



Arab Open University

AOU Students' Appeals & Complaints Process and Procedures Version: 4

**Approved by University Council #76
2022**

AOU Students' Appeals and Complaints Procedures

A.AOU Principles of Appeals & Complaints Procedures

- All AOU students have the right to appeal or complain as defined in the University Bylaws and within the set period.
- A student who makes an appeal or complaint will not be adversely affected or disadvantaged in any way even if the appeals or complaints are not valid.
- The student will have a fair opportunity to lodge an appeal or complaint and will be informed with the outcome within a reasonable period.
- The students are sufficiently guided on the University's complaints system and procedures.
- Sufficient support is provided to students with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.
- Complaints cases are dealt with on their merit.
- Appeals & Complaints systems are transparent, responsive, and accessible to all stakeholders.
- The appeals and complaints management system allow the escalation of serious complaints to be addressed at a senior level.
- Appeals and complaints are properly reviewed and investigated
- An anonymous complaint will not be considered by the university.
- Disputes on matters of academic judgment will not be considered under the students' appeals & complaints system.

Explanation of Key Terms:

1. Student Complaint

Complaint constitutes any expression of dissatisfaction about the quality or adequacy of the university provision and its related services

2. Academic Judgement

Academic Judgement refers to the determination of a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential. Students may not complain about or appeal against, a matter of academic judgement. For example, disagreement with an assessment mark or classification of an award decision are not grounds for appeal.

3. Student Appeal

The University can only consider an academic appeal when it relates to the following:

Administrative Error in marks allocation or grade entry.

Procedural irregularities in the conduct of assessment.

Procedural irregularities in course equivalency.

Evidence of prejudice or bias.

Appeals made on the above grounds will be considered in line with AOU academic bylaws or policies.

B. Appeals and Complaints Procedures:

1. Appeals and complaints Procedures apply for the following:

- Any current registered student
- Group of current registered students.

2. Time frame for making an appeal or complaint:

Appeals and complaints should be raised as soon as possible and within the time- frame specified by the university. For an appeal, this would be usually within seven (7) of the release of results or the decision subject to appeal. Complaints may be raised as soon as an incident takes place and within 14 calendar days. Appeals will be responded to according to the timeframe schedule specified in the assessment bylaws. Appeals and Complaints will be responded to within a reasonable period not exceeding 28 days from receiving the complaint.

Appeals process – committees responsible:

- The Appeals Committee is the committee that considers student's first appeal. In every AOU branch country, there is a Branch Appeal Committee (BAC) for each Academic Programme.
- The Re-Appeals Committee is the committee that deals with the student's re- appeals (second appeal). Similar to Appeals Committee, there is a Branch Re-Appeal Committee (BRC) in every AOU-Branch.
- Re-appeal cases are allowed only for cases of pervious appeals.
- The respective committees present their recommendations to the respective authority i.e. Assistant Rector/Director for academic Affairs for first appeals and to the Branch Rector/ Director for second appeal cases for approval.
- All Appeals and Re-appeals cases will be submitted to the Chair of the Central Examination Committee(CEC) for endorsement and final approval.
- All students' results are deemed final and irrevocable one academic semester following their declaration, and changes are prohibited thereof.

Students' Appeals:

First Appeal

- A Student may submit an appeal by filling the online form within seven (7) calendar days from the announcement of the course results. The student can also attach any relevant documents.
- The Branch Appeal Committee (BAC) will look into the appeal and forward their recommendations to the Assistant Branch Rector/Director along with a copy of the assessment script or any other relevant documents.
- If the appeal is against course grades, the BAC will look into the assessment or examination script to ensure that all answers are marked and that compilation of marks is conducted properly. Based on the outcome, the BAC will make its recommendation either to uphold the appeal (recommendation for change of marks) or to reject the appeal (no grounds for appeal).
- If the appeal is valid, a copy of the BAC recommendation will be sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Scientific Research (VPAA &SR)-HQ, and, Registration and Examination Department-HQ (ARE).
- The VPAA&SR will submit the appeals lists to the Central Examination Committee (CEC) for approval.
- The student will be notified with the decision through the online appeals and complaints system or the university official email.

