PEC Committee | □ |
| Brief details: | |
### SECTION 3 - GROUNDS FOR APPEAL (Continued)

#### 3B) Grounds for appeal following PEC Committee decisions (Continued)

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(i) Supporting documentation is required for your appeal. **You must submit a letter, detailing your reasons for appealing, with this form.** You must also submit all evidence that you have to support your case (e.g. medical certificates, statements, copies of email correspondence). Any documents more than two pages long must be submitted electronically to **casework@ncl.ac.uk** *(a scanned version is fine).*

(ii) Under the current Data Protection legislation, we are required to obtain your consent for an Appeal Adjudicator or members of the Appeal Panel to view any personal data you may provide in connection with your appeal. It will also be necessary for other members of staff in your Academic Unit to be able to review your documentation – this would normally include your tutor / supervisor, Degree Programme Director, Chair of the Board of Examiners or other staff with a designated role relevant to your appeal. By signing this form, you are giving permission for all relevant staff to have access to your documentation. If you do not wish a particular staff member to see your documents, please ensure that this is made clear in your letter of appeal – but also note that the University may be unable to proceed with your appeal if we are unable to seek input from a key member of staff.

Please list all documentation:

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<td>3. Copy of the full PEC application and outcome documentation <em>(MUST BE INCLUDED WITH PEC APPEALS)</em></td>
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*Please note that all supporting documentation must be available to the Student Progress Service within the 21 calendar days appeal period. Documents received late will only be considered at the discretion of the Student Progress Service. If you are unable to send documentation electronically, you must provide the documents by post. Each document should be labelled clearly with your name and student number and the date that you submitted this Application.*

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: __________________________

**Please send this form, together with your supporting documentation, to:**
**The Casework Team, Student Progress Service, King’s Gate, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU.**
**Alternatively, you may email your full appeal to casework@ncl.ac.uk**
ACADEMIC APPEALS PROCEDURE
FOR STUDENTS

This procedure applies to all academic appeals submitted during the 2012/13 academic year or later. Implementation of Procedure: September 2012.

The principles of this procedure apply to all students regardless of the location of study. On a case by case basis some staff roles may vary from those detailed below.

Definitions

Appellant: A current or former student who is submitting an academic appeal.

Academic Appeal: A written application to the University to review a formal academic decision made by the Board of Examiners or Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Committee of a taught programme, a recommendation of the examiners of research degrees, or a Degree Programme Director for Unsatisfactory Progress cases.

Academic Unit: The unit that manages the student’s programme. Normally this is a School, but occasionally a Faculty, Institute or other organisational unit applies.

Appeal Officer: A Student Progress Officer appointed to process a submitted appeal and to advise the Appeal Adjudicator where appropriate. Advice on the Academic Appeals procedure can be obtained from the Appeal Officer or another member of the Student Progress Service.

Appeal Adjudicator: Normally, accepted appeals are considered by the Appeal Adjudicator, who will be a Dean or other approved member of the Appeal Panel approved by University Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee (ULTSEC) and appointed by the Head of the Student Progress Service. The appointed Appeal Adjudicator may not act in the event of any previous involvement or close connection to the case. Without qualifying this general prohibition to act, (i) for taught programmes, the Appeal Adjudicator shall be from a School other than that in which the appellant is studying and (ii) for research programmes, the Appeal Adjudicator shall be from a Faculty other than that in which the appellant is studying.

The term Appeal Adjudicator in this procedure extends, unless the context otherwise requires, to any Appeal Committee constituted by the Appeals Adjudicator.

Appeal Committee: The Appeal Adjudicator may co-opt further independent members of academic or administrative staff as deemed appropriate to consider the case. The members of an Appeal Committee will have no previous involvement in or
close connection to the case. For taught programmes, the members of an Appeal Committee shall be from a school other than that in which the appellant is studying. For research programmes, the members shall be from a faculty other than that in which the appellant is studying.

