



THE RUSU STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO

# Appeal Against Assessment (AAA)

# The RUSU Step by Step Guide to Appeal Against Assessment (AAA)

## PART A

In order to lodge a AAA you **must** attend to each of these steps:

- 1. Informal Review – you have sought (and hopefully received) feedback from your course coordinator or program manager as to why you received the grade you were awarded.
- 2. You have identified one or more grounds of review / appeal and can explain how it / they apply to your assessment grade.
- 3. You have prepared a written statement and have evidence supporting steps 1 and 2 above.
- 4. You have completed all sections A to G of the official AAA form.

For further guidance on how to complete your Appeal Against Assessment, please refer to the RUSU website at [www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/appealsagainstassessment](http://www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/appealsagainstassessment)

If **all of the above steps** have been **completed within 20 days of the published final course result**, you can submit your AAA (the form, written statement and supporting evidence in PDF) to your college office:

**BUS** bus.appeals@rmit.edu.au  
**DSC** dsc.appeals@rmit.edu.au  
**SEH** seh.appeals@rmit.edu.au

## PART B

Preparing for your hearing with the College Appeals Committee.


 Step 1

## Informal Review

It is natural to feel disappointed if you received a grade less than you expected, and there is a defined process for having the university review your grade where it can be demonstrated that something wrong on the part of the university resulted in your lower grade. Simply feeling unhappy that you did not achieve a higher grade, or believing the lecturer was a tough marker, or struggling with other demands in your personal life, are not grounds (reasons) for the university to review your grade. The only grounds upon which a grade can be reviewed and appealed (as set out in Chapter 7 of the Assessment Processes) is where there is evidence of:

- A **calculation error**, or;
- The assessment **did not comply** with the **description of the assessment** or the **assessment criteria** published in the **course guide**, or;
- The assessment/s or the **assessment criteria** published in the **course guide** are **not consistent** with **industry requirements** (eg: relevant training packages or accredited courses), or;
- The assessment did **not comply** with the **assessment policy** or **processes** or another relevant rule or policy, and this has had a **significant impact** on your result.

Think carefully about what went wrong and how it led to your lower than expected grade on either one or multiple assessment tasks – if assessment tasks are sequenced to a final task (research proposal, literature review then final report), ensure you consider each task individually and cumulatively. If you believe that one or more of the grounds above exist, then send an email request to your course co-ordinator asking to meet with them. An email request is advised, as you are expected to provide evidence that you have sought (and hopefully obtained) informal review. Before meeting with your course coordinator, prepare your questions directed towards exploring whether one or more of the above grounds are potentially in issue. This step of informal review is mandatory, although for reasons associated with strict university protocols, it is unlikely to be successful and rarely does it resolve what can sometimes be complex issues. Therefore, use the informal review to listen to your course coordinator so that you can prepare a strong written appeal to the College Appeals Committee – successful appeals are invariably those that are written.

NB: Querying an unreturned exam or other unmarked assessment task? Include in your email the sentence:

"I refer to clause 2.6 of the RMIT Assessment and Assessment Flexibility Policy and request I be provided with a copy of my \_\_\_\_\_ as this is the assessment I am seeking review of and this has not been returned to me."

### FAQs

- When do I send this email = as soon as possible.
- What if I'm not sure of a ground of review = request a meeting regardless, it is central to your success at RMIT that you understand what went wrong - this is called obtaining instructive feedback.
- Will I be penalised for seeking a review = no, you have every right to question how your work resulted in the grade you received, and academic staff commonly have students seeking informal review.
- What do I say when I meet with the course coordinator = keep it simple, ask about how and why ...
- What if I get no answer to my email = wait for 5 working days, then proceed to step 2.
- What if I met with my course coordinator and I still believe my grade is wrong = proceed to step 2.



## Identifying the ground/s and explaining how the ground/s apply to your assessment

### Non compliance with University Policy \*

**Where the assessment task/s did not comply with the Assessment and Assessment Flexibility Policy, the Assessment Processes or any other relevant rule or University Policy (resulting in an error in process) and this has had a significant impact on the result.**

Common policy areas where non compliance may be in issue

#### **Assessment and Assessment Flexibility Policy**

- Section 1 – Design of Assessment
- Section 2 – Students and Assessment
- Also consider the introductory wording in 'Purpose'

#### **Assessment Processes**

- Chapter 1 – General processes – see group work and feedback

These are a suggested starting point only, you are encouraged to read the RUSU publication Non compliance with University Policy and look through both policy documents in more detail.

### Calculation Error

**Where a mistake has been made in calculating your grade – either within the one assessment task, or with calculating the total of several assessment tasks.**

### Non compliance with description or course guide

**Where the assessment task/s did not comply with (or it was different to):**

- the description of the assessment, or;
- the assessment criteria published in the course guide.

### Inconsistency with industry standards

**Where the assessment task/s or the assessment criteria published in the course guide differ from the requirements of:**

- a relevant training package (Vocational Education courses) – eg: you are enrolled in a nationally recognised training program (Certificate or Diploma) and an assessment task or the criteria in the course guide is inconsistent with the training package outcomes, or:
- an accredited course (that is recognised by a professional body) – eg: you are enrolled in a program such as primary / secondary teaching and that, so you can register with the Victorian Institute of Teaching to work as a teacher, the program courses must be accredited with the Vic Institute of Teaching.

\*This is usually the most successful appeal ground because university policy has many student friendly provisions, but you must be able to explain in some detail what went wrong to demonstrate that a policy has not been followed.

