



# ICHAS

## Section 2 (b) – Terms of Reference for Decision Making Structures

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| Subject:                             | Terms of Reference for the Appeals Committee |                       |           |
| Date Approved by Board of Directors: |  |                       | July 2021 |
| Policy Version                       | 1/2021                                       | Date due for Revision | July 2024 |

### **PURPOSE (including Scope of Functioning/ Key Responsibilities and Accountabilities)**

The Appeals Committee is a Sub-Committee of Academic Council. The purpose of the Appeals Committee is to review appeals of examination and assessment grades or challenges or any decision-making committees. The Appeals Committee specifically manages appeals from learners, which is defined as a “request to a higher authority for the alteration of the decision or judgement of a lower one” or “a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with decisions on student progression, assessment and awards’ (Assessment and Standards, QQI, 2013).

### **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES** The Appeals Committee;

- Considers a learner appeal based on the evidential basis supplied by the learner and the report of the relevant decision-making authority regarding the decision made.
- May request the learner to provide supplemental evidence relating to the circumstances on which they based the appeal.
- May request the learner to make an oral presentation at the Appeals Committee and in such circumstances the learner may be accompanied by a peer, a friend, family member, fellow learner or a colleague.
- May seek such supporting information or advice as it considers necessary and, in such manner, as it considers appropriate.
- Decides the outcome of the appeal based on the evidence presented to it.

### **Membership of an Appeals Board normally comprises:**

- An external examiner or academic external to the College.
- Two members of Academic Council (one of which must be an academic staff representative or Programme Director not involved in the academic decision or judgement being appealed).
- The Registrar

The Academic Council appoints the Chair which is normally an external examiner or academic external to the College.

### **Members must fulfil the following additional criteria:**

- Members must have the competence to make the decision or judgements required of the committee
- Members must be independent of the matter being investigated, in other words, they will not have had a previous involvement with the student on the matter.

### **Role of the Chair of the Appeals Committee**

The Chair convenes and manages meetings, provides such documentation and reports as necessary to members for the proper functioning of the Committee. The Chair also arranges that the Appeals Committee issues a report to the Academic Council and communicates the outcome of its deliberations to the appellant, the Board of Examiners and such other parties as are necessary in a timely manner.

### **Role & Expectations of Members of the Appeals Committee**

Committee members are expected to be appropriately prepared for each meeting, read relevant reports and documentation in advance, and make every reasonable effort to attend the appeals meeting.

### **Appointment to the Appeals Committee**

Appointment to an Appeals Committee will be made Academic Council from a panel of potential members. Such a panel of potential members will be nominated by the Academic Council on a biannual basis.

### **Operating Procedures**

The College's appeals process is designed to be transparent and fair and recognises a learner's absolute right to question any decision-making authority or complain about same as required by *QQI's Assessment and Standards* (Revised, 2013).

The Appeals Committee is a Sub Committee of the Academic Council and as such, the decision of an Appeals Committee regarding academic decisions and judgements will be final. This does not impinge on the appellant's right to seek external legal redress.

Appeals must be evidentially supported and are considered by the Appeals Committee (on behalf of Academic Council) where the appellant believes substantial irregularity has occurred on the following grounds:

- (i) The assessment processes.
- (ii) The conduct of the process or means by which process was conducted
- (iii) The assessment criteria including substantive irregularity in the assignment brief or examination paper or the assessment process

- (iv) The relevance of the assessment tasks to the intended programme learning outcomes

### **Meetings of the Appeals Committee**

**Frequency of Meetings:** Meetings are convened at the request of the Vice President (Academic Affairs) when an appeal is made. A note-taker, who is not a decision-making member of the committee, is assigned to attend and prepare a formal record/ written minutes of the committee proceedings for approval by the chairperson and communication to relevant parties.

**Quorum:** The Appeals Committee normally requires the presence of all appointees but may proceed with the presence of the Chair and at least two other members.

**Powers of Decision Making:** All decisions of an Appeals Board are made by consensus or if necessary, by majority vote. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote. While the Appeals Committee report back to the Academic Council as a subcommittee, the Appeals committee is considered the final appeals authority in the College.

**Reporting Relationships:** The Appeals Committee reports to Academic Council.