Requests for the Review of Examination Decisions – Research Degree Candidates

UPR AS16 version 07.0

Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces version 06.0 of UPR AS16, with effect from 1 September 2026.

Summary of significant changes to the previous version

This document has been updated to reflect the changes to the composition of the Appeal Review Panel (Sections 2.3 and 3.6.2).

Glossary

A glossary of approved University terminology can be found in **UPR GV08**.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Unless indicated otherwise in the text, the amendments to the policies, procedures and regulations in this document were approved by the Academic Board with effect from 1 September 2006 and have been amended subsequently to take account of changes in internal structures.

1.2 The University is committed to protecting and promoting freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law. The University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (UPR FS01) sets out the rights and obligations inherent in supporting the principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law, the University's values relating to freedom of speech and the procedure to be followed by students and staff in connection with the organisation of events and meetings which fall under the Code of Practice. A copy of the University's Code of Practice on

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Freedom of Speech (UPR FS01) can be found here FS01 on the University's Policies and Regulations webpage. In the event of any uncertainty about the University's approach to freedom of speech, the University's definitive and up-to-date statement of its approach is set out in the Code of Practice.

2 Grounds for the review of an examination decision

2.1 Following the oral examination, candidates have the right to appeal against decisions taken by the Research Degrees Board of the Academic Board upon the recommendations made by the examiners.

2.2 The grounds upon which a candidate may appeal are set out in UPR AS10 'Research Degrees – Generic Institutional Regulations'. An appeal against a particular decision may be based on one or more of these grounds.

(**Note:**

A Inadequacy of supervision or other arrangements at any stage prior to submission, known before the candidate's oral examination, are not admissible grounds for appeal and should be dealt with by means of the complaints procedure for research degree candidates set out in UPR SA16[1].

B Requests for reviews of progress assessment decisions should be dealt with by means of the procedure for research degree candidates set out in UPR AS20[2].)

2.3 Candidates may not challenge the academic judgement of the examiners. *Where a a candidate appeals on the grounds of unfair assessment, the examiners must be informed and have a right to respond.*

3 Procedure

3.1 The candidate will give notice in writing to the Secretary and Registrar of their request for a review within ten (**10**) working days of the date on which they were notified of the decision of the Research Degrees Board on the outcome of the examination or re-examination.

3.2 The Secretary and Registrar will notify the Chair of the Research Degrees Board that notice of review and appeal has been received.

3.3 The candidate will submit the case to the Secretary and Registrar for review within a further three (**3**) calendar months from the date of giving notice.

3.4 The Secretary and Registrar, in consultation with the Chair of the Research Degrees Board, will be responsible for the general interpretation and application of University regulations.

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1 UPR SA16, 'Student and Applicant Complaints'

2 UPR AS20 'Request for the Review of a Progress Assessment Decision – Research Degree Candidates'

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3.5 Where an appeal is inconsistent with the relevant grounds

The Secretary and Registrar, acting in accordance with the provisions of section 3.4, reserves the right to refuse or to disallow appeals which are inconsistent with the relevant grounds for appeal (see section 2.2).

3.6 Where an appeal is permitted

3.6.1 Where the Secretary and Registrar deems the appeal to fall within the permitted grounds for appeal, the procedure for considering the matter will be as follows.

3.6.2 Appeal Review Panel

i The Vice-Chancellor, acting in their capacity as Chair of the Academic Board, will establish an Appeal Review Panel.

ii Composition

The Appeal Review Panel will be composed as follows:

Not fewer than three (**3**) senior academics with experience of research degree awards who may or may not be members of the University's staff *including members of the Research Degrees Board*, one (**1**) of whom will be appointed Chair by the Vice-Chancellor. *Members of the Appeal panel who are also members of the Research Degrees Board are recused from the Research Degrees Board when the Appeal outcome is being decided.*

The Secretary and Registrar (or nominee) will be Secretary to the Panel.

iii All members of the Panel will have experience of supervising and examining research degrees and will have had no previous involvement in the candidate’s registration for a research degree.

iv For the purposes of these regulations, 'previous involvement' is defined as having supervised, advised or counselled the candidate about the project or advised or counselled the supervisors about matters pertaining to the project.

