

GW/946484

29th September 2022



Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

Private and Confidential

Mr Geoffrey Blanche

By email: geoffblanche@yahoo.com

Dear Geoffrey

Appeal Outcome

I am writing in response to your request for an appeal received on 2 September 2022.

In accordance with the Regulations for Academic Appeals, your appeal was considered through an initial filtering stage by the Filtering Committee. Apologies for the delay in writing to you, however all members of the Filtering Committee needed to consider your appeal document which consisted of 223 pages.

Unfortunately, your Academic Appeal has been rejected and reclassified as a complaint. This letter explains the reason for the decision.

Reasons for the decision

In arriving at the decision the Filtering Committee considered the following key procedures and documents :

- Your appeal form and attachments.
- Your academic record.
- The Academic Appeals procedure 2021/22.

Whilst the Committee have taken into account all documentation which had been submitted to the Committee and which has been provided by you, this letter may not necessarily refer to all the documentation provided and points raised - I have referred below to all material and points raised which the Filtering Committee considered necessary to make their decision on your academic appeal.

The Filtering Committee noted that you explain within your appeal:

- You were advised that you were not allowed to use/reference 'Newman' in your thesis.
- You felt that the University had an agenda against you and your ideas.
- Your supervisory team was changed during your studies.
- You were originally advised that your Viva would be held online.
- You were not provided with copies of notes kept during the viva and nor were minutes made available to you.

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- You were originally advised that your witness to the Viva could not attend. However you were then allowed to take Miss Barbara Down with you.
- You felt that there had been inadequate preparation of the Viva by the examiners.
- You felt that there was a lack of knowledge amongst the lecturers based in the Faculty of Science and Engineering.
- You feel that the Chairperson was not independent.
- You were not privy to the Chairperson's notes which were made during the viva.
- You note that Professor Paul Rees who is your second supervisor is line managed by Professors Huw Summers (Chairperson).
- You feel that Ms Zoe Perry acts in dishonest manner.
- You felt that there was a lack of communication from the internal examiner as they did not reply to all emails.
- You felt that the Chairperson did not fulfil their role.
- You are dissatisfied that the Report and Results form was not returned to Academic Services immediately.
- You disagree with the Report and Results form and addendum form completed by Professor Dhammika Widanalage, Professor Lijie Li and Professor Huw Summers.

The Filtering Committee noted that you had selected the following grounds of Appeal:

"I believe the Examination Board failed to take into account all work submissible and properly submitted for assessment."

"I believe there were defects or irregularities in the conduct of the examination or in written instructions or in advice relating thereto which are of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the examiners would have reached the same decision had they not occurred."

"I believe that there was prejudice or bias or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the Examiners"

Whilst noting your disagreement with the examiners decision relating to your thesis, this decision is a question of academic judgment. As set out within the Academic Appeals Procedure, appeals which question "academic judgment" are not covered by the Academic Appeals Procedure. The University defines academic judgment as *"the experience and knowledge of a student, the student's performance and whether he/she has reached the required academic standard, and an awareness of best practice in higher education are combined to allow an examiner to make an academic judgement on the ability of a student. Academic appeals which question this academic judgement shall not be considered,"* (Section 2 of the Academic Appeals Procedure).

In addition, Section 5.5 of the Academic Appeals Procedure explains:

“The following shall not be considered grounds for appeal:

- *Questioning the academic or professional judgement of the examiners;*
- *A candidate’s disappointment with a result where marks have been accurately recorded, assessment regulations correctly followed and where no evidence of material irregularity exists;”*

Having considered your appeal submission document the Filtering Committee therefore agreed that your appeal was essentially questioning the academic judgment of your examiners.

The Filtering Committee further considered the information you had provided and noted in particular that within your appeal you had made reference to the following issues.

1. That you were prevented from using the work of Newman in your research.
2. That you believe the university failed your work to please investors.
3. That there were changes within your supervision team .
4. That you were originally advised that your viva would be held online, however this took place face to face in May 2022.
5. That no minutes of the viva were kept.
6. That you were originally advised that you could not bring a witness into the meeting, however you explain that you were later allowed to do so.
7. That you were not privy to the notes kept by the Chair and Examiners and have still not had sight of these.
8. That you do not believe the examiners read your full submission.
9. That the Examiners were not experienced and portrayed little knowledge of electromagnetism, as-well as showing some very inept basic science understandings’ which you believe is demonstrated by the questions asked by the external and internal examiners during the examination
10. That the Chair was not independent and did not fulfil their role.
11. The Chair delayed providing notes.
12. That your second supervisor Professor Paul Rees is line managed by Professor Huw Summers and therefore not independent.
13. You believe Ms Zoe Perry *‘lies and is being told what to say by Summers, and she is the go between of deceit, one will notice that lots of the communication in emails is with the Postgraduate research team email address, that all the staff seem to have the privilege of using. This really does show they are all in it together.’*
14. The internal examiner failed to reply to your emails.
15. The Report and Results form was not returned to Academic Services immediately.
16. The original Report and Results form was not provided to the student.
17. You believe the findings of the examiners set out in the R and R form are incorrect for the reasons set out by you within your rebuttal document

