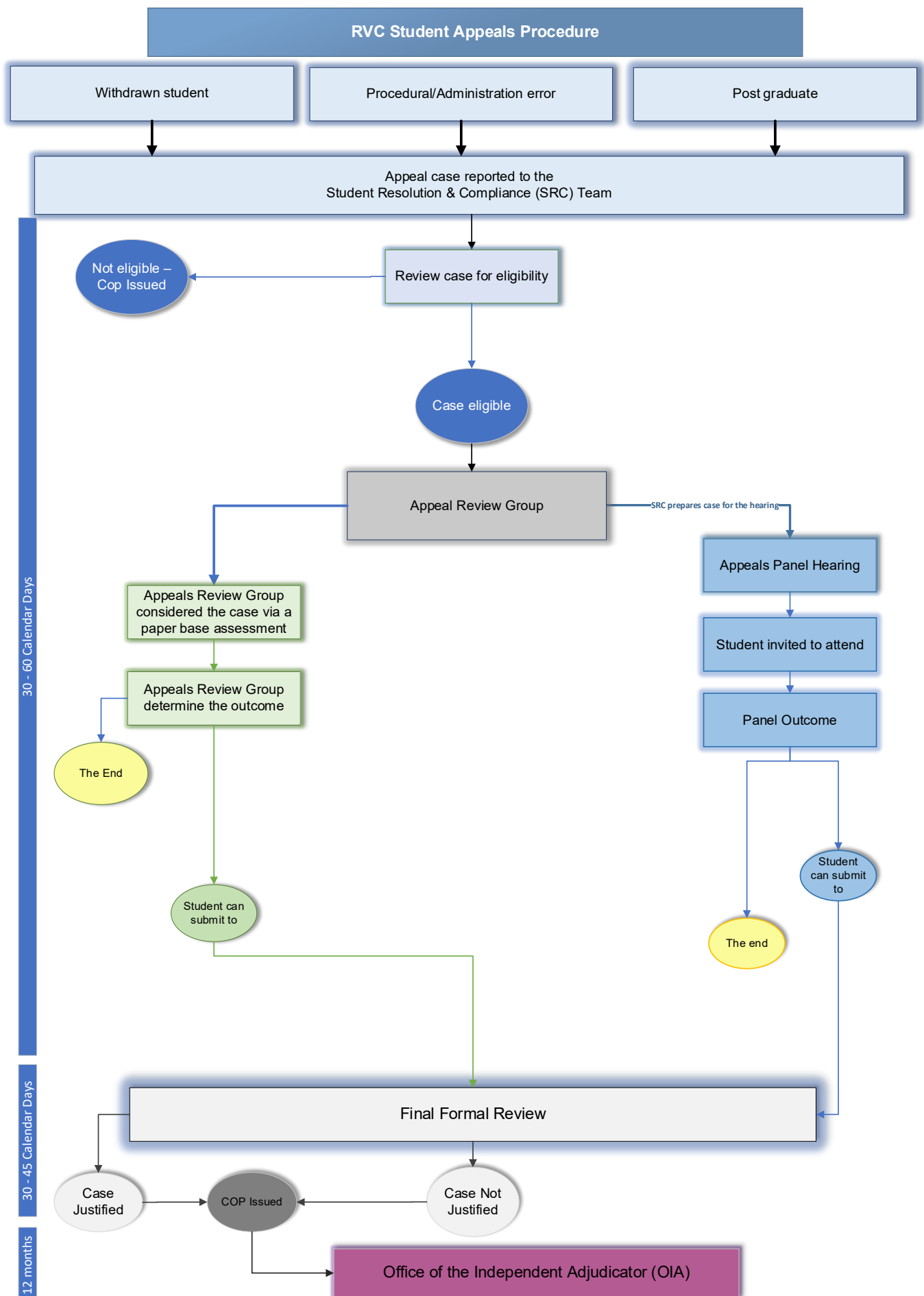


RVC Student Appeals Procedure

For all Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes

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1. Introduction and purpose

- 1.1 Students may wish to present a case regarding their continuation or outcome of studies due to various factors. Depending on the nature of these factors, the case will be classified as either an Appeal or a Complaint.
- 1.2 A student who appeals will suffer no detriment as a result of appealing.

