

# Academic Appeals Policy 2025-27

LCCA Governance



London  
College of  
Contemporary  
Arts

ID: ASA-001

<b>Section 1: Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Overview	3
1.2 Quick Reference	4
1.3 Deviations and Amendments	4
<b>Section 2: Grounds for Academic Appeals</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Permissible Grounds	5
2.2 Appeals relating to College Procedures	5
2.3 Appeals relating to Mitigating Circumstances	5
2.4 What you cannot appeal against	6
2.5 Understanding Academic Judgement	7
<b>Section 3: Submitting an Academic Appeal</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Overview	8
3.2 Fair and Accessible Process Standards	8
3.3 Evidence Requirements	8
3.4 Timeframes	10
3.5 Possible Outcomes	10
<b>Stage 1 – Initial Consideration and Local Resolution (LCCA)</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1 Overview	11
4.2 Process	11
4.3 Outcome	11
<b>Stage 2 – Formal Consideration (LCCA)</b>	<b>12</b>
5.1 Overview	12
5.2 Inquiries	12
5.3 Consideration	13
5.4 Possible Outcomes	13

<b>Stage 3 – Appeal Review (UCA)</b>	14
6.1 Overview	14
6.2 Possible Outcomes	14
6.3 Completion of Procedures and External Review	14
<b>Section 4: Document Overview</b>	<b>15</b>
Monitoring and Auditing	15
Related Documents and Guidance	15
<b>Appendix I: Key Terms and Definitions</b>	17
<b>Appendix II: Academic Appeal Procedure (Students)</b>	19
<b>Appendix III: Academic Appeal Procedure (Staff)</b>	20

## Section 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

This policy sets out how London College of Contemporary Arts (LCCA) considers academic appeals for taught BA and MA programmes delivered in partnership with the University for the Creative Arts (UCA).

An academic appeal is a request for review of an academic decision made by:

- Academic staff regarding assessment or final module grades
- Board of Examiners regarding progression or degree awards

#### **This policy covers:**

- Academic decisions affecting assessment outcomes, progression, or awards
- Procedural irregularities in assessment processes
- Material errors in calculation or recording
- Appeals against rejected mitigating circumstances decisions.
- Submission user-errors (wrong location, format, or technical issues) where work was submitted on time

#### **This policy does not cover:**

- Initial mitigating circumstances requests (see UCA's Mitigating Circumstances Regulations)
- Late mitigating circumstances requests (submitted after deadlines)
- Academic or non-academic misconduct outcomes (see Academic Misconduct Policy)
- Fee-related withdrawal decisions (see Refunds Policy)
- Course quality concerns (see Student Complaints Policy)

#### Important: Relationship with Mitigating Circumstances

Students should request assessment support through UCA's Mitigating Circumstances Regulations before or at the time of assessment, including self-certification (up to 5 working days, maximum 2 per year) and deadline extensions.

Use this Academic Appeals Policy only to appeal rejected Mitigating Circumstances decisions or assessment outcomes where circumstances could not be disclosed at the appropriate time.

As a UCA partner institution, LCCA operates under UCA's Academic Appeals framework. LCCA's Quality Assurance Team manages Stages 1-2 under delegated authority from UCA. UCA's Office for Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulations (OSCAR) manages Stage 3 and issues Completion of Procedures letters. This policy applies to all LCCA students and staff.

## 1.2 Quick Reference

"Can I appeal?"

- ✓ Error in marking or recording
- ✓ Circumstances within 4 weeks of deadline (if not disclosed)
- ✓ Mitigating Circumstances request rejected
- ✓ Work submitted on time but wrong location/format
- ✗ Disagree with marks awarded
- ✗ Teaching quality concerns
- ✗ Circumstances more than 4 weeks before deadline

**Who handles what:** Stage 1: Course Director → Stage 2: Quality Team → Stage 3: UCA

## 1.3 Deviations and Amendments

Standard procedures apply to most cases. Deviations may include extending timeframes, nominating alternative personnel, or adjusting procedures for reasonable adjustments. Any deviation requires College discretion, clear documentation, and student notification.

## Section 2: Grounds for Academic Appeals

### 2.1 Permissible Grounds

Academic appeals may only be submitted on the grounds specified below. Appeals that do not meet the permissible grounds will not be considered. For an academic appeal to be upheld, the reviewer(s) must be entirely satisfied that the permissible grounds have been fully met, and it would be fair and reasonable to uphold it.

