

Assessment appeals policy

Students should read this policy in full before deciding whether to submit an appeal.

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Introduction

This document sets out the process required for all CIPFA students wishing to appeal against the result awarded for an assessment (examination) or a decision in relation to a Practical Experience Portfolio (PEP) submission.

Consideration of an appeal does not normally involve the review of a candidate's work. In order to receive further information on examination performance, students may request a copy of their examination mark sheet, or detailed feedback on their script through the script feedback service. Exam scripts will NOT be sent out as part of these services. The Institute does not offer re-marks, as robust quality assurance processes are employed throughout the assessment process.

Grounds for appeal

Students must be able to provide clear evidence as to how they feel that the decision against which they are appealing meets **at least one** of the following criteria:

- There is evidence of bias, prejudice or discrimination as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- New evidence exists of extenuating circumstances which, for valid reasons, the student could not disclose to CIPFA in line with the published timetable for special considerations applications.
- There is evidence of a substantial procedural irregularity with respect to an aspect of the conduct of the exams and/or determination of results.

It is the responsibility of the student to provide CIPFA with clear evidence that at least one of the grounds listed above is valid.

Students considering an appeal should take note of the following:

- Appeals will only be considered on the grounds listed above.
- Disagreement with the professional academic judgement of examiners **does not** give grounds for appeal.
- Where the student is aware of any extenuating circumstances that may have impacted their performance in the examination, they are required to have submitted

their special considerations application to CIPFA within ten working days of the date of their last examination. Applications for special considerations will not be accepted after the release date of examination results under any circumstances. The current version of CIPFA's Assessment Regulations provides more information on special considerations applications; it is available on the CIPFA website.

Before submitting an appeal, candidates are encouraged to contact CIPFA's Head of Student Services for an informal check as to whether they meet the criteria for an appeal.

Submitting an appeal

The appeal form must be submitted within ten working days of the release of the results of the relevant assessment, together with relevant evidence and payment, to:

Head of Student Services
studentsupport@cipfa.org

Only cases brought to the attention of the Head of Student Services in accordance with the requirements of this policy will be considered for appeal.

Stage 1

Upon receipt of the appeal, the Head of Student Services will:

- Carry out an initial administrative check to ensure that the assessment result has been recorded properly;
- Check whether the required criteria for an appeal are met;
- Check, if relevant to the appeal, whether an application for special considerations had been submitted and taken into account by the Examination Panel;
- Acknowledge receipt of the appeal and advise the candidate of the next steps within five working days of the deadline for submitting the appeal.

Appeals which are deemed to meet at least one of the criteria listed above will be forwarded to the Head of Qualifications to begin Stage 2 of the appeal process.

Stage 2

The Head of Qualifications will undertake a full investigation into the grounds for appeal. This investigation could include, but may be not restricted to, interviews with the following people:

- Appellant
- Appellant's Employer
- Examiner
- Moderator
- Invigilator
- CIPFA Education and Membership staff members
- Any member of the Examination Panel
- Any external 3rd party deemed appropriate

Once the investigation has been completed, the Head of Qualifications will notify the appellant of the outcome of their appeal.

There are three possible outcomes from Stage 2 of the appeals process:

Appeal upheld

If the Head of Qualifications finds in favour of the appellant, the original assessment outcome is changed to 'Pass' with the minimum required score for assessments (50%, or

40% for Strategic Financial Management awarded, changed to 'Complete' for PEP assessment.

Appeal rejected

If the Head of Qualifications rejects the appeal, the original assessment outcome remains unchanged. If the appeal is rejected at this stage, then the decision is final.

Appeal referred to Appeals Review Panel

If the case is not resolved at Stage 2, the Head of Qualifications may refer the appeal to the Appeals Review Panel, Stage 3 of the appeal process.