2. Definition of an appeal

- 2.1 An appeal is a request for a review of a decision made by an academic body that makes a decision(s) on a student's progression, assessment, or award.
- 2.2 An academic appeal is based on documented evidence to support an extenuating circumstance, a procedural error, administrative error or new evidence which has likely resulted in an underperformance causing a failure to progress. The procedures cannot be used to contest a classification or marks on the basis of it not being predicted or expected.

3. Right of appeal and allowable grounds

- 3.1 Where an academic decision has resulted in a student no longer having the right to progress or gain the award on the programme for which they originally registered. Any appeal has to be on one or more of the following grounds:
 - 3.1.1 There was an error in the procedure that might have resulted in an incorrect decision.
 - 3.1.2 That the student's failure or ineligibility for the award was caused by extenuating circumstances which have significantly disadvantaged them by comparison to their peers.
 - 3.1.3 Significant new and relevant evidence has come to light which could not have been presented at the time of the Panel's decision.
 - 3.1.4 That there was an administrative error¹ which has significantly impacted a student's ability to

¹ Definition: An **administrative error** is a human error that could affect the accuracy of the marks under consideration by the Board (e.g., incorrect calculations or inputting of marks).

progress.

- 3.2 Where a student on a taught course wishes to contest their result(s) or a degree classification, any appeal must be on one or more of the following grounds:

- 3.2.1 That there was an error in the procedure followed by at the Board or Post Graduate progression or appraisal system that might have resulted in an incorrect decision; **and/or**
- 3.2.2 That there was an administrative error.

4. Academic judgment

- 4.1 Academic judgment, as defined by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator Higher Education (OIAHE), *is a judgment that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential. So, for example, a judgement about marks awarded, degree classification, research methodology, whether the feedback is correct or adequate, and the content or outcomes of a course will normally involve academic judgement.*
- 4.2 Academic judgment does not involve:
- 4.2.1 Decisions related to procedural fairness.
- 4.2.2 Whether or not the process has been interpreted correctly or appropriately applied.
- 4.2.3 Consideration of evidence during a decision-making process.

5. General principles

- 5.1 Following the correct application of RVC procedures (e.g., exam board), academic judgment cannot be appealed against.
- 5.2 A student will not be permitted to progress on their programme of study without having passed the examination/assessment or appraisal that they had failed before the appeal.
- 5.3 Where a student claims that there was an administrative error that might have resulted in an incorrect decision regarding progress or actual result. The Student Resolution and Compliance (SRC) Team will conduct a local-level investigation to determine whether a case needs to be answered (section 7).

- 5.4 SRC will conduct enquiries to ascertain whether there is reasonable evidence of a administrative/procedural error. If the case is unfounded, SRC will issue a Completion of Procedures (CoP) Letter².
- 5.5 Consideration of cases will also explore whether the student had reasonable access to support measures and options related to deferrals or an interruption of study.
- 5.6 Successive appeals submitted by the same student in either the same year or future years will require new grounds on the reasons surrounding their underperformance. Cases will not be accepted based on a student's circumstances, which have already been previously considered.
- 5.7 Should a student's case be successful, their return to the programme will be contingent upon the next available assessment opportunity.

6. Process and Timescales

6.1 Process timescale table:

Process	Action	Expected Timescale
Appeals Procedure	Appeal Review Group and delivery of outcome (inclusive of either a paper-based review or a Panel hearing)	Up to 60 calendar days
Review	Final Formal Review (internal to RVC)	30 - 45 calendar days
External Review (Independent external review)	Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIAHE)	12 calendar months

- 6.2 The RVC will make every effort to adhere to the timescales above but matters of complexity and/or periods of RVC closure or staff absence may require additional time to ensure that appeal submissions are considered thoroughly. Where these timescales need to be extended, we will confirm this in writing to the student(s) and keep them regularly informed of progress.
- 6.3 Reasonable attempts will be made to conclude the procedure before the beginning of

² A Completion of Procedures Letter is a letter that educational providers issue at the end of their internal procedures.

the next academic year and/or timetabled assessment opportunity; however, this is not always attainable.

