

### Introduction

The Open University aims to provide an excellent student experience that enables everyone to achieve their study goals and full potential. However, we recognise that sometimes things go wrong and, when they do, we welcome the opportunity to put them right as soon as possible. The Student Complaints and Appeals Procedures enable you to bring matters of concern about any aspect of your time as a student or decisions relating to your access to learning, to the attention of The Open University. The procedures provide mechanisms through which those concerns may be resolved.

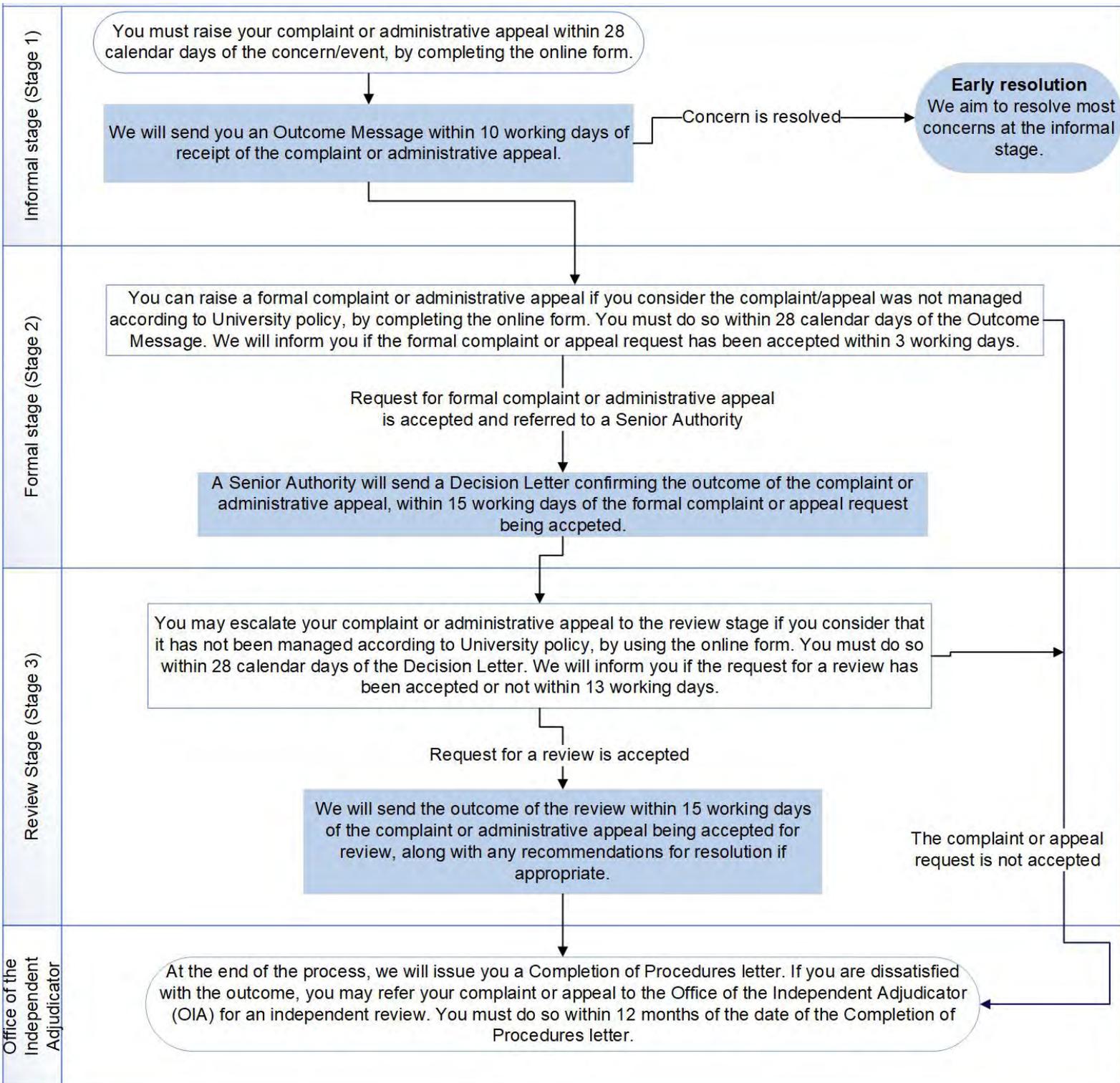
There are several complaints and appeals procedures, covering both academic and non-academic concerns. The below flowcharts and figure descriptions provide an overview of the procedures:

- A. [Student complaints and administrative appeals \(non-academic\)](#)
- B. [General Academic Appeals Procedure \(academic\)](#)
- C. [Tutor Marked Assignment \(TMA\) mark appeals procedure \(academic\)](#)
- D. [Appeals relating to a module result, the result of an examination for a research degree or the decision of a Selection Panel or a Fitness to Practice Panel \(academic\)](#)
- E. [Complaints in relation to The Open University Students Association \(non-academic\)](#)

You can make your complaint or appeal by completing the [online form](#) or by contacting the email address listed in the flowchart and figure description.

