

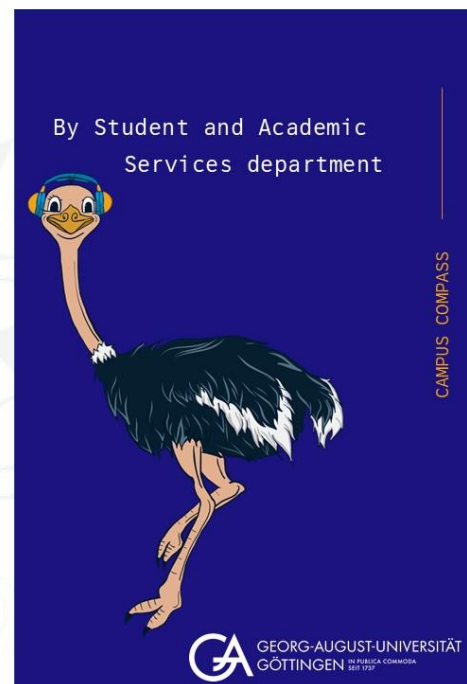
Campus Compass – episode 05 – Appeals Procedure

CAMPUS COMPASS

Appeals Procedure against the assessment of examinations §20 APO

Procedure and further information

Episode no. 5



Welcome back to Campus Compass – your guide to university life! I'm Paulina, your host, and together we're going to take a look at ways of **appealing exam results**.

You've probably been there: you write an exam, leave the room with a good feeling and firmly expect a 2.0 – maybe better, maybe a little worse. Weeks later you open your email inbox: "Exam result available." Heart pounding, maybe a little nervous – and then? Damn! (Beeper) A bad grade, a 4.0 or, even worse, the red cross: "failed". And now? What can you do?

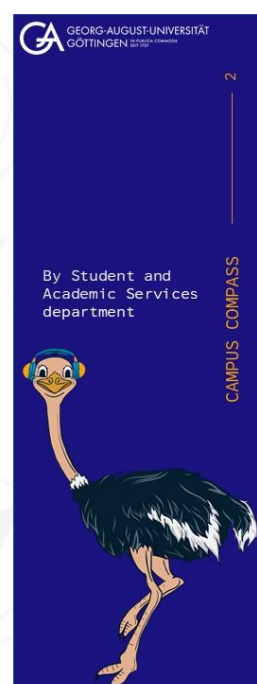
In this episode, I'll explain the Appeals Procedure step by step, which you can use to appeal against the assessment of your exam performance. In this episode, I will talk about classic exams as an example. However, the Appeals Procedure applies to all types of examinations.

DISCLAIMER

This information refers to bachelor's and master's degree programmes at the University of Göttingen to which the General Examination Regulations (APO) apply. Different legal bases apply to state examination and doctoral programmes as well as degree programmes at other universities, and regulations may vary.

Framework conditions are constantly evolving. All information in this podcast should therefore be checked against the university's current regulations.

www.uni-goettingen.de/apo



Before we go deeper into the topic, a quick note: This information applies to Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes at the University of Göttingen, which are subject to the APO. State examination and doctoral degree programmes have their own rules, so please refer to the relevant regulations if necessary. You can also pause for a moment and read through the disclaimer at your leisure.

If you want to take a closer look at the APO: Simply enter www.uni-goettingen.de/apo or scan the QR code.

Appeals Procedure – purpose and notification of the outcome

Purpose:

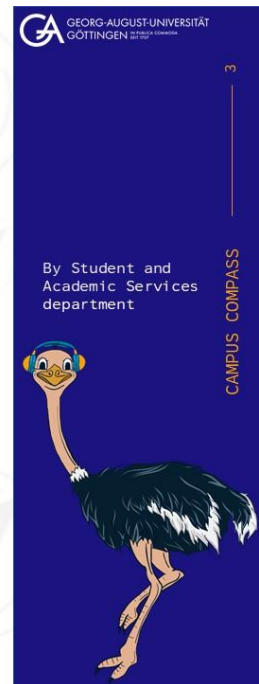
- Review of exam results in cases of perceived unfair assessment

Announcement:

- Results will be posted in FlexNow

Deadline:

- 1 month to lodge an appeal
- Start of deadline: day after you check the result or 3 days after publication in FlexNow
- Extension: if exam papers can only be inspected after this deadline has expired



Now let's clarify the purpose and the deadlines.

