

Appeals Process to the Student Academic Administrative Appeals Committee (SAAAC)

During your time at university, you may want to appeal a decision made by the University regarding an academic matter. This decision could relate to assessment, show cause, student loans and scholarships, or other study-related matters.

This guide details the typical process you can expect and best practices for writing and lodging an appeal to the Student Academic Administrative Appeals Committee (SAAAC), and how UQ Union's Student Advocacy & Support (SAS) team can help you.

Step 1: A formal letter is sent to you by the University.

All official decisions by the University require a formal letter to be sent to you. In this letter, the decision maker (UQ) is required to detail the decision and all factors that led to the decision being made.

An outline in chronological order of all processes followed by the University will be clearly laid out, including important interactions (between University staff, or between staff and you) noted, any interventions or opportunities provided, and the relevant policies that have led to the decision being made.

The decision letter will outline your right to appeal to the Student Academic Administrative Appeals Committee (SAAAC) and will provide a timeframe for submission.

Step 2: Writing your appeal letter.

You are generally given 28 calendar days to formulate and submit your appeal unless your notice specifies otherwise. It is recommended that you take your time with your letter, as this is the most crucial part of the appeal process.

Your appeal should be focused on responding to the information that is provided in the decision letter, countering any misinformation, and adding new relevant information to strengthen your argument.

Relevant supporting evidence might include:

- A medical certificate.
- An email or correspondence.
- A letter from a counsellor or psychologist.
- A police report.
- A statement from a relevant authority.

You need to tell a compelling story that the decision maker either did not have access to, or was not aware of at the time of making the decision. Anything that is inserted into the appeal needs to be based on a sound argument that does not lead to any academic advantage or bias being awarded to you, and is not going to lower the academic standards held by the University.

Step 3: The faculty's response.

After you submit your appeal, the Secretary for the SAAAC will schedule a hearing date and the decision maker will be sent the appeal to review and make a response. The response will include one of two actions: rescind (cancel) their decision or uphold (maintain) their decision.

The decision maker may determine, after understanding the new information supplied in your appeal, that they did not have all of the possible information available to them at the time of making the decision. They can then rescind their decision, awarding the appeal to you.

After considering the new information presented in the appeal, the decision maker may feel that they made the correct decision. In this case, they will uphold their decision, i.e., they will not change their mind.

Step 4: Your reply to the response.

After the decision maker has made a response to the appeal, you will be provided an opportunity to reply to the response within the next seven business days.

This counter response needs to focus exclusively on the response of the decision maker, adding new information and supporting documentation to counter the decision where possible. If you are not capable of providing new information that can be supported with further evidence, then your chances of having the appeal awarded will decrease.

This will be your last chance to argue your case, so your reply needs to be based directly on the faculty response and should avoid highly emotive reasonings.

Step 5: The SAAAC decision.

When the SAAAC meets, they may be presented with the following information:

- Your completed academic transcript.
- Any records of misconduct (general or academic).
- Past applications made (appeals, withdrawal without academic penalty, change to finalised results, removal of financial liability, deferred exam requests, and extension requests).
- The original decision (the initial one issued to you).
- Your appeal.
- The decision maker's response to your appeal.
- Your reply to the response.

Using this information, the SAAAC will make their decision regarding your appeal. This decision will be made on academic grounds, not emotional. Once the SAAAC has reviewed your appeal and made a decision, you may be sent an informal notice of the decision, with a formal decision to be issued in the following weeks.

If your appeal is not successful, you can seek legal advice regarding making a claim to the Queensland Ombudsman.

To assist you in appeals processes, your UQU Student Advocacy & Support (SAS) advocate will:

- Be aware of all relevant policies that have been cited in making the decision. They will use this knowledge in providing the best advice for you.
- Help you in formulating, structuring, and presenting your argument in your appeal and giving you advice to add more strength to your appeal.
- Give feedback on the quality of your supporting evidence and provide information about how to obtain more supporting evidence.
- Once a response has been given, help you to understand the strength of the decision maker's argument and your options to pursue the matter further.

Note: This information is the information understood by the UQU Student Advocacy and Support (SAS) team accurate as of June 2024, and may not reflect subsequent UQ policy changes.



SAS

Student Advocacy
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we listened.

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