7. Supporting early resolution

- 7.1 The RVC supports early resolution in relation to feedback, examination marks, and administrative and/or procedural errors.
- 7.2 Students cannot challenge decisions about marks, progression, or classifications once they have been ratified by the Board of Examiners. We appreciate that students may be dissatisfied with their awarded marks and wish to seek extra clarification on the marking process or the Exam Board's decision following the publication of results, such as:
 - 7.2.1 How the marks have been calculated.
 - 7.2.2 Explanation of the marking and moderation process.
- 7.3 We encourage all students to consult with their academic tutor and/or supervisor in the first instance to try and understand the circumstances surrounding their results and feedback.
- 7.4 Students can also contact the Advice Centre (advice@rvc.ac.uk) for wellbeing and support, and the Royal Veterinary College Student Union (RVCSU).
- 7.5 If a student is unable to access their tutor or supervisor, there will be other course staff available, for example, the Year Leader, Module and/or Strand Leader, or Course Director. The Exams Office (exams@rvc.ac.uk) will be able to signpost students to the best point of contact in relation to specific assessment and/or exam queries.
- 7.6 If the issue around marking clarification remains unresolved, then the student can submit their concerns to the SRC Team (studentappeals@rvc.ac.uk) by submitting and completing the [A002 Student Appeals Request Form](#) within 21 calendar days after the provisional marks release date.
- 7.7 SRC will have 21 calendar days from the date of the completed submission to complete the local-level investigation and provide the student with an outcome.

7.8 The local-level investigation will be in collaboration with Exams Office who will check whether a procedural error or administrative error has taken place. Possible outcomes will be:

7.8.1 The local-level investigation finds there is no procedural error or administrative error and the RVC marking process was followed accurately. The student would not be able to contest the outcome as per academic judgment, and this would mark the end of the procedures.

7.8.2 The investigation detects a procedural error or an administrative error in the marking process and the case would be escalated to the Registrar for early resolution.

Or

7.8.3 The Chair of the Examination Board and/or Course Management Committee (CMC) propose an appropriate resolution.

7.9 Should other students be directly affected by the outcome then the RVC would offer the same resolution for all students impacted by the local- level investigation outcome.

7.10 There is no available outcome which allows for re-marking an examination or assessment. The agreed resolution would be aligned with the outcomes of the formal appeals (sections 21 & 22).

8. How to request an appeal

8.1 Students who have failed to meet the requirements to progress will be notified of their right to appeal via a withdrawal notification letter from the Registrar.

8.2 The [A002 Student Appeals Request Form](#) should be accompanied by a written statement and documented evidence to support the issues and circumstances surrounding the appeal.

8.3 Students are required to submit their appeals, including their written statement and supporting evidence, within 21 calendar days from the date of the withdrawal letter or publication of results.

- 8.4 Cases will not be considered unless there is sufficient evidence to support the students' claims or grounds for an appeal.
- 8.5 The SRC Team will acknowledge receipt of the full appeal submission within 5 calendar days.
- 8.6 The submission will be fully reviewed and assessed to ensure the case meets the allowable grounds.
- 8.7 Once the case has been fully reviewed, the SRC Team will respond within 14 calendar days, to confirm one of the following:
- 8.7.1 That the case has been submitted on grounds of Extenuating Circumstances³ which are unfounded and therefore, will be considered ineligible under these procedures, and a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued.
- 8.7.2 That the case submitted qualifies for consideration by the Appeal Review Group Meeting. The students will be notified at this point of the range of outcomes to the Appeal Review Group.