The purpose is to have the assessment of your exam results reviewed – for example, if you think it was not assessed fairly or correctly.

Announcement: The result of your exam is announced in FlexNow, and this is where the crucial **deadline** starts: you have exactly one month from the day after you check the result to lodge an appeal. If you do not check the result directly, the third day after the result is posted in FlexNow automatically counts as the start of the deadline.

And what happens if you can only inspect the exam after this deadline has passed? No stress: in such cases, the deadline can be extended accordingly.

So much for the basics – now let's move on to the details!

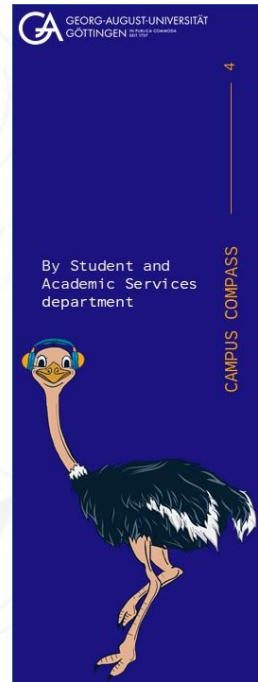
Appeals Procedure – Lodging an appeal

Appeal:

- Simple letter or e-mail to the Examination Board (contact via the Examination Office)
- Personal registration of the appeal possible – not recommended
- Recommendation: e-mail – Why?
 - Own structured argumentation of the appeal
 - Easy traceability of communication (incoming/outgoing mail, contact persons etc.)

Content:

- Clear reason for the appeal
- Explanation of why the assessment is considered **unfair or incorrect**



After the result has been posted in FlexNow, you can – if you feel unfairly graded – officially lodge an appeal. But what is the best way to do this?

You can lodge an appeal by letter, email or in person at the university. Our clear recommendation: send an e-mail to the Examination Office!

Why?

- An email allows you to formulate your appeal in a clear and structured way.
- You have easy traceability – everything remains documented in your inbox and outbox.
- If you register your appeal in person, you have to trust that the person recording your appeal will write down and explain everything correctly. This bears the risk of important points being inaccurately or incorrectly reproduced – and you certainly want to avoid this.

What should be in the email?

- The clear reason for your appeal. What exactly do you think was assessed incorrectly?
- A clear explanation of why you feel the assessment is unfair or incorrect.

Here is another recommendation: take your time, check your documents carefully and formulate your appeal in a factual and structured manner. This will give you the best chance of success and make it easier for both you and the members of the Examination Board who will decide on your appeal.

Examples of reasons for an appeal

Assignment not corrected:

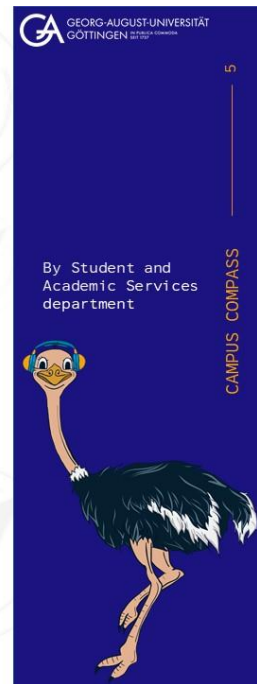
- Assignment was completed but not assessed

Disagreement about the correctness/relevance of the answer:

- For example, arguments in open questions were marked as "irrelevant"
- Reference to lecture content, course materials, scientific sources, answer marked as incorrect even though explained in lecture

Misunderstandings about the assignment:

- Assignment was worded ambiguously, leading to interpretation problems
- Unclear expectations for open questions



There are various reasons why you can lodge an appeal to an exam assessment. Here are a few examples where it may make sense to take action:

1. **Uncorrected assignments:** Sometimes it happens that an assignment has been completed but is simply not graded in the final result. This is of course a clear reason for an appeal.
2. **Disagreement about the correctness/relevance of the answer:** In open questions, it can happen that your answer is marked as 'irrelevant' or 'incorrect', although you have actually made a good reference to the lecture content, the course materials or scientific sources and argued well. It is worth checking whether the answer was really wrong or whether another perspective was simply overlooked. What one examiner sees as wrong, another may see completely differently.
3. **Misunderstandings in the assignments:** Sometimes assignments are worded unfavourably or misleading, which can lead to interpretation problems. Unclear expectations in open questions are also possible reasons for an appeal.

