

## **Advice following a 'Requirement to Withdraw from the Course'**

### ***Stop, take advice and think***

Things have not gone well and now you have to make a choice. Studying at RVC or any course at a University is a large investment of your time and money. You need to be sure about the different choices. You need to ask yourself some difficult questions.

This document is not intended to 'put you off' appealing; it is intended to help you make the right choice in your next step. Here are the things you should do:

#### *Explore alternatives*

The careers service is there to introduce you to the options you might not have thought about before. You might discover options that are much more suited to your different strengths and preferences. The careers service can help you to discover what you might be good at. A change of direction might be just what you need. Don't think this service is just for young students; our service is also in the business of providing advice for postgraduates and in-career professionals.

#### *Questions to ask yourself: all students*

Before doing anything take a moment. Is the course or programme for you? Do you enjoy it? Is it just hard slog? Why did you fail? Are you likely to do any better if you try again?

#### *Questions to ask yourself: students on courses of 3 years or more*

Did you have a repeat year earlier on? Do you think you will succeed in the later and academically harder stages of the course? (Failing at year 1 feels bad; just think about what it might be like at year 4 – all that time and money wasted). It is tough, but you have to be really brutally honest with yourself.

#### *Questions to ask yourself: research students*

What do you think the reasons are for it all going wrong? Have you taken time to look at what happened and when, and what part you played? It is tough, but you, like other students, have to be really brutally honest with yourself. What will it take to make it all work in the end and do you want those demands?

#### *Making the choice*

Sometimes life is too full of choices and stresses. Remember the Advice Centre services are all there for you. To make sure you have considered options and know where different sources of advice can be found. Remember your tutor or, if you are a research student, the research degree advisers. They can help with reflections about your position.

If you really think this failure was NOT because the course does not suit you then it is worth the bother and worry of an appeal.

RVC tries hard to avoid making appeals difficult or stressful, but it is likely to be a strain for you. If you have decided to go ahead with an appeal see the advice below.

## ***Preparing for Appeal***

### *Context and Practicalities*

- Preparing to make an appeal is a serious matter. If your appeal is not upheld, that is the end of the line. You may not continue with your studies for your chosen degree.
- Read the procedures carefully – especially the grounds for appeal part.
- Right at the beginning you can ask the Academic Registrar or other appointed Registry Officer for any procedural advice. They are there to make sure a fair procedure is followed well and the student has the best chance to make their case. They are not on anyone's 'side' but they are there to make sure everyone is as comfortable as they can be with the procedure.
- Read the advice leaflet about your position as a student. There will possibly be money and accommodation difficulties for you whilst the appeal is in progress. Again use the Advice Centre for any problems of this sort.
- Check your College email account is working. The College will use your RVC email account for communicating about the panel. You should send in your letter as an attachment to an email (Ideally PDF).

### *Writing your letter:*

- At an appeal the panel will ask itself two basic questions:
  1. Does the candidate have grounds for appeal? If the answer to that is 'yes' then
  2. Will the candidate succeed if given another go?
- Everything sent to the panel is confidential and held away from your general student file. So it is very confidential and you should feel able to say anything and everything.
- With that in mind you should begin to plan your letter of appeal.
- Dealing with the 'grounds', think about what went wrong, why it went wrong. You must put down everything and all evidence you want to put forward must be in this one letter. Embarrassment, shyness and bravery do not help at this stage. **Your letter will be confidential to the panel.** Refer to everything and accurately reflect the extent of the effects of any problem. If it all feels convoluted and you don't know where to begin, use chronological order as a framework for your letter.
- If your case is 'procedural' rather than due to mitigating circumstances, simply state clearly what you believe the error to have been.
- Dealing with 'Will the candidate succeed if given another go?' Has your situation changed? (e.g. illness/finances how under control?). Put this in your letter if there is 'news' on this matter. You will be asked questions relating to your past academic record. So think about your previous results and study patterns. Were there any difficulties? What was easy? Where did you do well? What did you do about difficulties?
- Make sure you put in everything. If it does not go your way, it is very, very unlikely you will be allowed a further hearing if you have more information that you did not put in your letter the first time.
- The panel will see your whole range of marks/appraisal notes from your entry qualifications up to the current year's results. They will also see any notes from a progress committee. They will have access to your file of any medical notes or placement reports too.

### *The meeting itself*

- Option to take a friend. It is much better to take a friend to the meeting. An extra person listening will make sure that you have covered all the answers and can reinforce some points. If you know you are going to find something hard to say in public, ask your friend to say it for you when they get their chance to speak.
- The panel: They ask straight questions but they are basically 'nice about it'.
- The Panel makes every effort to treat individual cases sympathetically. However, it also has to uphold professional and/or academic standards and be even handed in its treatment of students. It strives to make ethical decisions about individual students.
- There will be a Professional Services Officer there. Their job is to see procedures are followed and that everything is working smoothly.
- The decision will usually be given to you on the day of the meeting. The panel will offer a chance for you to come back to see them later in the day to get your result in person. (We don't like to be impersonal even with bad news). You can ask to be phoned with the result.

### *After the meeting*

If your appeal is upheld – seek immediate tutorial advice on your future learning strategy and plans. Follow the conditions in the appeal letter.

If your appeal is not upheld, use the careers and counselling services to help with your next step.

If you think the decision is unfair, refer to the OIA website. ([www.oiahe.org.uk](http://www.oiahe.org.uk))

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