SECTION 7

THE SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY ON ACADEMIC GROUNDS

Students are advised to seek impartial help, advice, guidance and support from sabbatical officers in the Students’ Union and Students’ Union Advice Centre.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Action to suspend or expel a student for an unsatisfactory standard of work or other academic reason can be taken either during an academic year or at the end of a year following the publication of examination results. The decision by an Assessment Board that a student has failed a year of a course does not constitute expulsion. Expulsion only occurs where a student is subsequently denied the opportunity to retrieve that failure.

2. DECISION TO SUSPEND OR EXPEL

2.1 The power to suspend or expel a student on academic grounds rests with the Dean of School, though the decision may be delegated to the chair of a course or course committee, or a course tutor. A recommendation by an assessment board that a student should not be allowed to repeat a year of a course does not constitute a decision and cannot, therefore, be the subject of review under Assessment Regulation 7 of the University’s assessment regulations. It is for the Dean to decide whether or not to accept the recommendation.

2.2 Where the decision is taken by a person other than the Dean the student concerned has the right to ask the Dean to change or confirm the decision. The Dean must respond to such a request.

3. APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION TO SUSPEND OR EXPEL

3.1 A student has the right to appeal against a decision to suspend or expel taken by a Dean. Notice of appeal must be sent to the Head of Registry and, except for good reason, must be lodged within ten working days of the Dean’s decision. It must state the general grounds on which the decision is being contested.

3.2 Requests will only be considered in the following circumstances:

3.2.1 that the student’s performance on the course (including in assessed work or examinations) was adversely affected by illness or other factors which the student was unable or, for valid reasons, unwilling to divulge before the Dean reached the decision to suspend or expel. The original circumstances and the reason for their late submission must be supported by medical certificates or other independent evidence;

3.2.2 the student can produce evidence demonstrating that there has been an administrative error or other irregularity that has directly affected the Dean’s decision.
3.3 A request for an appeal of suspension or exclusion from the University shall be made to the Head of Registry’s office as soon as possible and normally not later than two calendar weeks from the date of the Dean’s letter. Some reasonable delay in lodging a request will be allowed where, for example, the student is involved in either sandwich placement or teaching practice as part of his/her course. The appeal submission should detail the nature of and the grounds for the request and provide all relevant evidence to support the appeal.

3.4 On receipt of an application for leave to appeal, the Head of Registry or nominated deputy will review the documentation to identify if 3.2.1 or 3.2.2 has occurred and/or is demonstrated within the documentation. If leave to appeal is not granted, the Head of Registry or nominated deputy will write to the student with a full explanation.

3.5 If leave to appeal is granted the Appeals Committee shall comprise three members of the Senate, one of whom will be a student member. No member shall have been directly involved in the assessment under dispute, be a member of the Assessment Board nor be drawn from the School in which the student is based. The chair of the Committee, who may not be a student, shall be chosen by the members of the Committee.

3.6 The Head of Registry or a nominated deputy shall act as secretary and convener of the Committee, but shall not be a member.

3.7 The Appeals Committee shall normally hold its first meeting within 20 working days of the request being lodged, provided all evidence is presented with the appeal form. Delays in providing evidence may delay a hearing. The Appeals Committee’s meetings shall be held in private and its proceedings shall be confidential.

3.8 The student may, if he/she wishes, present his/her case to the Committee in person and has the right to be accompanied by a friend when presenting the case to the Committee. Representatives from the School will present their case in the presence of the student and supporter. Notification of the date of the Appeals Committee will be forwarded to the student at least five working days in advance of the meeting. At this point no further documentation may be submitted by the student.

3.9 The meeting of the Appeals Committee may be postponed, if the student who has made the appeal can show good reason for not being able to attend at the originally specified time. However, the failure or inability of a student to attend the meeting of the Appeals Committee will not preclude the Committee from reaching a decision.

3.10 The Appeals Committee shall have the powers to disallow a request and in such cases its decision shall be final, with the following provisos:

3.10.1 The relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor may hear complaints or require, in exceptional circumstances, the Committee to be reconvened.

3.10.2 In cases of exclusion the decision of the Appeals Committee cannot prejudice any right of appeal under Article 87.
3.11 In cases where an Appeals Committee believes that there is relevant new information which was not available to the Dean when the decision was taken it may request the Dean to review the decision in the light of such information. In these cases it shall not give directions as to the outcome of the review and the student will have the right to appeal against the new decision.

3.12 In its proceedings the Appeals Committee must pay proper deference to the role and the authority of external examiners and to the regulations of external bodies where they are material.

3.13 All decisions of the Appeals Committee shall be made by a majority vote of the members. In the event of the votes being tied the decision shall be in favour of the student and the procedure laid down in paragraph 3.11 shall be followed.

3.14 The Committee shall submit a written report of its conclusions within ten working days of its final meeting to the Dean of the School and to the student.

3.15 The University will meet reasonable and proportionate incidental expenses (for example, travel within the UK, subsistence and essential accommodation) necessarily incurred by successful appellants as a result of attending an Appeals Committee. The University will not meet any legal expenses.

3.16 The Head of Registry will prepare an annual statistical report on complaints and appeals for the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee and Research Committee as appropriate. This report will identify any issues which need prompt attention.