

## How to appeal an academic integrity decision.

In accordance with the University of Galway [Academic Integrity Policy](#), students are permitted to appeal the decision of an academic integrity case. To ensure the appeal process is transparent, consistent, and fair, this document outlines how appeals should be submitted by students and describes the processes and timelines for the Academic Integrity Office to accept and decide on these appeals.

Students should, in the first instance, be aware that once a decision is appealed, it is possible that a different (and potentially more serious) outcome may be determined if further information pertaining to misconduct is revealed as part of the appeal process. Only **one appeal allowed** per case is permitted and the subsequent **decision of the appeal is final**.

### Requirements for submitting an appeal.

To appeal an academic integrity decision, the student must appeal by email to the Academic Integrity Office within **ten working days** of the date of the email which communicated the original decision to the student.

In their email, the student must explain in detail their grounds for submitting an appeal. These grounds **must be valid** (the ground for a valid appeal are set out below), and the student should be clear in stating them and their relevance to the appeal.

Extenuating circumstances are not normally considered valid grounds for appealing an academic integrity decision. Each college has a process for students to request an extension for the submission of an assignment as a result of extenuating circumstances, and students should avail of this process before submitting an assignment.

The following are the **valid grounds** on which a student may appeal an academic integrity decision:

1. **Procedural errors:** where the student is of the view that there is evidence of failure by the Decision Maker<sup>1</sup> to follow proper procedures, and this may, in the student's view, cause reasonable doubt about the fairness of the decision;
2. **New evidence:** where there is new evidence which was not considered by the Decision Maker before the decision, as that evidence was not then available to the Decision Maker, or could not be disclosed by the student. The new evidence must be relevant and cause reasonable doubt about the fairness of the decision.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Decision Maker" refers to the individual who makes a decision on a case of suspected academic misconduct or on an appeal of same. Depending on the nature of the suspected academic misconduct, a Decision Maker can be an instructor, Academic Integrity Advisor, Academic Integrity Officer or Academic Integrity Support Officer, or Executive Dean.

## Verifying an appeal request.

When the Academic Integrity Office receives an application to appeal an academic integrity decision, a member of the office's staff will:

1. Confirm that the request is sent within ten working days of the date of the email which communicated the original decision;
2. Confirm that the request contains valid grounds for appeal.

If the request does not meet both of these conditions, the appeal will be rejected. The Academic Integrity Office reserves the right to determine whether the stated grounds for appeal are valid. The Academic Integrity Office will respond to the student by email confirming that their request has been rejected.

If the request meets both of these conditions, the Academic Integrity Office will respond to the student by email to confirm that their appeal will be investigated.

The Academic Integrity Office will endeavour to respond to an appeal request **within five working days** of the appeal being lodged. However, the process may take longer in some circumstances.

The exceptions to this procedure are when an appeal is requested on a decision from the Academic Integrity Office or by an Executive Dean. In those instances, the appeal request will be forwarded to the relevant Executive Dean who will carry out the verification process described in this section and, if the request is valid, proceed to carry out the appeal process described in the next section.

## The appeal process.

The precise process for investigating the appeal depends on the nature of the decision being appealed. Details of these separate processes are described below.

1. **Decision of inadvertent misconduct:** upon accepting a request to appeal a decision of inadvertent misconduct, the Academic Integrity Office will refer the appeal to the relevant Academic Integrity Advisor, who will be the Decision Maker for the appeal.
2. **Decision at the Courageous Conversation:** a decision after a Courageous Conversation between a student and an Academic Integrity Advisor may be appealed to the Academic Integrity Office. One or more members of the Academic Integrity Office will complete the investigation.
3. **Decision from the Academic Integrity Office:** a decision issued by the Academic Integrity Office may be appealed to the Executive Dean of the relevant college, when the Executive Dean was not involved in the initial decision. Upon accepting a request to appeal such a decision, the Academic Integrity Office will refer the request to the relevant Executive Dean. If the Executive Dean confirms that the request is valid they will be the Decision Maker for the appeal.

4. **Decision of an Executive Dean:** a decision of an Executive Dean may be appealed to an Executive Dean who did not determine the initial outcome. Upon accepting a request to appeal such a decision, the Academic Integrity Office will refer the appeal to the relevant Executive Dean, who will be the Decision Maker for the appeal.

The AIO will consider any conflict of interest issues arising. Where required by the circumstances, having regard to the terms of the QA413 Conflict of Interest and Commitments Policy, the AIO may nominate a suitable substitute Decision Maker for the appeal.

To determine the appeal, the Decision Maker will be given access to the appeal request, the case record, and materials used to determine the initial outcome. The Decision Maker may ask any relevant person to provide additional information related to the appeal and may request a meeting with any relevant person.

The question before the appeal's Decision Maker is the same question that was before the person who made the initial decision: is it more likely than not that (inadvertent or intentional) academic misconduct has taken place? In practice, the Decision Maker may determine one of the following outcomes:

1. The original decision is upheld, and the original outcome stands;
2. The original decision is adjusted; the finding of misconduct stands, but the original outcome is changed to another outcome recommended by the Academic Integrity Policy Appendix;
3. The original decision is overturned; the finding of misconduct and the original outcome are rescinded.

### **After the appeal.**

When they have concluded their investigation of the appeal, the Decision Maker will communicate their decision by email to the student, copying the Academic Integrity Office and the person who made the initial decision.

The Decision Maker will endeavour to issue a decision on the appeal **within ten working days** of the appeal request being accepted by the Academic Integrity Office. However, the process may take longer in some circumstances.

If further actions are required on the basis of the appeal outcome (e.g. new assessments, revised marks), these should be communicated to the relevant persons by the person who made the initial decision.

The outcome of the appeal is final, and no further appeals related to the original decision or the appeal decision are allowed.



OLLSCOIL NA  
GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF GALWAY

An Oifig Sláine Acadúla  
Academic Integrity Office

Last revised: 11/09/2024