

Appealing results: frequently asked questions about stage 1 appeals

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- [Academic appeals for coursework students](#)
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A stage 1 appeal, known as an 'informal appeal' or 'resolution with the original decision-maker,' is the first level of appeal.

If you are concerned about an academic decision, make an appeal in writing to the relevant decision-maker (usually your unit coordinator). Do this within 15 working days of the decision.

[Find out more about the academic appeals process.](#)

Read the University's information: [resolution with the original decision-maker.](#)

Appeals process

Q. How long do I have from the date my results were released to lodge an appeal?

A. You have 15 working days from the date your results are released to begin your stage 1 appeal. Weekends, public holidays and the University shutdown in December to January are not included in this deadline. The 15 days do not start from when you personally checked your results or emails.

Q. Who will review my stage 1 appeal?

A. The unit coordinator for your subject will review your stage 1 appeal – or they may delegate a tutor or another academic to review it on their behalf. The person who reviews your stage 1 appeal should provide their name and contact details.

Q. I don't think the unit coordinator likes me. Can I make my appeal to someone else?

A. You cannot choose who you appeal to. In most cases a stage 1 appeal will be directed to the relevant unit coordinator.

Q. I found out I failed my final exam. Can I talk with my unit coordinator?

A. Yes, you may contact your unit coordinator to request feedback. Before you contact your unit coordinator, attend your exam review session or review your paper according to your faculty's procedures, if possible. Seeking feedback on your exam can be considered the start of the stage 1 appeal process.

Reasons to appeal

Q. I got a mark of 49, why can't the faculty award a 'conceded pass' grade?

A. The University of Sydney does not allow 'conceded pass' grades. If you received 49 you should review your exam paper and request further feedback and consider an appeal if you believe you have good reasons.

Q. One of my tutors treated me badly during the semester. Can I use this to appeal my grade?

A. No. All University staff are expected to demonstrate professional and respectful behaviour towards all students. Grades are awarded on academic merit and the University uses anonymous marking. If you think you have been treated badly by a tutor, you can [submit a complaint](#). [Contact us for help with your complaint](#).

Q. Can I argue that my exam performance was affected by illness, emergency or a personal problem?

A. Unfortunately, no. Serious illness or misadventure are not reasons for an academic appeal, but you may [submit a late application for special consideration](#) for an assessment. In your application you will need to explain your reason for applying late and have appropriate medical documentation relevant to the date of the assessment. [Contact us for help](#).

Q. Does SUPRA have a list of acceptable or strong appeal arguments?

A. No. We recommend that you clearly explain the reasons why you believe you were incorrectly marked and/or you should have earned a higher mark according to the assessment criteria. Be specific about which questions or exam responses you are appealing against.

Q. Can I argue that it is too expensive for me to retake this unit or that I need to graduate on time due to visa, career, family, or health reasons?

A. Unfortunately, no. Although these experiences are very difficult, they are not considered reasons for an appeal.

Q. I failed my final exam, but I don't think it was fair because it was online and I was not comfortable with this format. Can I appeal?

A. Unfortunately, no. Being unfamiliar with an online exam is not a valid reason for an appeal. However, if you felt unusually anxious or stressed during an online exam, you may be able to [apply for late special consideration](#) if you can explain your reason for why it is late and have appropriate medical documentation to support your request. [Contact us for help](#).

Q. I failed a subject but had lots of health issues. Can I appeal or ask for special consideration?

A. If you have appropriate medical documentation that covers the period of your assessment and a good explanation for the delay in application, you may [submit a late special consideration application](#). If you had ongoing health issues throughout the entire semester, you may consider applying for a [late discontinuation under special circumstances](#) for the unit of study, instead of individual special consideration applications for every assessment.

Q. Can I appeal a group work decision?

A. At stage 1 of an appeal, all members of the group must consent to the appeal and be listed on the appeal form. You can also appeal a finding of academic dishonesty for a

group work assignment. If you are unhappy about a group work result and are considering an appeal, [contact us for help](#).

Exam paper reviews

Q. Can I review my exam paper?

A. Yes, it is your right to review your exam paper.

Some faculties and schools have a set timetable for exam review sessions. You may be required to register to attend one of these sessions. Make sure you follow the instructions that your faculty will email to you. You will not be able to discuss your answers during an exam review session.

Q. Why should I wait until after I've reviewed my paper before submitting my appeal?

A. Reviewing your paper will give you an opportunity to understand the marking and any written feedback. You can use this feedback to have a more constructive and informed discussion with your unit coordinator.

Q. What should I check for in the exam paper review?

A. You will be given up to 10 minutes to review the paper. The important things to check are:

- Is the calculation of your total mark correct?
- Are there marks given for each question, and written feedback?
- Are there questions you think you answered adequately, and deserve a higher mark for?

Q. Am I allowed to take notes during my exam paper review?

A. No, you are not allowed to take notes during the exam paper review. The University wants to minimise the risk of exam questions and papers being shared, so they do not allow it. After you leave the exam review, you should write down all of your notes immediately so that you don't forget any details.

