



“Enabling Students to Accomplish their Academic Goal”

Academic Appeals Policy

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1. Introduction

Bellmont College is committed to maintaining a fair, transparent, student-centred and academically rigorous environment in which students have confidence in the integrity of academic decisions, assessment processes and progression outcomes. The College recognises that academic appeals are an important part of its quality assurance and student protection framework because they provide a formal route for students to request review of an academic decision where valid grounds exist.

Bellmont College currently delivers higher education provision in partnership with Liverpool Hope University. Under current collaborative arrangements, students may be taught and supported locally by Belmont College while academic regulations, assessment board processes, award requirements and final academic decisions may sit within Liverpool Hope University or another relevant awarding body framework. Belmont College operates this policy in a way that supports local student guidance and fair administration while respecting the authority of the relevant awarding body.

Bellmont College is also seeking Office for Students approval for its own funding arrangements and wider regulatory development. This may affect future academic processes, decision-making routes, external review arrangements and partnership responsibilities. Throughout any transition, Belmont College continues to protect student interests by providing clear information, accessible advice, fair processes, appropriate support and careful record-keeping.

This policy has been developed with reference to relevant Belmont College policies, Liverpool Hope University public information on academic appeals and student regulations, the Office for Students regulatory framework, the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, consumer protection expectations and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator Good Practice Framework. It is read alongside the relevant assessment, progression, complaints, academic integrity and student support policies that apply to a student's programme.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and accessible framework through which students may challenge specific academic decisions where recognised grounds for appeal exist. It explains the principles, grounds, stages, responsibilities and oversight arrangements that apply when an academic appeal is submitted.

The policy is intended to ensure that appeals are handled fairly, consistently, proportionately and within published timescales; that students understand what can and cannot be appealed; that academic judgement is respected; and that academic standards, assessment integrity and student rights are protected.

The policy also supports institutional learning. Themes arising from appeals are reviewed through Belmont College committees so that assessment processes, student communication, academic support and quality assurance arrangements can be improved where appropriate.

3. Scope

This policy applies to students enrolled on higher education programmes delivered by Belmont College, former students where the appeal relates to a decision made during their period of enrolment, and students studying under collaborative arrangements where Belmont College has delegated responsibility to administer or support the appeal process.

Where a programme is delivered under the academic authority of Liverpool Hope University or another awarding body, the awarding body's academic regulations and academic appeals procedures may take precedence for academic decisions. Belmont College provides guidance and support to students and cooperates with the awarding body by supplying relevant documentation, records and contextual information where required.

This policy covers appeals against academic decisions such as assessment board decisions, progression decisions, award outcomes, termination of studies for academic reasons, or other academic decisions where a recognised ground for appeal exists. It does not replace other procedures that may be more appropriate for non-academic concerns.

4. Regulatory and Legal Framework

Requirement	Relevance to this Policy
Office for Students Conditions B1, B2, B3, B4 and B5	Support a high-quality academic experience, effective resources and support, positive student outcomes, reliable assessment and secure sector-recognised standards.
Office for Students Conditions C1, C2, C3 and C4	Require clear student information, fair complaints and appeals routes, student protection planning and action where student interests are at risk.
Office for Students Condition E6	Requires appropriate arrangements to prevent and respond to harassment and sexual misconduct where these matters affect appeals, safety or wellbeing.
Higher Education and Research Act 2017	Provides the statutory basis for the Office for Students and higher education regulation in England.
UK Quality Code for Higher Education	Supports fair assessment, student support, partnership oversight, student engagement, complaints, appeals and enhancement.

Competition and Markets Authority expectations for higher education providers	Require clear, accurate, timely and accessible information about academic appeals, responsibilities and timescales.
Consumer Rights Act 2015 and Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013	Support fair terms, transparent information and clear contractual arrangements affecting students.
Equality Act 2010	Requires non-discrimination, fair treatment and reasonable adjustments for disabled students and students with protected characteristics.
UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018	Require lawful, fair, secure and transparent processing of appeal records and related personal data.
Office of the Independent Adjudicator Good Practice Framework	Supports fair, accessible, timely and evidence-based handling of academic appeals and Completion of Procedures letters.
Liverpool Hope University academic regulations and partnership requirements	Apply where programmes are delivered under Liverpool Hope University collaborative arrangements, including assessment board, progression, appeal and external review processes.
Safeguarding, health and safety and wellbeing obligations	Require appeal processes to take account of student safety, mental health, safeguarding, wellbeing and safe participation in learning.

