

Student Casework **Attendance and Engagement Withdrawal / Suspension Appeals Procedure**



Version control

Owner:	Academic Registrar
Author:	Head of Registry, Registry Services
Approved by:	Learning and Teaching Committee
Date of Approval of this Version:	26 September 2024
Next Review Date:	September 2027
Version Number:	V.1
Applicable Statutory, Legal or National Best Practice Requirements:	UK Quality Code – Advice and Guidance: Concerns, Complaints and Appeals OIA Good Practice Framework for handling complaints and academic appeals OIA case studies Higher education: consumer law advice for providers – complaint handling processes
Equality Impact Assessment Completion Date:	September 2024

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Contents

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Scope	4
3.	General information.....	4
4.	Additional information for students studying on a Student Visa .	5
5.	Submission of appeals	5
6.	Independent Review.....	7
7.	Monitoring	7
8.	Document retention and disposal	7
9.	Related policies and standards.....	7

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Bradford is committed to the fair and equitable treatment of all students.
- 1.2 The University recognises there may be occasions when students feel they have been unfairly withdrawn or suspended from their course due to attendance and engagement concerns. This Attendance and Engagement Withdrawal / Suspension Appeals Procedure, supports students to appeal if they believe they have been unfairly withdrawn or suspended.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The following procedure relates solely to how a student can appeal against a withdrawal or suspension decision, when they have been withdrawn or suspended based on attendance and engagement concerns.
- 2.2 This procedure covers attendance and engagement withdrawal and suspension appeals for all types of study programmes provided by the University of Bradford, including undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research and degree apprenticeship programmes and those run by our partnership organisations.
- 2.3 This procedure covers all modes of study, including full-time, part-time and distance learning.

3. General information

- 3.1 We recognise that being withdrawn or suspended can be a difficult and worrying experience for students. Support, assistance, and advice on all aspects of the appeal procedure, including the preparation and submission of an appeal, is available to students from the Students' Union Advice Service (ubu-advice@bradford.ac.uk) or telephone (01274) 233300. The University strongly encourages students to access this support.
- 3.2 Where necessary, appropriate adjustments will be made to the process to accommodate the needs of disabled applicants, including those with mental health issues. This includes the provision of these procedures in a format accessible to the student concerned.
- 3.3 The procedure aims to be simple, clear and fair to all parties involved, complying with the principles of natural justice, namely:
 - a) The case will be dealt with in good faith and in an impartial and fair manner.

- b) No one will be the judge of an issue which concerns their own cause.
 - c) Staff investigating the appeal will be impartial.
 - d) Students raising appeals will be treated with dignity and respect, and their wellbeing will be properly considered.
- 3.4 Students making an appeal will not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of doing so.
- 3.5 Appeals will be handled sensitively, courteously and confidentially.
- 3.6 Appeals will not be permitted from parents, sponsors or employers of students. However, in cases where a student has a mental health issue or disability which might impinge on their ability to make an appeal, a third party may be nominated to progress the appeal for them. The student must confirm in writing that they authorise a third party to represent them by completing a Third Party Consent Form.

4. Additional information for students studying on a Student Visa

- 4.1 For students who are studying on a Student Visa, the University has a duty to inform UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) of the withdrawal or suspension. A report of this nature is likely to mean the student would need to leave the UK.
- 4.2 When completing the appeal form, students must declare that they are studying on a Student Visa. This will ensure that the University place a hold on informing UKVI whilst the appeal is being considered.
- 4.3 If the appeal is not submitted within the two-week timeframe, the University will automatically inform UKVI. This means that for students who submit their appeal late, the University will have already notified UKVI that the student has been withdrawn or suspended from the course.

5. Submission of appeals

- 5.1 An appeal can be made to request a reconsideration of a withdrawal or suspension decision which was based attendance and engagement concerns.
- 5.2 The appeal procedure should be followed if the student believes any of the following grounds apply:
- a) There were extenuating circumstances, which can be independently evidenced, which for good reason the student could not tell us about before the decision was made.

- b) There is evidence that demonstrates a procedural irregularity has occurred during the decision-making that led to the student's withdrawal or suspension.
- 5.3 If the student has not established grounds for appeal, the University will provide a completion of procedures letter to the student informing them that the appeal has been rejected and explain why this decision has been made.
- 5.4 Late appeals will not normally be considered, and if submitted must include a detailed explanation of the reason for late submission, supported by relevant evidence (for example, where the student was too unwell to be able to submit the appeal on time).
- 5.5 Students will normally be expected to complete and submit an Attendance and Engagement Withdrawal / Suspension Appeal Form, setting out the grounds for appeal, what they are dissatisfied with and what outcome or further action they are seeking.
- 5.6 Students must submit their appeal to the Student Casework Team, by completing an Attendance and Engagement Withdrawal / Suspension Appeal Form, within two weeks of receiving notification of their withdrawal / suspension.
- 5.7 Appeals will be acknowledged within one week of receipt and the consideration of the appeal will normally be completed within one calendar month after receipt of the appeal. However, in exceptional circumstances this time period may need to be extended. In such cases the student will be notified that their case will take longer than the normal timescales to investigate and an expected timescale to conclude the case will be provided.
- 5.8 Appeals will be considered by an Investigating Officer, who will normally be a member of staff from the Student Casework Team. The Investigating Officer's decision will be approved by a Pro Vice-Chancellor (or nominee).
- 5.9 On conclusion of the process, the University will issue a completion of procedures letter to the student. This letter will detail why the appeal has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. This outcome represents the University's final decision. There is no right of further appeal.
- 5.10 A successful appeal does not always mean that students are automatically reinstated onto their course. The outcome letter will make it clear what the next steps are and in most cases the decision to withdraw or suspend will be reconsidered by the Attendance and Engagement Review Panel, taking into consideration the new evidence that the student has provided in their appeal.
- 5.11 The Head of Programme Administration and the student's Faculty will be informed of the outcome.

6. Independent Review

- 6.1 The University subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student appeals and complaints.
- 6.2 If students are dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they may be able to apply for a review, to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), provided the appeal is eligible under their rules.
- 6.3 Normally, students can only escalate their case to the OIA if they have exhausted the stages in this procedure and received a completion of procedures letter.
- 6.4 Students must raise a complaint with the OIA within 12 months of receiving the completion of procedures letter.
- 6.5 Students can complete an OIA Complaint Form online or download a copy from the [OIA website](#). Alternatively, students can telephone or write to the OIA for a form.

7. Monitoring

- 7.1 The University regularly monitors the number and outcome of appeals and provides an annual report to Learning and Teaching Committee and Senate.
- 7.2 The annual report will make appropriate recommendations and changes to systems or procedures.
- 7.3 Trends and patterns identified by monitoring may also be used to inform other University processes, policies or activities.
- 7.4 Monitoring reports do not contain any personally identifiable information.

8. Document retention and disposal

- 8.1 All notes of meetings, documents, evidence and agreed outcomes, regarding appeals, will be stored securely and in line with the University of Bradford Document Retention and Disposal Policy.

9. Related policies and standards

- 9.1 This procedure has been developed in accordance with the following policies and standards:
 - a) University of Bradford's policies:
 - Ordinances and Regulations
 - Student Attendance and Engagement Policy

- Guide & Process for Attendance Monitoring for Programme Leaders, Module Leaders, Personal Academic Tutors & Programme Administration
 - Equality and Diversity Policies
- b) UK Quality Code – Advice and Guidance: Concerns, Complaints and Appeals
 - c) Good Practice Framework for handling complaints and academic appeals
 - d) OIA case studies
 - e) Higher education: consumer law advice for providers – complaint handling processes