Stage 3

Stage 3 of the appeal process involves a full hearing of the Appeals Review Panel:

- All papers relevant to the appeal will be provided to the Appeals Review Panel by CIPFA at least seven working days before the date of the hearing.
- The appeals hearing may be virtual and the Panel may interact by either a conference call or online, or any similar technology that allow for synchronous interaction.
- The Chair of the Appeals Review Panel will determine the precise procedure for each appeal hearing.
- The appellant is not able to submit further information to the Appeals Review Panel, unless invited to do so by the Panel, nor can the appellant attend the Panel hearing.
- The Panel will reach a decision, set out a statement of reasons and advise the student of the outcome in writing.

The decision reached at Stage 3 of the appeals process is final.

Monitoring and review of the appeals process

CIPFA has procedures in place for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the operation of its enquiry services and appeals arrangements, including the number and nature of enquiries and appeals and their outcomes. The Examination Panel, acting on behalf of CIPFA Members and Students Development Board, will be notified of all appeals and the decision reached.

The appeals policy will be reviewed by CIPFA after each examination sitting.

Overview of roles and responsibilities

Student (appellant)

- Only the student can be engaged in the process; employers or third parties cannot act on behalf of the student.
- Although the student may enrol for an examination while the appeals process is ongoing, they may not sit an examination until a final outcome on their appeal has been reached. This includes the assessment processes for PEP.
- The student may appeal on one or more of the grounds listed (see Grounds for Appeal) and all evidence presented should clearly relate to the appeal.
- The student must present a clear and concise case to support their appeal, ensuring that, in particular, it is clear how they feel that the appeals criteria are met and that all relevant supporting information is submitted to CIPFA by the deadline for receipt of appeals.
- All information relevant to the appeal must be provided at the beginning of the process as new information and evidence cannot be submitted later in the process.
- Students will be responsible for all costs incurred and will only be refunded if the appeal is upheld.

Head of Student Services

The Head of Student Services will act objectively and will:

- Carry out an initial administrative check to ensure that the assessment result has been recorded properly.
- Check whether the required criteria for an appeal are met.
- Check, if relevant to the appeal, whether an application for special considerations had been submitted and taken into account by the Examination Panel.
- Acknowledge receipt of the appeal and advise the candidate of the next steps within five working days of the deadline for submitting the appeal.
- Act as Secretary to the Appeals Review Panel.

Head of Qualifications

The Head of Qualifications will act objectively and will:

- Investigate all Stage 2 appeals thoroughly and fairly.
- Ensure the appellant is notified of all decisions made, or any changes to the agreed timescales.
- Submit all evidence from the Stage 2 review to the Appeals Review Panel and represent CIPFA at the Stage 3 hearing.

Appeals Review Panel

- The Appeals Review Panel will not be a standing Panel, but will be convened as necessary.
- The Panel will be formed by at least three individuals who are wholly independent of the original assessment decision.
- The Chair will be elected by each Panel immediately after its formation.
- The Chair of the Appeals Review Panel is responsible for taking decisions during the appeal process.
- The Chairman of the Appeals Review Panel is empowered to decide on any dispute over documents or witnesses to be presented to the Panel.
- In the case of a PEP appeal, a PEP reviewer not involved in the original assessment decision, will advise the Panel on the specialist nature of PEP review.

Timescales

- All appeals must be received within ten working days of the publication or notification of the result of assessment.
- The Stage 1 decision will be communicated to the student within five days of the appeals submission deadline.
- The Stage 2 decision will be communicated within 15 working days of the appeals submission deadline.
- Where it is necessary to convene the Appeals Review Panel, CIPFA will make every effort to ensure that the student receives their decision within 30 working days of the appeals submission deadline. The student will be notified if it is necessary to extend this timescale due to availability of Panel members.

Fees

The fee for an appeal against an examination or assignment result is £75, and the fee to appeal against a PEP review decision is £200. Students should note that:

- an appeal will not be accepted without the correct fee.
- the fee will not be refunded for unsuccessful appeals.
- the fee will be refunded for successful fees.
- CIPFA is not liable for any other costs that the student may incur in submitting their appeal.