You will find full details in the [Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure](#).

# Flowchart A: Student Complaints and Administrative Appeals



Version number: 1.0

Last reviewed: April 2024

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

## Flowchart A figure description

The flowchart summarises the three stages of the Student Complaints and Administrative Appeals Procedure (Section A within the [Student Complaints and Appeals Procedures](#)).

The flowchart uses a series of swim lanes to represent the three stages of the internal procedure, the informal stage (stage 1), the formal stage (stage 2) and the review stage (stage 3). The fourth swim lane represents external review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The flowchart uses boxes to represent actions taken by you or The Open University and uses lines with direction arrowheads to connect the boxes progressing through the swim lanes.

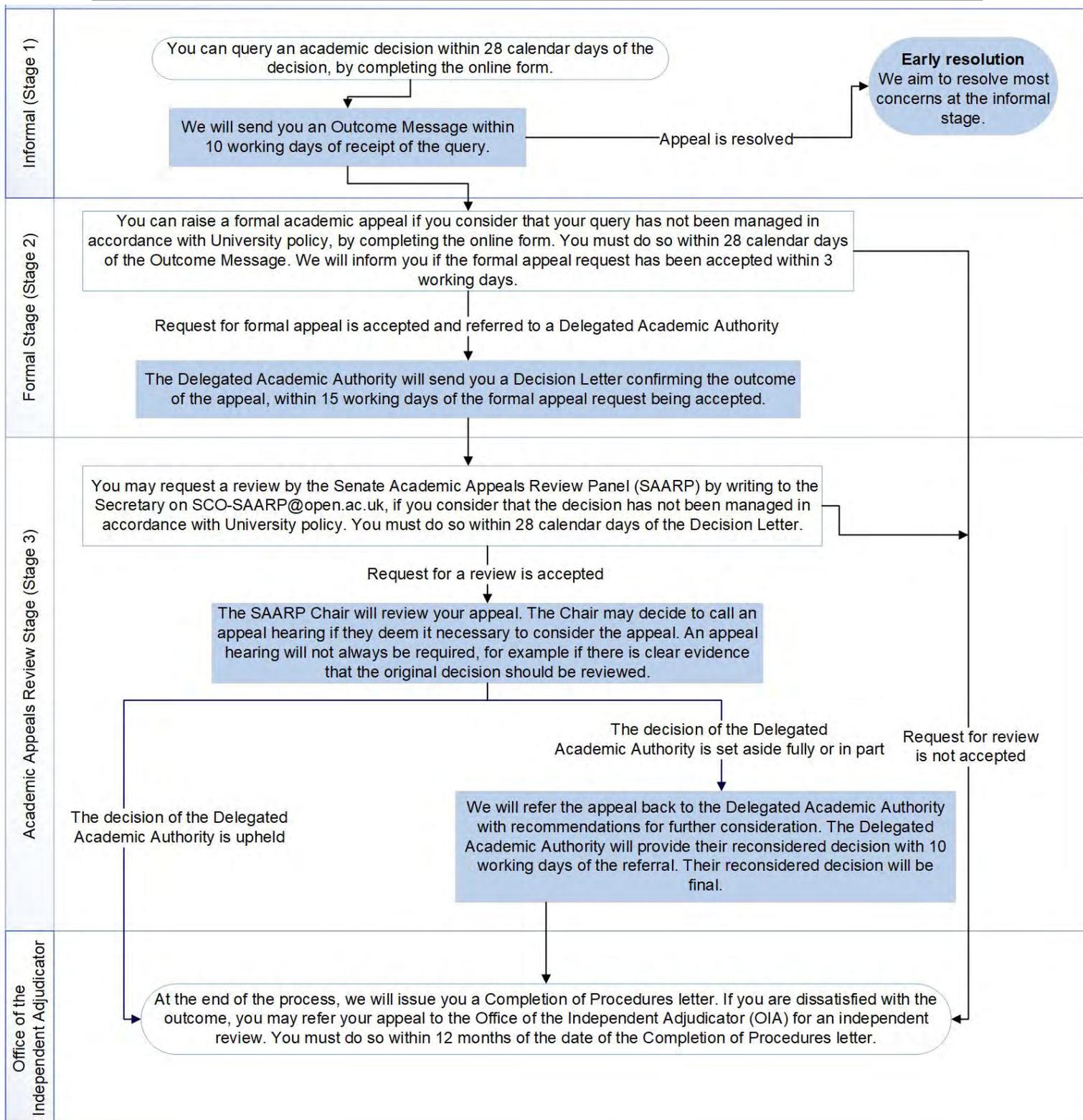
1. The first box is labelled “You must raise your complaint or administrative appeal within 28 calendar days of the concern/event, by completing the [online form](#).”
2. A downwards arrow from the first box connects to a second box which is labelled “We will send you an Outcome Message within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint or administrative appeal”.
3. There are two arrows from the second box, one is a sideways arrow and the other is a downwards arrow. The sideways arrow which is labelled “concern is resolved”, connects the second box to a further box which is labelled “Early resolution - We aim to resolve most concerns at the informal stage”. The downwards arrow from the second box connects to a third box which is labelled “You can raise a formal complaint or administrative appeal if you consider the complaint/appeal was not managed according to University policy, by completing the [online form](#). You must do so within 28 calendar days of the Outcome Message. We will inform you if the formal complaint or appeal request has been accepted within 3 working days”.
4. There are two downward arrows from the third box. The first arrow is labelled “The complaint or appeal request is not accepted” and it connects the third box to the seventh and final box. The seventh and final box is discussed in point 9 of this figure description. The second arrow is labelled “Request for formal complaint or administrative appeal is accepted and referred to a Senior Authority” and it connects the third box to a fourth box.
5. The fourth box is labelled “A Senior Authority will send a Decision Letter confirming the outcome of the complaint or administrative appeal, within 15 working days of the formal complaint or appeal request being accepted”.

