

EXAMINATION APPEALS PROCESS

1. Access by students to information on their examination marks

Opportunities will be afforded to each student after the publication of examination results to obtain information on her/his overall and individual module results as follows:

- 1.1 Following the issuing of examination results, the Institute, where practicable, will ensure that internal examiners are available to meet students on an individual basis in relation to the marks awarded to them. This may include the viewing of scripts by students and the provision of information as appropriate on both terminal examination and continuous assessment marks.
- 1.2 After the examinations, the Institute will arrange for the examination scripts to be brought to designated locations in the Institute and to be made available for inspection by students on request. This inspection will take place under supervision on specified dates and times. Marks will be available at the viewing locations and the individual student's marks will be provided to that student on request. If a student so requests, another person of the student's choosing may accompany her/him for the purpose of viewing the examination material.
- 1.3 The responsibility for requesting an opportunity to view assessment material will lie with the student.
- 1.4 The viewing must be under the direct supervision of a member of the staff of the Institute. Examination scripts or other examination material being inspected by a student may not be copied, written on or altered in any way. The student may however make personal notes during the viewing.
- 1.5 Having viewed their assessment material, a student may request an administrative recheck of the assessment material (i.e. checking that calculations in relation to the marking of scripts are correct).
- 1.6 Administrative recheck of assessment material is not considered to be an appeal and should be addressed by the Correction of Errors and Omissions Process.
- 1.7 In the event that the Institute is unable to facilitate a student in viewing her/his assessment material during the initial 5-day period specified for examination appeals she/he will be granted an additional 5-day period, during which an examination appeal can be lodged, from the date that she/he is notified by the Institute that assessment material is available for viewing. During this additional 5-day period the student may only submit appeals related to the specific module or modules impacted by the delay.
- 1.8 The assessment material will be retained by the Institute for a period of six months after the ratification of results. Unless the examination result is the subject of an examination appeal or other enquiry, the material may be destroyed after that period.

- 1.9 During the six month period, the material will be available to students in accordance with the Freedom of Information Acts.

2. Correction of Errors and Omissions Process

If, following a Module Examination Board meeting or a Progression and Awards Board meeting, an error is discovered in the recording or calculation of a mark and/or in the recording of an overall result for a student, such errors shall be corrected according to the following process:

- 2.1 In the case of an error or omission in the recording or calculation of a mark and/or in the recording of an overall result on the part of a Module Examination Board, the correction shall be entered by the relevant Module Coordinator on the official results correction form and approved by the Chairperson of the Module Examination Board. In the case of an error or omission in the calculation or recording of an overall result on the part of a Progression and Awards Board, the correction will be entered by the relevant Head of Department on the official results correction form and approved by the Chairperson of the Progression and Awards Board.
- 2.2 The completed and signed correction form will be sent to The Examinations Office for processing and the consequential changes will be made in the student's records.
- 2.3 A note shall be made on the formal module results sheet and/or the broadsheet of any changes that have been made in accordance with this procedure.
- 2.4 The student will be issued with an updated results notification incorporating the changes.

3. Grounds for Appeal

A student who wishes to lodge an appeal may do so on a limited number of grounds as follows:

- 3.1 A student may appeal on the following grounds:
 - a) Extenuating circumstances which were not know at the time of the assessment or which were submitted *sub rosa*;
 - b) Procedural or administrative errors on the part of CIT in the conduct of assessment or in the application of regulations governing assessment;
 - c) Error in the evaluation of assessment material/performance.
- 3.2 The student may appeal on any of the above grounds but each will be handled as a separate appeal and will attract a separate fee. Appeals on different grounds by the same student must be submitted on different forms.
- 3.3 CIT will provide a different examination appeal form format for each of the 3 different grounds for appeal.
- 3.4 A positive result of an appeal on one ground may be used by the chair of the appeals board to discontinue other appeals, on different grounds, by the same student.

4. Individual Extenuating Circumstances Policy

Any consideration of extenuating circumstances as part of an examination appeal must take place in the context of the Institute's policy addressing Individual Extenuating Circumstances Related to Examinations and Assessment:

- 4.1 In keeping with the CIT policy on Individual Extenuating Circumstances relating to Examinations and Assessment, extenuating circumstances must be submitted in a timely manner such that they can form part of the deliberations of the appropriate Module Examination Board meeting or Progression and Awards Board meeting. Accordingly, evidence relating to extenuating circumstances will not normally be admitted as grounds for appeal except where provided for in paragraph 4.4 below.
- 4.2 Examination boards will consider extenuating circumstances (following the approved policy) and will formally record the fact that these circumstances have been considered.
- 4.3 The responsibility for submitting evidence of individual extenuating circumstances rests with the student.
- 4.4 Evidence relating to extenuating circumstances will not be admitted as grounds for an examination appeal unless it can be shown that it was not possible to submit this evidence for consideration at the relevant Module Examination Board meeting and/or Progression and Awards Board meeting. Examples would be where the individual was unable to submit evidence due to hospitalisation, or where the circumstances were not fully known at the time of the assessment.