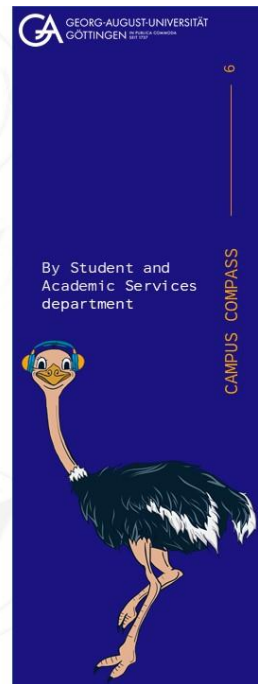
Our TOP TIP! ;)

Taking notes or pictures of your own exam is **permitted** during the exam inspection.

Distributing exam questions or passing them on to third parties is prohibited!

Why is this a game changer?

- During exam inspection, there is not enough time to thoroughly review the content, check all questions in 10-20 minutes, and add up the points
- It helps to formulate a precise argumentation for an appeal to an exam result



Let's move on to our top tip and I have been waiting to share this tip with you since the start of this podcast: **You are allowed to take pictures of your own exam during the exam inspection!**

But be careful – **distributing the exam tasks or passing them on to third parties is of course prohibited!**

Why is this a real game changer? There is often not enough time in a normal exam inspection session to deal intensively with the assignments. You usually only have 10 to 20 minutes to check everything and see how your points are made up. That's not a lot of time to think through every detail and compare it with your own answers.

You can use the pictures to look at everything again at home, do the maths and **formulate a precise argument** for a disagreement with an exam result. It helps you to recognise things that you may not have noticed in the hectic rush of the inspection. And this way you can formulate the argumentation for your appeal – if you want to lodge one – much better and more precisely!

So, the next time you inspect your exam, don't forget to take pictures!

If you are not allowed to take a picture or write down everything you notice when you inspect your exam, you can – and should of course – mention this in your appeal and at the same time request that the exam file be made available to you again and that you are given more time to substantiate your appeal.

Let's now move on to what happens after you have lodged your appeal. What happens next?

Procedure after lodging the appeal – Review by the examiner

Re-evaluation:

- The original examiner reviews the assessment
- Correction of the grade in case of obvious errors (e.g. points added up incorrectly)

Statement:

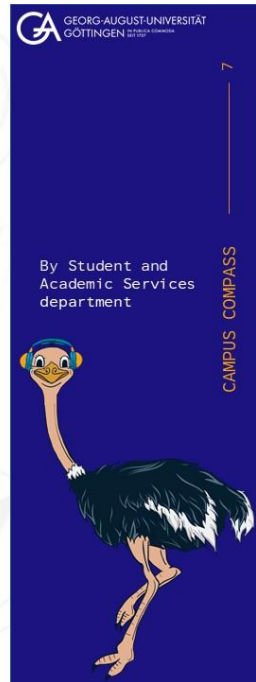
- If there is no change to the assessment: The examiner writes a statement
- This is forwarded to the Examination Board

The examiner will review the grade again: The appeal will be forwarded to the original examiner, who will reconsider the grade. If the grade was calculated incorrectly – for example, if the points were added up incorrectly – the grade may be corrected directly. The same applies if you were able to convincingly demonstrate with the help of a textbook or the lecture materials that your answer is correct and wrongly did not earn any points.

If the grade is improved, the Appeals Procedure ends at this point. Unfortunately, this can also mean that you receive a 3.7 instead of a 4.0 and cannot lodge another appeal.

If no changes are made to the grading, the examiner will issue a statement. In this statement, they explain why the appeal did not result in a change to the grade. This statement is then forwarded to the Examination Board, which ultimately processes the appeal further.

The procedure therefore first goes through the examiners, and if there is no change there, it is further reviewed. There are therefore several people who review the examination!