Version number: 1.0	Last reviewed: April 2024
---------------------	---------------------------

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

6. A downwards arrow from the fourth box connects to a fifth box. The fifth box is labelled “You may escalate your complaint or administrative appeal to the review stage if you consider that it has not been managed according to University policy, by using the [online form](#). You must do so within 28 calendar days of the Decision Letter. We will inform you if the request for a review has been accepted or not within 13 working days”.
7. There are two downwards arrows from the fifth box. The first arrow which is labelled “The complaint or appeal request is not accepted” connects the fifth box to the seventh and final box. The seventh and final box is discussed in point 9 of this figure description. The second arrow which is labelled “request for a review is accepted”, connect the fifth box to the sixth box.
8. The sixth box is labelled “We will send the outcome of the review within 15 working days of the complaint or administrative appeal being accepted for review, along with any recommendations for resolution if appropriate”.
9. A downwards arrow connects the sixth box to the seventh and final box. The seventh and final box is labelled “At the end of the process, we will issue you a Completion of Procedures letter. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may refer your complaint or appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for an independent review. You must do so within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter”.

# Flowchart B: General Academic Appeals Procedures



Version number: 1.0

Last reviewed: April 2024

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

## Flowchart B figure description

The flowchart summarises the three stages of the General Academic Appeals Procedure (Section B2 and B5 within the [Student Complaints and Appeals Procedures](#)).

The flowchart uses a series of swim lanes to represent the three stages of the internal procedure, the informal stage (stage 1), the formal stage (stage 2) and the review stage (stage 3). The fourth swim lane represents external review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The flowchart uses boxes to represent actions taken by you or The Open University and uses lines with direction arrowheads to connect the boxes progressing through the swim lanes.

