**Special Cases Committee Dissolution: Summary of Changes, January 2024**

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**Background:** In May 2023, Senate agreed to the dissolution of the Special Cases Committee and transfer of the delegated authority assigned to it under Regulations 2 and 6 to Student Administration and Academic Affairs (Special Cases). A project group was set up to update existing policy and procedures and draft new policy documents where these were missing.

**Academic Appeals:** There have been some significant changes to the [Student Academic Appeals Procedures](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/progress/scc-new/appeals-procedure). The changes are summarised below:

* Amendment of Section 2 (Introduction) to note that submission of an appeal does not alter a student’s academic status
* Amendment of Section 4 (Special Cases) to reflect delegation of authority to SAS with Case Officers/Manager making Formal Stage appeal decisions and Manager/SAAA Management making decisions at Review Stage
* Addition Section 6 (Informal Resolution). This is to encourage resolution of simple procedural errors without the need for an academic appeal (in a similar way to an informal complaint), where it is appropriate to do so. Further information about this can be found in the policy.
* Amendment of Section 8 (Grounds for appeal) for greater clarity. Exceptional circumstances and procedural error have been split up to make it clearer to students that there are two elements to establishing each ground. Addition of 8.4 given there is now a Special Cases Progress Case policy. 8.6 has been expanded upon to make it clearer to students which circumstances are not grounds for appeal.
* Addition of Section 11 (Evidence) to clarify the evidentiary requirements of the appeals process.
* Section 12 (Consideration of Formal Stage Appeals) and Section 13 (Consideration of Review Stage Appeals) have been updated to reflect the delegation of authority to the Special Cases team.
* The sections of the procedures relating to appeal hearings have now been removed given the committee has been dissolved.
* Reference to “Triage” at both stages of the appeals process has been replaced with “Initial Consideration” as a preference of our regulator.

The Special Cases Team now has a [dedicated webpage](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/progress/scc/) which includes information about the Academic Advisory Group, which the Special Cases team can call on for advice on complex appeals. This group is made up of experienced Special Cases Committee members.

The Formstack Appeals forms (both Formal and Review) have been fully reviewed and updated. The [Academic Appeals webpages](https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/progress/appeals/) have been updated and the variety of separate student advice documents have been merged into one improved [advice document](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/progress/scc/appeal-form-guidance) housed in a dedicated webpage.

**Progress Cases:** Special Cases now has a [progress case policy](http://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/progress/scc/policy)**.** This sets out the policy for consideration of progress cases where Special Cases approval is required, information about initial considerations for staff and students, and what should be done where Special Cases approval is not required. The content of the policy is largely based on existing precedent which has never been combined into one policy document, with key changes to precedent summarised below:

* Section 4 (Leave of Absence and Repeat Study) largely represents current practice, however, one key policy change is that the requirement to provide evidence of fitness to return is removed in most cases. The exceptions to this: programmes with a PSRB requirement - PGCE, Health Sciences, Hull York Medical School and Social Work
* Section 8 (Readmission) has been drafted in-line with current practice but the wording relating to when Special Cases team approval is required has been amended to make it easier for staff and students to understand.
* Section 15 (Progress Cases and Academic Appeals) has been drafted to inform students that they can only appeal a decision made in-line with the progress case policy where there has been a procedural irregularity.

All related progress web pages and application forms have also been updated. Please ensure that you use the new progress case application forms.

**Policy & Reporting:** The Special Cases team now reports to the University Teaching Committee. The University Teaching Committee has oversight of the policies applied by the Special Cases team to Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students whilst the PGR Policies and Programmes Committee of York Graduate Research School Board has oversight of the policies which apply to Postgraduate research students.

Please direct any queries in respect of academic appeals to appeals@york.ac.uk, and for progress cases to scc@york.ac.uk