### 2.2 Appeals relating to College Procedures

Students may appeal on the following procedural grounds:

1. **Procedural irregularity:** Error in assessment process casting reasonable doubt on result accuracy. *Example:* Work not marked or graded against incorrect criteria.
2. **Material calculation error:** Demonstrable error in mark or award calculation. *Example:* Incorrect component weightings or award classification.
3. **Recording/reporting error:** Error in recording or reporting marks to Board of Examiners. *Example:* Published grades differ from assessment feedback.

### 2.3 Appeals relating to Mitigating Circumstances

Students may appeal on the following mitigating circumstances grounds:

1. **Undisclosed circumstances:** Assessment performance affected by circumstances beyond control which, for justifiable reasons, could not be disclosed before submission deadline.
  - Must explain why Mitigating Circumstances Regulations weren't used at appropriate time
  - Appeals normally relate to circumstances within 4 weeks prior to submission deadline.
  - This includes circumstances where a student submitted work but was not fit to do so, provided they can demonstrate how circumstances affected their judgement about fitness to be assessed and why they could not reasonably request support at the time.

2. **Rejected mitigating circumstances:** Belief that mitigating circumstances rejection was unreasonable.
- **Deadlines:** 14 calendar days from MC rejection notification for LCCA-managed stages (Stage 1-2). For UCA Stage 3, 10 UCA working days (equivalent to 14 calendar days). Appeals can be submitted before Board ratification.
  - **Evidence required:** Demonstrate why the rejection was unreasonable based on evidence provided and UCA's Mitigating Circumstances Regulations
  - **Scope:** Appeals review procedural fairness and regulatory consistency of the decision, not re-assessment of circumstances
3. **Submission user-error:** Work was inaccessible to the marker due to a user-error on the student's part in the submission of their work.

Examples include:

- Work submitted to the wrong location on the VLE
- Work submitted in an incorrect or inaccessible format
- Files that were locked or corrupted at the point of submission

Important conditions:

- The student must demonstrate the work was submitted on time
- It must be determined that by giving the student a further opportunity to submit will not give them an unfair advantage over other students
- The error must be a genuine mistake and not an attempt to gain additional preparation time

Note: This ground is consistent with UCA Academic Appeals Regulations 4.4.3 and is distinct from technical difficulties with College systems (which are addressed through the Mitigating Circumstances procedure).

## 2.4 What you cannot appeal against

The following will not normally be considered grounds for appeal:

- **Academic judgement:** Disagreeing with awarded marks
- **Quality concerns:** Teaching/supervision dissatisfaction
- **Fee-related disruption:** Assessment impact due to non-payment
- **Policy ignorance:** Not engaging with relevant policies when appropriate

- **Retrospective circumstances:** Could have been disclosed at time without justifiable delay reasons

**Retrospective circumstances:** Could have been disclosed at time without justifiable delay reasons (Note: Appeals regarding mitigating circumstances not disclosed prior to submission will usually only be considered where those circumstances were contemporaneous with the last 4 weeks prior to the submission deadline, consistent with UCA Academic Appeals Regulations 4.5.5)

## 2.5 Understanding Academic Judgement

Academic judgement refers to professional decisions requiring academic expertise, including:

- Assessment of work quality and academic merit
- Evaluation of performance against learning outcomes
- Decisions about assessment methods and criteria
- Professional judgements about course content and academic standards

### Key distinction:

- Not appealable: "I deserved higher marks because my arguments were strong"
- Appealable: "Marker didn't follow published criteria" or "Part of submission not considered"

Allegations of bias or discrimination are serious and must be supported by clear, objective evidence. Such concerns may be addressed through either the Academic Appeals Policy or the Student Complaints Policy, depending on the nature of the issue.

## Section 3: Submitting an Academic Appeal

### 3.1 Overview

Students must submit appeals in good faith without suffering disadvantage. Frivolous, vexatious, or malicious appeals may breach regulations and result in disciplinary action.

**Student responsibilities:** Use appropriate forms; ensure truthful information; engage constructively with process.

**Support available:** QA Team guidance; Student Services assistance; reasonable adjustments for specific needs.

**Representation:** Students may have classmate or Student Voice Representative support at meetings (supportive capacity only, cannot present case or answer questions).