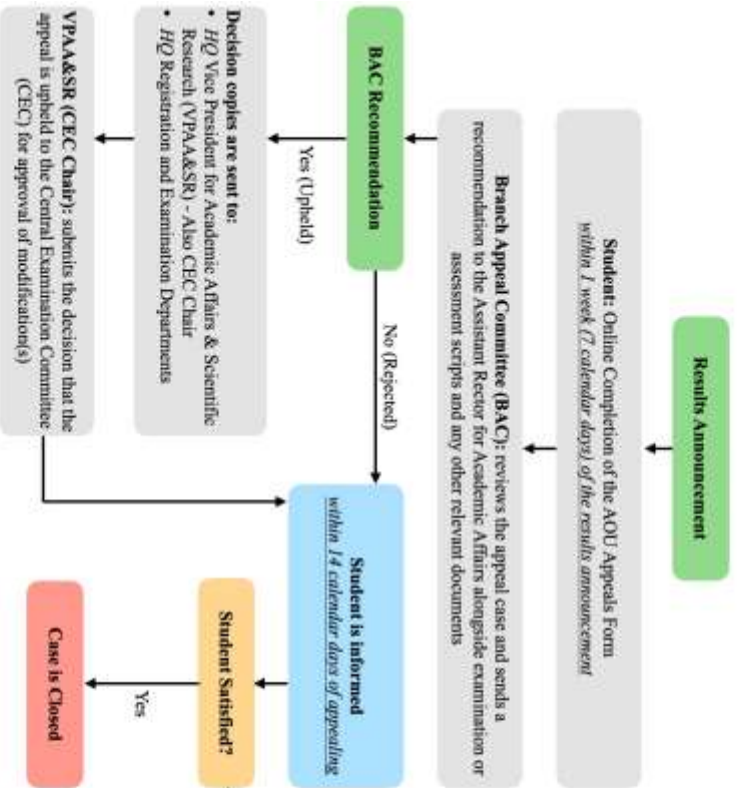
Second Appeal (Re-appeal)

- If the appeal is rejected and the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the BAC, he or she may take the appeal to a higher level by appealing to the Branch Re-Appeal Committee (BRC) through the Branch Rector within seven (7) calendar days of notification of the decision.
- The BRC will review the appeal and communicate its decision to the Branch Rector and copies will be sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Scientific Research (VPAA&SR), Registration and Examination Department (RE) and Programme Deanship at the headquarter (HQ).
- If the appeal is accepted, the VPAA&SR will submit the recommendations that the appeals are upheld to the CEC for approval.

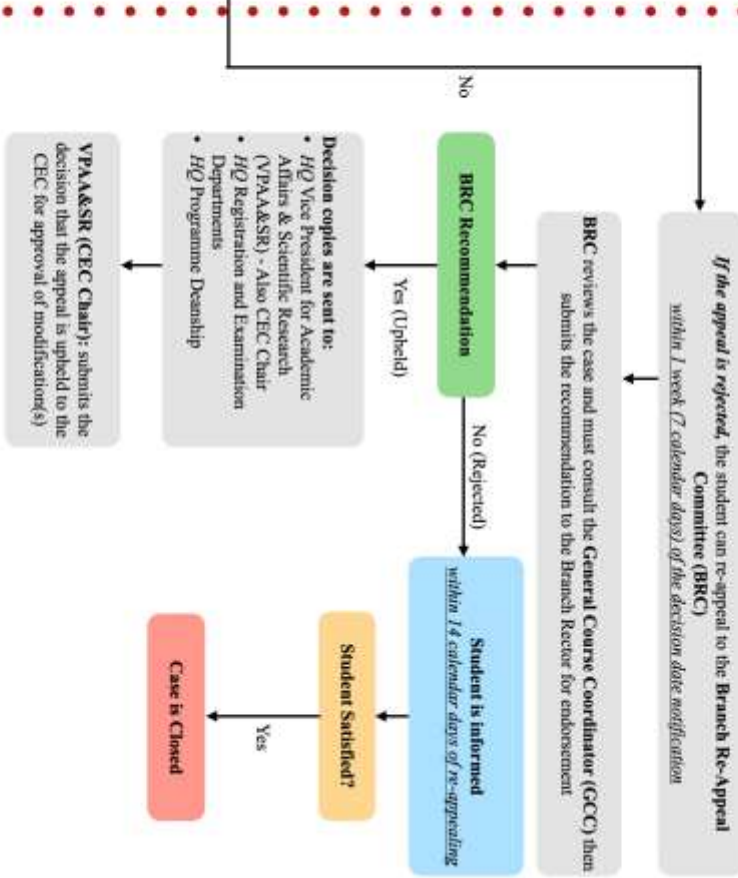
- The student will be informed through the Branch Rector's/Directors office through the online complaint system or the University official e-mail.
- If the student is not satisfied with the BRC decision, he/she may appeal to the President of the University.
- If the student is registered in an Open University Validated Award Programme and still dissatisfied with the decision, and providing that the appeal / complaint is eligible under their rules, he or she may complain to the Open University-United Kingdom.
- The student will find more information on OU-UK appeals and complaints process in the Student guide to studying on a programme validated by 'The Open University'.