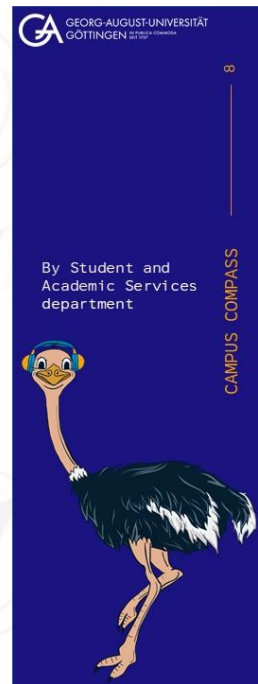
Procedure after lodging the appeal - Review by the Examination Board

The Examination Board reviews the assessment based on the appeal and the statement of the examiner:

- Proper examination procedure
 - Compliance with generally accepted assessment principles
 - Appropriate assessment
- The Examination Board either agrees with the examiner and rejects the appeal

OR

- The examination board decides on a further assessment:
- Possible reassessment by an independent person
 - The grade must **not be lower** than the original assessment



Now let's move on to the procedure after lodging the appeal, i.e. the review by the Examination Board.

If the examiner does not change the assessment of your examination, your appeal is sent to the Examination Board together with the examiner's statement. The Examination Board then checks whether everything has been done properly and weigh up the arguments you put forward in your appeal against the examiner's statement. If necessary, they will also take a closer look at your exam performance and check whether the general assessment principles have been adhered to and whether the assessment is appropriate.

The Board then has **two options**: It can either agree with the original examiner and reject the appeal, or it can decide that the exam must be reassessed. In this case, an independent person is appointed to reassess.

This means that everything will be checked again to see if everything was correct – and you have the opportunity to ensure that your assessment is fair and appropriate.

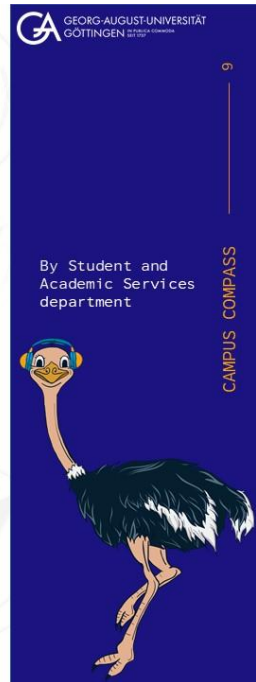
Important again: If a reassessment takes place, the new grade must not be lower than the original grade. There is therefore no risk that you will receive an even worse grade if you appeal.

Decision of the Examination Board

- The Appeals Process should not take longer than twelve weeks.
→ It may be extended if the examiner is ill, but this must not delay the course of study.
- The decision of the Examination Board is final.

The entire procedure should not actually take longer than twelve weeks. Of course, there are exceptional cases, for example if the examiners are ill, but even then the delay must not prolong the course of study.

Once the Examination Board has made its decision, it is final – this means that the appeal is closed. After that, you only have the option of taking legal action and filing a lawsuit if you still disagree with the decision.



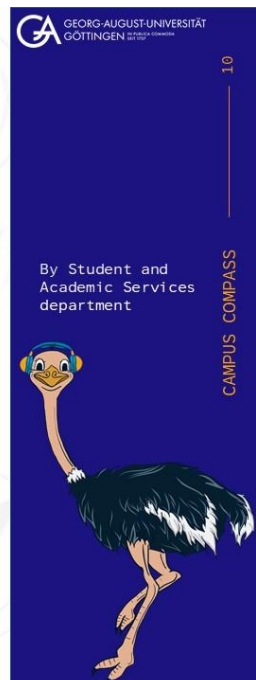
Contact and support

Please contact:

- The relevant Examination Office
- The Student Council
- The Ombudsperson and Complaint Management

If you need support or further information on the Appeals Procedure, there are several points of contact:

- The responsible Examination Office is your first point of contact when it comes to official appeals.



- The Student Council can also support you, as they often have a good overview of the study regulations and the process.
- The Ombudsperson and Complaint Management can also help, especially if you feel that something has not been done fairly in the procedure.

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THANKS FOR LISTENING!

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
www.uni-goettingen.de/kritik
 OR SIMPLY SCAN THE QR-CODE.





I hope you now have a clear overview of the Appeals Procedure and know how to proceed if you feel that an exam assessment was unfair or incorrect.

At this point, I would like to thank you for listening. I hope this episode was helpful to you. Campus Compass was set up by Silja-Katharina Haufe, the Ombudsperson for students and responsible for Complaint Management at Göttingen University. If you would like to find out more about her counselling and her work, simply listen to our episode no. 1 or visit the website. Simply scan the QR code or enter www.uni-goettingen.de/kritik. See you next time – at Campus Compass – your guide to university life.