

APPEALS REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH STUDENTS

These Regulations are approved by the Academic Board.

They apply to any new and continuing research student who wants to appeal against a decision made by LSE academic departments (in relation to progress review, upgrade and de-registration) and by examiners (in relation to a final examination outcome) in and after the 2024/25 academic year. They do not apply to MRes students who should use the Appeals Regulations for taught students <https://info.lse.ac.uk/Staff/Divisions/Academic-Registrars-Division/Teaching-Quality-Assurance-and-Review-Office/Assets/Documents/Calendar/AppealsRegulations-for-all-students-from-2019-20.pdf>

Procedure for making an appeal

1. You can appeal against progress review and upgrade assessment decisions made by LSE academic departments, and decisions made by examiners appointed by LSE following an examination.
2. These regulations govern the procedure for making an appeal. They do not apply to complaints about issues affecting the provision of teaching, learning and supervision. For information on making such complaints, see the [Student Complaint Procedure](#).
3. To make an appeal, you must do so within 20 working days from when the School has confirmed the relevant decision to you. You must do so by completing the appeal form, which can be found on the PhD Academy website.
4. This appeal procedure is an internal process, and is not a legal process. We expect you to represent yourself. However, you can get advice from the LSE Students' Union Advice Centre.
5. You can withdraw your appeal at any stage without completing the procedure by confirming this in writing (by email) to the PhD Academy.

Decisions you can appeal against

6. You can appeal against:
 - 6.1 your department's decision that you have not met the progression requirements of your programme¹, and that either:
 - 6.1.1 your continued registration should be subject to conditions, or;
 - 6.1.2 you should be allowed to continue in registration only as an MPhil candidate, or;
 - 6.1.3 your registration should be terminated.
 - 6.2 your department's decision that you have not met the requirements to be upgraded to the PhD, at either the first or the second attempt.
 - 6.3 your examiners' decision that you are required to be re-examined, either:
 - 6.3.1 after completing revisions to your submitted thesis, or;
 - 6.3.2 without completing revisions to your submitted thesis.
 - 6.4 your examiners' decision not to award you either an MPhil or a PhD degree.
 - 6.5 your examiners' decision to award you an MPhil degree, rather than a PhD degree.

Grounds for an appeal: departmental decisions on progress or upgrade assessment

7. For an appeal against a departmental decision under the progress review or upgrade assessment processes, you can make an appeal on any or all of the following grounds (reasons).
 - 7.1 That the department did not follow the correct procedure, such that there is reasonable doubt that the decision would have been the same if the department had followed the correct procedure.
 - 7.2 That there is evidence of bias, prejudice or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more members of the panel involved in the decision such that the result should not be allowed to

¹ This includes decisions made under the *Regulations for Research Degrees*, or under the *PhD Remediation and Withdrawal Policy*.
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stand.

7.3 That there is new information about exceptional circumstances affecting your performance that the panel was not aware of when it took its decision, which factors beyond your control prevented you from disclosing prior to the relevant assessment, and that this produced an unfair result.

8. There are no other grounds for appeal. Specifically, you cannot appeal because you want to question the academic judgement² of academic staff involved in making a decision or of individual examiners.

Grounds for an appeal: examiners' decisions

9. For an appeal against examiners' decisions, you can make an appeal on any or all of the following grounds (reasons).

9.1 That the examiners did not follow the correct examination procedure such that there is reasonable doubt that the decision would have been the same if the examiners had followed the correct procedure.

9.2 That there is evidence of bias, prejudice or inadequate assessment on the part of one or both examiners such that the result of the examination should not be allowed to stand.

9.3 That your performance at the oral examination (viva) was affected by exceptional circumstances of which the examiners were not aware when they took their decision, which factors beyond your control prevented you from disclosing prior to the examination, and that this produced an unfair result.

10. There are no other grounds for appeal. Specifically, you cannot appeal because you want to question the academic judgement³ of academic staff involved in making a decision or of individual examiners.