5. *Sub Rosa* Process

It is recognised that, in a limited number of rare and exceptional cases, evidence relating to extenuating circumstances may be considered embarrassing, sensitive or personally damaging by the student and that consequently the student may not wish to make this information known unless it is entirely necessary. In such cases the following *Sub Rosa* process may be followed:

- 5.1 If a student does not wish to submit evidence of extenuating circumstances through the normal process she/he may submit the evidence *sub rosa* (in confidence) to the chair of the examination appeals board .
- 5.2 This process should only be invoked in rare and exceptional circumstances.
- 5.3 This submission will generally be subject to the normal deadlines although these deadlines may be waived in exceptional cases.
- 5.4 Evidence will be submitted in a sealed envelope.
- 5.5 The evidence submitted will be stored securely and unopened.
- 5.6 Evidence will only be opened and read in the case of an appeal from this student.
- 5.7 Evidence will be destroyed unopened if no appeal transpires.

6. Application Procedures and Fees

A student wishing to lodge an appeal must follow the following process:

- 6.1 A fee shall be charged for lodging an appeal. The relevant fees will be decided by the Institute from time to time.
- 6.2 In the event of the appeal by the student being upheld, the fee charged shall be refunded in full.
- 6.3 A student must lodge an appeal on the official CIT examination appeals forms. Appeals in any other format will not be accepted.
- 6.4 Appeals will only be considered if they are lodged with the Registrar's Office within 5 working days of the day on which the examination results are officially released (i.e. posted on the notice boards in the Institute, made available via electronic notification, etc.) or within the time specified at paragraph 1.7 above.
- 6.5 Appeals on the standard form must be signed by the student making the appeal and will be accepted directly from the student, by post, or by fax. A scanned electronic file of the signed form may be submitted as an email attachment. The student has a responsibility to verify the receipt of fax or email submissions by contacting the Registrar's Office. Appeals made on behalf of a student by a third party will not be accepted.
- 6.6 Receipt of the appeals will be acknowledged by the Registrar's Office.
- 6.7 Students who have appealed an examination result should not assume a favourable outcome to an appeal or assume that the appeal will be decided prior to the sitting of a repeat examination or reassessment opportunity. They should register for such repeat examination or reassessment opportunity and prepare themselves to sit it. The conferring of an award may be deferred. In the event of an appeal being upheld, any examination fee paid will be reclaimable.
- 6.8 When an appeal has been received, the Registrar's Office will forward it immediately to the relevant Module Coordinator and/or Head of Department who will inform the internal examiner(s) of the appeal without delay.

7. Examination Appeals Board

At the beginning of each year the Academic Council shall meet and appoint an Examination Appeals Board as follows:

- 7.1 The Examination Appeals Board shall be a sitting board appointed for a 12 months (commencing November 1st each year) by the Academic Council.
- 7.2 When appointing members of the Board, the Academic Council should, where possible, aim for overlap between the membership of the incoming and outgoing Boards.
- 7.3 A permanent Chair will be appointed (by the Academic Council) for the full term of the Board.

- 7.4 The Chair of the Examination Appeals Board should be a senior academic with experience of the examination processes of the Institute.
- 7.5 The Academic Council shall replace the Chair, either on a temporary or permanent basis, if circumstances demand (e.g. due to illness etc).
- 7.6 The Examination Appeals Board will consist of a maximum of eight members.
- 7.7 The Academic Council should give due regard to balance across discipline areas when appointing the members of the board.
- 7.8 The membership of the Board shall include at least 1 sabbatical officer of the Students' Union.
- 7.9 All Board members will be entitled to sit on every appeal hearing and will be given due notice of each meeting.
- 7.10 The Chair and any 2 members shall be a necessary and sufficient quorum for an appeals hearing.
- 7.11 The Board's members have an obligation to reveal any conflict of interest in relation to a specific appeal.
- 7.12 Where there is a conflict of interest on the part of any member of the Board in relation to a specific appeal, she/he will exclude themselves from the Board for the hearing of the appeal in question.
- 7.13 If the Chair has a conflict of interest in relation to a particular appeal, she/he will exclude herself/himself from the hearing and in such case a temporary chair will be elected from the membership of the Board for the purpose of hearing the appeal in question.
- 7.14 All Institute staff and all persons involved in the Appeals process have a duty of confidentiality. No information regarding an appeal shall be divulged or transmitted except as required by the Institute's procedures or by laws.

