Appeals Procedure

1. Purpose

This procedure sets out how a student can appeal a decision BIRD has made under the Student Complaints Policy, the Student Disciplinary Policy, or a decision to withdraw a student from their studies. It is BIRD's single route of internal appeal for these non-academic matters, covering complaints review, disciplinary appeal, and withdrawal appeal. The grounds for appeal, the process, and the possible outcomes are shared across all three wherever they genuinely are the same. This procedure only splits into separate treatment where a real difference in the underlying decision requires it, for example who is entitled to appeal, or what a panel can offer as a remedy.

Under BIRD's agreement with the University of Greenwich, academic matters, including assessment, marks, extenuating circumstances, and academic misconduct, are dealt with under the University of Greenwich's Academic Appeals Procedure, not this document. That split is based on the subject matter of the decision, not on where the underlying conduct or event took place.

A separate and narrower exception applies to non-academic misconduct that occurs on University of Greenwich premises. Under the Student Disciplinary Policy, that misconduct is decided under the University of Greenwich's own Student Disciplinary Procedure rather than by a BIRD Disciplinary Panel, and any appeal against that decision follows Greenwich's own procedure, not this one.

2. Scope

2.1. What this procedure covers

This procedure applies to appeals against:

a) a Stage Three review outcome under the Student Complaints Policy
b) a Disciplinary Panel decision under the Student Disciplinary Policy, including a finding of breach and/or a sanction imposed
c) a decision to withdraw a student from their programme

2.2. What this procedure does not cover

This procedure does not cover:

a) academic appeals of any kind, including assessment decisions, marks, degree classification, extenuating circumstances, and academic misconduct, which are dealt with entirely under the University of Greenwich's Academic Appeals Procedure for students on Greenwich-validated programmes
b) a first-instance complaint or disciplinary allegation that has not yet been decided, since this procedure only applies once BIRD has reached a decision
c) a decision by a witness to a disciplinary case to challenge the outcome; a witness who is not a party to the case cannot appeal, but may raise concerns about how the matter was handled under the Student Complaints Policy

d) a decision made under the University of Greenwich's Student Disciplinary Procedure, where the misconduct occurred on University of Greenwich premises; any appeal against that decision is made under Greenwich's own procedure, not this one

Where a concern touches on both a non-academic matter covered by this procedure and an academic matter for Greenwich, BIRD will tell the student which parts of their case go through this procedure and which go to Greenwich, in the same way this is handled under the Student Complaints Policy.

3. Definitions

Appellant: the person bringing a complaints review, disciplinary appeal, or withdrawal appeal under this procedure. In a disciplinary appeal, this is the reported party.

Reporting Party: has the meaning given in the Student Disciplinary Policy.

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Reconsideration Request: a request by the reporting party in a disciplinary case for the Disciplinary Panel's decision to be looked at again, on the narrower grounds set out under Grounds for Appeal, below. This is separate from an appeal, which is only available to the reported party.

Single Reviewer: a senior member of staff who decides a complaints review appeal or a Reconsideration Request alone.

Appeals Panel: the panel convened to decide a disciplinary appeal or withdrawal appeal.

Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter: the letter BIRD issues when its internal procedures have concluded, confirming the student's right to take their case to the OIA.

4. Support and Representation

A student can be accompanied or supported at any stage of an appeal by a peer, a member of staff, a family member or guardian, or an independent adviser, for example from the Greenwich Students' Union (GSU) Advice Service which is available to BA students. The companion may support the student but does not represent them or answer on their behalf. Legal representation is not normally permitted, and will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances, such as where a case is particularly complex or where the potential outcome for the reported party is especially serious. Any legal representation must be agreed with BIRD in advance of the hearing. Where a student brings a legal representative to a hearing without that prior agreement, BIRD may decline to allow the representative to take part, adjourn the hearing, or take other steps it considers appropriate.

Where a student is under 18, a parent, guardian, or other supporting adult may accompany them in addition to, or in place of, the companion described above.

BIRD will consider reasonable adjustments to this process for disabled students, or students who need extra support to take part, and will keep a record of any adjustments made.

5. Submitting an Appeal or Reconsideration Request

An appeal or a Reconsideration Request must be submitted in writing, using BIRD's appeal form, within 14 calendar days of the date the decision was communicated. The form should set out which of the grounds relied on apply, and include any supporting evidence.

BIRD will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days. Submissions received after the 14-day deadline will not normally be considered, and the student will be sent a Completion of Procedures letter, unless there is good reason for the delay, which BIRD will consider flexibly.