5. Principles of Academic Appeals

- Fairness: Every student has the right to submit an appeal where recognised grounds exist. Appeals are considered impartially, consistently and without discrimination.
- Transparency: The grounds, process, evidence requirements, timescales and possible outcomes are explained clearly to students through this policy, student communications, induction and student-facing guidance.
- Independence: Appeals are reviewed by staff who were not directly responsible for the original decision wherever reasonably practicable.
- Timeliness: Appeals are acknowledged, investigated and resolved within published timescales wherever possible. Students are informed if additional time is required.
- Confidentiality: Appeal information is shared only with staff or external bodies who need it for legitimate academic, regulatory or support purposes.

- **Respect for academic judgement:** This policy does not permit challenge to academic judgement itself where that judgement has been exercised by appropriately qualified staff using approved assessment criteria.
- **Student protection:** Students who submit appeals in good faith are not disadvantaged for doing so, and any evidence of victimisation or retaliation is addressed through appropriate Belmont College procedures.

6. Grounds for Appeal

A student may submit an academic appeal only where one or more recognised grounds apply. The appeal includes evidence and explains how the ground affected the academic decision being challenged.

Procedural irregularity: A material error, administrative failure or failure to follow approved procedures occurred and may have affected the academic decision.

Bias, prejudice or inadequate assessment practice: There is credible evidence that the assessment or decision-making process was affected by bias, prejudice, unfair treatment or failure to apply approved assessment procedures.

Mitigating circumstances: The student experienced significant circumstances that could not reasonably have been disclosed before the decision was made and that may have materially affected the outcome. Such cases are considered alongside the requirements of the relevant mitigating circumstances process (*LTP8 Belmont College Mitigating Circumstances Policy*)

An appeal is not normally accepted where the student simply disagrees with a mark, grade, academic judgement or professional academic opinion. Students may be given feedback on academic performance, but feedback is not the same as an academic appeal.

7. Matters Excluded from this Policy

The following matters are normally outside the scope of this policy and are handled under the relevant procedure instead.

- Concerns about teaching, learning resources, facilities or services (*CAP3 Belmont College Complaint and Appeal Policy and Procedure*)
- Allegations or findings of academic misconduct (*LTP6 Belmont College Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy*)
- Student behaviour, misconduct or disciplinary matters (*QGP4 Belmont College Student Handbook*)
- Fee, refund or compensation disputes (*CAP4 Belmont College Fees, Refunds and Compensation Policy*)
- Fitness to study, wellbeing, safeguarding or safety concerns that are not appeals against academic decisions (*SWP4 Belmont College Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy*)
- Requests for a reassessment or re-mark based solely on dissatisfaction with academic judgement

- Appeals that are frivolous, malicious, vexatious or unsupported by evidence

8. Informal Advice and Early Resolution

Students are encouraged to seek advice before submitting an appeal so that they understand the relevant decision, the grounds for appeal, evidence requirements and timescales. Advice may be sought from the Student Support Team, Academic Support Tutors, Programme Coordinators, the Head of Academic Programmes or the Head of Quality and Operations as appropriate (*SWP4 Belmont College Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy*)

Informal discussion may help clarify the reason for an academic decision, explain assessment board outcomes, signpost students to feedback, identify whether a complaint or appeal route is more appropriate, and reduce unnecessary delay. Informal advice does not extend the deadline for submitting a formal appeal unless Belmont College confirms an extension in writing.

Belmont College seeks early resolution where this is possible without compromising academic standards, awarding body regulations or procedural fairness. Early resolution may include correcting an administrative error, providing clarification, or signposting the student to the correct procedure.

9. Academic Appeals Procedure

9.1 Stage 1 - Submission of Appeal

A student wishing to appeal submits a written appeal to the Head of Quality and Operations within ten working days of publication of the relevant result or notification of the academic decision. Where Liverpool Hope University or another awarding body procedure applies, the relevant timescale in that procedure applies.

The appeal submission includes the student's full name, student identification number, programme title, the academic decision being appealed, the ground or grounds of appeal, a clear explanation of the concern, supporting evidence and the outcome sought.

Students are responsible for providing evidence at the point of submission wherever reasonably possible. Evidence may include medical evidence, formal correspondence, assessment records, relevant communications, documented procedural issues or other reliable information directly relevant to the appeal.

9.2 Acknowledgement and Initial Eligibility Review

The Head of Quality and Operations, or nominee, normally acknowledges receipt within three working days. An initial eligibility review considers whether the appeal is within time, whether it falls within the scope of this policy, whether a recognised ground is stated and whether evidence has been provided or can reasonably be requested.

Where an appeal is incomplete, late or unclear, the student may be asked to provide further information. Where the appeal is outside the scope of this policy, the student is signposted to the appropriate procedure where possible.

9.3 Stage 1: Formal Investigation and Outcome

Where the appeal is accepted for consideration, an independent reviewer is appointed wherever reasonably practicable. The reviewer considers the appeal form, supporting evidence, relevant academic regulations, Assessment Board records, marking or moderation records where relevant, correspondence, student support information and any information provided by academic or professional services staff.