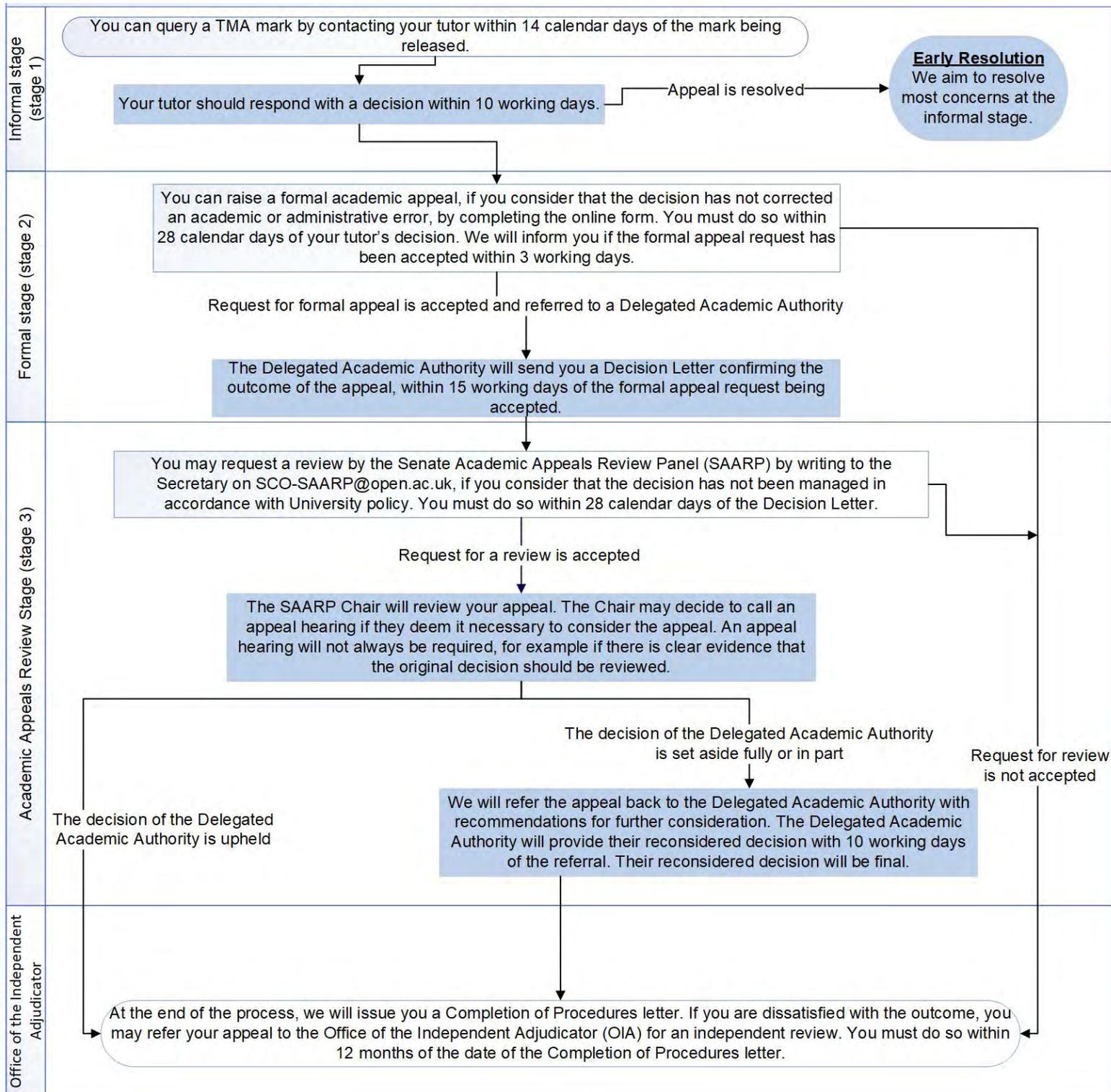
1. The first box is labelled “You can query an academic decision within 28 calendar days of the decision, by completing the [online form](#)”.
2. A downwards arrow from the first box connects to a second box which is labelled, “We will send you an Outcome Message within 10 working days of receipt of the query”.
3. There are two arrows from the second box, one is a sideways arrow and the other is a downwards arrow. The sideways arrow which is labelled “appeal is resolved”, connects the second box to a box which is labelled “Early resolution – We aim to resolve most concerns at the informal stage”. The downwards arrow from the second box connects to a third box which is labelled, “You can raise a formal academic appeal if you consider that your query has not been managed in accordance with University policy, by completing the [online form](#). You must do so within 28 calendar days of the Outcome Message. We will inform you if the formal appeal request has been accepted within 3 working days”.
4. There are two downwards arrows from the third box. The first arrow is labelled “request for review is not accepted” and it connects the third box to the eighth and final box. The eighth box is discussed in point 11 of this figure description. The second arrow is labelled “Request for formal appeal is accepted and referred to a Delegated Academic Authority” and it connects the third box to a fourth box.
5. The fourth box is labelled “The Delegated Academic Authority will send you a Decision Letter confirming the outcome of the appeal, within 15 working days of the formal appeal request being accepted”.