An appeal is not a re-investigation or a rehearing of the original matter from scratch. It checks whether the original decision was properly reached, using the grounds set out below, not whether a different decision would have been preferable. A Reconsideration Request is narrower still, and is explained separately below.

6. Grounds for Appeal

The same grounds apply whichever of the three decisions is being appealed, a Stage Three complaints outcome, a Disciplinary Panel decision (appealed by the reported party), or a withdrawal decision. An appealing party may appeal on one or more of the following grounds:

a) BIRD's procedures were not followed properly
b) the decision maker reached an unreasonable decision on the information available
c) there is new material evidence that the appealing party could not, for good reason, have provided earlier in the process
d) there was bias, or a reasonable perception of bias, during the process
e) the decision or sanction was disproportionate, or not permitted under BIRD's procedures

For a withdrawal appeal, new material evidence commonly relates to the student's health, wellbeing or performance. A student who has interrupted their studies may still bring a withdrawal appeal against the decision to withdraw them.

6.1. Reconsideration Request Grounds

A reporting party may submit a Reconsideration Request on one or both of the following grounds, which are narrower than the grounds above:

a) there is new material evidence that the reporting party could not, for good reason, have provided earlier in the process
b) evidence the reporting party did provide was not properly considered by the Disciplinary Panel

A Reconsideration Request cannot be brought on the grounds that the Panel's decision was unreasonable, that there was bias, or that the sanction (or absence of one) was disproportionate. The section below, Who Can Bring an Appeal or a Reconsideration Request, explains why the reporting party's route is narrower than the reported party's, and how the two relate..

7. Who Can Appeal or Submit a Reconsideration Request

For a complaints review or a withdrawal appeal, the appealing party is the student. For a disciplinary appeal, the reported party has the right to appeal a Disciplinary Panel decision, including the finding of breach and/or the sanction imposed.

The reporting party does not have the same right of appeal. This reflects the OIA Good Practice Framework, which treats it as unusual for a reporting student to appeal the penalty applied to another student directly, while treating a review of the reporting party's own complaint as good practice, and reflects sector practice more broadly, where most providers give the reporting party either no right of appeal or a narrower review right, separate from the reported party's appeal. Instead, the reporting party may submit a Reconsideration Request, on the grounds set out above, which a Single Reviewer decides. This is a distinct, lighter-touch mechanism, not a second route into the same appeal available to the reported party, and it does not allow the reviewer to personally overturn or vary the Panel's decision (see Outcomes, below).

A witness who is not themselves a party to a disciplinary case cannot appeal the outcome or submit a Reconsideration Request, but may raise concerns about how the matter was handled under the Student Complaints Policy.

Where the reported party appeals and the reporting party separately submits a Reconsideration Request about the same decision, the two are handled as independent processes, each on its own timescale, rather than combined into one. BIRD will coordinate the two so that, so far as possible, the reported party's appeal and any fresh Panel hearing arising from a Reconsideration Request are not decided in a way that contradicts each other

8. Deciding an Appeal or Reconsideration Request: Single Reviewer or Appeals Panel

Who decides depends on what's being decided, not on which party brought it or how serious the case feels:

a) a Stage Three complaints outcome is decided by a single senior reviewer
b) a Disciplinary Panel decision is decided by an Appeals Panel, when appealed by the reported party
c) a withdrawal decision is decided by an Appeals Panel
d) a Reconsideration Request from a reporting party is decided by a single senior reviewer

For an appeal, the principle is that the appeal stage should match, or exceed, the standing of the decision it's reviewing. A Stage Three outcome is itself made by a single investigator or manager, so a single independent reviewer meets the same standard. A Disciplinary Panel decision is made by three people, so a single reviewer overturning or upholding it wouldn't carry the same standing, an Appeals Panel is needed instead. A withdrawal decision is normally made by one person, but the outcome is severe enough (loss of a place) that it goes to a panel regardless. A Reconsideration Request is decided by a Single Reviewer for a different reason, not because the underlying decision lacks standing, but because the Reconsideration Request is deliberately a narrower, lighter-touch mechanism than an appeal (see Outcomes, below, on why the reviewer can't simply overturn the Panel's decision).

8.1. Single Reviewer

A complaints review or a Reconsideration Request is decided by a senior member of staff who was not previously involved in the case.