**Examiners:**

The Board of Examiners (or other authority within the Academic Unit) for an undergraduate or postgraduate taught programme, or for research degrees either the annual review progress panel or individually appointed internal and external examiners. Other authorised roles within the Academic Unit, against which appeals may be considered, are Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Committees and Degree Programme Directors for Unsatisfactory Progress cases.

**Friend / Supporter:**

In accordance with all formal University procedures, a student can be accompanied by a friend or supporter of their choice. The friend or supporter cannot act as a representative unless they have permission of the person conducting the proceedings and explicit permission from the student.

**PEC:**

Personal Extenuating Circumstances. Students should inform their School of any circumstances that may affect their studies or assessment by completing a PEC written application [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/help/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/help/) throughout the year and prior to Board of Examiners meetings. PEC forms are considered by a PEC Committee appointed by the relevant Board of Examiners.

**Prima Facie:**

A Latin term expressing meaning on first appearance, at first sight or on the face of it. It is used within these procedures to denote evidence that is considered sufficient to support the institution of proceedings.

**Progress Panel**

For research degree programmes, the Annual Review Progress Panel is deemed to be equivalent to that of the Board of Examiners for taught programmes.

**Student Progress Service**

The University authority on academic appeals.

**Unsatisfactory Progress:**

The University may seek to terminate a student's degree programme if s/he does not fulfil the requirements. Reasons for failure to make satisfactory progress include failure to (i) attend interviews or the programme of study without good cause, (ii) perform adequately, (iii) submit written work, (iv) attend examinations, (v) attend English Language assessments (vi) attend or provide evidence to dissertation supervisors. Full details are available in the University regulations.
**Scope of Procedure**

1. This procedure is to be used only in relation to formal academic decisions made by the examiners or other authority within the Academic Unit. In all instances, students considering submitting an appeal are encouraged to first discuss the issues with staff in the Academic Unit. The award of a provisional mark, or any other provisional decision, gives no grounds for appeal under this procedure.

2. Queries about provisional marks for taught programmes should be raised with appropriate School staff, e.g. a Module Leader, Degree Programme Director or Personal Tutor.

3. Given the existence of procedures for complaint during the study period, alleged inadequacy of teaching and supervision shall not constitute grounds for an appeal. Separate policies and relevant information are contained in the following documents:

   - **Student Complaints Procedure**
     http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/complaints.htm
   - **Dignity at Work and Study Code of Practice**
     http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/dignity.htm
   - **Guidelines for Research Students**
     www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/handbook.htm
   - **Student Guide**
     www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/studentguide.pdf
   - **Public Interest Disclosure Whistleblowing Policy**
     www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/policy/conduct/documents/policy-conduct-public-interest-disclosure-whistleblowing_rjc.pdf

4. Appeals from groups of students are not allowed, but individual appellants may refer to related appeals from other students if appropriate. However, each case will be considered independently on its own merits, and within the constraints of Data Protection policy.

**Grounds**

5. Appeals may only be made on the following grounds:

   a) **Grounds for appeal following Board of Examiners Decisions:**

      (i) Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) that the appellant was unable to disclose in advance of the Board of Examiners meeting via a Personal Extenuating Circumstance (PEC) application, or was unable to provide evidence for at that time, or of which the appellant was previously unaware.

      (ii) Procedural irregularity on the part of the examiners.

      (iii) Bias or prejudice on the part of an examiner or examiners.

   b) **Grounds for appeal following PEC Committee Decisions:**

      (i) Procedural irregularity or other error on the part of the PEC Committee

      (ii) Bias or prejudice on the part of the PEC Committee

   c) **Grounds for appeal following an Unsatisfactory Progress Decision:**

      (i) Evidence which was not available or considered previously

      (ii) Procedural irregularity

      (iii) Bias or prejudice

      (iv) That the decision reached was perverse in that it was one which no reasonable person could have reached on the available evidence.
6. A challenge to the academic judgement of the examiners on an assessment outcome or the level of award recommended is not of itself a valid ground of appeal.

7. Appeals made by the appellant must be supported by documentary evidence. It is the responsibility of the appellant to provide all relevant evidence in support of their case within the permitted timescales.

