ADMINISTRATIVE VERIFICATION

Purpose and scope

1.1. This section of the Consolidated Academic Policies and Regulations (CAPR) explains how a student may ask the College to review a decision for factual errors, what sort of errors the College will review, and what the outcome of the review may be.

1.2. This policy applies to all current students or past students until three (3) months after graduating from the College, and to any concern raised on or after 1 June 2017 regardless of the date of the event giving rise to the concern.

1.3. This policy **does not** apply in the following circumstances:
   a. A student has deferred or interrupted their studies. If so, the College will normally consider the matter on their return to the programme.
   b. A student has been recommended for an award and is due to graduate. If so, the College may continue with the request only through discussion with the student and if the student accepts in writing that this may delay their graduation, where necessary.

Definitions

1.4. 'Verification' means a check on the administration of procedures and clerical recording of a decision affecting a student's status or academic study.

NOTE: Verification is not a review of academic judgment or the quality of the decision itself.

1.5. 'Decision' means any choice or judgment by a person or body that affects a person or group including reports, recommendations, advice and guidance.

Introduction

Overview

1.6. Verification is a quick and efficient way for students to ask the College to check whether human error has affected a decision.

1.7. The verification process does not check the quality of a decision. It reviews whether the College's decision-making process included all the elements it should have done.

Principles

1.8. A student may request the verification of a decision of a Board of Examiners or College body or officer on any matter affecting the student's status or studies (e.g., a decision about academic progress).

1.9. The College will not allow verification until the relevant body has ratified or confirmed a decision on a student's status or studies. There are two (2) exceptions to this:

   a) A student's failure in a module or placement has not yet been ratified by a Board of Examiners and the failure prevents or may prevent the student progressing in their current programme.
   b) A student has expressed a concern, upheld by the Office of Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulation, that the current decision-making process is not giving 'natural justice'.

1.10. The College's verification response is its formal confirmation, based on evidence, of whether a decision was free from human error in:

   a) processes (including errors of totalling, transcription or omission) that may have adversely affected the student;#
   b) considering complete and accurate information (including all the information that the student has provided in line with the relevant regulations or that the decision-maker or body has a duty to consider);
   c) providing instructions given under the relevant regulations which the student believes may have adversely affected them.

1.11. The College will refuse a verification request based on the student's belief that the decision-makers made a mistake of academic judgment or that the quality of the decision was poor.

Procedures

Overview

1.12. The administrative verification procedure contains three (3) stages:

Stage 1 – Submitting a request for verification.

Stage 2 – Considering the request.

Stage 3 – Decision on the request.

Stage 1 – Submitting a request for verification

1.13. A student may only request verification:
   a) in writing on the prescribed form with the applicant's full name, student number and signature;
   b) by 4pm within ten (10) working days of the decision being published; and
   c) to the place and person stated in the written instructions.

1.14.   The request must include:
   a) a clear statement of the reasons for the request (i.e., why the student believes there has been human error);
   b) all relevant evidence or details of events in support of the request; and
   c) a list of any people (with their contact details) who are known to have relevant information.

1.15. The College may consider a request made out of time if the student proves to its satisfaction that they were mentally or physically incapable of making it within the prescribed time limit.

Stage 2 – Considering the request

1.16. The verification will be conducted by a suitably authorised officer who has had no previous role in the decision-making process.

1.17. The officer must check whether the person, committee, board or panel's decision was as far as possible free from the human errors set out above.

Stage 3 – Decision on the request

1.18. The verification must normally be completed and the student informed of the outcome within ten (10) working days of the College receiving the application. If this is impossible, the student must be notified within this timescale of the delay and the reasons for it.

1.19. On completion of verification, the student must be informed that:
   a) no error was discovered, and how the student may have the decision further examined or appraised, if possible; or
   b) a potential error has been identified. The student must be given a copy of the officer's invitation to the Chair of the relevant committee, board or panel to review its decision.

1.20. If the error may carry broader implications, the officer must also invite the relevant Head of Department to begin a broader investigation. This invitation must be included in the response sent to the student if the officer decides this will not compromise anyone's confidentiality, privacy or employment rights.

1.21. If the College sends an invitation to a Chair to begin a broader investigation, this investigation must normally be completed and the student informed, in writing, of the outcome within ten (10) working days of the date of invitation. If this is impossible, the student must be notified within this timescale of the delay and the reasons for it.

Advice and support

1.22. Advice for students on the administrative verification, and the associated lower-level College rules is available from the Student Hub or the GSM London Students' Union (gsmsuadvicecentre@gsmlondon.ac.uk). More complex queries may be referred to appropriate individuals or the Office of Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulation (oscar@gsmlondon.ac.uk)

1.23. Advice for staff on administrative verification is available from their nominated Academic Policy Partner.

1.24. If any staff development needs are identified, these may be discussed with members of the Staff and Educational Development Team.

Fees

1.25. A fee may be charged for each verification request under these regulations as set out in the College's list of charges. If an error is revealed, the fee will be refunded.

Legal and regulatory context

1.26. These regulations have no specific legal or regulatory context, but all decisions will pay regard to the principles of good administrative decision-making outlined in *Associated Provincial Picture Houses Ltd. v Wednesbury Corporation [1948] 1 KB 223.*

1.27. The College may not be bound by the principles in paragraph 1.26 and this policy alone may not provide the procedure to meet all of these principles, some of which may be met by other College policies and procedures. It uses the principles as guidance only, to help it deal soundly with these matters.

Enforcement, monitoring and review

1.28. If any person or body in the College refuses to comply with a request or decision made to enforce this policy, their refusal must be reported to the Academic Registrar, who will take such action to enforce this policy as they think necessary.

1.29. Each year, the College must receive a report that enables it to monitor, identify and act on any shortfalls in how this policy is interpreted and applied.

1.30. The annual report must include statistical data on the number of request for verification; the outcomes, Departments and programmes from which they originate; the length of the process; and the equality characteristics (including sex, disability and ethnicity) of those submitting requests.

1.31. It is good practice for an overview of this report to be published to all members of the academic community to enable them to make decisions about how these regulations might apply to them and the likelihood of success were they to request verification.

1.32. Every two (2) years, the College must review these regulations to ensure that:

  a) they remain up to date and continue to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code, applicable legislation or guidance;

  b) areas of improvement, or any concerns, raised by students, external examiners, or professional bodies have been addressed; and

  c) opportunities to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy have been taken.

Schedule (not part of the policies or regulations):

Responsible Officer: Head of Admissions
Approved by: Board of Directors and Academic Board
Version: 1.0
Date: 1 June 2017
Monitoring and Review Body: Academic Regulations and Awards Committee
Effective From: 1 June 2017
Next Scheduled Review: Oct 2018