Q. What can I do if I can't attend the scheduled exam paper review?

A. If you are unable to attend, email your unit coordinator and request another time to review your paper.

Q. I took my exam online, can I still review my paper?

A. Yes, all students whose exams are online are given access to an online review session. If you can't attend the review session, contact your faculty to request a further review session. The process and contact details for the exam paper review are emailed to students or published in Canvas.

Business School students may also submit a 'file note' as a stage 1 appeal to request general feedback to understand your performance on an exam. Based on the response to your file note, you may consider a further appeal.

Q. My faculty won't allow review of multiple-choice questions. Why?

A. The University doesn't allow review of multiple-choice questions, in order to reduce the risk of exam questions being shared.

For further feedback on your exam paper, or to better understand areas for improvement, contact your unit coordinator.

Q. I reviewed my exam paper but there were no comments and only a total mark. Can I ask for more information?

A. Yes, you can contact your unit coordinator to request feedback on your exam or the marking of your exam paper. University policy states that you have a right to understand your assessment mark and be provided with feedback to make improvements. Your unit coordinator may ask you to submit a stage 1 appeal if you require further feedback.

Q. What if the exam paper review is after the appeal deadline?

A. If this happens, don't wait for the exam paper review – start your appeal within the deadline. You can start the appeal by emailing your unit coordinator to request further feedback or an explanation about your mark.

We suggest you email with the subject line: 'Request feedback on [name of assessment]'. You should explain, 'I am contacting you as I am considering submitting a stage 1 appeal for [assessment task]'.

Q. I have reviewed my exam paper and I am still not satisfied with my results. How and when do I start an appeal?

A. You may submit a stage 1 appeal to your unit coordinator within 15 working days from the date you received your result. [Check the University's academic appeals pages](#) for information on how to write an appeal and whether your faculty has specific appeal guidelines. For example, the Business School uses a ['file note' form](#) for their stage 1 appeals. Some unit coordinators are willing to have a meeting at the first stage of appeal, which you can request by sending an email.

Writing your appeal

Q. Do I need to use special language in my appeal letter?

A. No special language is required for an appeal. However, some faculties use an online form so [check whether your faculty has a specific appeal process](#).

Q. Can I still appeal if the faculty states that my grade was checked by multiple markers?

A. Yes.

Q. Where can I find the assessment criteria?

A. Check your unit of study outline. If you need a copy, or if you're not sure what a unit of study outline is, contact your unit coordinator.

Q. Can I ask for a re-mark?

A. Yes, your stage 1 appeal can ask for a re-mark which is where your original answer, paper, or assessment is marked again. This could be by the same marker or a different academic. Your grade may stay the same or be adjusted. It is possible to lose marks if your assessment is re-marked.

Q. Can SUPRA write my appeal?

A. No. SUPRA's caseworkers can advise you how to write your appeal and can review your draft before you submit it, but they can't write it for you.

Stage 1 appeal outcome

Q. How long will it take for a decision on my stage 1 appeal?

A. University policy does not provide a time frame for stage 1 appeal decisions. However, if you do not receive a decision within 1 week, we recommend you respectfully email the unit coordinator and ask when you will receive an outcome.

Q. This is my final unit and my final semester. Can I do anything to speed up the decision-making process?

A. If the outcome is taking longer than 1 week you may contact the unit coordinator and politely explain your situation. You may ask them whether they require any further information.

Q. Will submitting my appeal before the 15 working day deadline help my chances of a successful outcome?

A. No. However, submitting your appeal as soon as possible means you should get answers to your questions or concerns sooner. This may allow you more time to reflect and consider your next steps.

Q. Am I still enrolled if I submit an academic appeal?

A. Yes, while your appeal is being considered you will remain enrolled in your course until all levels of appeal are finalised or decided. You must be a currently enrolled student to submit an appeal.

Q. I've submitted my appeal. What can I do while I wait?

A. We understand it can be stressful when you are waiting for your outcome. If you have waited for at least 1 week, we suggest you politely follow up with your unit coordinator by email.

Q. I already contacted my tutor/lecturer/unit coordinator about my stage 1 appeal. They replied and I am still not

satisfied with the outcome. Does that mean I have already completed my stage 1 appeal? What else can I do?

A. If the decision you receive refers you to the academic appeals policy, this concludes stage 1. If your unit coordinator replies to your request for feedback or request for a change in mark and does not invite further discussion, this can also conclude stage 1. You now have the option to [submit an application for review](#), which is the second appeal stage. Your application will be reviewed by a senior academic.

Q. I received my stage 1 appeal outcome and I am not satisfied. What else can I do?

A. You can [submit an application for review](#) to your faculty. [Read more about the academic appeals process](#).

Getting more advice on your appeal

We are happy to review your written appeal and to offer advice on contacting your faculty. [Contact us for assistance](#).

Read more detailed advice:

- [Academic appeals for coursework students](#)
- [Simple extensions, special consideration, and special arrangements](#).

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