Examples of vexatious appeals may include but are not limited to:

- Repeated requests for an appeal to be considered by means other than those prescribed by published procedures
- Requests that repeatedly cite grounds, circumstances, or seek outcomes that are not permitted within the regulations
- A case that relies upon circumstances that were either not upheld or had been rejected by previous appeals or other procedures (See UCA Academic Appeals Regulations 5.8.2)

### 3.2 Fair and Accessible Process Standards

LCCA is committed to ensuring academic appeals are fair, competent, consistent, completed promptly, accessible to all, and free from disadvantage. Students requiring reasonable adjustments should contact [quality@lcca.ac.uk](mailto:quality@lcca.ac.uk) at the earliest opportunity.

### 3.3 Evidence Requirements

All evidence submitted with academic appeals must comply with [LCCA's Evidence Guidance](#).

Key principles:

- Evidence must be contemporaneous (obtained at the time of circumstances). For mitigating circumstances appeals, evidence should relate to circumstances that occurred during, or had a demonstrable ongoing effect on, the period of assessment - normally within the 4 weeks prior to the submission deadline.

- Must be from independent, authoritative sources (not family/friends)
- Must demonstrate clear impact on academic performance
- Must include specific dates covering the relevant period
- Must be verifiable and unaltered

**Burden of proof:** It is the student's responsibility to provide compelling evidence supporting their appeal.

**Standard of proof:** Appeals are decided on the "balance of probabilities" - whether it is more likely than not that the described circumstances occurred and affected academic performance.

**Self-certification:** Students may self-certify for circumstances affecting up to 5 working days (maximum 2 requests per academic year). Self-certified circumstances submitted through appeals will be counted toward this limit.

**Retrospective evidence:** Medical evidence obtained after the circumstances will only be accepted if:

- The practitioner saw the student during the period of illness, OR
- The evidence references contemporaneous medical records (prescriptions, consultations, clinical notes) from the relevant timeframe
- The student provides justifiable reasons for not obtaining evidence at the time

**Alternative evidence:** Where standard evidence is unavailable due to NHS delays or other practical barriers, refer to Section 2 of the [Evidence Guidance](#) for acceptable alternatives.

**Evidence verification:** The College may contact evidence providers to verify authenticity and may request original documentation.

For detailed requirements by circumstance type (medical, bereavement, legal matters, etc.), see the [Evidence Guidance](#).

### 3.4 Timeframes

#### Submission deadline:

- **Stage 1:** May be initiated at any time before Board of Examiners ratification of results.
- **Stage 2:** Within 14 calendar days of notification of the assessment result, Board of Examiners decision, or Mitigating Circumstances rejection decision being appealed.
- **Stage 3:** Within 10 UCA working days (Monday-Friday, equivalent to 14 calendar days) of the Stage 2 outcome.

Late appeals will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances. Appeals submitted more than 12 months after official notification will not be considered under any circumstances.

**Processing times:** The College aims to process appeals promptly within any specified timeframes, though this depends on staff availability, student meeting required deadlines, and case complexity. Students will be notified of any delays and revised timescales.

**Continuing studies:** Academic appeal procedures may not conclude before other modules, assessments, Board meetings, or ceremonies. The original decision remains valid during the appeal. Students should continue studies normally and may not withhold fee payments due to ongoing appeals.

### 3.5 Possible Outcomes

If an appeal is upheld, the outcome may include one or more of the following:

- Permitting a further assessment opportunity
- Extending deadlines retrospectively
- Requesting remarking of work (potentially by different assessors)
- Recalculating marks or classification
- Approving reasonable adjustments to assessment tasks

Successful appeals will not result in:

- Automatic mark increases
- Grade uplifts without resubmission
- Pass marks without additional work
- Reclassification without reassessment

**Note:** The specific remedy will depend on the nature of the appeal and what is required to address the identified issue fairly.

## Stage 1 – Initial Consideration and Local Resolution (LCCA)

### 4.1 Overview

Stage 1 enables students to raise concerns about assessment outcomes with their Course Director before proceeding to formal appeal. This local resolution stage addresses misunderstandings, clarifies feedback, and resolves straightforward procedural matters.

Stage 1 can be initiated any time before Board of Examiners ratification, allowing early resolution of concerns about provisional marks.

