

Academic Appeals Policy

Date: 10 June 2026

Last amended by: Tim Johnson

1 Introduction

- 1.1 ThinkSpace Education (TSE) is committed to ensuring that all assessment outcomes are reached fairly and in accordance with its regulations. This policy sets out the procedure for students who wish to query an assessment outcome on permitted grounds.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all students enrolled on a postgraduate programme delivered by ThinkSpace Education and leading to an award of Arts University Bournemouth (AUB).
- 1.3 Academic appeals relate solely to assessment outcomes. If you have concerns about the quality of teaching, tutor support, or a service provided by TSE, this is a complaint, not an appeal. Complaints should be submitted under the TSE Student Complaints Policy, available at <https://thinkspace.ac.uk/about/policies/>.
- 1.4 If a submission contains elements of both a complaint and an appeal, TSE will determine which aspects fall under each procedure and will proceed accordingly. A complaint will generally be suspended pending the outcome of an appeal where the two are connected.
- 1.5 All appeals are treated in good faith. You will not be disadvantaged for lodging an appeal in good faith. However, where an appeal is found to be fraudulent or malicious — for example, where it contains false allegations against a member of staff — TSE reserves the right to take action under the TSE Student Code of Conduct.

2 What You Can Appeal Against

- 2.1 You may appeal against:
 - (a) an individual module mark, once that mark has been published following a Subject Examination Board;
 - (b) a progression decision; or
 - (c) the classification of your final award.
- 2.2 Appeals against progression decisions and final award classifications must be submitted following the publication of results by the AUB Progression and Awards Board (PAB). An appeal cannot be made against a provisional mark.

3 Grounds for Appeal

- 3.1 There are two grounds on which you may appeal:
 - (a) Mitigating circumstances — your performance in assessment may have been affected by mitigating circumstances that, for good reason, you were unable or unwilling to bring to TSE's attention before your work was assessed. An appeal on this ground must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence (for example, a medical certificate or letter from a relevant professional).
 - (b) Procedural irregularity — there has been an administrative error, or the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the course regulations.

- 3.2 Disagreement with academic judgement is not grounds for appeal. Academic judgement is defined as the decision made by academic staff on the quality of a student's work, or the criteria applied in marking it.
- 3.3 Travel or financial difficulties are not accepted as grounds for appeal.

4 Deadlines

- 4.1 You must submit your appeal within 15 working days from the date your results are published.
- 4.2 Appeals submitted after this deadline will not normally be accepted unless you can demonstrate, with supporting evidence, a valid reason for the delay.
- 4.3 It is your responsibility to check your results promptly and to submit any appeal within the required timescale.

5 What to Include in a Formal Appeal

- 5.1 A formal appeal submitted at Stage 2 must include:
 - (a) your full name and TSE Student Number;
 - (b) the module(s), progression decision, or award classification you are appealing against;
 - (c) the ground(s) you are relying upon (mitigating circumstances and/or procedural irregularity);
 - (d) a clear explanation of your case;
 - (e) all supporting documentary evidence; and
 - (f) confirmation that an informal discussion with your Senior Tutor has taken place at Stage 1, or documented evidence of your attempts to arrange this.
- 5.2 Appeals submitted without the required evidence will not normally be considered.

6 The Appeals Process

6.1 Stage 1 — Informal Discussion

- 6.1.1 Before submitting a formal appeal, you must first contact your Senior Tutor by email to discuss the assessment outcome. Your Senior Tutor will acknowledge your email within 5 working days and the discussion will take place within 10 working days of your initial contact.
- 6.1.2 Your Senior Tutor will copy the Head of Postgraduate Education (HPE) into all correspondence at this stage. If the matter concerns the HPE, your Senior Tutor will instead copy the Director.
- 6.1.3 If you remain dissatisfied following the informal discussion, you may proceed to Stage 2.

6.2 Stage 2 — Formal Appeal

- 6.2.1 If you wish to proceed following Stage 1, you must submit a formal written appeal to the HPE by email within 15 working days of the publication of your results (see Section 4). Your appeal must include all of the information set out in Section 5.
- 6.2.2 The HPE will acknowledge receipt of your appeal within 5 working days and will issue a written decision within 20 working days of receipt. The decision will either uphold your appeal, reject it, or refer the matter back to the relevant examination board.
- 6.2.3 If the appeal concerns the HPE, it should be submitted directly to the Director.

6.3 Stage 3 — Internal Review

- 6.3.1 If you are dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, you may request an internal review by the Director. Your request must be submitted by email within 10 working days of the Stage 2 decision.
- 6.3.2 The Director will issue a written decision within 15 working days of receiving your request.
- 6.3.3 The Stage 3 decision is TSE's final internal decision. If the appeal concerns the Director, the review will be conducted by the Chair of the Board of Directors.

7 Escalation and External Review

- 7.1 Following the Stage 3 decision, TSE will issue a Completion of Procedures letter confirming that all internal TSE processes have been exhausted and setting out the next steps available to you.
- 7.2 In accordance with the TSE–AUB Partnership Agreement, a student who has exhausted TSE's internal appeals process and remains dissatisfied may access AUB's Review stage. Details of how to do so will be included in the Completion of Procedures letter.
- 7.3 Once the AUB Review stage has also been exhausted, AUB will issue a further Completion of Procedures letter. At that point, you have the right to refer your case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) at <https://www.oiahe.org.uk>.

8 How to Submit

- 8.1 All appeals must be submitted by email:
 - (a) Stage 1 — Informal Discussion: email David Denyer (Senior Tutor) at david@thinkspace.ac.uk.
 - (b) Stage 2 — Formal Appeal: email the HPE at tim@thinkspace.ac.uk.
 - (c) Stage 3 — Internal Review: email the Director at guym@thinkspace.ac.uk.
- 8.2 The 15-working-day deadline applies from the date results are published. It is your responsibility to check your results promptly and submit any appeal within the required timescale.

9 Confidentiality

- 9.1 All appeals are treated confidentially. Information relating to an appeal will be shared only with members of staff directly involved in its consideration.

10 Data Protection

- 10.1 In submitting an appeal, you will be providing personal data to TSE. This data will be held securely and processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Documentation relating to an appeal will be retained for six years, in line with TSE's standard retention periods. For further information, see the TSE Privacy Notice at <https://thinkspace.ac.uk/about/policies/>.