

2019  
Academic Appeals  
(HE16)

 **Partnership**  
Training • Education • Careers

The Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education (GIFHE) was established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 for the purpose of conducting its business. GIFHE is an exempt charity under Part 3 of the Charities Act 2011. In the delivery of its mission GIFHE uses brand names and trading styles in the public domain and includes, but not limited to: the TEC Partnership; Scarborough TEC; Skegness TEC; The Academy Grimsby, Grimsby Institute, University Centre Grimsby and Career 6. Policies, data protection registration and other documentation and legal requirements relating to or as part of the operation of brands are part of the Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education's legal status.

**Document Name:** Academic Appeals  
**Reference Code:** HE16  
**Version:** 1.3  
**Date of Implementation:** December 2019  
**Originator:** HE Quality Office  
**Approval by:** Executive Management Team  
**Date for Review:** July 2023

**Description:**

Whilst taking into account regulations within partner Universities, this code of practice makes clear the processes that must be adopted within higher education across the TEC Partnership in relation to academic appeals by students.

For further advice on how the code of practice works, you should contact the HE Quality Office.

HE Quality Office  
(01472) 311222  
[heqa@grimsby.ac.uk](mailto:heqa@grimsby.ac.uk)

**This document is available in alternative forms.**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Edits made</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.3	Addition of OIA to the Policy	December 2019
1.3.1	Remove Progression and Standards Committee and replace with Academic Authority and Standards Committee	January 2020

## **1.0 Compliance with Regulations**

1.0.1 All appeals shall be conducted in accordance with these regulations and the precepts set out in the Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code for Higher Education, as embodied in the regulations approved by the TEC Partnership Governing Body, and shall seek to uphold the principles of fairness, consistency, equity and equal opportunities.

1.0.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Academic Authority and Standards Senior committee to oversee compliance with these regulations, to interpret them when necessary and to issue guidance as deemed appropriate.

### **1.1 Impartiality of Decision-Makers**

1.1.1 No person shall be permitted to take part in the making of a decision regarding an appeal where s/he has an interest through being a member of the same academic department in which the appellant is registered.

1.1.2 Any person who may be involved in the making of a decision regarding an appeal shall be required to declare an interest where s/he has any other material connection with the appellant, and shall thereby be disqualified from being involved in the making of the decision.

### **1.3 Distinction between Appeals and Complaints**

1.3.1 This Code of Practice shall apply only to academic appeals which shall be understood as the request to review a decision regarding the progress of the appellant on his/her programme of study, including the award of any qualification as a result of that progress. Other matters of dispute involving a student and TEC Partnership, or department, shall be termed "complaints" and subject to TEC Partnership's Policy governing the Investigation and Determination of Complaints. Complaints can be submitted here <https://tecpartnership.com/partnership-feedback/#1501672889199-d0950462-b97c>.

1.3.2 In the event of a set of circumstances legitimately giving rise to grounds for both appeal and complaint the Chair of Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee, and the person responsible for investigating the complaint in accordance with the Complaints Code of Practice, shall jointly determine in consultation with the appellant/complainant the manner in which the two matters shall be resolved, and the appropriate timescale. All parties shall ensure that the requirements of the respective regulations are fully adhered to.

### **1.4 Timeliness and management**

1.4.1 TEC Partnership recognises that academic appeals can be stressful for staff, as well as for the appellant. These regulations are designed to ensure the interests of staff, including those handling the appeal, and the appellant are safeguarded at all times

1.4.2 At all stages of the appeals process, the appellant and/or the TEC Partnership are expected to submit and/or manage an appeal expeditiously

1.4.3 Each stage of the appeals process is defined through clear stages and indicative timescales. However, these regulations require that every appeal is fully investigated. This may mean that a response cannot be given as quickly as the appellant or the TEC Partnership would normally wish to, particularly if the appeal is complex or extensive, was submitted during TEC Partnership closure, or at a time when key staff are temporarily away from the work.

1.4.4 Equally, it is recognised that there may be delays reasoned by necessary absences on the part of the appellant which may mean the appellant is not able to submit their appeal within specified timeframes. Where this is the case, the appellant will be required to submit authentic and reliable evidence to demonstrate why their appeal could not be submitted within the TEC Partnership's indicative timescales

### **1.5 Privacy, Confidentiality and Data Protection**

1.6.1 All evidence submitted by an appellant in support of an appeal should be treated with respect for the privacy of the appellant, and should be confidential to those members of staff concerned with the matters raised in the appeal.

1.5.2 Exceptionally, the appellant may request in writing to the Academic Registrar that information which s/he specifies is not disclosed (save to the appeal panel). The Chair of Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee must determine whether such exceptional circumstances exist.