8. Appeals that do not on the face of the submitted documentation provide sufficient evidence to support a finding in favour of the appellant (a *prima facie* case) may be rejected in accordance with paragraph 13.

**How to apply**

9. Impartial advice on the academic appeal procedure may be sought from Student Progress Service. Assistance with submitting an academic appeal may be sought from the appropriate Officers of the Students’ Union, from the Student Advice Centre (Students’ Union – www.unionsociety.co.uk/sac) or from a Personal Tutor.

10. All submitted appeals shall be accompanied by a completed “Academic Appeals Application Form” attached or available from Student Progress Service or http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/appeals.htm

11. An academic appeal shall be lodged with the Head of the Student Progress Service, King’s Gate, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU or e-mail to casework@ncl.ac.uk within 21 calendar days of the original publication of the examination results of the appellant or within 21 calendar days of notification of any other relevant decision.

12. A late appeal shall only be considered if the Head of the Student Progress Service is satisfied that the appellant has reasonable grounds not to have applied within the period specified above. Evidence of grounds of a late appeal must be supplied by the appellant.

**Stage One – Acceptance of the Appeal**

13. If, on receipt of a completed academic appeal submission, the Head of the Student Progress Service determines that:

   (a) an application is late without good cause, or
   (b) a completed appeal submission based on grounds 5(i), does not establish good cause for the delay, or
   (c) the appellant has not provided good cause / evidence for failing to follow correct protocols for advising the Examiners / Personal Extenuating Circumstance Committee / Progress Panel of personal extenuating circumstances affecting performance, or
   (d) the submitted documentation does not provide sufficient evidence to support a finding in favour of the appellant (no *prima facie* case for appeal), or
   (e) an alternative procedure has been invoked for the same matter, or
   (f) the appeal is no more than a challenge to academic judgement as set out in paragraph 6.

the application will be rejected and the student informed in writing. An appellant may seek a review of this decision by writing, with evidence, directly to the Academic Registrar, as detailed in notes 34-37.

14. All other appeals will be accepted and investigated in accordance with the following procedure. The Head of the Student Progress Service will appoint an Appeal Officer to progress the appeal.
Stage Two – Investigating the Appeal

15. The academic appeal will be processed on the basis of the documentation provided by
the appellant. Exceptionally, for the purposes of ascertaining the nature and details of
the appeal, the Appeal Officer may invite the appellant to a meeting to clarify the details
of the case. In accordance with point 13, the Head of Student Progress Service may
reject the application at any stage if additional information received indicates that there is
no prima facie case for appeal.

16. In accordance with the principles of natural justice the University will disclose to
appellants any relevant case documentation at an early and appropriate stage and in
particular, in advance of determination of the outcome. Non-disclosure would occur in
exceptional circumstances only and for compelling reasons.

17. If the appeal is accepted, the Appeal Officer shall seek comments on the appeal from
appropriate members of staff. The External Examiner(s) comments may be sought
where the appeal is from a research student. Those from whom comment is sought
shall be provided with all of the appeal documents subject, where the appellant has
withheld permission to disclose any supporting documentation to the written consent of
the appellant.

18. Once all comments have been received, the appellant will be sent a copy and invited to
make a response. The Appeal Officer may determine that there is sufficient evidence to
refer the case immediately back to the examiners for reconsideration, with further referral
to the appropriate Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee if necessary. The
Appeal Officer may seek advice at this stage from an Appeal Adjudicator.

19. The Appeal Officer may refer the case to the Head of Student Progress Service to
consider rejection of the appeal at this stage if there is good cause to do so as outlined
in paragraph 13 above. In all other cases the Appeal Officer shall refer the case to an
Appeal Adjudicator for consideration. The Appeal Adjudicator shall consider the appeal
and may seek any such information as appears to be necessary to reach a decision.
Exceptionally, where deemed appropriate by the Appeal Adjudicator, the appellant and
any other relevant parties may be invited to a hearing. The Appeal Adjudicator shall
decide whether to constitute an Appeal Committee or to determine the matter alone.

