

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS FOR STUDENTS ON ACCESS COURSES

Introduction

1. This document sets out LASER's procedures for considering complaints and appeals from students studying on a LASER validated Access to HE Diploma course.
2. These procedures specifically cover:
 - Student appeals against the processes relating to assessment decisions.
 - Student complaints in relation to the course upon which they have been studying.
3. **Please note any student appeal or complaint about an Access Diploma course (including those against assessment related decisions) must be initially addressed to the college which provides the Access to HE Diploma.**

Students only have a right of appeal or complaint to LASER where they have exhausted the provider's appeals/complaints procedures. This subsequent appeal/complaint to LASER will only be considered on the grounds that the procedures applied by the college/provider were unfair or were not properly applied in relation to the appellant/complainant. LASER does not intervene in the case of disputed academic judgements in assessment decisions at an individual student level as all assessment decisions are internally taken by the college/provider and then externally verified by a LASER moderator. LASER does not set any external assessments on Access to HE Diplomas.

The process for making a complaint/appeal

4. In the first instance complainants/appellants are advised to raise and discuss any concerns with a tutor or course manager at the provider offering the Access to HE course, in order to ascertain whether the matter can be resolved without adopting formal procedures. The **LASER Student Complaint/Appeal Form AQ10** should be used to lodge a complaint or appeal with the college (downloadable from the LASER Access student web page).
5. If this does not resolve the issue then the complainant must fully exhaust all appeals/complaint procedures at the organisation that provides the Access to HE course. If the matter cannot be resolved the following procedures will be followed.
6. Complaints/appeals should normally be made in writing (email accepted) as soon as possible after the conclusion of the internal appeals process within the college/organisation providing the Access Diploma course (and no later than 30 days), to the LASER Access Quality Manager c/o Canterbury Innovation Centre, University Road, Canterbury, CT2 7FG. Contact details can be found on the LASER web site www.laser-awards.org.uk.
7. All complaints/appeals should be clearly identified as a formal complaint/appeal. The appeal should include the basis and grounds for the appeal and provide evidence to support the appeal. Please ensure that the issues being appealed against are clearly identified as separate points. The first part of the **LASER Student Complaint/Appeal Form AQ10** may be used.

8. All complaints/appeals will be acknowledged within 10 working days.
9. A LASER investigating officer will conduct an assessment and review of the complaint. Should the complaint not fall within the scope of LASER complaints described in Paragraphs 2 & 3 above, the complainant will be notified within 10 working days of initial receipt.
10. The investigating officer, will seek all relevant documentation and evidence. When the investigating officer is satisfied that all relevant evidence is present, the evidence will be assessed and an initial conclusion reached. The investigating officer will write to the complainant/appellant providing a judgement on each point in the complaint, referenced with relevant evidence. The report will be issued within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint.

Appeals against the outcome

11. If the complainant/appellant is dissatisfied with the outcome s/he may appeal against the outcome to the Chair of the LASER Access and Quality Development Committee (AQDC) at Canterbury Innovation Centre, University Road, Canterbury, CT2 7FG or email a copy of the appeal against the outcome to the LASER Chief Executive Officer within 10 days of receipt of the report. The Chair of the AQDC will respond within 15 working days. The decision of the Chair is final.