Version number: 1.0	Last reviewed: April 2024
---------------------	---------------------------

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

6. A downward arrow connects the fourth box to a fifth box which is labelled, “You may request a review by the Senate Academic Appeals Review Panel (SAARP) by writing to the Secretary on [SCO-SAARP@open.ac.uk](mailto:SCO-SAARP@open.ac.uk), if you consider that the decision has not been managed in accordance with University policy. You must do so within 28 calendar days of the Decision Letter”.
7. There are two downwards arrows from the fifth box. The first arrow is labelled “request for review is not accepted” and it connects the fifth box to an eighth and final box. The eighth and final box is discussed in point 11 of this figure description. The second arrow which is labelled “request for a review is accepted” connects the fifth box to a sixth box.
8. The sixth box is labelled “The SAARP Chair will review your appeal. The Chair may decide to call an appeal hearing if they deem it necessary to consider the appeal. An appeal hearing will not always be required, for example if there is clear evidence that the original decision should be reviewed”.
9. There are two downwards arrows from the sixth box. The first arrow is labelled “The decision of the Delegated Academic Authority is set aside fully or in part” and it connects the sixth box to the seventh box which is discussed in point 10 of this figure description. The second arrow from the sixth box is labelled “The decision of the Delegated Academic Authority is upheld” and it connects the sixth box to the eighth and final box which is discussed in point 11 of this figure description.
10. The seventh box is labelled “We will refer the appeal back to the Delegated Academic Authority with recommendations for further consideration. The Delegated Academic Authority will provide their reconsidered decision with 10 working days of the referral. Their reconsidered decision will be final”. The seventh box is also connected to the eighth and final box by a downwards arrow.
11. The eighth and final box is labelled “At the end of the process, we will issue you a Completion of Procedures letter. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may refer your appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for an independent review. You must do so within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter”.

# Flowchart C: Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA) mark appeals procedure



Version number: 1.0

Last reviewed: April 2024

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

## Flowchart C figure description

The flowchart summarises the three stages of the Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA) mark appeals procedure (Section B3 and B5 within the [Student Complaints and Appeals Procedures](#)).

The flowchart uses a series of swim lanes to represent the three stages of the internal procedure, the informal stage (stage 1), the formal stage (stage 2) and the review stage (stage 3). The fourth swim lane represents external review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The flowchart uses boxes to represent actions taken by you or The Open University and uses lines with direction arrowheads to connect the boxes progressing through the swim lanes.

1. The first box is labelled “You can query a TMA mark by contacting your tutor within 14 calendar days of the mark being released”.
2. A downwards arrow from the first box connects to a second box which is labelled “Your tutor should respond with a decision within 10 working days.”
3. There are two arrows from the second box, one is a sideways arrow and the other is a downwards arrow. The sideways arrow which is labelled “appeal is resolved”, connects the second box to a box which is labelled “Early resolution - We aim to resolve most concerns at the informal stage”. The downwards arrow from the second box connects to a third box which is labelled, “You can raise a formal academic appeal, if you consider that the decision has not corrected an academic or administrative error, by completing the [online form](#). You must do so within 28 calendar days of your tutor’s decision. We will inform you if the formal appeal request has been accepted within 3 working days”.
4. There are two downwards arrows from the third box. The first arrow which is labelled “Request for review is not accepted” connects the third box to the eighth and final box. The eighth box is discussed in point 11 of this figure description. The second arrow which is labelled “Request for formal appeal is accepted and referred to a Delegated Academic Authority” connects the third box to a fourth box.
5. The fourth box is labelled “The Delegated Academic Authority will send you a Decision Letter confirming the outcome of the appeal, within 15 working days of the formal appeal request being accepted”.
6. A downward arrow connects the fourth box to a fifth box which is labelled “You may request a review by the Senate Academic Appeals Review Panel (SAARP) by writing