8. Processing of Examination Appeals

8.1 First Instance Arbitration

Each examination appeals will be subject to initial First Instance Arbitration as follows:

- 8.1.1 The Chair of the Examination Appeals Board will act as Arbiter of First Instance for all appeals.
- 8.1.2 She/He can reject appeals if they are technically incorrect (e.g. no evidence supplied, after deadline, etc) or if they are deemed to be groundless.
- 8.1.3 She/He can grant appeals where the result of the process clearly supports the granting of the appeal (e.g. Appeals where re-evaluation of assessment material is involved and where first and second examiners agree).

- 8.1.5 All appeals which are not adjudicated upon by First Instance Arbitration will be referred to the full Examination Appeals Board.
- 8.1.6 Where there is a conflict of interest the Arbiter of First Instance must refer an appeal to the full Examination Appeals Board.
- 8.1.7 The role of Arbiter of First Instance can not be assumed by any other individual other than the appointed Chair of the Appeals Board. If the appointed Chair cannot perform this duty for whatever reason, the appeal must be referred to the full Examination Appeals Board.
- 8.1.8 A decision of the Arbiter of First Instance has the same standing as a decision by the full Examination Appeals Board.
- 8.1.9 The work of the Arbiter of First Instance will be carried out with oversight from the Registrar and the Academic Council. A short written explanation shall be recorded for each case arbitrated upon.

8.2 Examination Appeals Board Meeting

- 8.2.1 The Examination Appeals Board shall meet to consider an appeal.
- 8.2.2 The Registrar shall provide an administrator to act a recording secretary for the Board meeting.
- 8.2.3 In carrying out its duties, the Examination Appeals Board may request further information from the relevant academic Department, the Examinations Office, the Registrar's Office, any other relevant offices within CIT and from relevant sources outside CIT.
- 8.2.4 The Examination Appeals Board may request to meet with the Head of Department, internal examiner(s) and other officers of the Institute who may be able to provide information relevant to the appeal.
- 8.2.5 The student is normally not required or permitted to make any written or verbal submissions to the Appeals Board (other than the initial documentation lodged with official appeal form).
- 8.2.6 The Appeals will consider all the information before them and will arrive at one of the following decisions in respect of the appeal:
 - a) to uphold the appeal;
 - b) to reject the appeal;
 - c) in exceptional circumstances to refer the appeal to the Registrar and/or the Academic Council.
- 8.2.7 In the case of a successful appeal, the Examination Appeals Board must also decide on appropriate action to be taken. In deciding the action to be taken the Examination Appeals Board must be guided by the actions available to the original Module Examination Board and/or Progression and Award Board that presided over the item under appeal. The Examination Appeals Board must ensure that the implications of any action taken are reflected across all aspects of the student's record (i.e. module result, overall result, progression status, award level, etc).

- 8.2.8 If an appeal is upheld, consideration shall be given as to whether or not the results of other students should be reconsidered.
- 8.2.9 The Examination Appeals Board should seek in all cases to reach a consensus decision, however if necessary a vote may be taken. Where a vote is necessary a simple majority is required to arrive at a decision. The Chair of the Board shall have a deliberative vote and, in the event of an equality of votes, shall have a second or casting vote.

8.3 Appeals on the Grounds of extenuating circumstances not known at the time of the assessment or submitted *sub rosa*

- 8.3.1 Where an examination appeal is based on grounds of illness or of other personal circumstances that might have affected the performance of the student in the examination, the Examination Appeals Board should be guided by the points set out in Section 4 of this document.
- 8.3.2 Where an appeal is made on the basis of such personal circumstances, the Examination Appeals Board shall have due regard to the confidentiality of the information provided by or on behalf of the student.
- 8.3.3 A copy of the Appeal will be provided to the Chair of the relevant Module Examination Board and/or Progression and Awards Board and to the relevant Module Coordinator and/or Head of Department. If deemed necessary the latter will provide a copy of the Appeal to the relevant internal examiner(s). Comments in relation to the appeal should be provided by the internal examiner(s) to the Module Coordinator and/or Head of Department. Such comments together with those of the Head and Chair of the Module Examination Board and/or Progression and Awards Board should be given to the Registrar for transmission to the Examination Appeals Board.