Student Appeal Process

Stage 1: First Appeal



Stage 2: Second Appeal (Re-Appeal)



Note:
 If the student is still unsatisfied, he/she may appeal to the **University President**
 If the student is registered in an OUVV Validated Award Programme, then he/she may appeal to **OUVP (OU UK)***
 * Refer to OUV Handbook for Student Awards Page #4 F1127 for further information
<https://www.ou.ac.uk/about-us/validation-powers/ouvp/ou-uk-validation/ou-handbook-validation-awards/>

4 Complaint:

It is an expression of dissatisfaction about the quality or adequacy of the university provision and its related services. It covers a wide range of issues such as support services, administration, facilities, teaching delivery, technical support, and other aspects of student's relationship with the University.

Students' Complaints:

First Complaint

The student may lodge a complaint any time during the academic year, by completing the University's formal student complaints form. The student must state the grounds for complaint, giving detailed reasons to support his or her case. A copy will be automatically forwarded to the concerned department and to Student Affairs Office and Branch Quality Assurance Unit/coordinator for follow up and monitoring.

- If the complaint can be addressed by the Student Affairs Office, then the office will prepare a formal response and send it to the student.
- The concerned department will examine the complaint and it may consult other members of University staff or departments if it is deemed appropriate in particular cases.
- The Concerned department may find grounds for complaint and produce a report on the case setting out its recommendations and the documentations considered.
- The report will be sent to the Assistant Rector /Director for Administration and Finance or Assistant Director for Academic Affairs based on the nature and subject of the complaints for approval.
- Upon the approval of the concerned Assistant Rector/ Director, the Student will be notified of the final outcome of the complaint within one week(7 Calendar days) and not later than four weeks (28 Calendar days) in certain cases) of submitting the complaint. Copies of the

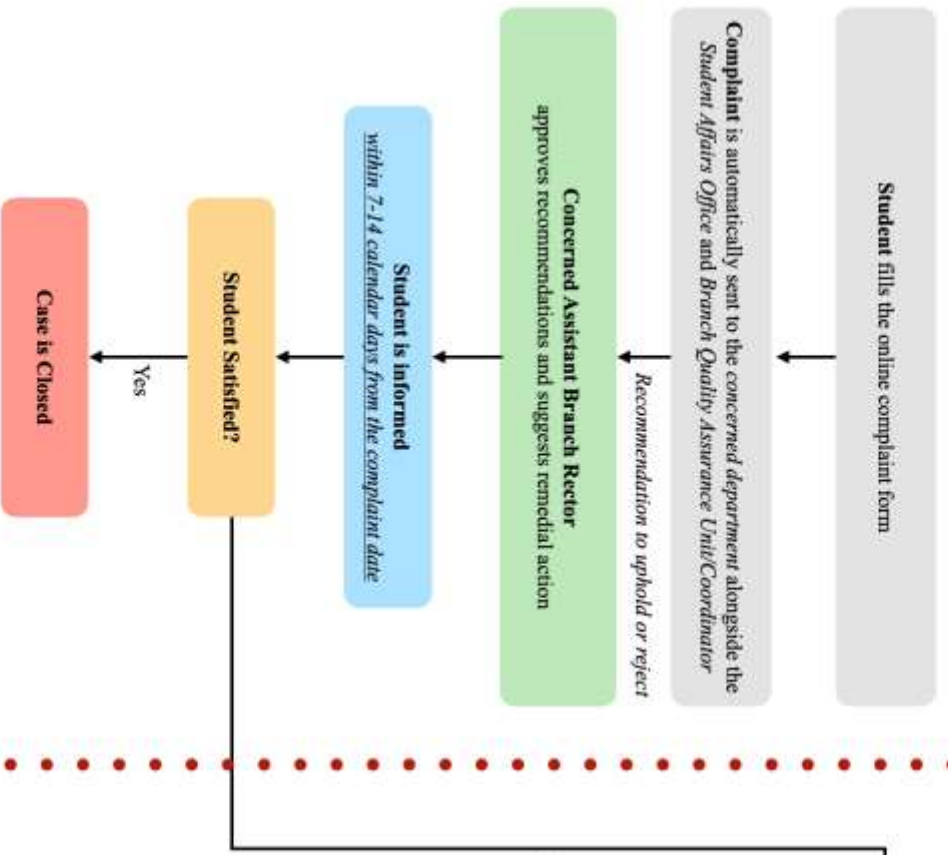
decision will be sent to the Branch Rector and the Branch Quality Assurance Unit/Coordinator.