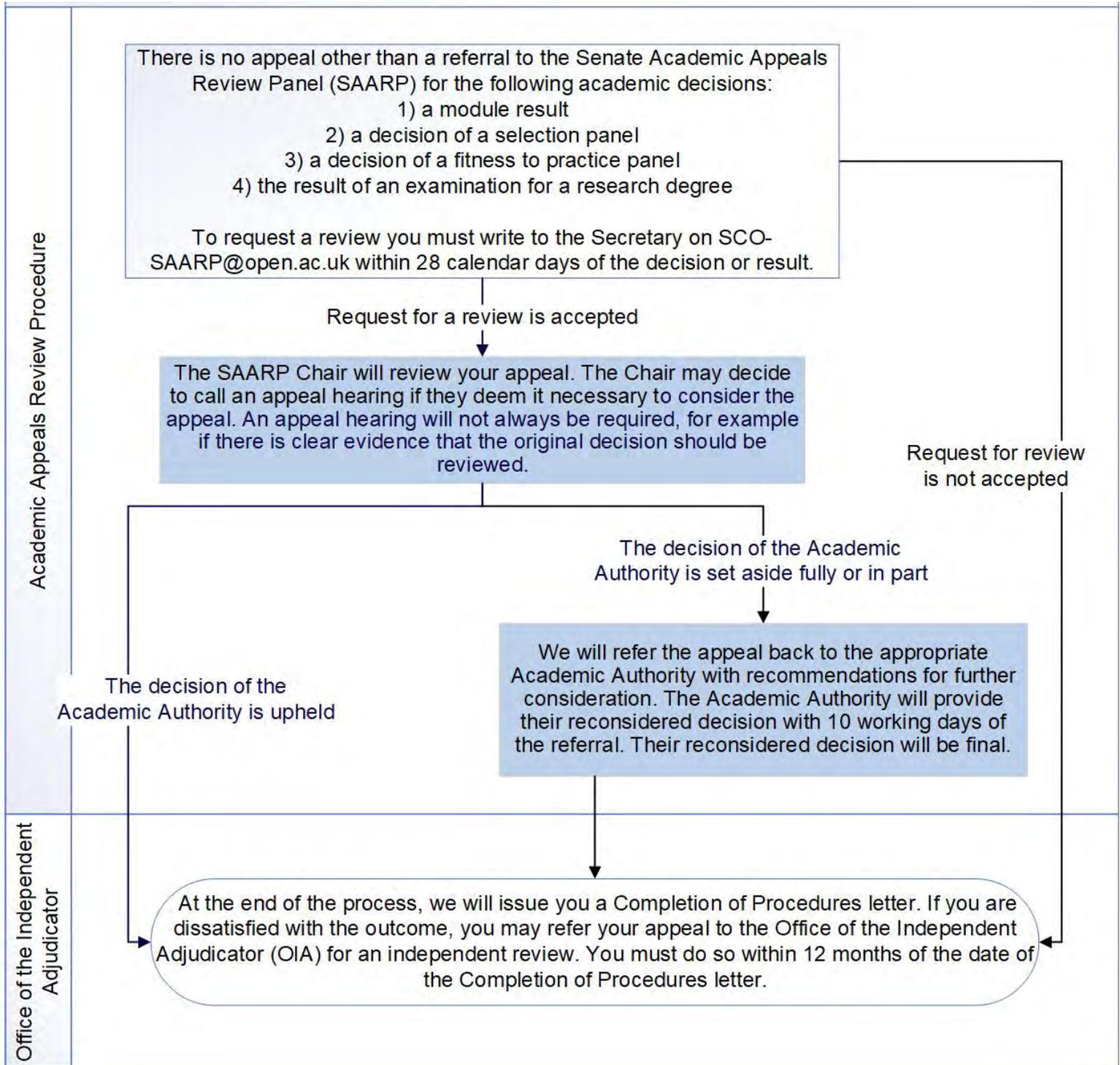
Version number: 1.0	Last reviewed: April 2024
---------------------	---------------------------

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

to the Secretary on [SCO-SAARP@open.ac.uk](mailto:SCO-SAARP@open.ac.uk), if you consider that the decision has not been managed in accordance with University policy. You must do so within 28 calendar days of the Decision Letter”.

7. There are two downward arrows from the fifth box. The first arrow which is labelled “Request for review is not accepted” connects the fifth box to the eighth and final box. The eighth box is discussed in point 11 of this figure description. The second arrow which is labelled “Request for a review is accepted” connects the fifth box to a sixth box.
8. The sixth box is labelled “The SAARP Chair will review your appeal. The Chair may decide to call an appeal hearing if they deem it necessary to consider the appeal. An appeal hearing will not always be required, for example if there is clear evidence that the original decision should be reviewed”.
9. There are two downward arrows from the sixth box. The first arrow is labelled “The decision of the Delegated Academic Authority is set aside fully or in part” and it connects the sixth box to the seventh box. The seventh box is discussed in point 10 of this figure description. The second arrow from the sixth box is labelled “The decision of the Delegated Academic Authority is upheld” and it connects the sixth box to the eighth and final box. The eighth and final box is discussed in point 11 of this figure description.
10. The seventh box is labelled “We will refer the appeal back to the Delegated Academic Authority with recommendations for further consideration. The Delegated Academic Authority will provide their reconsidered decision with 10 working days of the referral. Their reconsidered decision will be final”. The seventh box is also connected to the eighth and final box by a downwards arrow.
11. The eighth and final box is labelled, “At the end of the process, we will issue you a Completion of Procedures letter. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may refer your appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for an independent review. You must do so within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter”.