### 4.2 Process

Students concerned about assessment outcomes should contact their Course Director (or nominee), who will attempt resolution by:

- Explaining the assessment process and mark determination
- Checking all submission parts were considered during marking
- Clarifying misunderstandings about feedback or criteria
- Addressing perceived procedural irregularities
- Explaining relevant regulations and policies

The Course Director may consult other relevant staff (module leaders, second markers) while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

### 4.3 Outcome

The Course Director will contact the student explaining:

- Summary of concerns raised
- Clear explanation of the assessment decision
- Response to specific queries raised
- Any actions taken if concerns were valid
- Stage 2 process information if student remains dissatisfied

If concerns are resolved, no further action is required. If dissatisfied, students may submit a formal Stage 2 Appeal to the Quality Assurance Team.

**Deadline for Stage 2:** If the student remains dissatisfied with the Stage 1 outcome, they may submit a Stage 2 appeal within 14 calendar days of receiving the Stage 1 decision.

### What Course Directors should do:

1. Acknowledge receipt within 2-5 working days
2. Review the appeal form and evidence
3. Consult relevant staff (module leaders, markers) as needed
4. Check for:
  - Marking errors or omissions
  - Recording discrepancies
  - Procedural irregularities
5. Consider whether issue can be resolved locally
6. Document investigation and decision
7. Respond to student within 15 working days

## **Stage 2 – Formal Consideration (LCCA)**

### **5.1 Overview**

Stage 2 is a formal, independent investigation by LCCA's Quality Assurance Team. Appeals are considered impartially, and personal testimonials will not be accepted.

**Timing:** Stage 2 appeals may only be submitted after Board of Examiners ratification and, where reasonably practicable, after Stage 1. Appeals concerning provisional marks should be addressed through Stage 1.

**Exception:** Appeals against rejected MC requests made before the submission deadline may be submitted before Board ratification (UCA Academic Appeals Regulations 6.2.5(b)).

Most appeals will be determined by the designated reviewer(s) from the Quality Team. In exceptional cases involving complexity or where reviewers cannot reach agreement, referral to an Academic Appeal Panel may occur at the reviewer's discretion.

### **5.2 Inquiries**

The College will nominate a case manager who will:

- Normally be from the Quality Assurance Team
- Have had no direct involvement in the matters under appeal
- Complete an initial assessment to verify timeliness and permissible grounds
- Decide whether the appeal should proceed to formal consideration or be dismissed

If dismissed, the student will be informed of the reasons for the decision.

If proceeding to formal consideration, the case manager will:

- Determine the scope of inquiries needed
- Seek information from the student, connected persons, and relevant College departments
- With student consent, may request disclosure of medical conditions, disabilities, and reasonable adjustments from Student Wellbeing Services
- Provide a summary report for reviewers, with a copy shared with the student

### 5.3 Consideration

For an appeal to be upheld, reviewer(s) must be entirely satisfied that:

- Permissible grounds have been fully met
- It would be fair and reasonable to uphold the appeal
- Mitigating circumstances and/or procedural errors have directly, adversely, and significantly affected the student's outcomes
- The appeal is supported by compelling evidence

Reviewers may consider an appeal under different grounds than those cited by the student if more appropriate and will notify the student (UCA Academic Appeals Regulations 6.2.8).

**Academic Appeal Panel (if required):** If reviewers refer the case to a panel, it will comprise at least one senior academic staff member and two senior QA representatives who have not been involved in the appealed matters. The panel considers cases by file review, though may request meetings with the student and/or relevant persons at their discretion.

### 5.4 Possible Outcomes

- Appeal upheld (fully successful)
- Appeal partially upheld (some aspects successful)
- Appeal not upheld (unsuccessful)

## Stage 3 – Appeal Review (UCA)

### 6.1 Overview

In limited circumstances, students may request a review of their Stage 2 appeal outcome. Review requests must be submitted to the Quality Assurance Team ([quality@lcca.ac.uk](mailto:quality@lcca.ac.uk)) using the Stage 3 Request Form (AAF3) no later than 12pm (midday) on the 10th UCA working day (Monday-Friday, excluding UK public holidays) following notification of the Stage 2 outcome, in accordance with UCA regulations.

Stage 3 is the final internal review of the appeal decision, conducted by UCA's Academic, Conduct and Experience (ACE) Appeal Board. This represents the completion of internal procedures before potential referral to external review.

### 6.2 Possible Outcomes

The Stage 3 Appeal Review Board may determine:

- Confirmation that Stage 2 decision was reasonable (appeal not upheld)
- Discretionary reconsideration of the case (appeal partially upheld)
- Finding that Stage 2 decision was unreasonable (appeal upheld)
- Referral back to earlier stages if new evidence warrants it

### 6.3 Completion of Procedures and External Review

#### [Office of the Independent Adjudicator \(OIA\)](#)

If, after exhausting LCCA's and UCA's internal procedures, a student remains dissatisfied with their appeal outcome, they may apply to the OIA for independent review of the final decision.