Regulation 1 of the Academic Appeals Procedure provides as follows;

“Where an academic appeal also contains within it a complaint and vice versa, Academic Services may reclassify the appeal or complaint (at whatever stage they may have reached) and process it under the most relevant regulation or procedure if this is likely to lead to a more appropriate outcome for the person(s) appealing or complaining. Candidates will be notified in writing by Academic Services of any reclassification.”

In relation to the issues you have raised it was agreed by the Filtering Committee that those issues are issues of complaint and need to be thoroughly investigated by your School.

In deciding to reclassify these issues the Committee agreed that:

- the Appeal Form submitted by you on 2 September 2022 states '*Please be advised that issues related to feedback, supervision and teaching are likely to be reclassified as issues of complaint pursuant to Section 1 of the Academic Appeals Procedure*'.
- It is for the Filtering Committee to determine whether or not issues are issues of complaint.
- Issues such as those listed (1-17 above) above are issues of complaint.

Therefore pursuant to Regulation 1 of the Academic Appeals procedure (extracted above) your appeal has been reclassified as a complaint .

I enclose a 'Frequently Asked Questions' sheet which summarises the University's Complaints Procedure for your information. The full Complaints Procedure can be accessed from the University's website at:

<https://myuni.swansea.ac.uk/academic-life/academic-regulations/conduct-and-complaints/complaints-procedure/>

Should you wish to pursue a complaint please read the abovementioned Complaints Procedure and the enclosed FAQ sheet. To enable me to process a complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure I would require the following information :

- *the nature of the complaint – this should be brief and to the point, referring to any **specific** events;*
- ***any informal steps already taken to include the names of any staff involved and the outcomes;***
- *a statement as to why the complainant remains dissatisfied and, without prejudice to any formal remedy which might be determined, **the resolution/ outcome they are seeking;***
- ***copies of any documents/ correspondence which are relevant to, or support, the complaint. [my emphasis in bold]***

Therefore if you wish to pursue a Stage 2 Complaint please email studentcases@swansea.ac.uk by 12 October 2022 and confirm :

- **That you wish to pursue a Stage 2 Complaint and are happy for me to forward a copy of your appeal paperwork to your School to enable them to investigate these issues of complaint.**
- **Whether my understanding of the issues identified above (numbered 1-17) are correct?** Please note that these issues have been generalised from the above-mentioned points and should you wish to proceed in making your complaint, the investigator will have sight of your appeal submission and full comments regarding these matters.
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- **Whether there are any additional documents you wish to be considered as part of your complaint to support your assertions that you have not already provided ?**

- I note that you explain that are seeking financial compensation, please confirm the amount you are seeking in £ . Please note that this may not be the outcome offered to you in the event that your complaint is found to be upheld.

If I do not hear from you by 12 October 2022 then I shall presume that you do not wish to pursue a complaint.

Accordingly, the Examination Board's decision has been upheld.

The Authorities (if appropriate) and your School will be notified of this decision in due course.

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your academic appeal (i.e that your appeal be reclassified as a complaint) , I am obliged to draw to your attention your right to request a final review of this decision under the [University's Final Review Procedure](#). The Final Review Procedure, details on how to obtain the form and the grounds on which you can appeal can be accessed via the University's website link above.

If you wish to lodge a final review, you must submit the Final Review Application form and all supporting documentation/evidence to the Director of Academic Services, within Academic Services, within 14 working days of this letter. This form can be obtained via the University's website You can submit this form to the Director of Academic Services via email (to studentcases@swansea.ac.uk)

If the Director of Academic Services does not receive a review from you within the next 14 working days, I shall assume that you are satisfied with the above decision and your file will be closed.

I would also like to remind you that the Students' Union Advice Centre is able to provide you with free and confidential advice and assistance with a final review. To make an appointment to see someone at the Students' Union you can contact the Advice Centre via email at advice@swansea-union.co.uk.

If you have any queries regarding the above decision, please do not hesitate to contact us by email studentcases@swansea.ac.uk .

Yours sincerely,

Gemma Wilkins
Student Cases Officer

cc: *Appeal Contact, Faculty of Science and Engineering*
Enc: *Support information*
Complaints FAQ