## Important questions to ask yourself

**It's important to be sure that your appeal meets the grounds for an Appeal Against Assessment. Ask yourself the following questions to ensure that your appeal is valid:**

- Was it clear what you actually needed to do in the assessment?
- Was I given feedback about my performance in time to make important changes?
- Did the feedback guide me about how to improve?
- Was feedback given in a way which was useful and actually let you reflect on it?

**Think about what happened around your assessment.**

- Was the assessment or teaching disrupted or affected by any unplanned circumstances?
- What were the consequences of that?
- Was there enough support and guidance available to help you complete the assessment successfully?
- If needed, were necessary interventions in external assessments made?
- For groupwork, where your performance depended on others was adequate support made available to you?

**Remember...**

- Identify the problem within the process of the assessment first, not in the final result.
- Once you identify that there was a problem with the process, you can then link it to the problem with your performance and/or final grade.
- To be understood by RMIT university, you will need to work on a detailed explanation of your reasoning.
- Provide as much detailed information as you can, as you won't be able to add to it later. RMIT will use only what you have supplied to make a decision about your appeal.
- Many formal appeals are rejected because they don't meet the grounds of appeal, and this happens when your case is not absolutely clear.

# Step 3

## Preparing a written statement with supporting documents

### Prepare a draft statement structured as follows:

<b>Opening</b>	Dear Secretary – College Appeals Committee
<b>Para 1</b>	Your name, student number, enrolled program, course and specific assessment task/s for which you are lodging the AAA, the ground/s of your appeal
<b>Para 2</b>	Details of you having sought Informal Review (step 1) and the feedback / outcome of this review – include “I have attached the email/s regarding my request for review”
<b>Next Para</b>	Set out the facts you rely upon to demonstrate one or more of the grounds exist – where relevant, include reference to all the evidence you have attached eg: emails, rubrics, assessed report / essay, screenshots of Canvas
<b>3rd last Para</b>	Explain how the facts in your case directly link to a ground being satisfied, and expressly state this as a conclusion
<b>2nd last Para</b>	State the remedy you seek – calculation error corrected, internal or external re-assessment of submitted task, opportunity for supplementary assessment
<b>Final Para</b>	Thank the Secretary and College Appeals Committee for consideration of your application
<b>Closing</b>	Your name, student number and date.

### Steps to take next

Once you have prepared your draft, you are now ready to make an appointment with a student rights officer:

1. Make the draft ready for review for a student rights officer using the draft statement guidelines in **Part 3**, above.
2. Once the draft is completed, contact **student.rights@rmit.edu.au** to make an appointment with a RUSU Student Rights Officer.
3. Please **allow up to 3–4 business days** to get an appointment, as it is the peak busy season for the Student Rights team



## Complete the required AAA appeal form

Ensure all sections of the Appeal against final course assessment result – College Appeals Committee (CoIAC) are completed with full details, including:

**Section D – on the lines write “see attached statement”**

**Section E – at least one box must be ticked, and write “see attached statement”**

### AAA Information Sessions

The Student Rights service at RUSU conducts **AAA workshops** at the end of each semester for students who, after receiving their published results, are considering making an AAA. In person and online options are generally available.

If you are considering appealing against your assessment then you should attend a RUSU information session.

Email: [student.rights@rmit.edu.au](mailto:student.rights@rmit.edu.au), or

Phone: **9925 1842**

RUSU Student Rights Officers provide **may** individual consultation and guidance for students in some circumstances. However, it is expected that students will have familiarised themselves with the contents of this publication and associated materials before booking an individual appointment.

## Outcome of your AAA to the College Appeals Committee

### When you have received by email:

- An invitation to attend a meeting with the College Appeals Committee = read on.
- Notice that your request for a hearing has been rejected = contact Student Rights immediately as you have 10 days in which to appeal that decision if you believe the rejection decision is unfair.

### Preparing for your hearing

1. Reply to the email to confirm your attendance at the scheduled time and venue, or to make alternative arrangements if the scheduled time or venue is not practicable for you. Hearings usually run for approximately 40 minutes.
2. Decide whether you would like to be represented by another person (because you are unable to attend yourself) and / or call a witness – in either of these instances you must advise the Secretary to College Appeals Committee in writing of the name of these other person/s not less than one working day prior to the hearing.
3. Decide whether you would like to be accompanied by a support person such as a friend, family member or a Student Rights Officer – a support person may speak and / or advocate on your behalf.
4. Your email from the College Appeals Committee should contain two attachments – a file of your AAA documents and a file of your School Review documents.
5. Prepare for your hearing:
  - i. Read the email so you understand the order the hearing will take (think of it more as formal conversation, it is not a hearing where you have to give sworn evidence)
  - ii. Ensure you understand the grounds and evidence you have put forward in your appeal;
  - iii. Ensure you understand the School's statement in response;
  - iv. Make a list of points you wish to address in support of your AAA, and;
  - v. If you have further evidence not previously submitted with your AAA, ensure you have 4 copies to bring to the hearing.
6. At the hearing:
  - A. There will be 3 College Appeals Committee members
    - Chair – usually a senior academic staff member
    - Board Member – a staff member
    - Student Representative
 and a Secretary who does not participate but will take written notes.  
 There will be a staff member from the School
  - B. Stay calm – think of the process as a conversation with the Committee members
7. In most cases you will be advised of the outcome at the end of the hearing after the Committee has deliberated.