Key requirements:

- Requests must be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the date UCA confirms procedures are complete
- Cases must have been dealt with through internal procedures and completed
- A Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter from UCA is required for OIA referral

## When Completion of Procedures letters are issued

A CoP letter will be issued by UCA's OSCAR following:

- Any Stage 3 decision (except referral back to earlier stages)
- Dismissal of an appeal as vexatious at any stage
- Request within 1 month of student accepting Stage 1 or 2 outcome
- Request within 1 month of out-of-time rejection at Stage 1 or 2 (where not referred to Stage 3)

Students wishing to request a CoP letter should contact LCCA's Quality Assurance Team ([quality@lcca.ac.uk](mailto:quality@lcca.ac.uk)) who will liaise with UCA's Global Partnerships Team and OSCAR.

**Further information:** The OIA provides an independent review scheme for student complaints and appeals in higher education. Details, guidance, and complaint forms are available at: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/>

**CoP letters:** Issued by UCA's Office for Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulations (OSCAR). Students need this document to escalate their case to the OIA.

## **Section 4: Document Overview**

### **Monitoring and Auditing**

The College will conduct regular audits of the management of academic appeal procedures to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

### **Related Documents and Guidance**

[LCCA Absences and Mitigating Circumstances – Evidence Guidance](#)

LCCA Stage 1 Request Form (AAF1a) [Local Consideration]

LCCA Stage 2 Request Form (AAF2) [College Consideration]

UCA Stage 3 Request Form (AAF3) [Appeal Review]

[UCA Academic Appeals Regulations and Procedures](#)

[UCA Academic Misconduct Regulations and Procedures](#)

[OIA Good Practice Framework](#)

[UK Quality code for HE: Advice and Guidance – Concerns, Complaints and Appeals](#)

Key Information	
<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Approved By</b>	Academic Board
<b>Author(s)</b>	QA Team
<b>Owner</b>	QA Team
<b>Date Approved</b>	24 Sep 2025
<b>Effective Date</b>	01 Oct 2025
<b>Review Date</b>	Annually
<b>Readership</b>	All

Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Summary of Changes
Draft V 0.1	QA Manager	29-03-2025	First draft
Draft V 0.2	QA Manager	01-04-2025	Section and subsection formatting
Draft V 0.3	QA Manager	29-06-2025	Streamlining of all section and document formatting
Version 1.0	QA Manager	30-09-2025	Updated with new brand assets

## Appendix I: Key Terms and Definitions

**Academic Appeal:** Formal request to reconsider an academic decision affecting assessment outcome, progression, or award.

**Academic Board:** College's senior academic committee responsible for academic policy approval and standards oversight.

**Academic Judgement:** Professional decisions requiring academic expertise about work quality, assessment methods, and evaluation against learning outcomes.

**Board of Examiners:** Formal body responsible for ratifying marks, determining progression, and confirming award eligibility.

**Burden of Proof:** Student's responsibility to provide evidence supporting their appeal.

**Chief Examiner:** Senior academic overseeing assessment standards and Board decisions for specific programmes.

**Completion of Procedures (CoP) Letter:** UCA document confirming internal procedures are exhausted, enabling OIA referral.

**Contemporaneous Circumstances:** Circumstances that either occurred during, or had a demonstrable ongoing effect on, the period of study or assessment in question. For appeals relating to mitigating circumstances, circumstances are usually only considered contemporaneous if they occurred within the 4 weeks prior to the submission deadline.

**Material Error:** Significant mistake in calculation, recording, or reporting affecting result accuracy.

**Mitigating Circumstances:** Unexpected circumstances beyond student control significantly impacting academic performance. For appeals, circumstances are normally considered contemporaneous if they occurred within the 4 weeks prior to the submission deadline, consistent with UCA's regulations.

**Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA):** Independent body reviewing student complaints and appeals in higher education.

**Procedural Irregularity:** Error or failure to follow assessment processes casting doubt on result accuracy or fairness.