8.2. Appeals Panel

A disciplinary appeal or withdrawal appeal is decided by a panel consisting of:

a) a Chair, who is a senior member of staff not previously involved in the case
b) one further member of staff not previously involved in the case
c) one of BIRD's student representatives, sitting as part of that role, who has not been involved in the case

No one who sat on, or could have sat on, the original Disciplinary Panel for a disciplinary case may sit on the Appeals Panel considering the appeal against it. Where BIRD does not have enough staff or student representatives free of prior involvement to form a distinct Appeals Panel, it will proceed with the smallest available deviation, for example bringing in a governor or a senior manager from outside the usual pool, rather than reusing someone from the original decision. Any such deviation will be recorded with reasons, and where this happens more than once in an academic year, it will be reported to the Academic Board as part of annual disciplinary monitoring.

8.3. Timeframe

Whichever route applies, the decision maker will normally issue a written outcome within 28 calendar days of receiving the appeal, with reasons for the decision..

9. Outcomes

For a complaints review, a disciplinary appeal, or a withdrawal appeal, the decision maker may:

a) dismiss the appeal, in which case the original decision stands
b) uphold the appeal in full or in part, and specify what BIRD will do as a result

Two situations need more than this common pair of outcomes.

9.1. Reconsideration Request Outcomes

A Reconsideration Request works differently, because it isn't an appeal. The Single Reviewer cannot personally overturn or vary the Disciplinary Panel's finding or sanction. They may only decide one of the following:

a) that reconsideration isn't warranted, in which case the original decision stands
b) that the point raised has enough substance that the matter should go back to a newly constituted Disciplinary Panel, which was not involved in the original hearing, to reconsider in light of it

Where a fresh Panel is convened, it reaches its own decision, which the reported party can appeal in the normal way, on the full grounds set out earlier. Keeping the reviewer's own powers limited to this pair of outcomes is deliberate: if the reviewer could substitute their own decision for the

Panel's, the Reconsideration Request would function as a second appeal in all but name, which is the outcome this design is meant to avoid.

9.2. Withdrawal Appeal: Rescind and Offer Interruption

As well as dismissing or upholding the appeal, the Appeals Panel may rescind the withdrawal decision and offer the student a period of interruption, in light of issues raised in the appeal. If the student declines the offer, or does not respond by the deadline given, the original withdrawal decision stands.

10. Students on University of Greenwich Programmes

Students on a University of Greenwich programme use this procedure in exactly the same way as any other BIRD student for the matters it covers. BIRD's process, including any appeal under this procedure, is always the first stage.

Where a student on a Greenwich programme remains dissatisfied after completing BIRD's process, including an appeal under this procedure, and the matter relates solely to an aspect of their Greenwich programme, they have a further right of recourse to the University of Greenwich Final Review Procedure. This sits between the end of BIRD's process and any referral to the OIA, and is separate from both.

11. Completion of Procedures and the OIA

Once BIRD's internal process under this procedure has concluded, whether an appeal is dismissed or upheld, BIRD will issue a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter within 28 calendar days, unless the student's next step is the University of Greenwich Final Review Procedure, in which case the section above, Students on University of Greenwich Programmes, applies instead.

The CoP letter confirms that BIRD's process has ended, explains the outcome and reasons in plain language, and tells the student about their right to take the matter to the OIA and the time limit for doing so. Students who remain dissatisfied can ask the OIA to review their case, provided it is eligible under the OIA's rules, within 12 months of the date of the CoP letter.

12. Records and Monitoring

BIRD will keep records of appeals and their outcomes in line with its record retention and data protection obligations. Anonymised data on the number and type of appeals, the route used, and their outcomes will be reviewed periodically to identify patterns and inform future revisions to this suite of policies.

13. Document Control

Document type:	Procedure		
Document number:	007	Version:	2.0
Department:	Registry		
Approved by:	Academic Board	Date approved:	16/07/2026
Effective from:	01/08/2026	Review date:	15/07/2029
Publication:	BIRD website		
Related documents:	• Student Complaints Policy • Student Disciplinary Policy • Student Code of Conduct • Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy • Anti-Bullying Policy • University of Greenwich Academic Appeals Procedure • University of Greenwich Final Review Procedure		
Documents replaced:	N/A		
Notes:	Full rebuild against the OIA Good Practice Framework. Remains a single standalone document covering complaints review, disciplinary appeal, and withdrawal appeal, but restructured from three fully separate sections (as in the previous version) to a shared structure: one set of grounds, one routing rule, and one outcomes section common to all three, with separate treatment only where the underlying decision genuinely differs (who can appeal, and what remedy is available).		