9. What to include in your appeal

- 9.1 The written statement should include:
- A self-appraisal outlining the details of the circumstances surrounding the student's reasons for an appeal.
 - How the circumstances have directly impacted the student's personal circumstances, learning and/or teaching provisions, i.e., attendance/engagement.
 - Reflection in terms of how the student intends to manage their circumstances moving forward, especially if the issues require more long-term management.
 - Any steps taken to engage with the RVC support services or external support.

³ Extenuating Circumstances definition is broadly referred to serious or significant circumstances which are unforeseen and beyond a student's control and could significantly impair their academic performance in one or more assessed activities, possibly over a short period of time.

9.2 Examples of evidence which can be used include (non-exhaustive list):

- Medical evidence.
- Order of service or death certificates.
- Specific Learning Difference or Disability Diagnosis if the diagnosis is directly associated with the period related to the underperformance.

9.3 Examples of evidence which will not be accepted:

- Testimonials from fellow students or practitioners.
- Matter of opinion or hearsay claims around undiagnosed illness or conditions.

9.4 Students are advised to consult with tutors/supervisors and other professional sources of advice to ensure they present a complete case to the Appeal Review Group and/or Panel.

9.5 Where any extenuating circumstances are presented that would seem relevant to the student's fitness to practise, after consultation, the case may be directed to the Fitness to Practise Procedure by the Appeal Review Group and/or Panel.

9.6 In addition to the material presented by the students, the Appeals Review Group and/or Panel will receive a copy of the following for each student:

- A copy of the student's appeal request form.
- A form completed by the student's tutor or supervisor concerning the student's engagement with their studies during the time leading to failure.
- A full academic history from all routine formal progress meetings and assessment marks for the time leading up to the failure.
- Any record following a Student Performance and Development (SPD) Meeting. Any parts of the notes which are identified as being non-related disclosure will be appropriately redacted.
- Any records outlining engagement with Disability support services (if applicable).
- Any relevant information held on record by the Academic Registry (i.e. the time

remaining on the student's maximum registration period⁴) in relation to all programmes.

- 9.7 Conflict of interest will be checked with the student and the Appeals Review Group and/or Panel members before any case documents are shared to ensure all Group and Panel members remain impartial.

10. Out of time

- 10.1 Appeals must be submitted within the procedural timescales of 21 calendar days from the date of the withdrawal letter.
- 10.2 Any appeals received after this time will be considered out of time.
- 10.3 Should there be exceptional circumstances for a late submission then students should submit the form and provide their reason for an extension and any evidence to support their claims. A decision will be made on whether or not the appeal can be taken forward.
- 10.4 Non-exhaustive reasons that will not be accepted based on a reason for submitting late:
- Not knowing about the academic appeals process or associated time limits.
 - Being on holiday or having work commitments.
 - Non-reported or registered issues around technical or connection difficulties.
- 10.5 Should the student's reasons for a late submission be rejected, they will be issued an Out of Time Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter explaining the rationale for the decision. Receipt of the CoP letter will enable the student to request an external review with the OIAHE (section 27).

11. Support and advice for students

- 11.1 Students who have entered the Appeals process can approach a range of staff and supporters for advice. Examples are (but not restricted to) listed below:
- Tutor

⁴. Minimum and maximum time allowed to complete the award as per the Study and Award Regulations.

- Senior Tutor
- Supervisor
- Departmental Postgraduate Research (PGR) Advisor
- [Student Union Representative](#)
- Course Director or Academic Head of the Graduate School
- Year Leader
- Pathway/Module leader
- [Advice Centre](#)
- [Study Skills Team](#)
- [Student Resolution and Compliance \(SRC\) Team](#)
- [Disability Advisor](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit](#)

