

Verification & Appeals Procedure

Verification

1. A student is entitled to ask for verification of one or more of the following in respect of a Birmingham Christian College (BCC) examination*:
 - that the assessment published by BCC is free of arithmetical or other errors of fact;
 - that the examiners were aware of exceptional personal circumstances reported by the student prior to the meeting of the Examining Board(s) concerned and which might in the student's opinion have had an adverse effect on his/her academic performance;
 - that the examiners were aware of defects or irregularities in the conduct of the examinations or in written instructions or in advice relating thereto, when such defects or irregularities or advice might, in the student's opinion, have had an adverse effect on his/her performance.
2. A student who wishes to have such verification shall make a written application to the Registrar normally within **fourteen days** of the date of the meeting of the relevant Examining Board. Applications for verification submitted outside this timescale with good reason may be accepted at the discretion of the Registrar. Requests for verification must include details of any alleged defects or irregularities in the conduct of the examinations or in any written instructions or in any advice relating thereto, or of any exceptional personal circumstances.
3. Upon receipt of such written application, the Registrar shall ask the Chair of the Examining Board, or his/her nominee, to take the necessary steps to verify the facts to which the application refers. The Chair shall ensure that the facts are verified within **three weeks** of the date of the application. At the same time, the Registrar shall acknowledge receipt of the application, informing the student of the action being taken.
4. The Chair of the Examining Board shall, when he/she has completed his/her enquiry, take the following action:
 - a) if the verification procedure indicates that:
 - there has been an arithmetical or other factual error;
 - exceptional personal circumstances reported by the student **prior** to the meeting of the Examining Board(s) concerned were not, in fact, considered at the meeting(s);
 - a student, in the course of requesting verification, has provided additional evidence of exceptional personal circumstances which were previously notified prior to the meeting of the Examining Board;

* In the context of this Procedure a University examination is an examination or assessed piece of work which counts towards a student's overall result and which is, therefore, conducted by a University Examining Board comprising both internal and external examiners.

the Chair of the Examining Board shall arrange for the Examining Board to re-consider the student's examination performance. S/he shall then inform the Registrar in writing of the full circumstances of the case, and, at the same time, the student shall be informed by the Registrar of the action being taken.

BCC shall subsequently arrange for the publication of such supplementary pass-list as may be necessary.

b) if the verification procedure indicates that:

- there has been no error;
- any exceptional personal circumstances reported by the student have already been considered;
- there are no defects or irregularities in the conduct of the examinations or in written instructions or advice relating thereto;

the Chair of the Examining Board shall inform the Registrar in writing of this conclusion. The Registrar shall in turn inform the student of this conclusion, of the student's right of appeal, that an appeal may only be made on the grounds stipulated in paragraph 6 below and that such an appeal must reach the Registrar within the deadline stipulated in paragraph 5 below; a copy of the Procedure and of the Application Form for Appeal shall be enclosed with that letter.

c) if it transpires that:

- there were exceptional personal circumstances which could have affected the student's performance adversely, of which the Examining Board was unaware because the student did not report them at the appropriate time;
- the student has provided evidence of defects or irregularities in the conduct of the examinations or in written instructions or advice relating thereto of which the Examining Board had been unaware;

the action stipulated in paragraph 4b) above shall apply.

Appeal

5. Students in BCC examinations are only entitled to appeal against a decision reached following the above process of verification. Any appeal shall be sent, in full, in writing to the Registrar and must reach him/her not later than **one month** after the despatch to the student of the verification of his/her result. Simple notice of appeal given in writing by a student within the above deadline shall not be deemed to constitute an appeal proper and shall not be accepted. The Chair shall, at an Appeal Board meeting, have discretion to declare inadmissible any matter introduced by the appellant, or by any member of staff or student accompanying the appellant, if he/she deems it not directly related to the contents of the appeal previously lodged in writing within the stipulated deadline.

6. BCC is only prepared to consider appeals which are based on one or both of the following grounds:
 - a) defects or irregularities in the conduct of the examinations or in written instructions or in advice relating thereto, where there is a *prima facie* case that such defects, irregularities or advice could have had an adverse effect on the student's performance;
 - b) exceptional personal circumstances where there is a *prima facie* case that such circumstances could have had an adverse effect on the student's performance. (In appeals based on these grounds, the appellant must show good reason why such personal circumstances were not made known to the Examining Board before its meeting. Where a student could have reported exceptional circumstances to the Examining Board prior to its meeting, those circumstances cannot subsequently be cited as grounds for appeal.)
7. Appeals which question the academic judgement of examiners shall not be admissible. Disagreement with the academic judgement of the appointed Programme Assessment Board in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work, or in reaching any assessment decision cannot in itself constitute grounds for an academic appeal.
8. On receipt of an appeal the Registrar shall acknowledge receipt normally within three working days.

The Academic Dean is required to disallow any appeal normally within two weeks of its receipt:

- which is based on factors which were known to the Examining Board concerned when the student's result was determined;
 - which introduces information which was known to, and could have been reported by, the student prior to the meeting of the Examining Board.
9. If it is decided by the Academic Dean that there is a *prima facie* case to be considered, it shall be referred to an Appeal Board consisting of three persons, at least one of whom has not been involved in the previous verification procedure. This shall normally be within one month of receipt of the application for appeal.
 10. An appellant shall be offered a personal hearing by the Appeal Board and shall accordingly be informed in advance of the time and date of the meeting. The appellant may be accompanied, but not represented, by a member of the academic or administrative staff of BCC or by a student, but not by any other individual. Any person accompanying an appellant shall be asked by the Board to identify themselves at the beginning of the proceedings and may be invited by the Board during the hearing to speak in support of the case. The appellant may not send another person to an Appeal Board in his/her stead.
 11. The Appeal Board shall base its decision on the evidence of the appellant's submission and the information from the previous verification, together with any further evidence which it considers relevant.
 12. The decision of the Appeal Board shall be notified by the Registrar as soon as possible to the appellant.

13. The Appeal Board shall be empowered to take either of the following decisions:
- a) that the appeal be rejected and no further action be taken;
 - b) that the appeal be upheld and a decision made on whether any adjustment should be made to marks or grades previously awarded. A decision on whether or not to adjust marks or grades previously awarded may or may not alter the appellant's overall examination result. If the overall result is altered, BCC will publish any supplementary pass-list which may be necessary.
14. In the case of 13a) above, the decision of the Appeal Board shall be final and the matter shall, therefore, be regarded as closed. There shall be no discussion of the decision of the Appeal Board with the appellant or any other person.
15. The Registrar shall inform the appellant in writing of the decision of the Appeal Board, and of the reasons for the decision.
16. Where applicable, appropriate arrangements will be made in respect of students who, following a successful appeal, are deemed by an Examining Board to have qualified for the award of a certificate or diploma.
17. The Appeal Board may make recommendations for consideration by BCC management on any matter arising from the consideration of appeals.
18. If a student feels their appeal has not been dealt with satisfactorily by BCC, for degree courses, they should write to Newman University at the following address:

Deputy Registrar
Newman University
Genners Lane
Bartley Green
Birmingham
B32 3NT

For courses accredited by NCFE they should write to NCFE at the following address:

Customer Recovery Team
NCFE
Q6, Quorum Park
Benton Lane
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE12 8BT

19. For degree courses, if a student feels their appeal has not been dealt with satisfactorily by Birmingham Newman University they should contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Details can be found here <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.