A written Stage 1 outcome is normally issued within fifteen working days of the appeal being accepted for investigation. The outcome may reject the appeal, uphold it in whole or in part, refer the matter to an Assessment Board or awarding body for reconsideration, correct an administrative error, provide a reassessment opportunity, review assessment procedures, or recommend another appropriate remedial action consistent with academic regulations.

9.4 Stage 2: Review by Academic Appeals Panel

A student who remains dissatisfied with the Stage 1 outcome may request a Stage 2 review within ten working days of the Stage 1 outcome letter. Stage 2 is a review of the Stage 1 decision and does not normally involve a full rehearing unless this is required for fairness.

The Stage 2 review is normally considered by an Academic Appeals Panel made up of senior staff who have not been directly involved in the original decision or Stage 1 outcome. The panel may review documentation only or invite the student to attend a meeting where this is necessary to reach a fair decision.

9.5 Academic Appeals Panel

Stage 2 reviews are normally considered by an Academic Appeals Panel made up of senior staff who have not been directly involved in the original decision or Stage 1 outcome. The panel may include the Head of Quality and Operations or nominee, a senior academic representative, the Head of Academic Programmes or nominee, and an independent committee representative where appropriate.

The panel may review documentation only or invite the student to attend a meeting where this is necessary to reach a fair decision. Students may normally be accompanied by a friend, student representative or member of Belmont College staff for support. Legal representation is not normally permitted unless required by the circumstances of the case and agreed in advance.

9.6 Final Internal Decision

The Academic Appeals Panel normally issues a final written decision within twenty working days of the Stage 2 request being accepted. The decision explains the outcome, reasons, any actions required and whether a Completion of Procedures letter is issued by Belmont College or, where applicable, by the relevant awarding provider.

Where a case relates to an academic decision for a Liverpool Hope University award, the final review stage and Completion of Procedures arrangements may need to be completed by

Liverpool Hope University in accordance with its academic appeals procedures and OIA expectations for collaborative provision.

9.7 External Review

A student who remains dissatisfied after completing the relevant internal procedure may be able to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Students normally need a Completion of Procedures letter before submitting a complaint to the OIA. The OIA sets its own eligibility rules and timescales.

10. Partner Institution Appeals and Liverpool Hope University Arrangements

Bellmont College currently works with Liverpool Hope University and ensures that students studying on Liverpool Hope University awards are informed clearly where Liverpool Hope University academic appeals regulations apply. Liverpool Hope University public information explains that academic appeals are requests for review of academic decisions and that students may be required to follow a staged academic appeals process with supporting evidence.

Where Liverpool Hope University procedures apply, Belmont College supports students by explaining routes, providing relevant local records, signposting to Liverpool Hope University materials, assisting with reasonable adjustments where appropriate and cooperating with any investigation or review. Belmont College does not override Liverpool Hope University academic decisions where the awarding body retains responsibility for those decisions.

Where Belmont College manages local elements of the appeal process, it does so in line with this policy, partnership agreements, awarding body requirements and the need to maintain equivalent student experience, fair processes and secure academic standards. Any uncertainty about which procedure applies is resolved by the Head of Quality and Operations in consultation with the partner institution where required.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Students are responsible for submitting appeals within the relevant deadline, identifying the recognised ground or grounds, providing evidence, engaging with communications and attending meetings where required.

Role / Body	Responsibility
Board of Directors	Retains ultimate governance oversight of academic quality, standards, student outcomes, regulatory compliance, risk and the effectiveness of student-facing procedures.
CEO	Holds executive accountability for implementation, resourcing, escalation and ensuring that appeals processes protect students and maintain academic standards.
Head of Quality and Operations	Leads the operational management of this policy, including receipt of appeals, eligibility review, appointment of

	reviewers or panels, communication with students, record maintenance and reporting through the Senior Management Committee, Quality Committee and Academic Committee routes.
Head of Academic Programmes	Provides academic leadership for programme quality, standards, assessment and student outcomes, and ensures that relevant assessment, marking, moderation, feedback and Assessment Board information supports fair review of appeals.
Head of Professional Services	Oversees student records, communications, registry support, procedural guidance and administrative support across the student lifecycle.
Head of IT and Human Resources	Supports secure and reliable digital systems, staff development and employment practices that underpin appeal records, teaching, data management and regulatory reporting.
Programme Coordinators, Module Tutors and Academic Support Tutors	Provide accurate academic information, maintain assessment records, signpost students to support and contribute factual information where required for an appeal investigation.
Assessment Boards	Make and record academic decisions in accordance with approved regulations and implement appeal outcomes where a decision is referred back for reconsideration. Assessment Boards do not vary an appeal decision outside the approved procedure.
Student Support and Wellbeing Staff	Provide guidance, signposting and support where appeals intersect with disability, mitigating circumstances, wellbeing, safeguarding or reasonable adjustment matters (SWP4 Belmont College Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy).
Liverpool Hope University	Retains responsibility for matters reserved to it under collaborative provision, including University academic regulations, Assessment Board decisions, appeal review routes and Completion of Procedures arrangements where applicable.

