

Assessment Appeals Policy

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Purpose

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is the global professional body for public finance professionals and recognises practitioners at every level, from those starting out in their career to those innovating and leading the profession. CIPFA organises, sets and runs professional Assessments to enable our members to attain high levels of competence in the field of public finance.

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

Scope

It will be used by internal CIPFA staff, students and Accredited Training Providers (ATPs) to ensure that they are dealing with results enquiries and appeals in a fair and consistent manner.

CIPFA's regulatory responsibilities regarding appeals

CIPFA must establish, maintain and comply with an appeals process in relation to all qualifications that it makes available which must provide for the appeal of:

- (a) the results of assessments,
- (b) decisions regarding Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration, and
- (c) decisions relating to any action to be taken against a Learner or a Centre following an investigation into malpractice or maladministration.

This must include provision of:

- a) the effective appeal of results on the basis that the awarding organisation did not apply procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly,
- b) all appeal decisions to be taken by individuals who have no personal interest in the decision being appealed,
- c) appeal decisions to be only taken by persons who have appropriate competence
- d) the final decision in respect of the outcome of an appeal to involve at least one decision maker who is not an employee of the awarding organisation, an Assessor working for it, or otherwise connected to it, and
- e) timelines for the outcome of appeals.

Additionally, we are duty bound to publish information on our appeals process to enable the results of assessments to be appealed.

Where the application of an appeals process in the case of a student leads us to discover a failure in our assessment process, we must take all reasonable steps to –

- a) identify any other Learner who has been affected by the failure,
- b) correct or, where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure, and
- c) ensure that the failure does not recur in the future.

Our appeals process involves more than one stage therefore our final stage must involve an independent decision-maker who has not had previous involvement in the earlier stages of the appeal.

For the purposes of the final stage an Independent Reviewer will be appointed by CIPFA's Head of Qualifications & Membership and instructed to impartially review all available evidence for the case in question.

This evidence will include:

- Documentation relating to the previously completed stages
- Processes, procedures and policies relevant to the appeals

On completion of the final stage, there are two possible outcomes:

- If the Independent Reviewer finds that the appropriate procedures and processes have been followed and confirms the original decision of CIPFA, the appeal will be rejected and the appellant notified.
- The Independent Reviewer finds that if any one of the appropriate procedures and processes have not been followed, the appeal will be upheld. The appeal will be upheld and the appellant notified.

In both cases, the Independent Reviewer will produce a full report including recommended actions in the event that the appeal was approved.

The decision of the Independent Reviewer is the 3rd and final stage and will not be overturned.

Accredited Training Provider (ATP) responsibilities

ATPs must be fully aware of this policy and procedure including the published timelines for reviews of marking.

Candidate consent

Students enrolled with ATPs must provide written consent to the ATP for enquiries appeals to take place after publication of their results.

Independent students not enrolled with an ATP may submit an application directly to CIPFA.

Notes for appellants

Appellants must be aware that as a result of an appeal the mark can go up or down.

If appellants have cause for concern relating to the receipt of the appeals outcome before the next entry or assessment date, we recommend that you notify us when submitting your results enquiry or appeals as we may advise that you register for the next assessment window so that you do not miss that assessment opportunity.

Grounds for appeal

Consideration of an appeal does not normally involve the review of a candidate's work. Assessment scripts will NOT be sent out as part of these services. CIPFA do not offer re-marks, as robust quality assurance processes are employed throughout the assessment process.

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Appellants must be able to provide clear evidence 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 appellant 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 Assessments and/or determination of results.

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

Appellants 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 Assessors does not give grounds for appeal
- Where the appellant is aware of any extenuating circumstances that may have impacted their performance in the Assessment, they are required to have submitted their special considerations application to CIPFA within ten working days of the date of their last Assessment. Applications for special considerations will not be accepted after the release date of Assessment results under any circumstances. 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 Qualifications & Membership 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 Qualifications and Membership studentsupport@cipfa.org

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

Stage 1

- i. Check whether the required criteria for an appeal are met
- ii. Check, if relevant to the appeal, whether an application for special considerations had been submitted and taken into account by the Assessment Team

- iii. 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 Quality and Compliance Manager to begin Stage 2 of the appeal process.

Stage 2

The Quality and Compliance Manager will undertake a full investigation into the grounds for appeal. This will also involve clerical checks of marks and grades across the assessment for accuracy; this is not a review of marking.

This investigation could include, but may be not restricted to, interviews with the following people:

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

Once the investigation has been completed, the Quality and Compliance Manager 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 Quality and Compliance Manager finds in favour of the appellant, the original assessment outcome is changed in favour of the appellant and the fee refunded.

Appeal rejected

If the Quality and Compliance Manager rejects the appeal, the original assessment outcome remains unchanged. If the appeal is rejected at this stage, then the decision is final and the fees are retained.

Appeal referred to the Independent Reviewer

If the case is not resolved at Stage 2, the Quality and Compliance Manager may refer the appeal to an Independent Reviewer, Stage 3 of the appeal process.

Stage 3

Stage 3 of the appeal process involves a full review of information relating to the appeal and is conducted by an Independent Reviewer:

- i. All papers relevant to the appeal will be provided to the Independent Reviewer by CIPFA at least seven working days before the date of the hearing
- ii. The Independent Reviewer will evaluate all steps of the appeal so far, including the documentation relating to the process, procedure, communication and earlier stages of the appeal
- iii. The appellant is not able to submit further information to the Independent Reviewer unless invited to do so, nor can the appellant attend any meeting with the Independent Reviewer

- iv. The Independent Reviewer will reach a decision, set out a statement of reasons in the form of a report and advise CIPFA of the outcome in writing
- v. The decision reached at Stage 3 of the appeals process is final.

Final reporting

The Quality and Compliance Manager will notify the Assessments Team of the outcome of any appeal. The decision will formally recorded on the Student Member's electronic record.

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 appellant 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 escalate to the Independent Review Stage, CIPFA will make every effort to ensure that the appellant receives their decision within 30 working days of the appeals submission deadline. The appellant will be notified if it is necessary to extend this timescale due to availability of a suitable Independent Reviewer.

Fees

The fee for an appeal against an Assessment or assignment result is £75, and the fee to appeal against a PEP review decision is £200.

Appellants should note that:

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

Overview of roles and responsibilities

Student (appellant)

- Only the appellant can be engaged in the process; employers or third parties cannot act on behalf of the appellant.
- Although the appellant may *enrol* for an Assessment while the appeals process is ongoing, they may not sit an Assessment until a final outcome on their appeal has been reached. This includes the assessment processes for PEP.
- The appellant 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 appellant 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.

- Appellants will be responsible for all costs incurred and will only be refunded if the appeal is upheld.

Head of Qualifications & Membership

The Head of Qualifications & Membership 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.
- Acknowledge receipt of the appeal and advise the candidate of the next steps within five working days of the deadline for submitting the appeal.

Quality and Compliance Manager

The Quality and Compliance Manager 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 Independent Reviewer and coordinate the final decision including communicating the decision with the appellant.

Policy version and owner

Policy owner	Head of Qualifications and Membership
Version	V1.0
Update	
Approval	SMB 04 March 2021
Policy review date	March 2022

Regulatory references

Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition
Condition I1: Appeals process
Condition I2: Compliance with Ofqual's appeals and complaints process