20. The Appeal Adjudicator shall determine whether an appeal hearing is to be convened. If
an appeal hearing is convened, the Appeal Adjudicator may invite the appellant, and any
other relevant parties. Any persons invited to attend a hearing by the Appeal Adjudicator
may be accompanied by a friend or supporter, who may make representations with the
permission of the Appeal Adjudicator. The Appeal Adjudicator will ensure that the
appellant is given reasonable notice of the date of the hearing and the Appeal Officer will
provide the appellant, as soon as is reasonably practicable, with any further relevant
case papers in accordance with the requirements of the current Data Protection
legislation, together with written advice about the general nature of hearings. The
conduct of the hearing shall, unless otherwise stated in this procedure, be for the Appeal
Adjudicator to decide.

21. The appellant shall be kept informed of the progress of the appeal in writing by the
Appeal Officer. Progress reports shall normally be provided at intervals of approximately
one month, unless the appellant has been advised of a specific update period in his/her
case.

22. Appellants shall not normally be allowed to progress to the next stage of their study
where the outcome of their appeal is pending. In order to prevent possible difficulties for
the appellant at a later stage, whilst an appeal outcome is pending the appellant should
prepare for appropriate resit examinations, or other progress requirements, to be
completed if the appeal is unsuccessful. It is the appellant's responsibility to request to
register or continue with studies pending the outcome of an appeal. This may be
exceptionally granted if, on further investigation, the Appeal Officer and the School
consider this academically feasible. Such permission shall be expressly subject to a requirement to discontinue studies if the appeal is unsuccessful. Appellants may also request that the Appeal Officer ensure that spaces on capped modules or programmes are reserved where appropriate.

23. Appellants who are eligible to receive a University degree but who are appealing against a decision of the Board of Examiners may attend a congregation (degree award ceremony). In such a case, the award shall be that previously determined by the examiners and, if the award is subsequently amended, there will be no further opportunity to attend a congregation ceremony on a second occasion. Appellants may alternatively defer attendance at a congregation until the outcome of their appeal is known. Where an appellant receives a certificate of award (parchment) before an appeal is determined and the Board of Examiners then change their decision, the parchment should be returned to the University and a replacement will be issued upon receipt of the original.

Stage Three – Initial Outcome

24. Where the Appeal Adjudicator decides that there are no reasonable grounds for referring a case back to the examiners, the Appeal Officer will write within 14 calendar days of the decision informing the appellant that the original decision is to stand. The reasons for the decision will be provided.

25. Where the Appeal Adjudicator decides that a case should be referred back to examiners for reconsideration, the Appeal Officer shall proceed in accordance with paragraph 26 or 27, depending on whether the appellant's degree is a taught or research programme.

26. Taught Programmes (including non-standard programmes and stand-alone modules)

In the case of all taught programmes and modules, the Appeal Officer shall:

(i) write to the original examiners (through the Chair of the Board of Examiners), or other relevant authority, requiring a reconsideration. The Appeal Adjudicator's decision may include specific instructions for action as deemed appropriate. The notice shall clearly identify the grounds for reconsideration and provide all the relevant evidence on which the Appeal Adjudicator based their decision. The notice shall, where the matter relates to results, advise that external examiners must be consulted in writing and where reasonably practicable, be present at any reconvened meetings wherever possible. The notice shall, where the matter relates to a Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Committee decision, advise whether the external member of that Committee does not need to be consulted.

and

(ii) write to the appellant to inform him/her of the Appeal Adjudicator's decision

27. Research Programmes

In the case of postgraduate research programmes, the Appeal Officer shall:

(i) write to the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and the original examiners requiring reconsideration of the thesis without further revision, clearly identifying the grounds for reconsideration and providing the examiners with all the relevant evidence on which the Appeal Adjudicator based their decision.

or

(ii) on the instructions of the Appeal Adjudicator, direct the relevant research student support team to write to the appellant giving permission to revise the thesis in line with the examiner’s report and re-submit it for examination within a specified time
limit in accordance with the normal procedure for the re-submission. The Appeal Adjudicator should decide whether the re-examination will be undertaken by the original examiners or, under exceptional circumstances, by newly appointed examiners,

or

(iii) on the instructions of the Appeal Adjudicator, declare the original examination null and void and require the Head of School to nominate for the approval of the Faculty Dean of Postgraduate Studies two new external examiners to re-examine the appellant’s thesis without further revision. Where an appeal on the grounds of bias or prejudice on the part of an examiner or examiners has been upheld, this is the only outcome that the Appeal Adjudicator may choose.

and

(iv) write to the appellant setting out the Appeal Adjudicator’s decision.

