HEAR 6.1 Appeals Procedure
Last updated on 17 March 2014

Purpose: To allow students to appeal against a decision not to verify their completion of an extra-curricular activity/award for inclusion in Section 6.1 of their Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

Grounds: In general, HEAR recognition cannot be granted if HEAR completion criteria for an activity/award are not met. N.B. It is your responsibility to find out what the HEAR criteria are for activities in which you are involved. These are published in the online database of verifiable activities (www.shef.ac.uk/hear-search), and your activity organiser will also be able to tell you what they are.

Appeals against a decision not to verify an activity/award for the HEAR may, however, be made upon one or more of the following grounds:

(a) Administrative error

(b) Evidence of extenuating circumstances, demonstrating that a student’s inability to meet all of the HEAR recognition criteria was beyond his/her control, and that s/he only failed to meet the HEAR criteria by a narrow margin

(c) The initial decision not to grant HEAR recognition was manifestly unreasonable

Please note that there may be exceptional occasions where, owing to circumstances beyond the control of the University/Students’ Union, it is not possible to continue running an activity and where, therefore, students undertaking the activity are unable to complete HEAR criteria. If such failure to meet HEAR criteria is not by a narrow margin, it will regrettably not be possible to grant any students HEAR recognition for the activity.

Process:

Stage 1 – Informal 6.1 Appeals Procedure

If you have any questions or concerns about the criteria/process for gaining HEAR recognition, you should speak to your activity organiser at the earliest opportunity, so that s/he can help to resolve your difficulty.

Unless you are appealing on the grounds of administrative error, please note that you must approach your activity organiser within three months of the date when an activity was due to be added to your HEAR.

In the case of extenuating circumstances, you are required to:

1. Discuss, at the earliest opportunity, alternative means of meeting the HEAR criteria/different but equivalent criteria with your activity organiser.

   This is not guaranteed to be possible, but should be considered before any other action so that, as far as possible, the achievement of HEAR recognition represents the same level of commitment and achievement, and is granted at the same point in time, for all students.

2. If (1) above is not possible, you may still request the right to receive HEAR recognition provided you can both:
a. demonstrate that you have only failed to achieve HEAR recognition criteria by a narrow margin;
b. demonstrate that extenuating circumstances have prevented you from fulfilling any outstanding HEAR criteria.

Some examples are provided below to illustrate the kinds of scenarios that may be applicable:

- Illness prevents you from attending an activity event/meeting the submission deadline for a HEAR recognition task.
- Unexpected personal circumstances (e.g. illness or death of a family member or close friend) prevent you from attending an activity event/meeting the submission deadline for a HEAR recognition task.
- The last activity event is in a series is cancelled/rescheduled at short notice, and you are not able to attend for good reason. This prevents you from contributing a minimum number of hours/attending a minimum number of activity events.
- An academic lecture/seminar is rescheduled at short notice, to a time that prevents you from being able to attend an activity event. This prevents you from contributing a minimum number of hours/attending a minimum number of activity events.
- You are late for an activity event because of a last-minute room change (either the activity venue itself is changed, or an academic activity immediately beforehand was moved to a distant location).
- A project start date is delayed (e.g. because of external delays in completing prerequisites such as DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks for volunteering or outreach activities), and this prevents you from contributing a minimum number of hours/attending a minimum number of activity events.

As all 6.1 activities are different, there is no strict definition of what constitutes a ‘narrow margin’. It will be up to your activity organiser to make a final decision about whether or not this applies in your case.

**Stage 2 – Formal 6.1 Appeals Procedure**

If you have tried to resolve your difficulty informally but have still not been granted HEAR recognition, you may submit a formal 6.1 appeal. This is done by completing the Student 6.1 Appeals Form at www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/hear/help, which must be done within ten working days of receiving the activity organiser's response to your informal appeal. Formal appeals submitted after this point will not generally be accepted, unless a good reason for the delay can be evidenced.

The purpose of the 6.1 Appeals Form is to confirm the action that has already been taken to attempt to resolve your appeal informally, and the reason why you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You will need to be logged in to your University account in order to access the form, and guidance within the form will include instructions for submitting additional documentation in support of your appeal. If you have already submitted documentation for the purposes of another appeal (e.g. academic appeal), please note that you will need to re-submit this, because 6.1 appeals are dealt with by different members of staff.

You will receive confirmation that your 6.1 Appeals Form, and any supporting documentation (where applicable), have been received via email within five working days. Once your form, and any supporting documentation, have been received, your activity organiser will be asked to respond your appeal within ten working days, by completing a form to explain why HEAR recognition has not been granted. Both your appeal, and your activity organiser’s response, will then be considered by a Faculty Officer (in the case of University activities), or the Students’ Union HEAR Management Group (in the case of SU activities).*

* Except for Sports Awards and Club Sport involvement, which are managed by the Students’ Union. all Sport Sheffield activities are classed as University activities and considered by a Faculty Officer.

Please note that all information you submit will be shared with relevant staff, in order to ensure that your case is considered fully.

As far as possible, a decision about your appeal will be made within twenty eight days of the date when your form was submitted. If it is not possible to come to a decision by this point because further consultation is needed, you will receive a progress update after twenty eight days. You will then receive further updates every twenty eight days until a final decision has been made.
When you are notified about your appeal outcome, you will be sent details of your activity organiser’s response, along with the response from the Faculty Officer/Students’ Union HEAR Management Group.

**Stage 3 – University Case Review/Students’ Union Complaints Procedure**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal 6.1 appeal and wish to respond further to your activity organiser and/or the Faculty Officer/Students’ Union HEAR Management Group, you may:

- Submit a Case Review request (for University activities)
  See Stage 5 of the University Complaints Procedure at: [http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/procedures/complaints](http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/procedures/complaints)

- Submit a Formal Complaint to the SU President (for SU activities)
  For details of the SU Complaints Procedure see Bye-Law 16 in the SU Constitution at: [http://www.shef.ac.uk/union/you-run-us/constitution](http://www.shef.ac.uk/union/you-run-us/constitution)