# Flowchart D: Academic decisions reviewed only by the Senate Academic Appeals Review Panel



Version number: 1.0

Last reviewed: April 2024

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

## Flowchart D figure description

The flowchart summarises the review procedure for academic decisions where there is no right of appeal, other than a referral to Senate Academic Appeals Review Panel (SAARP) (section B4 and B5 within the [Student Complaints and Appeals Procedures](#)).

The flowchart uses two swim lanes. The first swim lane represents the review procedure of the Senate Academic Appeals Review Panel (SAARP), and the second swim lane represents external review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The flowchart uses boxes to represent actions taken by you or The Open University and uses lines with direction arrowheads to connect the boxes progressing through the swim lanes.

1. The first box is labelled “There is no appeal other than a referral to the Senate Academic Appeals Review Panel (SAARP) for the following academic decisions:
  - 1) a module result
  - 2) a decision of a selection panel
  - 3) a decision of a fitness to practice panel
  - 4) the result of an examination for a research degree

To request a review, you must write to the Secretary on [SCO-SAARP@open.ac.uk](mailto:SCO-SAARP@open.ac.uk) within 28 calendar days of the decision or result”.

2. There are two downwards arrows from the first box. The first arrow which is labelled “Request for review is not accepted” connects the first box to the fourth and final box. The fourth and final box is discussed in point 7 of this figure description. The second arrow which is labelled “Request for a review is accepted” connects the first box to a second box.
3. The second box is labelled “The SAARP Chair will review your appeal. The Chair may decide to call an appeal hearing if they deem it necessary to consider the appeal. An appeal hearing will not always be required, for example if there is clear evidence that the original decision should be reviewed”.
4. There are two downwards arrows from the second box. The first arrow is labelled “The decision of the Academic Authority is upheld” and it connects the second box to the fourth and final box. The fourth and final box is discussed in point 7 of this figure description. The second arrow is labelled “The decision of the Academic Authority is set aside fully or in part”, and it connects the second box to the third box.

Version number: 1.0	Last reviewed: April 2024
---------------------	---------------------------

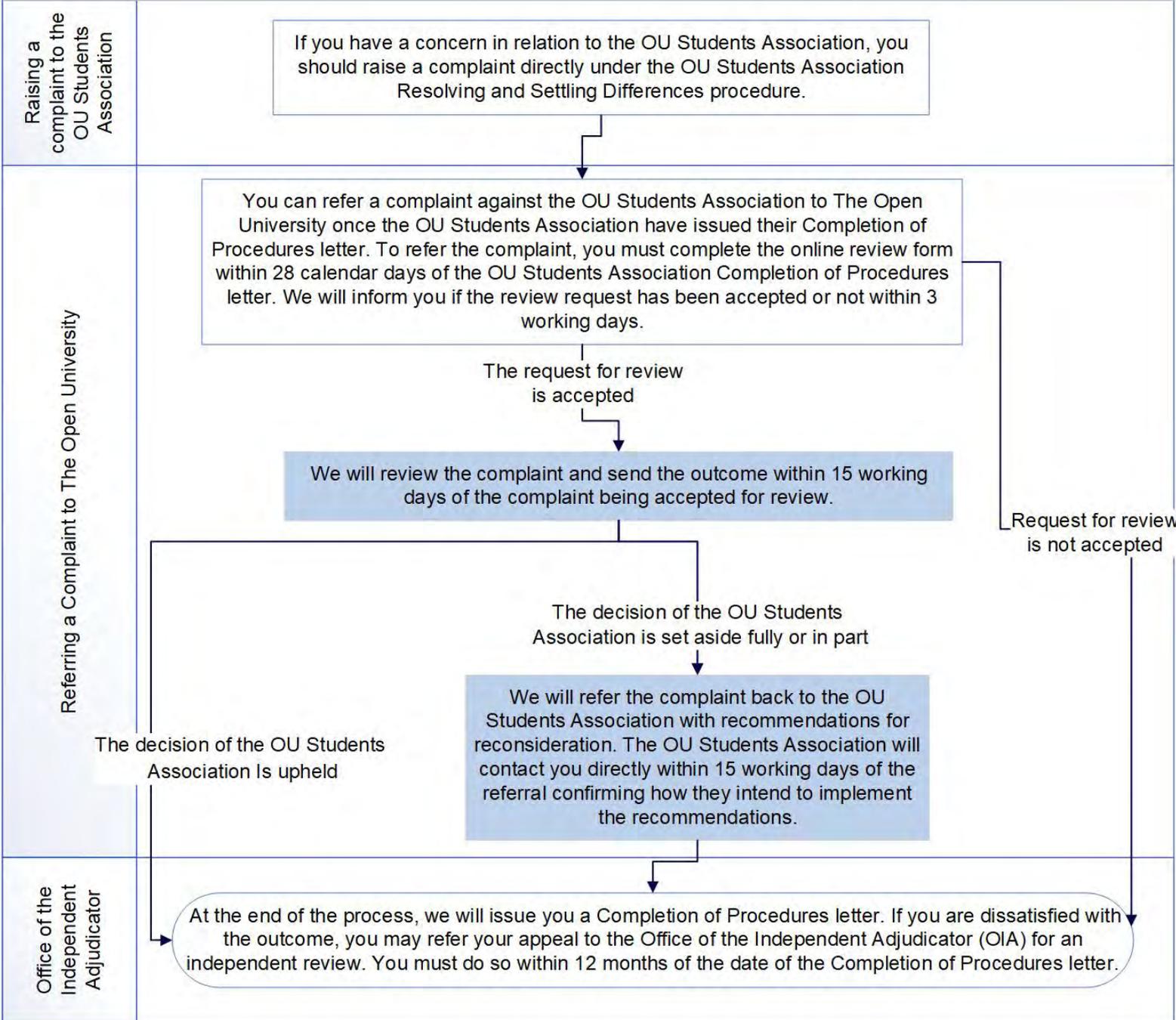
The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