12. Confidentiality and record keeping

- 12.1 Cases of appeals are treated with confidentiality and are not discussed amongst the RVC or wider community unless an immediate risk is identified. Only key members of staff will be notified to provide additional development and support in relation to any post-meeting recommendations or conditions.
- 12.2 The student's tutor (for teaching degrees) or supervisor (for research degrees) and essential student support staff will be informed of the outcome of the appeal but not the content of the appeal.
- 12.3 In the event of a successful appeal, students may choose to share details of their extenuating circumstances with key staff members (tutor, senior tutor, supervisor, Advice Centre, etc.) to help inform discussions about potential support requirements.
- 12.4 The Academic Board will receive annual reports of anonymised appeal cases, including data on the total number of reported case types, outcomes and identified risk and control measures. The RVC will annually evaluate and audit the appeal cases along with other forms of feedback, to improve the quality and effectiveness of the RVC's governance, compliance, and service delivery standards.

- 12.5 Students are advised to keep a copy of all correspondence in case they are dissatisfied with the appeal outcome and wish to use this information as part of their supporting evidence when making a request for a Final Formal Review (section 25) or submitting a complaint to the OIAHE (section 27).
- 12.6 Appeals records are administered centrally by the SRC Team within the Academic Registry and are held on a casework tracker. Records of academic appeals cases are retained for 6 years from the last action taken on the case.
- 12.7 To help support the RVC annual evaluation, any student who undertakes the appeals process will be invited to complete a Student Resolution and Compliance Survey.

13. Retention, Deletion and Archiving

- 13.1 Data related to appeals is used to:
- 13.1.1 Monitor and analyse our management of casework within the required timeframes to improve and develop RVC service delivery.
 - 13.1.2 Respond to internal audit requirements.
 - 13.1.3 Enable us to respond to any requests regarding the decision and process that may be made by the OIAHE.
 - 13.1.4 Conduct the periodic evaluation of cases in relation to Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests (SARs).
- 13.2 Individuals who obtain copies of records before and during the process will be sent an automated reminder to delete or shred any papers and/or documented evidence related to the student's case. This may also include double deleting any copies saved in downloaded folders. Access will also be removed from the created One Drive Folder where appeals documents are securely shared.

14. Related policies and procedures

- 14.1 Where a student claims that the actions or inactions of RVC or external staff or other RVC provisions for their learning have resulted in the student's underperformance, this will be treated as a complaint using the [RVC Student Complaints and Resolution Procedure](#).
- 14.2 At any stage of this process, the staff involved can refer the student to the [Fitness to](#)

[Practise Procedure](#). Should this occur, the Appeals Procedure will be suspended.

Once a decision has been taken on the student's fitness to practise, a decision can be made on the continuation of the Appeals Procedure.

15. Attendance and engagement

- 15.1 Students are expected to fully engage with the appeals process if they wish to submit an appeal. This includes promptly responding to requests for information and attending hearings scheduled under this procedure.
- 15.2 Failure to engage with the appeals procedure may result in the case not being heard and the termination of proceedings.
- 15.3 Approval of non-attendance is only permitted in exceptional circumstances (e.g., medical grounds). If approval is granted, the Hearing will be postponed only once with the intention of rescheduling at the earliest opportunity.
- 15.4 In such cases where the student has concerns over their mental health or impaired decision making, then a validation (e.g. an Occupational Health report or private clinical report) of being fit to undertake the process will be requested.
- 15.5 If a student fails to attend the Hearing without an approved reason, the Panel may agree that the case be considered in the student's absence based on information available at the time of the Hearing.
- 15.6 If a student decides to withdraw from the RVC whilst an appeals case is ongoing, this will mean the case is withdrawn from being considered under these procedures.

16. Reasonable Adjustments

- 16.1 Students who enter into the procedure are encouraged to disclose, at the earliest opportunity, any disability, learning difference or personal circumstance that may require a reasonable adjustment to the procedural process. A request can be submitted in writing to studentappeals@rvc.ac.uk. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 16.2 Reasonable adjustment may include providing information in different formats,

providing additional breaks during meetings, or conducting meetings via videoconferencing (for example where reported students are working/carers and unable to travel).

