

Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education

Student Appeals Procedures

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Student Appeals Procedure for the programmes offered in partnership with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

DEFINITIONS: Please note that for the above-mentioned programmes, the concept of 'appeal' is distinguished from that of 'complaint'. Whilst appeal will relate to academic matters, mainly academic decision, on the basis of evidence and procedure and not on the basis of the academic decision, complaint will relate to any dissatisfaction about matters that affect the quality of the student's learning experience opportunity, including assessment-related matters or standard of services provided by the College.

For student *appeals*, Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education works to ensure these procedures are followed.

Introduction

We aim to offer students the best possible educational experience while at the College and seek to improve continuously the quality of the services we provide. As a result, we hope students never need to appeal against an academic decision made by the College. However, should student(s) decide to appeal against an academic judgement, this procedure provides details of how to go about doing so for a successful resolving problems while studying at Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education.

The College values any feedback as this helps to inform quality improvements.

The object of this procedure is to solve problems quickly, simply and fairly at the earliest possible stage. The College will deal courteously and promptly with student appeals at all times.

The procedure applies to all registered students of the Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education, and those who have completed their studies within the past 2 years. Alternative provisions will be made if the student is at a distance from the campus.

Anonymous appeals will be considered, however further action will depend on the volume and reliance of the information given, the nature of the appeal, and the practicalities of progressing it further.

The internal regulations of the College and their associated policies and guidance will be operated in accordance with its Equal Opportunities Policy. Appeals will be handled with an appropriate level of confidentiality. There is an expectation that students and staff members will treat both the processes and each other with respect.

Students will not be treated less favourably by the College or suffer any disadvantage if they make an appeal in a good faith, regardless of the result.

Investigations will be conducted by a member of staff who is independent of the situation, and will be confidential.

Appeals will be dealt with in a timely fashion. Those involved in investigating the cases of appeal will establish appropriate timescales based on its nature and complexity. These timescales should be communicated to the student and the student kept informed of any changes.

If further independent advice and support is needed, students/staff may seek advice from Citizens Advice Scotland.

The College defines “academic judgement” as the professional and scholarly knowledge and expertise which members of staff draw upon in reaching an academic decision. You cannot submit an appeal simply because you believe you should have been awarded a better mark. Robust mechanisms exist within the College to ensure that marking standards are fair and appropriate.

Appeal Procedure stages

Stage 1: Informal stage

Students wishing to make an appeal should normally try to resolve this informally with the member of staff concerned. Or students may raise the appeal informally with their Student Programme Representative, Student Administrator, Unit Coordinator, or Programme Coordinator. If the student feels unable to raise the issue directly with any of these individuals, then they can arrange to speak to one of the officers of the Al-Maktoum College Student Society who can provide the student with impartial advice. These officers may also represent the student should they choose to make a formal appeal. The College will accept appeals brought by third parties, as long as the individual affected has given their personal consent under the requirements of the Data Protection Act. This usually means that the individual affected must give clear written authority for the third party to act on their behalf.

Staff will be informed if an appeal has been made against them/their academic judgement, and be given full details of this. Appropriate support will be made available to any member of staff who is involved in the appeal. Such support may come from a line manager, colleague, or SQA Coordinator/ Head of Department and will be determined in relation to the nature of the appeal.

It is anticipated that the vast majority of appeals should be resolved at this stage.

Stage 2: First Formal stage

If a student’s appeal cannot be resolved informally, then it must be made in writing formally to the SQA Coordinator/ Head of Department conveying the nature of the appeal within 5 working days of being unable to resolve the matter informally. Where possible, the student should also indicate the remedy sought. Appeals must be signed by the student concerned and will not be accepted if signed by a third party unless, for example, a student has asked a Student Society officer to represent them.

A meeting will be arranged with the student within 10 working days to discuss the matter and attempt to resolve it. At such a meeting the student may be accompanied by a friend or other adviser, who may include the President of the Al-Maktoum College Student Society or their nominee. A copy of the proceedings of the meeting will be sent to the student who has submitted the appeal. The SQA Coordinator/ Head of Department may ask for help from one or two members of the academic staff at this stage.

The outcome of this meeting will be provided in writing within 3 working days.

Stage 3: Second Formal stage

If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, then they should state this in writing to the Principal's Office and ask for a meeting with the Principal. A meeting will be arranged with the student within 6 working days to discuss the matter and attempt to resolve it. At such a meeting the student may be accompanied by a friend or other adviser. This may include the President of the Al-Maktoum College Student Society or their nominee. A copy of the proceedings of the meeting will be sent to the student who has submitted the appeal. The Principal may ask for help from the Registrar/member of academic staff/member of Academic Council or College Council at this stage.

The outcome of this meeting will be provided in writing within 3 working days.

This will normally be the final stage of the appeals procedure.

Appeals affecting a number of students

Where the appeal is shared by several students then the matter should be raised collectively as a group and the procedures followed as outlined above. If a group of students are submitting a letter under one of the formal stages of the procedure, then the letter should be signed by all of the complainants. At any meeting which takes place to discuss the appeal, the group may select up to three of its members to represent it in the discussions.

Where the College receives a number of individual appeals from students which we feel would be better dealt with collectively, we may decide to consider those appeals on a collective basis and will inform the students accordingly. However, the College will normally deal with academic matters individually.

Timescales and outcomes

It is expected that any appeal should be submitted within 10 working days after receiving the assessment result(s). If there is any unreasonable delay in submitting an appeal, the College will seek to establish the grounds for such a delay, and act accordingly. We will acknowledge receipt of appeals and will normally arrange to meet with the student/s concerned within 10 working days of the date of receipt. Where this is not possible, for example where the College has to carry out further investigations or gather additional evidence, we will ensure that the student is kept aware of the current position and of when a meeting is likely to take place.

Students will be notified of the outcome of the appeal in writing at the end of each Formal Stage. After each Formal Stage, we normally aim to respond within 3 working days of having met the student/s.

Storage and Processing of Appeals Information

Applicants lodging an appeal can expect their cases to be dealt with confidentially and with due regard for their privacy. It may be disclosed to those members of the College who have a need to see it in order to investigate the appeal. This disclosure will be undertaken solely to advance the thorough investigation of the appeal and will not be undertaken to disadvantage any party. Those who will act as assessors will mark the exam paper, essay or any written submission blindly and will provide their expertise feedback and mark.

The personalised record of the appeal and any supporting papers will be destroyed five years following resolution of the case. Anonymised data may be kept longer in order to facilitate monitoring and review of the College's admissions process.

Dissemination

The most up-to-date version of these procedures is made available on the College's website. They will also be available upon request from the Student Administration Office, and referred to during the Induction Day and in the Student Handbook.