1.5.3 Where the Chair determines that exceptional circumstances do not exist, the Chair (or nominee) must inform the appellant in writing of that decision and the reasons for it, and must provide the appellant with the opportunity to have a summary of the evidence, which balances the request for confidentiality against the ability of TEC Partnership to respond to the appeal. If the appellant is unable to accept either option, the appeal shall be deemed to have been withdrawn by the appellant.

1.5.4 Any member of staff involved with an appeal in any capacity will ensure that the Data Protection Act 2018 are complied with at all times.

## **1.6 Communication**

1.6.1 All communication by TEC Partnership will be to the email account provided by TEC Partnership upon enrolment. It is the responsibility of the appellant to ensure access to this account is maintained. TEC Partnership staff will respond to a request from a personal email addresses once to inform the student that a response has been given to the TEC Partnership email.

## **2.0 Grounds for Appeal**

2.0.1 There are four grounds for academic appeal covered in this policy. Mitigation and Incapacity, Maladministration, Assessment process and Academic Judgement, and Regulation Decisions including Exam Boards.

## **2.1 The Informal Process**

2.1.2 If a student considers that s/he may have grounds to request a reconsideration of any decision defined as Mitigation and Incapacity, Maladministration, Assessment process and Academic Judgement, and Regulation Decisions including Exam Boards, they would normally be expected to, in the first instance, attempt to obtain informal resolution of the case by undertaking informal discussion with the appropriate Curriculum Manager or nominated representative of their Faculty, as identified by the Academic Registrar.

2.1.2 At the conclusion of the Informal Stage, a written response must be sent by Curriculum Manager or nominated representative confirming the decision of the Informal Stage. A copy of the documentation must be provided to the student to serve as a record of the outcome. A copy must also be kept in the student's learning record, and copies may be circulated, in confidence, to members of academic staff involved in the investigation of the facts relevant to the application.

2.1.3 In the event that agreement has not been reached, a student may submit a formal Partnership Academic Appeal Application Form (HE16A).

## **2.2 Mitigation and Incapacity**

2.2.1 The code of practice HE10 Mitigating Circumstances and Short Extensions states that students have the right to apply for up to 14 days after an assessment was due. Should an appellant feel that their academic achievement has been effected by incapacity, and they have failed to apply for relevant mitigation within 14 days of the assessment or they have had mitigation turned down due to late application because their situation prevented application, they should write to the Academic Registrar providing details of the issue. This can be done by email and sent to [heqa@grimsby.ac.uk](mailto:heqa@grimsby.ac.uk).

2.2.2 The appellants request must be on HE16A and must be supported by a clear statement detailing the 'incapacity' and/or explaining why the student was 'unable' to submit mitigating circumstances at the appropriate time, together with medical certificates or other documentary evidence.

2.2.3 The Academic Registrar should check all documents and come to a judgement whether the mitigating circumstances panel should consider the case as an extraordinary case. The application will then be referred to a mitigating circumstances committee for review. This panel should then act independently of the decision to prompt the review and make its judgement on merit in line with the policy HE10 Mitigating

Circumstances and Short Extensions.

2.2.4 The process for this should take 14 days, if investigations are taking longer than the Academic Registrar must inform the appellant.

2.2.5 If the appeal is not upheld the appellant must be responded to giving the reasons for the decision. This will be to the appellant's email address provided by the TEC Partnership. If the appellant is not satisfied with the response, then they have the right to ask for 1b formal stage to be enacted by emailing the Academic Registrar.

2.2.6 If the mitigating circumstances panel find that an extension should be given the Board of Examiners must be asked to reconsider their decision at the next available opportunity or by Chairs Action if progression of the student is being effected. In all circumstances the appellant will be informed about these actions to their TEC Partnership email address.

### **2.3 Maladministration**

2.3.1 Should an appellant feel that their academic achievement or progression has been effected by incorrect public information or the misapplication of a code of practice, they should write to the Academic Registrar providing details of the issue. This process is with regards to published information by TEC Partnership and issues arising from verbal explanation or hearsay. This can be done by email and sent to [heqa@grimsby.ac.uk](mailto:heqa@grimsby.ac.uk).

2.3.2 The appellants request must be on HE16A. The appeal must be supported by a clear statement detailing the decision which has been made and how this decision does not match a regulation or code of practice and the impact it has had on achievement or progression. There is an expectation that additional evidence e.g. emails, screen shots, published documents should be submitted with the evidence.

