

ACADEMIC ISSUES

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CONTENTS

- 1 ACADEMIC ISSUES
- 3 WHAT IS AN ACADEMIC APPEAL?
- 6 EXCEPTIONAL FACTORS
- 8 ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT & PLAGIARISM
- 10 WITHDRAWAL OF A STUDENT BY MMU
- 12 CONTACT US

WE WANT ALL STUDENTS TO ENJOY THEIR TIME AT MMU AND TO COMPLETE THEIR STUDIES SUCCESSFULLY. HOWEVER, ISSUES CAN ARISE AND THIS BOOKLET WILL GIVE YOU THE INFORMATION YOU NEED TO RESOLVE THEM AS QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE.

WHAT IS AN ACADEMIC APPEAL?

An appeal is a way of asking the University to reconsider an academic decision they have made based on extra information that you provide them with.

**IF YOU WISH TO
APPEAL A DECISION
OR NEED HELP DROP
IN AND SPEAK TO US**

WHICH DECISIONS CAN YOU APPEAL AGAINST?

AN EXCEPTIONAL FACTORS PANEL DECISION

You can appeal the decision if:

- the decision of the panel was not reasonable (or it was refused because it was late).
- or
- the correct procedures were not followed when considering your exceptional factors case.

You must submit an appeals form within 21 days of the Exceptional Factors decision by completing an appeals form and submitting it to your Student Hub or to complaintsappeals@mmu.ac.uk

NB: If you have additional evidence, you can submit a new Exceptional Factors form instead of appealing.

AN ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT DECISION

e.g. allegations of plagiarism and/or cheating in exams

You can appeal the decision if:

- there were exceptional factors that you didn't present when the hearing took place
- or
- the hearing did not follow the correct process/there was another material irregularity which affected the decision.

You must appeal within 21 days of the date on the misconduct decision letter by completing an appeals form and submitting it to your Student Hub or to complaintsappeals@mmu.ac.uk

BEING WITHDRAWN FROM YOUR COURSE

This can happen if you are at risk of 'academic failure' – this could include low attendance, lack of engagement with Moodle and failing to submit assessments.

You can appeal the decision to withdraw you if:

- you have exceptional factors that you didn't inform the University of earlier
 - the withdrawal process did not follow the correct process and if the error hadn't occurred the decision to withdraw may not have happened
- or
- you can demonstrate that you are able to complete the academic work required to secure a pass at the end of the current academic session.

You must complete a withdrawal appeal form and submit it within **7 days** of the date of your withdrawal letter to your Student Hub or to complaintsappeals@mmu.ac.uk

END OF YEAR RESULTS

You can appeal this decision if you can show there has been a 'material error' (mistake) when the results

were considered and this has affected your results.

Examples include: an exam was missing from the timetable, the wrong exam paper was given out, an invigilator stopped the exam too early, or the University did not follow its own procedures e.g. the policy for the marking and moderation of assessed work was not followed correctly.

The University will also consider whether there was any bias when your work was marked.

You must submit an appeals form within 21 days of your end of year results being published by completing an appeals form and submitting it to your Student Hub or to complaintsappeals@mmu.ac.uk

HOW DO I APPEAL?

Firstly, speak to your tutor, Head of Department or Student Hub to chat about the decision you are unhappy with and/or to raise concerns.

If you remain unhappy, you can submit the relevant appeal form to your Student Hub or complaintsappeals@mmu.ac.uk by the deadlines mentioned above and it will be investigated further.

REMEMBER

YOU MUST HAVE CLEAR GROUNDS TO APPEAL A DECISION – YOU CANNOT APPEAL JUST BECAUSE YOU DISAGREE WITH THE EXAMINERS OR YOU THINK THE RESULT UNFAIR.

POSSIBLE APPEAL OUTCOMES

Typical outcomes include:

- a further reassessment opportunity
- an opportunity to sit as a first attempt (i.e. the re-sit mark won't be capped at 40%)
- reconsideration of academic misconduct decision
- withdrawal overturned

You can contact the Advice Centre for help with submitting an appeal.

EXCEPTIONAL FACTORS

If you have been affected by problems which prevented you from submitting an assignment on time, attending an exam or you didn't perform to the best of your ability, you can submit an Exceptional Factors form.

**UNSURE ABOUT ANYTHING?
DROP IN AND SPEAK TO US**

AN EXCEPTIONAL FACTOR MUST BE:

- **Severe:** The event or circumstance must have had a serious impact on your performance.
- **Unexpected:** There were no reasonable steps you could have taken to prevent these factors.
- **Relevant:** The event or circumstance must have happened at the time of assessment.
- **Corroborated:** You must provide independent, professional evidence to support your case.