5. The third box is labelled “We will refer the appeal back to the appropriate Academic Authority with recommendations for further consideration. The Academic Authority will provide their reconsidered decision with 10 working days of the referral. Their reconsidered decision will be final”.
6. The third box is connected to the fourth and final box by a downwards arrow.
7. The fourth and final box is labelled “At the end of the process, we will issue you a Completion of Procedures letter. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may refer your appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for an independent review. You must do so within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter”.

Version number: 1.0	Last reviewed: April 2024
---------------------	---------------------------

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

# Flowchart E: Complaints in relation to The Open University Students Association



Version number: 1.0	Last reviewed: April 2024
---------------------	---------------------------

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

## Flowchart E figure description

The flowchart summarises the procedure for referring a complaint against The Open University Students Association to The Open University for review (section C within the [Student Complaints and Appeals Procedures](#)). A complaint can only be referred to The Open University once you have exhausted the [OU Students Association Resolving and Settling Differences procedure](#).

The flowchart uses three swim lanes to represent the procedures you should follow. The first two swim lanes represent internal procedures, the first swim lane represents the complaints procedures of the OU Students Association, the second swim lane represents a referral of the complaint to The Open University. The third swim lane represents external review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The flowchart uses boxes to represent actions taken by you or The Open University and uses lines with direction arrowheads to connect the boxes progressing through the swim lanes.

1. The first box is labelled “If you have a concern in relation to the OU Students Association, you should raise a complaint directly under the [OU Students Association Resolving and Settling Differences procedure](#)”.
2. A downward arrow connects the first box to the second box which is labelled “You can refer a complaint against the OU Students Association to The Open University once the OU Students Association have issued their Completion of Procedures letter. To refer the complaint, you must complete the [online review form](#) within 28 calendar days of the OU Students Association Completion of Procedures letter. We will inform you if the review request has been accepted or not within 3 working days”.
3. There are two downwards arrows from the second box. The first arrow which is labelled “Request for review is not accepted” connects the second box to the fifth and final box. The fifth and final box is discussed in point 8 of this figure description. The second arrow which is labelled “The request for review is accepted” connects the second box to a third box.
4. The third box is labelled “We will review the complaint and send the outcome within 15 working days of the complaint being accepted for review”.
5. There are two downwards arrows from the third box. The first arrow is labelled “The decision of the OU Students Association is upheld” and it connects the third box to the fifth and final box.

Version number: 1.0	Last reviewed: April 2024
---------------------	---------------------------

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in relation to its secondary activity of credit broking.

6. The fifth and final box is discussed in point 8 of this figure description. The second arrow is labelled “The decision of the OU Students Association is set aside fully or in part” and it connects the third box to the fourth box.
7. The fourth box is labelled “We will refer the complaint back to the OU Students Association with recommendations for reconsideration. The OU Students Association will contact you directly within 15 working days of the referral confirming how they intend to implement the recommendations”.
8. The fourth box is also connected to the fifth and final box by a downwards arrow.
9. The fifth and final box is labelled “At the end of the process, we will issue you a Completion of Procedures letter. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may refer your appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for an independent review. You must do so within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter”.