2.3.3 The Academic Registrar should check all details, gathering further evidence as required, and come to a judgement whether on evidence produced by a student or any other person, that the student's performance in an examination (or other assessment) was adversely affected by a material administrative error attributable to TEC Partnership or to an agent acting on behalf of TEC Partnership.

2.3.4 The process for this should take 14 Days, if investigations are taking longer than the Academic Registrar must inform the appellant.

2.3.5 If the Academic Registrar is satisfied that the student's performance was adversely affected because of maladministration then the Board of Examiners must be asked to reconsider their decision at the next available opportunity or by Chairs Action if progression of the student is being effected. The appellant will be informed about these actions to their TEC Partnership email address. If the appellant is not satisfied with the response, then they have the right to ask for 1b formal stage to be enacted by emailing the Academic Registrar.

2.3.6 If the appeal is not upheld the student must be responded to giving the reasons for the decision. This will be to the appellant's email address provided by the TEC Partnership. If the appellant is not satisfied with the response, then they have the right to ask for 1b formal stage to be enacted by emailing the Academic Registrar.

### **2.4 Assessment process and Academic Judgement**

2.4.1 The mark to be awarded for an individual piece of work – whether coursework, written examination or similar, and whether formative or summative – or the award of an overall mark or classification for an award shall be regarded as the academic judgement of the examiner or examiners, or the Board of Examiners concerned, and as such shall not be appealable under these or any other regulations or procedures of TEC Partnership.

2.4.2 A candidate who wishes to question academic judgement shall be entitled to ask the examiner, or Board of Examiners to confirm that the work has been marked in accordance with the regulations and procedures of the University in force at the time governing such matters as second marking, and referral

to the external examiner. Provided such confirmation is provided in writing, with an explanation of the procedures followed, the matter shall be deemed closed and the mark or other decision upheld.

## **2.5 Regulation Decisions including Exam Board decisions**

2.5.1 A student has the right to appeal an exam board decision if they feel the academic regulations have not been applied correctly by a Board of Examiners. An appellant normally has 28 days from the publication of the results to give notice in writing to the Academic Registrar of his/her intention to appeal, stating the grounds for appeal. This can be done by email and sent to [heqa@grimsby.ac.uk](mailto:heqa@grimsby.ac.uk). This should include the formal Partnership Academic Appeal Application Form (HE16A).

2.5.2 At all the stages of the appeals process, the appellant has a right to be accompanied to any meeting called by the Partnership as part of the appeals process by a friend, who may not (save in exceptional circumstances) be a lawyer acting in a professional capacity. The friend may not speak on behalf of or otherwise represent the interests of the individual concerned unless invited to do so by the TEC Partnership.

## **2.6 Stage 1a Investigation Early Resolution**

2.6.1 Within 14 days of receipt of the appeal, the Academic Registrar should investigate whether the exam board has correctly applied the Regulations as set out in HE01 Academic Regulations. If further information is requested from the appellant or others, this stage may take longer than 14 days. If this is the case the appellant will be informed of the reasons for this.

2.6.2 If the Academic Registrar is satisfied that the student's performance was adversely affected because of incorrect decision(s) by a Board of Examiners then the board of examiners must be asked to reconsider their decision by Chairs Action if progression or award of the student is affected. The appellant will be informed about these actions to their TEC Partnership email address and the address from which TEC Partnership were contacted. If the appellant is not satisfied with the response, then they have the right to appeal to the Chair of the Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee which they can do by writing to the Academic Registrar.

2.6.3 If the appeal is judged to be not upheld the student must be responded to giving the reasons for the decision. This will be to the appellant's email address provided by the TEC Partnership.

2.6.4 If the appellant is not satisfied with the response, then they have the right to request the appeal to move to stage 1b. This should be done within 14 days of receipt of response at stage 1a. The response should detail any new evidence and grounds on which there is disagreement with the response to stage 1a.

## **2.7 Stage 1b Investigation Formal Stage**

2.7.1 Upon notification of the appellant's written request to progress the appeal to stage 1b, the Academic Registrar will convene an Academic Appeals Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee.

2.7.2 The Academic Appeals Committee should convene in 14 days of the date the appellant notified the Academic Registrar. In extraordinary circumstances it may take longer for a committee to be convened. If this is the case then the Academic Registrar will write to the appellant to keep them informed of progress.

2.7.3 The Academic Appeals Committee should consist of at least 3 members of Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee with 1 member nominated as chair. The Academic Registrar should provide the papers and evidence associated with the appeal and those present should decide whether there is a case to answer. The Academic Registrar must not form part of the voting process.

2.7.4 All papers presented to the Academic Appeals Committee must also be provided to the appellant and the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners or his/her representative who should be called to the hearing to give evidence.

