



Institute
and Faculty
of Actuaries

Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure

October 2019

Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure

Introduction

The Institute and Faculty of Actuaries is committed to providing a fair and transparent route to achieving their qualifications.

This procedure is intended to provide a formal means for appealing the outcome of an assessment result(s). An appeal is distinct from a complaint which seeks to raise concerns about the quality or delivery of a service received from the IFoA. Complaints are considered under a separate Complaints Handling Procedure.

The policy set out below is designed to ensure that such requests are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.

The IFoA aims to:

- Deal with any requests in a fair and timely manner and keep candidates appropriately informed of the progress of an investigation.
- Notify candidates of the outcome which has been reached and, where appropriate, what further action is to be taken.
- Monitor and track appeals to identify trends and patterns to be reported to Education Committee.

Acceptable Grounds for Appeal

The appeal will ONLY be considered where at least one of the following grounds has applied:

- Irregular procedure or improper conduct of an assessment took place. This can include procedures for question setting, marking and results moderation of the examinations. Specific evidence must be provided to support this.
- Extenuating personal circumstances which affected your assessment performance which you could not reasonably disclose under the mitigating circumstances policy. An explanation for earlier non-disclosure is always required.

It is important to note that appeals based on, or arising from, the following will be deemed invalid and not upheld:

| Irregular Procedure or Improper Conduct | Extenuating Personal Circumstances |
|--|--|
| Marking variances – variance between Marker 1 and 2 and/or the script review | Unwell at the time of the exam |
| Exam centre related incidents i.e. noise/invigilator issues/heating | Retrospective reporting of mitigating circumstances |
| Comparison of own analysis against marks awarded e.g. marking your own paper | Insufficient medical evidence or diagnosis |
| Challenging the academic judgement because candidate believes they deserve a different outcome | Issue with exam centre including distance and travel |
| Lack of understanding of the assessment regulations and procedures | Not being aware of exam timings i.e. time zones |
| Lack of understanding of the marking guidelines/policy | Situation or incident that does not directly have an impact on the candidate |
| | Sitting an examination against the advice of a medical professional |

To clarify, the IFoA will not consider an appeal that does nothing more than question the academic judgement exercised or is based on a situation that did not directly affect your exam performance. For example, candidates cannot appeal using the procedures simply because they are unhappy with a mark given and request a remark of the paper.

The IFoA is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all its activities. By submitting an appeal the candidate's privacy and confidentiality will be respected at all stages of the process. In submitting an appeal candidates must accept that limited disclosure of all, or part, of their submission will be required to enable investigation of the case to proceed.

Candidates have the right to expect that everyone who responds to, investigates or adjudicates upon an appeal will do so impartially. No individual, including assessors, will be permitted to act in any manner in a case which they have a material interest in, or in which any actual or potential conflict of interest may arise.

Stage One Appeal

Lodging an Appeal

The appeal must be submitted within 40 days of the receipt of the assessment result.

Candidates should complete the *Appeal application form (Stage one appeals)* and include all supporting evidence. A form needs to be completed for each assessment they wish to appeal. Appeals should be sent by email or post to the address given on the form. No fee should be paid until requested.

Candidates will need to provide reasons why they believe that the grounds of appeal apply, and include evidence to substantiate their claim.

On receipt of the form an email will be sent to the candidate within 48 hours. This is an automatic response which acknowledges successful receipt.

The appeals team will contact the candidate requesting that a payment of £200 is made within 5 working days. Failure to make payment when requested will mean the appeal application will be withdrawn.

Candidates should ensure they have read and understood the appeal policy before submitting an appeal and making the appeal payment. No refunds will be given if a student makes an appeal for an invalid reason as given above.

If the appeal is successful the fee is refundable. If the candidate has booked a resit for the same assessment and the appeal results in a pass then the entry fee will be refunded to them.

Consideration of the Appeal

The Head of Quality and Assessment (or nominee) will oversee the appeal and will take all appropriate steps to ascertain the relevant facts. This can include checking that no administrative, numerical, data transcription, computing or procedural errors have taken place. It will involve consulting where necessary with examiners, assessors, exam centres and Board Officers or IFoA staff.

The outcome of the appeal, with reasons, will be communicated to the candidate by letter from the Head of Quality and Assessment (or nominee) within 30 days from the receipt of the appeal fee, wherever possible. Any delays will be communicated to the candidate.

In the event the appeal is upheld this does not necessarily mean that the candidate is entitled to an amendment of their mark or pass/fail decision.

By way of an example, and not intended to be an exhaustive list, the following are available if the appeal is upheld:

- An explanation or apology.
- An undertaking to review the relevant administrative procedures.
- A remark of the assessment.
- Correction of the mark previously awarded.

If it is felt that a remark is appropriate, and if the candidate agrees to the remark of the assessment, the mark previously awarded may be corrected either up or down from the original outcome. If the corrected mark meets the required standard of the assessment then they will receive a pass.

Where the outcome of this process indicates a failure in assessment processes that might affect other candidates, the IFoA will take steps to correct or mitigate the effect as far as possible, and to ensure that such a failure does not occur.

Once the final outcome has been communicated to the candidate, the Head of Quality and Assessment (or nominee) will not enter into any further correspondence regarding the appeal.

Stage Two Appeal – Review of the Stage One Process

If the candidate believes the Stage One appeal has not been investigated correctly, they are entitled to have their appeal considered by the Director of Engagement and Learning (or nominee).

The candidate must request an appeal by completing an *Appeal application form (Stage two appeals)* and sending it to the Director of Engagement and Learning within 10 days of receiving the Stage one appeal outcome.

The Stage two appeal will not re-investigate the details of the original appeal. An appeal at Stage two will only consider evidence that:

- Stage one appeal has not been investigated correctly and the candidate has further evidence to support this.
- Evidence considered in the stage one appeal was incorrect or incomplete, to the extent it was reasonable to conclude the outcome may have been different.
- There was prejudice or bias during the stage one appeal.

If the appeal is successful the IFoA will undertake to re-review the case submitted at Stage one of the appeal process.

The outcome of the appeal, with reasons, will be communicated to the candidate by letter from the Director of Engagement and Learning (or nominee) within 30 days from the receipt of the Stage two appeal wherever possible. Any delays will be communicated to the candidate.

The decision of the Director of Engagement and Learning will be the final decision under this appeals process. Once this has been communicated to the candidate, the IFoA will not enter into any further correspondence regarding the appeal.

Document control

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Approving Committee: Education Committee

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