



Institute  
and Faculty  
of Actuaries

# Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure

September 2017

# 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 if any 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 is alleged to apply:

- Irregular procedure or improper conduct of an assessment took place. This can include procedures for question setting, marking and results moderation of the examinations.
- Extenuating personal circumstances materially affected the academic performance, which the IFoA were not aware of when the decision was taken and which could not reasonably have been disclosed. 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:

- The candidate's lack of knowledge or understanding of the assessment regulations and procedures.
- Challenging the academic judgement of the assessors because the candidate believes that they deserve a different outcome.
- The retrospective reporting of extenuating personal circumstances that might have been reasonably made known at the time, including where there was a reluctance to disclose circumstances until the results were known.

To clarify, the IFoA will not pursue an appeal that does nothing more than question the academic judgement exercised. For example, candidates cannot appeal using the procedures simply because they are unhappy with a mark given.

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 50 days of the receipt of the assessment result.

Candidates should complete the *Appeal application form (Stage one appeals)*. 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, with the appropriate fee.

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 acknowledgement letter will be sent to the candidate within one week.

If the appeal is successful then 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, 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 score previously awarded.

If the candidate agrees to a remark of the assessment, the score 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.

## **Stage Two Appeal – Review of the Stage One Process**

If the candidate does not agree with the outcome of the Stage one appeal 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 does not re-investigate the details of the original appeal. An appeal at Stage two will only consider evidence that:

- Procedures were not applied properly or fairly during the stage one appeal.
- 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. It should be noted that this is a serious allegation against IFoA staff or volunteers, and the evidence provided must be strong, or it could result in implications for the candidate under the Actuaries' Code.

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**

Controller: Karen Brocklesby, Head of Quality and Assessment

Approving Committee: Education Committee

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