2.7.5 The appellant must always be invited to attend the hearing to give evidence. The appellant must confirm any name and status of the person accompanying them in writing to the Academic Registrar no

less than four days before the hearing.

2.7.6 The Chair of the Academic Appeals Committee must decide how the committee will proceed with an appeal in the voluntary or unavoidable absence of the appellant, and whether or not it will permit a proxy to be nominated to represent the appellant.

2.7.7 Quorum must be defined through three voting members including the Chair. A formal record of the meeting must be kept by the Academic Registrar (or nominee).

2.7.8 The Academic Appeals Committee is not empowered to award any credit or other qualification, to order the raising or lowering of any mark, or Foundation Degree classification. However, they are empowered to instruct an Examination board to review a decision.

2.7.9 Once an Academic Appeals Committee has reached its decision, the appellant will be informed of the result of the appeal by the Academic Registrar in writing and normally within 7 days of the meeting.

2.7.10 The decision of an Academic Appeals Committee must be communicated to the Chair of the Board of Examiners at the same time as the student is informed. In event the appeal being upheld the Board of Examiners will be informed by the Academic Appeals Committee that there are prima facie grounds for amending the original decision. The Board of Examiners must make those adjustments accordingly which must be subsequently ratified by the Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee.

2.7.11 If the appeal is not upheld the student must be responded to giving the reasons for the decision. This will be to the appellant's email address provided by the TEC Partnership or the email from stated on the appeal form. If the appellant is not satisfied with the response, then they have the right to request a review of the academic appeal at Stage 2

## **2.8 Stage 2 Review of Appeal**

2.8.1 If not satisfied the appellant may request a review of the decisions by writing to the Academic Registrar. They should include any new material evidence which they were unable, through valid reasons to present earlier.

2.8.2 The academic Registrar will identify a member of SMT to review the decisions made at Stage 1b. The member of staff must not have been involved in any of the earlier stages of the appeal. The full pack from the earlier stages will be provided to the reviewer and to the appellant.

2.8.3 The reviewer may overturn the decision made by the Academic Appeals Committee if they find that clear errors were made. If the review feels that a change should be made but it is matter of interpretation, then a referral should be made back to the Academic Appeals Committee.

2.8.4 The following criteria are used in consideration of the review:

- Were the relevant procedures followed during the formal stage?
- Was the outcome reasonable in all the circumstances?
- Has the student received clear reasons why the academic appeal was rejected at the formal stage?
- If new material evidence has been provided has the student given valid reasons for not supplying this earlier?

2.8.5 If the academic appeal is not upheld, the outcome of the review stage should be communicated to the student in writing by issuing a Completion of Procedures letter as soon as possible and within 28 days. This should include a clear explanation and outline the reasons for the decision in straightforward language. This will help the student decide whether or not to pursue the matter further. The decision should also advise the student about their right to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicators for review (or to partner university appeal where appropriate).

2.8.6 Where an academic appeal is upheld, the TEC Partnership will provide the appellant with a written outcome and explain how and when it will implement any remedy, and where appropriate an apology.

### **3.0 Independent external review (OIA)**

3.1 For students on Grimsby Institute or Pearson programmes, once the review stage has been completed, the student is entitled to ask the OIA, the independent ombudsman service, to review his or her complaint about the outcome of the provider's academic appeals process. The request should be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

3.2 For students on partner university validated courses once TEC Partnerships procedures have been completed, they have the right to appeal to the relevant university policy.

3.2.1 Students on programmes validated by the University of Hull must make their appeal to the University's Student Case Committee within 15 days of the Completion of Procedures letter.

3.2.2 For students on Pearson programmes, once TEC Partnership procedures have been completed, they have the right of appeal to Pearson and the OIA. Please see appendix 1 for further clarification.

### **4.0 Reporting**

4.1 The Academic Registrar will present analysis to each Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee meeting about the number of, outcomes of and lessons learned from appeals.

4.2 On an annual basis the Academic Registrar will present a report to the HE Oversight Committee containing an anonymised analysis of formal academic appeals which detail:

- i. the number and reason for the appeals considered and the outcomes thereof
- ii. an analysis of appeals by the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 based on information supplied and consented to at enrolment
- iii. an analysis of appeal by full time and part time mode of attendance
- iv. the time taken to complete the appeal process at each stage
- v. The impact of lessons learned from the appeals.

4.2 Appeal reports make a positive contribution to the TEC Partnership's quality assurance and enhancement frameworks. To this end, anonymous appeals summary reports must be published to staff and students with a view to improving awareness of the procedures themselves but also to enhance the confidence of students and staff in the transparency and effectiveness of Partnership's regulations and appeals procedures.