EXAMPLES OF EXCEPTIONAL FACTORS:

- Illness
- Bereavement
- Personal trauma

...which occurred at the time of the exam or assessment submission date, which meant you couldn't attend it, submit your work or didn't perform to the best of your ability. The final deadline to submit an Exceptional Factors form is 21 days from when your end of year results are published on Moodle.

Long-term issues are not generally considered as exceptional factors unless they have had a specific bearing at the time of assessment. For example, a long-term health condition or illness that became unexpectedly severe during

the assessment period. You must provide evidence to support your case.

We advise that you seek support from the University Disability Service if you have a long-term health condition.

THE EXCEPTIONAL FACTORS PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

ASSIGNMENTS

If possible try to complete your Exceptional Factors (EF) form and submit it to your Student Hub before the submission deadline for the assignment.

If the form is submitted after the deadline, it may not be possible to grant an extension. In cases where an extension cannot be given, you will be allowed to resubmit the assignment later in the year, with or without a cap on the marks.

EXAMINATIONS

You must complete and submit an Exceptional Factors (EF) form before the exam or as near to the day of the exam as possible. If accepted, you will be given chance to sit the exam during the next exam period, with or without a cap on the marks.

APPEALS

If you are unhappy with the EF decision or your request is refused, you can submit an academic appeal against it. Please see the appeals section of this booklet.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT & PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism means passing someone else's work off as your own. Poor referencing is also considered as plagiarism and usually receives a penalty.

UNSURE ABOUT ANYTHING?
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You can be penalised for:

- **Plagiarism:** copying from authors, not using quotation marks or taking sections from other people's work and altering it to make it look like your own.
- **Self plagiarism:** You can self plagiarise, which means using parts of an assignment you submitted earlier in the course in a second assignment.
- **Collusion:** copying from other students or allowing your work to be copied. Be especially mindful when completing group work.
- **Attempting to gain unfair advantage:** paying someone to do your work or falsifying data.
- **Cheating:** taking unauthorised material into an exam.

If you receive a letter accusing you of Academic Misconduct or Plagiarism you will need to attend a meeting. This will be with your Head of Department – we may be able to go with you, but we will need plenty of notice in order to attend. If you do not attend, a decision will usually be made in your absence.

The penalty for plagiarism depends on your year and whether you have done it before. The general rules are:

REMEMBER
ALL WORK
SUBMITTED IS
CHECKED FOR
PLAGIARISM.

Level 3/4 – If this is your first offence and your work is less than 20% plagiarised then it will be marked normally and you will get a warning. If your work is over 20% plagiarised you will receive a mark of zero. You may have to repeat the assignment but this will be capped at 40%.

Level 5/6 – If this is your first offence and your work is less than 20% plagiarised it will be capped at 40%. If your work is more than 20% plagiarised you will receive zero. You may have to repeat the assignment but this will be capped at 40%. If you are a final year student this could affect when you graduate.

Where there are multiple assignments involved that were submitted at around the same time they should be treated as a single case.

The penalties are more serious if you have been accused of cheating before or if you are a postgraduate student.

Come and talk to the Advice Centre if you wish to appeal any decision or if you need help with any part of the process.

WITHDRAWAL OF A STUDENT BY MMU

If the university does not think that you will be able to complete the academic work to pass the year it can withdraw you.

**UNSURE ABOUT
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SPEAK TO US**

MMU will usually only do this if you are not attending classes or submitting assessments and you haven't let your tutors know why. This is why it is so important to let your tutors know if you are having a difficult time and cannot always attend university.

If you have missed a lot of classes or failed to submit work, and you haven't let anyone at MMU know why, your department may start the withdrawal procedure:

- Initially a warning letter will be sent to you, giving you two weeks to address the matter and to contact your department for help and support.
- If you don't respond you will be sent a second letter giving you an extra two weeks to sort things out. The letter should explain that you will be withdrawn if you don't take action.
- If you still don't address things within the two week deadline then you will be withdrawn from MMU. You will be sent a letter explaining that you are being withdrawn and

it should include details of how to appeal the decision.

APPEALING THE DECISION

You only have one week from the date on your withdrawal letter to appeal the decision and you can only do this if you meet certain grounds (e.g. you had exceptional factors, or the university have not followed their procedure properly). The Advice Centre can help you with an appeal, so please contact us if you would like our support.

BEWARE!

If you receive a student loan whilst you are studying, being withdrawn from university will affect this. You may find that you have a large overpayment that you have to pay back to the Student Loans Company earlier than you expected. Come and speak to an Adviser and we can discuss your situation and your options.

CONTACT US

T: 0161 247 6533

E: s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk

W: theunionmmu.org/advice

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Disclaimer: The Union has made every effort to ensure that the information in this leaflet is accurate. The Union cannot be held responsible for the consequences of any action taken as a result of reading this leaflet. Before taking any action you are advised to visit the Advice Centre.

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