Stage Four – Final Outcome

28. When asked to reconsider their original decision, the examiners or other authority within the academic unit, shall review their decision in light of the grounds for appeal, relevant evidence and any recommendations made by the Appeal Adjudicator.

29. Any new examiners appointed under paragraph 27 in the case of research students shall be told that they are conducting a re-examination on appeal but will not be informed of any other circumstances of the case.

30. Unless given specific directions by the Appeal Adjudicator in accordance with paragraph 26 above, Examiners, Personal Extenuating Circumstance Committees or Degree Programme Directors shall have the power to confirm or alter their original decision, applying whatever powers of discretion are normally available to them under the current University and programme regulations. The Examiners, Personal Extenuating Circumstance Committees or Degree Programme Directors shall be required to provide a formal report or Minutes of their judgement to the Appeal Officer.

31. The Appeal Officer shall inform the appellant in writing, normally within 14 calendar days of receiving the report of the final outcome of the Examiners’, Personal Extenuating Circumstance Committees’ or Degree Programme Directors’ reconsideration, providing appropriate feedback on / minutes of / extract of the decision.

32. The decision of the Examiners, the Personal Extenuating Circumstance Committee or Degree Programme Director on any reconsideration following an academic appeal shall be final.

33. The submission of an academic appeal in good faith, whether or not it is upheld, shall not prejudice any future treatment of the appellant by the University.

Review of decision of Head of Student Progress Service / Appeal Officer / Appeal Adjudicator

34. Under these procedures, an appellant may only seek a review of the outcome of their appeal on the ground of procedural irregularity by the Appeal Adjudicator, Head of Student Progress Service or Appeal Officer.

35. A review application must be made in writing directly to the Academic Registrar and within 14 calendar days of the notification of the outcome of the appeal.

36. A review application will be considered by either the Academic Registrar or the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning), the Appeal Panel Convenor or other Pro-Vice-Chancellor nominated by the Academic Registrar. The Officer acting in relation to the review may dismiss an application which does not provide sufficient evidence to support
a finding in favour of the applicant for review (a *prima facie* case).

37. Where a review request is accepted, the Academic Registrar or nominee shall either require the Head of Student Progress Service, Appeal Officer or original Appeal Adjudicator to reconsider the decision or will determine an alternative Appeal Adjudicator to consider the case afresh. The outcome of a review of the decision of an Appeal Adjudicator may not be appealed against under this procedure.

38. There shall be no further appeal within the University. Provision for independent external review is made through the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The Independent Adjudicator's role is to review how the University has applied its own internal procedures. Further information about the OIA's role is available from www.oiahe.org.uk/.

**Other General Provisions**

39. **Confidentiality:** The information provided by an appellant, or anyone else, to the Appeal Officer shall be treated in confidence and disclosed only as deemed appropriate by the Appeal Officer and with the consent of the appellant. Appellants are also expected to maintain confidence throughout the appeal process and should particularly not share any comments provided in good faith with a third party, unless the person(s) is assisting the appellant with their appeal case.

40. **Length of Appeal investigation:** All appellants shall normally be informed of the final outcome of their appeal within four months of the submission of their complete appeal.

41. **Expenses:** Successful appellants will have any reasonable and proportionate incidental expenses incurred as a direct result of submitting the appeal reimbursed as soon as possible after the outcome is known. This includes travel for the appellant, but excludes legal costs or other representation costs. In the event of any dispute, the Head of Student Progress Service will determine the legitimacy of any expense claimed and the validity of supporting evidence; the decision of the Head of Student Progress Service will be final.
Note 1 – Does this procedure apply to you?