#### Appendix 1

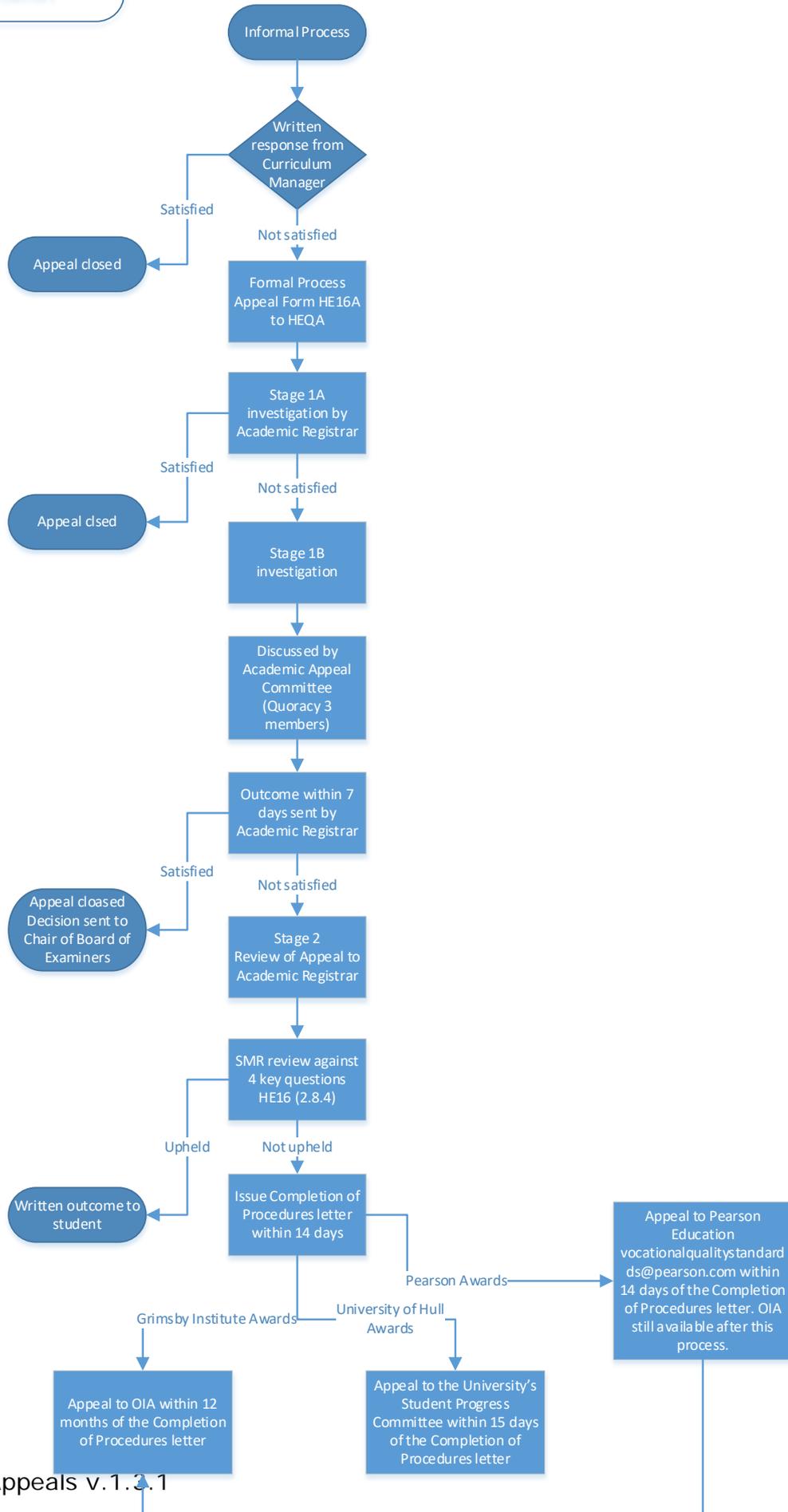
Extract from Pearson *Enquiries and appeals about Pearson vocational qualifications and end point assessment policy* (October 2017)

#### **"Enquiries and appeals for learners taking Higher National Certificates or Diplomas**

**2.5** Learners taking Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND) in England and Wales may have the option to present their appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for students in Higher Education (OIAHE). You can check if your centre is a provider that is covered by the OIA scheme [here](#).

**2.6** Following the OIAHE process does not prevent learners from pursuing a complaint or appeal with us and they may choose whichever route(s) that they feel to be the most appropriate.

Academic Appeals Flowchart





# TEC Partnership

Training • Education • Careers