Submitting an appeal

11. If you want to make an appeal, you must do so within 20 working days of the School confirming the relevant decision with you. To make an appeal you should complete the appeal form.

12. You must include all reasons (permitted under paragraphs 7 or 9) for appeal at this time. It is not permissible to introduce new reasons at a later stage of this procedure.

13. You must provide all the necessary evidence and information at the time you make the appeal. You cannot provide material later without our agreement.

14. Specifically, if you are appealing under reasons 7.3 or 9.3 above, you must provide evidence which complies with the School's requirements⁴ which:

14.1 sets out why you did not report the exceptional circumstances at the time; and

14.2 relates to the exceptional circumstances cited in your appeal.

15. All evidence must be in English. You are responsible for procuring official translations where these are necessary.

Accepting or rejecting an appeal

16. When the PhD Academy receives your appeal, you will receive an email confirming receipt.

17. The PhD Academy will send your appeal and all supporting documents to a member of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee other than the Chair, who will consider your appeal and the evidence you have provided. They will be referred to as the 'Stage 1 decision-maker'. They will also consider any relevant

² Academic judgement is the professional and scholarly knowledge and expertise which members of upgrade and review panels (in academic departments) and individual examiners draw upon in reaching an academic decision about your work (Higher Education Act, 2004).

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⁴ <https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/services/assets/documents/standards-of-evidence-information.pdf>

information from your academic record. They will then decide, normally within 5 working days of receiving your appeal, either that:

- 17.1 you do not have a valid reason for appeal (under paragraphs 7 or 9 above) and it should be dismissed (see paragraphs 18 to 22 below), or;
- 17.2 you do have a valid reason for appeal and it should be considered (see paragraphs 23 to 27 below).

Procedure when there is no valid reason for appeal

- 18. If the Stage 1 decision maker finds that you do not have a valid reason, the Academic Registrar (or a member of staff with authority to act for them) will be asked whether or not the appeal should be dismissed.
- 19. The Academic Registrar (or their delegate) will then, normally within 10 working days of receiving the recommendation from the Stage 1 decision-maker, either:
 - 19.1 accept the recommendation and dismiss the appeal (see paragraphs 20 to 22), or;
 - 19.2 reject the recommendation and ask the PhD Academy to appoint an alternative Stage 1 decision-maker to progress your appeal to the next stage (see paragraphs 23 to 27 below).
- 20. The Academic Registrar (or their delegate) will confirm their decision and the reasons for it, to the Stage 1 decision maker.
- 21. If the Academic Registrar (or their delegate) dismisses your appeal under paragraph 19.1, they will also consider whether there are any matters in it that should be referred to another LSE procedure (such as the [Student Complaint Procedure](#)).
- 22. The PhD Academy will confirm with you a decision taken under paragraph 19.1 in writing, with a copy of the response received under paragraph 20. They will do so normally within 5 working days of receiving the decision. If the Academic Registrar (or their delegate) decides to dismiss your appeal, that decision is final. They will send you a Completion of Procedures letter to explain the decision and confirm that you cannot appeal further through our internal processes. If you are still dissatisfied, you can take your case to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#).

Procedure when there is a valid reason for appeal

- 23. If your appeal is accepted under paragraphs 17.2 or 19.2 above, the Stage 1 decision-maker will consider your appeal.
- 24. The Stage 1 decision-maker will be asked to consider all the information presented and will determine either:
 - 24.1 that there is no evidence to uphold your appeal and it should be dismissed (see paragraphs 28 to 33 below), or;
 - 24.2 there is evidence to uphold your appeal. They will then cancel the original decision, if necessary including part or all of the process which led to the decision, and determine that:

in the case of an appeal against a progress review or upgrade assessment decision:

 - (i) the department are required to re-run the relevant decision-making process in light of the appeal outcome, either:
 - (a) with new assessors, or;
 - (b) with the same assessors.

in the case of an appeal against a decision made by your examiners:

 - (ii) your examiners should be required to reconsider their decision on the original examination in light of the outcome of the appeal, potentially including a recommendation or requirement as to the necessity of a further oral examination, or;
 - (iii) a fresh examination panel should be appointed, and that a further oral examination should be conducted.⁵

⁵ In this case, the new examination panel will be required to examine your originally submitted thesis, without reference to any previously submitted amendments, under the regulations in force at the time at which you originally entered for the examination, and

25. The Stage 1 decision-maker will normally reach a decision within 20 working days of receiving the appeal and will confirm this in writing, with the reasons for it, to the PhD Academy.
26. The Stage 1 decision-maker may consult with the examiners, members of the upgrade or progress review panel or other members of staff in the Department involved in making the original decision. They may also consult with members of LSE staff for advice on the procedure.
27. The PhD Academy will confirm with you a decision taken under paragraph 24 normally within 5 working days of receiving it. They will provide you with a copy of the written response submitted under paragraph 25.

Procedure when the original decision is upheld

28. If the Stage 1 decision-maker decides to uphold the original decision (under paragraph 24.1) at stage 1, the PhD Academy will inform you of your right to submit a further appeal. This must be submitted to the PhD Academy within 15 working days of receiving the stage 1 decision. Appeals submitted at this stage are referred to as 'stage 2' appeals.
29. You can make a stage 2 appeal against a stage 1 appeal on any or all of the following grounds (reasons).
 - 29.1 That a procedural flaw or irregularity in the decision-making process at stage 1 caused reasonable doubt as to whether the same decision would have been reached had it not occurred.
 - 29.2 That new material evidence is available, and that there is a valid explanation as to why it was not submitted at stage 1 and is instead being submitted at stage 2.
 - 29.3 That the decision at stage 1 was unreasonable or disproportionate.
30. The PhD Academy will send all information received under this procedure to the Chair of the School's Research Degrees Subcommittee (or a member of staff with authority to act for them), who will be asked to consider it and decide either that:
 - 30.1 there are no grounds for appeal under regulation 28, and that your appeal should be dismissed (see paragraph 34); or
 - 30.2 you have grounds for appeal under regulation 29, and that the decision-making process should be re-run. In this case, the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee (or their delegate) will then make their own determination under regulation 24.
31. The Research Degrees Sub-Committee Chair (or their delegate) may seek the view of other members of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee where necessary before reaching a decision. They can also seek clarification from you and/or your department/examiners/the stage 1 decision-maker concerning their decisions and/or any information submitted under this procedure.
32. The Research Degrees Sub-Committee Chair (or their delegate) will normally reach a decision within 20 working days of receiving the appeal and will confirm their decision in writing, with the reasons for it, to the PhD Academy.
33. The PhD Academy will confirm a decision taken under paragraph 30, normally within 5 working days of receiving it and provide you with a copy of the response submitted under paragraph 32.
34. The decision of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee Chair (or their delegate) is final. If they reach a decision under paragraph 30.1, the PhD Academy will send you a Completion of Procedures letter to explain the decision and confirm that you cannot appeal further through our internal processes. If you are still dissatisfied, you can take your case to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#).

Further procedural notes

35. In complex cases, such as those involving significant quantities of evidence or particularly complex procedural questions, decision makers may exceed the timescales stated above. In such cases, the PhD Academy will keep you informed, providing updated timescales wherever feasible.
36. Some appeals cases may raise matters which overlap with other School procedures.⁶ Where an appeal overlaps with

will not be given any information about the previous examination or the appeal process.

⁶ A non-exhaustive list of potentially overlapping procedures includes the Cause of Concern process, the Fitness to Study procedure, the Disciplinary, Harassment and Bullying Policy, the Student Complaints Procedure, the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for Professional Services staff, and the Academic Annex to the Articles of Association of the London School of Economics and Political Science.



these procedures, the School may need to pause consideration of your appeal to allow consideration to be undertaken under another procedure.

See the [Calendar](#) for further information about Programme Regulations, Course Guides, School and academic Regulations.