- 16.3 At the RVC's discretion, by way of making reasonable adjustments, the student may also be entitled to bring a health professional, support worker or disability advisor.

17. Composition of the Appeal Review Group

- 17.1 The Appeal Review Group composition:

- Two members of academic staff (voting members)
- At least one of these members should be experienced in making decisions about student progression, and one member of staff who meets the criteria will be selected as Chair.
- A member of the RVC Student Union (voting member)
- Notetaker appointed by the SRC Team (non-voting).

- 17.2 The quorum required for the Appeals Review Group to convene will be no less than two academic voting members. The appointed Chair shall have a casting vote.

- 17.3 The Student Union member of the Appeal Review Group can be omitted from membership at the request of the student whose case is being considered.

- 17.4 The SRC Team will appoint members depending on the nature of the case and the expertise needed.

- 17.5 The Appeal Review Group may be required to review multiple cases in one session.

- 17.6 There may be grounds to appoint additional members to the Appeal Review Group according to the nature and complexity of the case and/or to extend the Appeal Review Group's responsibility to a Panel where it is deemed appropriate.

- 17.7 If there are concerns regarding a conflict of interest or the perception of bias ⁵, it must be declared by the Appeals Review Group. In such cases, the SRC may adjourn the proceedings for a period not exceeding 7 calendar days to address procedural matters and ensure fairness. Group members must not have been key to the original decision

⁵ RVC follows the OIAHE Bias and the Perception of Bias framework - [Good Practice Framework - Bias and the perception of bias](#).

regarding the marking process and must be independent of any consideration by the Student Development and Performance (SPD) Panel.

17.8 The SRC Team are responsible for changing the Appeal Review Group's membership based on staff absences.

17.9 The SRC Team will determine whether the Appeal Review Group meet in person or via Teams, depending on procedural timescales and membership availability.

18. Appeal Review Group

18.1 The remit of the Appeal Review Group is to independently assess the submitted case based on the information provided by the student, to determine the outcome of the appeal.

18.2 The Appeal Review Group must decide on one of the following actions for each submitted case:

18.2.1 The case can be addressed via a paper-based review.

18.2.2 The case requires an escalation to an Appeal Panel.

18.3 In cases where the outcome is not unanimous, the Appeal Review Group Chair will have the casting vote.

19. Criteria for deciding the format of the Appeal

19.1 To determine whether to facilitate a paper-based review, the Appeal Review Group should decide if the case meets one or more of the following:

19.1.1 The case has substantiated documentation and leaves no further gaps of enquiry and so it is reasonable to reach a conclusion based on the information provided without the student attending.

19.1.2 Presence at a Panel is likely to cause an adverse impact on the student's mental well-being, studies, or personal circumstances.

19.1.3 Consideration of the length of procedural timescales thus far, specifically whether a paper-based review could minimise or avoid any further stress or inconvenience to the student.

19.1.4 There is no decision to be made on the student's maximum registration

period.

19.2 The Appeal Review Group may decide that a Panel Hearing is more appropriate if the case meets one or more of the criteria below:

19.2.1 The case highlights gaps of detail or information and requires further lines of questioning by the Appeal Panel to the student within an in-person or remote setting.

19.2.2 There is an identified reasonable adjustment to hold a Hearing so the student can present their case.

19.2.3 The reasons for underperformance are considered to have a long-lasting risk or impact on the student's opportunity to progress or to meet the programme requirements.

19.2.4 The case has reached the maximum registration period and therefore requires a Suspension of the Regulations decision.

19.3 Additional submissions of case evidence by the student can only be accepted and approved by the Appeal Review Group Chair. If approved, the student will also receive an identical copy of the completed evidence pack.

19.4 Should the Appeal Review Group opt to proceed with an Appeal Panel, the Appeal Panel and the student will be provided with 7 calendar days' notice of the Hearing date, time and venue. The student will be informed of the Appeal Review Group's rationale for progressing to a hearing.