Second Complaint

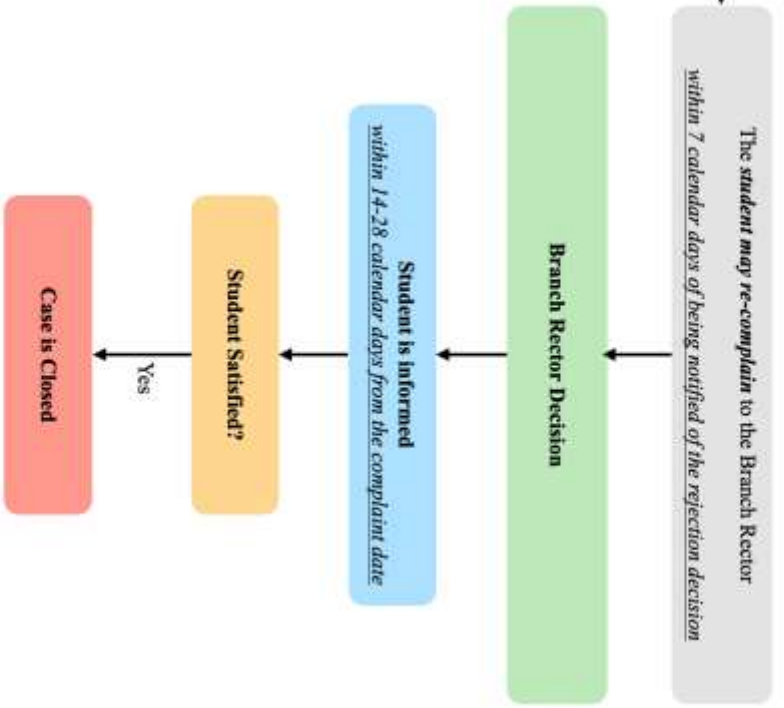
- If the student is dissatisfied with the decision, he or she may re-complain to the Branch Rector/Director within **seven (7)** calendar days of notification of the decision to reject the complaint.
- The student will be informed with the decision by the Branch Rector/Director's office through the online complaint system or the University official e-mail within **7 to 28** calendar days depending on the gravity of the case.
- If the student is registered in an Open University Validated Award Programme and still dissatisfied with the decision, and providing that the appeal / complaint is eligible under their rules, he or she may complain to the Open University-UK.
- The student will find more information on OU-UK appeals and complaints process in the Student guide to studying on a programme validated by The Open University.
- Each semester a summary report and analysis of all appeal and complaints cases will be prepared by the QAU in each branch. A copy of the summary report should be sent to Quality Assurance and Accreditation Department at HQ.
- Processing complaints may take a period up to four weeks.

Student Complaint Process

Stage 1: First Complaint



Stage 2: Second Complaint



Note:
 If the student is still unsatisfied, he/she may appeal to the *University President*
 If the student is registered in an OUV^P Validated Award Programme, then he/she may appeal to **OUVP (OU UK)***

* Refer to OUC Handbook for Validated Awards Page 84 F1.27 for further instructions
<https://www.open.ac.uk/about/validation-partnerships/about-us/validation-ou-handbook-validated-awards>

Acronym:

BAC: Branch Appeal Committee

CEC: Central Examination Committee

BRC: Branch Re-Appeal Committee

BPC: Branch Programme Coordinator

BCC: Branch Course Coordinator

BR: Branch Rector

VPAA &SR: Vice President for Academic Affairs and Scientific Research.

ARAA: Assistant Rector for Academic Affairs

ARAFA: Assistant Rector for Administrative & Financial Affairs

QAC: Quality Assurance Coordinator

BARD: Branch Admission & Registration Department

OU-UK: Open University – United Kingdom