If you are considering making an Academic Appeal, perhaps because you are unhappy with your degree classification or other decision confirmed by the Board of Examiners, Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee, Degree Programme Director or Progression Panel for Research Programmes, you are strongly advised to read the procedure carefully.

You are also strongly advised to take account of this guidance prepared by the University team which administers Academic Appeals. The guidance is not definitive, but is based on several years experience of handling Academic Appeals.

Please remember that every Academic Appeal is considered individually and general statements noted in this guidance may not apply in all circumstances. Before you commence an Academic Appeal you are strongly advised to discuss your case with an academic member of staff in your School. If this is not possible, you can also approach the Student Progress Service for advice. You may also contact the Student Advice Centre (Students’ Union – www.unionsociety.co.uk/sac).

An Academic Appeal can take several weeks/months to process. Academic appeals only tend to be successful if there is strong evidence available. The majority of academic appeals are unsuccessful – if normal academic protocols are working well this is to be expected.

In an Academic Appeal, any claims that you make must, generally, be supported by compelling evidence. The type of evidence that is acceptable varies significantly, but often includes medical certificates, statements by academic staff about particular events, copies of specific regulations, detailed personal statements, and confirmation from authorities that you were involved in a particular incident. Evidence that independently confirms your own evidence (including medical evidence) and is obtained at the time of the problem is of particular value in establishing a valid appeal. It is also important that the evidence indicates the significance of the impact on you – and relates to specific time periods. It is your responsibility to provide the evidence for the appeal authorities to consider – the University cannot approach doctors or others on your behalf.

Consider whether an Academic Appeal is the appropriate course of action for you. Two options that may be more appropriate are:
- A formal complaint:  
  www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/regulations/complaints.htm
- A PEC Application (if the Board of Examiners have not yet met)
  www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/help/

Note 2 – Delay / Late appeals

You must clearly explain any reason for delay. You should also note that a late appeal is unlikely to be considered unless there is a strong reason for a delay.

Examples of unacceptable reasons for late Appeals include:
- Being unaware of the procedure.
- Being on holiday.
- Being unwell and not having independent confirmation by medical certificates or other evidence obtained at the time of the matter put in evidence.
- Being uncomfortable or embarrassed about raising the issue earlier.

**Note 3 – Personal Extenuating Circumstances**

There are protocols for advising Examiners of personal extenuating circumstances (PEC) - [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/help/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/help/). You must therefore be explicit as to why the normal communication channels were not used to inform the staff in the Academic Unit of these circumstances. Good cause in this context means a substantial and valid reason for not disclosing to the Examiners in advance under normal protocols. This must be clearly demonstrated and you should note that less weight may be given to claims made after results are known.

**Note 4 – Grounds for Academic Appeal**

You are required to make your case on one of the specified grounds. You should consider the following when making your Academic Appeal – they will be considered by the Appeal Officer / Head of Student Progress Service / Appeal Adjudicator.

A) **Grounds for appeal following Board of Examiners decisions:**

(i) Personal Extenuating Circumstances that you were unable to disclose in advance of the Board of Examiners meeting via a PEC application, or were unable to provide evidence for at that time, or of which you were previously unaware - see Note 3. Therefore, if you make this claim you **MUST** give strong reasons why you had not advised the examiners of the problem. Remember that there are generally several weeks between examinations and Boards of Examiners, so there is normally sufficient time to advise of problems.

Examples of strong reasons for late disclosure - that have been successful in the past - include:
- Traumatic and highly personal family circumstances which were exceptionally serious.
- Being in hospital for the weeks between the assessment and the Board of Examiners.
- Evidence of being in active discussion with the academic unit about the matter – although in such circumstances it is also reasonable to advise the Student Progress Service that this is pending.

Examples of weak reasons for late disclosure - that have been unsuccessful in the past - include:
- Being unaware of the procedure.
- Being embarrassed.
- Being on holiday.