19.5 Should the Appeal Review Group opt to proceed with a paper-based review, the SRC Team will provide the formal outcome letter to the student within 7 calendar days of the decision, along with the reason(s) why the paper-based review was appropriate under the criteria (section 19.2).

20. Appeals Panel

20.1 The Appeal Panel will be convened by the SRC Team. The Panel will consist of:

- Three members of academic staff (voting members)
- At least one of these members should be experienced in making decisions about student progression, and one member of staff who meets this criteria will be selected as chair.

- A member of the RVC Student Union (voting member)
- One member of the Panel may be external to the RVC.
- One member of the Panel may be specifically required for their expertise in a specialist field (MVetMed, Intern, PGR or PhD-related cases).
- Notetaker from the SRC Team (non-voting member)

20.2 The quorum required for the Appeals Review Group to convene will be no less than **three** voting members. The appointed Chair shall have a casting vote.

20.3 The purpose of the student's attendance will be to present their case, version of events and answer any line of questioning.

20.4 Students will be entitled to bring a supporter to the Hearing, and this can be a friend, a family member or a member of the RVC community. Students must inform the SRC Team of the name of their chosen supporter by the deadline date outlined on the invitation letter. The supporter's role is to support the student but not to participate in the Hearing discussions unless invited to do so by the Chair.

20.5 The student must declare their supporter to the SRC Team before the Hearing.

20.6 The formal invitation letter will outline all the necessary information to attend (date, time and location of the Hearing).

20.7 Student's non-attendance will be considered in conjunction with 'Attendance and Engagement', (section 15).

20.8 The Appeal Panel Hearing will be recorded by the SRC notetaker.

20.9 The SRC Team reserves the right to hold the Hearing remotely based on good, evidenced grounds (e.g., medical reasons). Any requests will require approval by the SRC Team.

21. Appeal outcomes

21.1 The Appeals Review Group and/or Panel shall determine whether the appeal case is justified, not justified or partially justified and may refer any relevant concerns to the Fitness to Practise Procedures or the Student Complaints and Resolution Procedures,

as appropriate (refer to section 14).

- 21.2 The Appeals Review Group and/or Panel shall consider the appeal justified if they determine that there has been a procedural or administrative error which has either disadvantaged the student's opportunity to progress or resulted in an incorrect decision.
- 21.3 Cases presented on the grounds of extenuating circumstances will be justified if the Appeals Review Group and/or Panel determine that the student has been disadvantaged by comparison to their peers and the student's academic profile indicates that they have the potential to achieve the intended award.
- 21.4 If the Appeals Review Group and/or Panel determine that the student's academic profile is weak, or they identify concerns regarding the student's engagement with learning, the case will not be justified, irrespective of the extenuating circumstances presented.
- 21.5 Where the appeal is justified, the Appeals Review Group and/or Panel will determine the compulsory conditions for the student's return to study, such as:
- Whether or not the student should return to assessment only, or in attendance, teaching.
 - Any required period of deferral or interruption.
 - Any requirement to attend an Occupational Health appointment to confirm the student is fit to study before they can return to their programme.
 - Any other actions considered important for future success, such as engaging with learning support or other specialist advice.
- 21.6 Students who are withdrawn from their postgraduate research (PGR) programme due to unforeseen circumstances or a procedural error which have resulted in the student being prevented from completing the programme should be aware that it may not be possible to resume their original research project. This applies particularly where there are concerns regarding the project's continued viability. Such concerns may include, but are not limited to:
- The research is no longer required or has already been completed.

- The student is unlikely to complete the research within the remaining registration period.
- Funding for the project is no longer available.
- A suitable supervisory team can no longer be provided.

21.7 Where a withdrawal decision is based on academic judgement, for example, due to prolonged inactivity or failure to meet academic standards, the student's right of appeal will be through the Final Formal Review (FFR) process. In such cases, a potential outcome may be an offer to transfer to a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) programme, subject to the student meeting the required academic standards for registration.