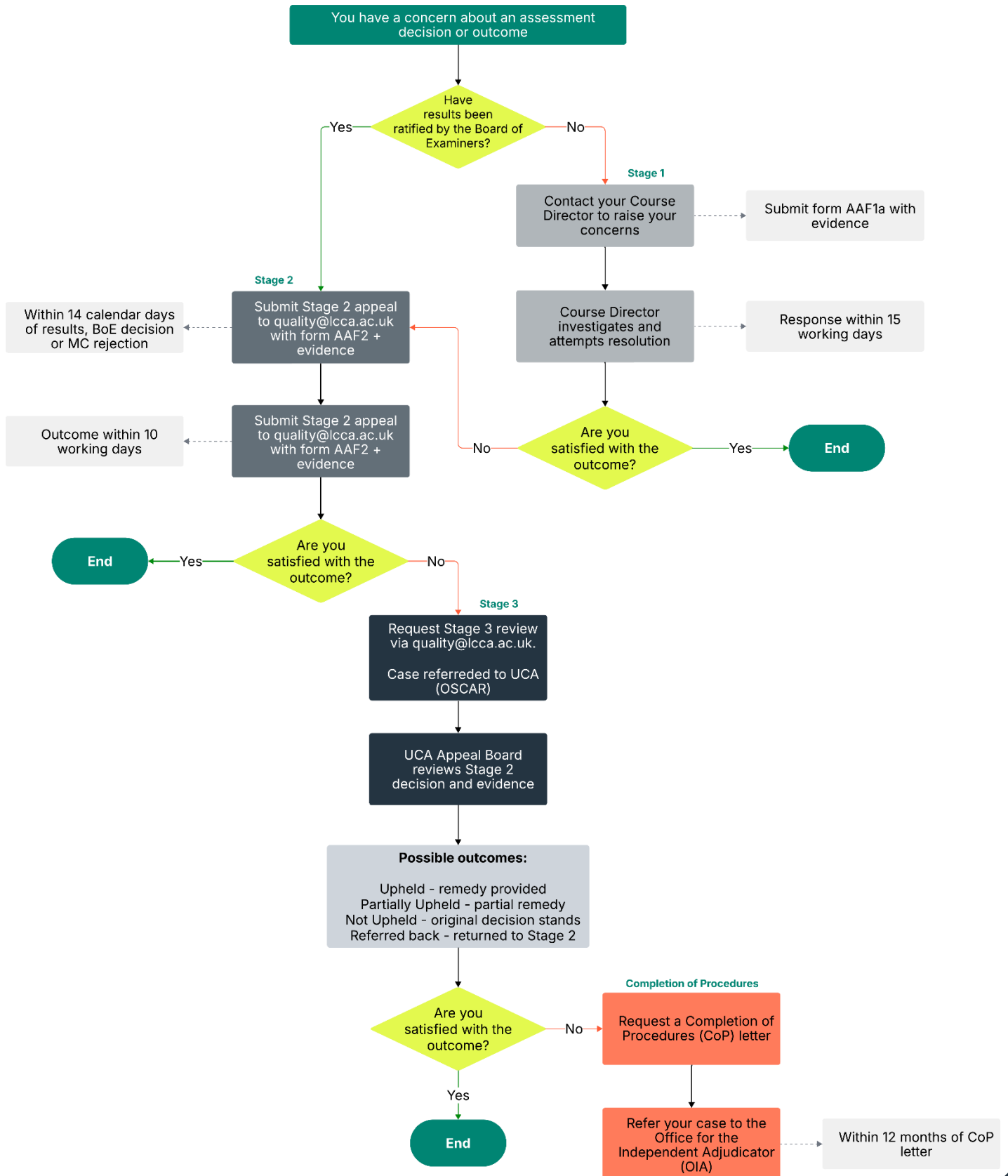
**Standard of Proof:** "Balance of probabilities" – more likely than not that described circumstances occurred.

**UCA:** University for the Creative Arts, LCCA's awarding partner whose regulations apply to LCCA processes.

**Calendar Day:** Any day of the week including weekends and UK public holidays, used for LCCA-managed stages (Stages 1-2) to ensure equity for all students regardless of attendance pattern.

**Working Day** (Stage 3 only): Monday to Friday (9am to 5pm), excluding UK public holidays, as defined by UCA for Stage 3 appeals. Ten UCA working days is equivalent to 14 calendar days.

## Appendix II: Academic Appeal Procedure (Students)



# Appendix III: Academic Appeal Procedure (Staff)



See UCA reg. 6.4.2 for additional CoP eligibility scenarios.