12. Governance, Committee Oversight and Reporting

Academic appeals are implemented and monitored through Belmont College's integrated governance and committee structure. Oversight is designed to ensure that appeals are handled fairly, trends are identified, student experience is improved and regulatory responsibilities are met.

Committee / Body	Responsibility
Board of Directors	The Board of Directors is the governing body and retains ultimate oversight of academic quality, standards, student outcomes, regulatory compliance, institutional risk and the effectiveness of student-facing procedures. It receives assurance reports on appeals trends, significant risks and enhancement actions.
Audit and Risk Committee	The Audit and Risk Committee advises the Board of Directors on audit, internal control, risk management, regulatory compliance and assurance where academic appeals identify wider institutional or student protection risks.
Academic Committee	The Academic Committee is the academic authority. It safeguards academic standards and quality, oversees academic assurance from the Quality Committee and reports to the Board of Directors on delegated academic governance matters.
Senior Management Committee	The Senior Management Committee coordinates operational implementation, resourcing, partner communication, serious cases and corrective action arising from appeals. It ensures that student interests remain central to operational decision-making.
Quality Committee	The Quality Committee monitors appeals data, identifies themes, reviews outcomes and ensures that lessons learned are translated into quality enhancement actions. It escalates operational actions to the Senior Management Committee and reports academic assurance matters to the Academic Committee.
Learning and Teaching Committee	The Learning and Teaching Committee reviews appeal themes relating to assessment design, marking, moderation, feedback, academic guidance, learning support and teaching practice. It recommends improvements to academic delivery and student support.
Recruitment, Admissions and Registry Committee	The Recruitment, Admissions and Registry Committee monitors student lifecycle records, assessment administration, progression information and operational processes that may affect academic appeals or the accuracy of academic decisions.
Student Staff Committee and Partnership Routes	The Student Staff Committee provides a student voice route for feedback about policy understanding, accessibility of procedures, communication, support and the academic experience. Liverpool Hope University partnership matters are escalated through the relevant operational, academic and strategic partner routes where applicable.

13. Equality, Accessibility and Student Support

Bellmont College is committed to ensuring that all students can access the academic appeals process fairly and equitably. Belmont College considers reasonable adjustments for disabled students, students with long-term health conditions, students experiencing mental health difficulties and students with additional learning needs (*SWP3 Belmont College Disability Policy*)

Students may request accessible formats, support with understanding the procedure, adjusted communication arrangements or support in meetings where reasonably required. Belmont College also considers equality, diversity and inclusion implications in appeals monitoring and enhancement activity (*SWP2 Belmont College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy*)

Where an appeal involves information about illness, disability, bereavement, trauma, safeguarding, harassment, sexual misconduct or other sensitive circumstances, Belmont College handles the matter sensitively and coordinates academic procedures with support or safeguarding arrangements where appropriate (*HSP1 Belmont College Safeguarding and PREVENT Policy*)

14. Confidentiality, Records and Data Protection

Appeal documentation is handled confidentially and shared only with staff, committees, awarding bodies, regulators or external review bodies who require access for legitimate purposes. Belmont College processes appeal information in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and institutional data protection procedures (*BCP7 Belmont College General Data Protection & Regulation (GDPR) Policy*)

Records may include the appeal form, evidence, correspondence, assessment board records, support information, panel notes, outcome letters, Completion of Procedures letters and any related action plans. Records are retained securely in accordance with institutional retention arrangements and partnership requirements.

Students may request access to their personal data in accordance with applicable data protection legislation. Information relating to third parties may be withheld or redacted where required by law or fairness.

15. Conclusion

The Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure forms an important part of Belmont College's academic governance, quality assurance and student protection framework. It provides students with a fair and accessible route to seek review of academic decisions where valid grounds exist, while preserving the integrity of academic judgement and protecting academic standards.

Through clear procedures, independent review, careful record-keeping, partner institution coordination and committee oversight, Belmont College ensures that academic appeals are managed consistently, transparently and in accordance with regulatory, legal and sector expectations.

As Belmont College continues to work with Liverpool Hope University and develops its future Office for Students funding and regulatory arrangements, Belmont College continues to review and strengthen this policy to ensure that student interests, academic standards and fair decision-making remain central to institutional practice.

Bellmont College Academic Appeals Policy					
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