22. Regulation outcomes

22.1 The SRC Team shall ensure that all regulatory requirements for a student's return to study are met by the completion of the Return to Study Regulations Form.

22.2 The return to study process requires submission of the completed Return to Study Regulations Form to the Examinations Office. Subsequent approval must be obtained from the relevant Course Director or Year Leader, as applicable. These administrators and academic staff members will determine the appropriate assessment components, regulations, and curriculum requirements to support the student in following the correct pathway for return to study and to maximise their potential for academic progression.

22.3 The student's Return to Study status will be classified as that of a 'resit' student, confirming a final opportunity to complete their programme.

22.4 Students should be made aware that appeals against Assessment and Award Regulations are permitted only on narrow and defined grounds (procedural or admin error). This means any requirements within the Return to Study Regulations Form derived from the Assessment and Award Regulations will not be eligible for review under the [Final Formal Review Procedure](#) unless there is evidence to suggest a procedural error has taken place.

22.5 The SRC Team will administer the Appeals Review Group/ Panel outcome and

Regulatory outcome with the student and any relevant teams; this concludes the end of SRC's responsibilities under the Appeals Procedure.

23. Suspension of Regulation

23.1 In cases where a student's maximum registration period has already been exhausted at the time of their withdrawal from their programme and/ or will be within their agreed Return to Study Regulations pathway, the confirmation of a Suspension of Regulations (SoR) will fall under the jurisdiction of the Panel.

23.2 A Suspension of Regulations under these procedures will only be considered where the following criteria are met:

- The student has not previously obtained a Suspension of Regulations to extend their maximum registration period.
- The appeal includes exceptional circumstances that prevented academic progress or engagement at the time of withdrawal (e.g. medical, personal, or other significant circumstances).

23.3 The decision of the Panel regarding a Suspension of Regulations will be communicated in writing to the students along with any associated conditions.

23.4 Any other request for the Suspension of Regulation outside of these parameters would need to be submitted using the [Suspension of Regulation Protocol](#).

24. Communication of the outcome

24.1 Written communication before and after the Appeal Review Group and/or Panel Hearing will be made through the student's RVC email address. If they are not registered on a programme, students can expect to continue to have access to their RVC email accounts for the duration of the procedure.

24.2 The student will receive the decision in writing no more than 7 calendar days after the Appeal Review Group and/or Panel Hearing.

24.3 Should there be any delays with the student receiving the outcome, the SRC Team will update the student on the revised timeframes.

25. Final Formal Review (FFR) – Internal Review

25.1 The student can request an FFR if they have grounds to believe:

- That there is **new evidence** that could not have been, or for good reason, was not, made available at the time of the previous decision.
- That evidence can be produced of a significant **procedural error(s)** made before or during the previous process.
- That any remedy or outcome proposed by the previous decision is **manifestly unreasonable**.

25.2 Students requesting a Final Formal Review must complete and submit a [Final Formal Request Form](#) to the Student Resolution and Compliance Team at ffr@rvc.ac.uk within 14 calendar days of the Appeals outcome. Full details and process are outlined in the [Final Formal Review Procedures](#).

26. Completion of procedures

26.1 A Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter is issued when any student process has reached the end of internal procedures.

26.2 If the RVC determines that an appeal is unjustified or that a case is not permitted to proceed under their internal procedures, the RVC will provide a CoP letter to the student. This letter will include an explanation of the decision reached.

26.3 A CoP letter is required should the student wish to advance a complaint to the Office of the OIAHE regarding the Student Appeals Procedure. The RVC will usually only issue a CoP letter once the Student Appeals Procedure has concluded, and a final decision has been provided to the student.

27. Office of Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE)

27.1 Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of an FFR can apply to the OIAHE for an independent review. Requests for OIAHE review must be made no later than 12 months after the FFR decision.

27.2 Further guidance on submitting a complaint to the OIAHE and the OIAHE Complaint Form can also be found on the OIA's website.