v Consideration of the candidate’s registration and training programme, either as Associate Director (Doctoral College) or as a member of the Research Degrees Board, does not constitute previous involvement.

vi The Vice-Chancellor will appoint a substitute member to the Panel where it becomes evident that an existing member has had previous involvement in the case.

vii The proceedings of the Appeal Review Panel are confidential.

viii The Appeal Review Panel will consider the written evidence (where relevant) which will include:

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a the candidate's written evidence;
b a report prepared by the Secretary and Registrar (or nominee);
c the examiners' preliminary and final reports and recommendations.

ix With limited exceptions, all written material (see section viii) considered by the Appeal Review Panel will be provided to the candidate.

x The candidate has the right to be heard in person and to speak about their appeal.

3.7 The candidate may be accompanied at any hearing by one (**1**) other person of their choice. That person may either act as the candidate's adviser or the candidate may nominate that person to speak on their behalf.

3.8 Where the candidate has nominated a representative to speak on their behalf (either in the candidate's presence or in their absence) the candidate is required to submit the name and address of the representative to the Secretary and Registrar not less than seven (**7**) days before the appointed date for the hearing.

3.9 It should be noted that, regardless of the profession of a candidate's adviser or representative, that person attends the hearing solely as an adviser or representative (as appropriate) and not in their professional capacity.

3.10 If it so wishes, the Appeal Review Panel will have the power to invite the examiners and supervisors to present oral and/or written reports to it.

3.11 At the time of the Panel's establishment, the Secretary and Registrar (or nominee) will inform the examiners that an appeal has been made and advise them that the Panel may find it necessary to approach them. The issues to be considered by the Panel will be confined to those which fall within the scope of these regulations and procedures (UPR AS16).

3.12 The Appeal Review Panel will examine the case presented by the candidate and will submit a written report of its findings to the Vice-Chancellor in their capacity as the Chair of the Academic Board. The Appeal Review Panel will make one of the following recommendations in its report. That:

i the appeal should be rejected by the Vice-Chancellor;

ii in accordance with the powers delegated to it by the Academic Board, the Research Degrees Board should invite the original examiners to reconsider their decision in accordance with the relevant research degree regulations (see section 2.2,);

iii the Research Degrees Board should proceed as though the submission for examination has not been made, in which case the candidate will submit for examination in accordance with the requirements of the research degree regulations to which they are subject (see section 2.2).

iv the Research Degrees Board should proceed as though the examination has not taken place and that new examiners should be appointed, in which case

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new examiners will be appointed in accordance with the prevailing regulations and the candidate will then submit for examination in accordance with the requirements of the research degree regulations to which they are subject (see section 2.2).

The Appeal Review Panel has no powers to recommend that the recommendation of the examiners be set aside.

3.13 The Vice-Chancellor, acting upon the advice of the Appeal Review Panel, will be responsible for reaching a final judgment on the outcome of the candidate's appeal. The Vice-Chancellor will draw the attention of the Research Degrees Board to their report and recommendation.

3.14 The Secretary and Registrar will inform the candidate, the examiners, the supervisors and the Dean of Students, in writing, of the decision of the Vice-Chancellor, whose decision is final.

3.15 If the Vice-Chancellor has referred the candidate's case back to the Research Degree Board for further consideration, in accordance with section 3.12, the decision of the Research Degrees Board is final.

3.16 At the conclusion of this process, the Dean of Students will issue the candidate with a **Completion of Procedures Letter** which may be used in relation to any future dealings with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

4 The Academic Board

In very exceptional circumstances, for example, where it believes that the Research Degrees Board has misused or otherwise contravened its authority or there are procedural irregularities, the Academic Board has the power to consider and, if appropriate, change the decision of the Research Degrees Board. In such exceptional circumstances, the delegation of authority made to the Research Degrees Board by the Academic Board would be temporarily revoked.

5 Further representations

Having exhausted the University's internal procedures and subject to the provisions of legislation, the student has the right to request the Office of the Independent Adjudicator to review their case.

Dr Matthew Andrews
Secretary and Registrar
Signed: **1 August 2026**

Alternative format
If you need this document in an alternative format, please email us at governanceservices@herts.ac.uk

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