You should note carefully that University awards are issued on the basis of academic merit. Often personal circumstances only influence the examiners for borderline cases. There are occasions when - even if a student proves in an Academic Appeal that there were problems that the examiners were unaware of - the circumstances are not strong enough for the examiners to alter their overall decision. For example, where a student has an average mark of 62 (2:1) and the run of marks throughout the programme is also
in the 2:1 band or lower, the examiners are unlikely to feel that the personal circumstances – however severe – is sufficient to alter the 2:1 classification.

(ii) Procedural irregularity or other error on the part of the examiners. Claims under this ground normally refer to Administrative Errors (e.g. errors in the calculation of your marks) – for which you must make clear:
- the reasons for the belief that an error has taken place,
- what you think the computation should have been and why,
- in what way this was material to the determination of your results.

Claims may also refer to Material Procedural Error – and tend to relate to the conduct of assessments or examinations, the proceedings of the PEC Committee or Board of Examiners or other Examination Committee. If you make this claim, you must:
- provide details of the procedural error which you believe has occurred,
- explain in what way this was material to the determination of your results,
- explain in what way you feel disadvantaged on account of this alleged error,
- provide evidence of the error, and, if available, evidence of adverse consequences.

(iii) Bias or prejudice on the part of an examiner or examiners. This is a particularly serious allegation. Unsupported assertions of bias or prejudice do not constitute valid grounds for appeal. Claims under this ground require a full explanation and should:
- detail exactly the evidence of bias/prejudice,
- explain in what way this affected your performance or determination of your results,
- explain in what way you feel disadvantaged,
- provide evidence.

B) Grounds for appeal following PEC Committee decisions:

(i) Procedural irregularity or other error on the part of the PEC Committee. You must provide:
- the reasons for the belief that an error has taken place,
- in what way this was material to the outcome.

(ii) Bias or prejudice on the part of the PEC Committee. This is a particularly serious allegation. Unsupported assertions of bias or prejudice do not constitute valid grounds for appeal. Claims under this ground require a full explanation and should:
- detail exactly the evidence of bias/prejudice,
- explain in what way you believe this affected the outcome,
- provide evidence.

(ii) Grounds for appeal following an Unsatisfactory Progress decision:

(i) Evidence which was not available or considered previously
If you make this claim you MUST give strong reasons why you had not disclosed this evidence to the Degree Programme Director earlier.

Examples of strong reasons for late disclosure include:
- Traumatic and highly personal family circumstances which were exceptionally serious,
- Being in hospital which prevented you from accessing the evidence earlier.
Examples of weak reasons for late disclosure include:
- Being unaware of the procedure,
- Being embarrassed,
- Being on holiday.

(ii) Procedural irregularity. You must provide:
- the reasons for the belief that an error has taken place,
- in what way this was material to the outcome.

(iii) Bias or prejudice. This is a particularly serious allegation. Unsupported assertions of bias or prejudice do not constitute valid grounds for appeal. Claims under this ground require a full explanation and should:
- detail exactly the evidence of bias/prejudice,
- explain in what way you believe affected the outcome,
- provide evidence.

(iv) That the decision reached was perverse in that it was one which no reasonable person could have reached on the available evidence. You must provide:
- details of why you believe this.
- provide evidence.

Note 5 – Examples of Successful and Unsuccessful Appeals

Very few Academic Appeals are successful. This is normally because students make general claims without evidence.

Examples of weak claims – unsuccessful in the past include:
- Being stressed during examinations ….
- Having flu for X weeks during ….
- Being unwell – without medical certificates or other evidence.
- Being unaware of the procedure.
- Being on holiday.
- A number of module results are in the X classification – so the Board should have ignored Y results and given me X classification.
- Don’t understand why I did worse than my fellow students XX.
- X months ago there was a problem with the teaching on module XXX – or other perceived deficiency that should have been reported at the time.
- Having a disability – the impact of which has already been allowed for by extra time / extensions / equipment etc.

Successful Academic Appeals are:
- Well founded.
- Well documented.
- Include good evidence.
- Do not involve double counting. For example - the appellant did not attempt to seek consideration of something that had already been given support by the School – by granted extension or other adjustment