8.4 Appeals on the grounds of procedural or administrative errors on the part of CIT in the conduct of assessment or in the application of regulations governing assessment

- 8.4.1 If procedural or administrative error(s) on the part of CIT is known prior to the convening of the relevant Module Examination Board meeting and/or Progression and Awards Board meeting, the Board(s) should be informed of the error(s) and these should be addressed where practicable by the Board meeting.
- 8.4.2 Where the error on the part of CIT has been addressed by a Module Examination Board meeting and/or Progression and Awards Board meeting they will not be allowed as grounds for an appeal.
- 8.4.3 The appellant must specify clearly the grounds on which the appeal is being made. Grounds for such appeals might include one or more of the following:
 - (a) The examination was significantly at variance with the directed course of study;
 - (b) There were circumstances in the conduct of the examination which had a significant adverse affect on the candidate's performance;

- (c) The candidate was seriously misdirected on the format of the examination;
- (d) Examination regulations were not properly applied by the Examination Board;
- (e) The Examination Board was inconsistent in applying Examination Regulations;
- (f) Irregularities in the conduct of the examination were not taken into account by the Examination Board.

8.4.4 If deemed necessary, a copy of the Appeal will be provided to the Module Coordinator and/or Head of Department and to such other persons as the Examination Appeals Board may decide, to obtain comments in relation to the appeal and these will be considered by the Examinations Appeals Board. If deemed necessary the Module Coordinator and/or Head of Department shall provide a copy of the appeal to the relevant internal examiner(s). Comments in relation to the appeal should be provided by the internal examiner(s) to the Module Coordinator and/or Head of Department. Such comments, together with those of any others to whom the appeal has been referred, should be given to the Registrar for transmission to the Examination Appeals Board.

8.5 Error in the evaluation of assessment material/performance

- 8.5.1 This category covers appeals which require a re-evaluation of assessment material or performance. A recheck of assessment marks may not be processed as an appeal under these grounds. A recheck consists of a numerical check of the accuracy of the addition of marks and calculation of the final mark, including the transposition of marks. Rechecks must be processed via the Errors and Omissions process outlined in Section 2 of this document.
- 8.5.2 A re-evaluation appeal may result in marks being increased, marks being decreased or marks remaining unchanged. In the event of marks being changed, there may be a consequential change in the overall result.
- 8.5.3 The re-evaluation will normally be carried out by the internal examiner and a second examiner. The second examiner will usually be another member of the staff of the Institute who is suitably qualified and experienced in the field of study of the examination being appealed and will be appointed by the Module Coordinator for that purpose. In exceptional circumstances, the Module Coordinator may appoint a suitably qualified person from outside the Institute as the second examiner.
- 8.5.4 In the event of the two examiners agreeing that the result should either be altered or should remain the same, this shall be recorded as the recommendation and shall be conveyed by the Module Coordinator.
- 8.5.5 In the event of the two examiners not agreeing, the Module Coordinator shall act as an arbiter and, in consultation with the two examiners, shall decide on the recommendation to be made in relation to the appeal.
- 8.5.6 The Module Coordinator shall inform the Registrar's Office in writing of the recommendation in relation to the appeal and shall also inform the two

examiners in writing. The Registrar shall forward the recommendation to the Examination Appeals Board for decision.

- 8.5.7 The appellant shall be informed by the Registrar's Office of the outcome of the appeal and shall be further informed:
- (a) of the process which has taken place;
 - (b) that the full documentation in relation to the examination and the appeal will be available to the student on request.

9. Appeal to the President

A student may challenge the findings of the Examination Appeals Board by initiating an Appeal to the President as follows:

- 9.1 To initiate an Appeal to the President, a student must show substantial grounds for disputing the findings of the Examination Appeals Board, e.g. evidence of faulty procedure on the part of the Examination Appeals Board, clear conflict of interest on the part of a member (or members) of the Appeals Board or new evidence which was not available to or considered by the Appeals Board.
- 9.2 An Appeal to the President is a very serious undertaking and should only be entered into if the student believes that the Examination Appeals board did not discharge its duty properly.
- 9.3 An Appeal to the President should not be initiated solely on the grounds that a student does not agree with the decision of the Examination Appeals Board.
- 9.4 The President will convene a President's Appeal Board chaired by a member of the Institute's Executive Board (other than the President or the Registrar) and also including the President's nominee and the Registrar or nominee.
- 9.5 The Chair of the Examination Appeals Board and the student will make submissions to the President's Appeal Board.
- 9.6 The President's Appeal Board shall decide between the two following courses of action:
 - a) Reject the appeal;
 - b) Ask the Examination Appeals Board to review its decision (citing reasons why they think this is necessary).
- 9.7 To initiate an Appeal to the President, a student must complete the appropriate appeal form and submit this with any supporting documentation to the Registrar's office.
- 9.8 The appeal fee is €100.

10. Communication of decisions of Examinations Appeals Board and consequential actions

The following communication should follow the processing of each examination appeal:

- 10.1 The Registrar shall inform the student of the outcome of the appeal. In the event of an appeal being upheld, the Examinations Office shall be informed and the broadsheet of examination results and the student's record shall be changed.
- 10.2 The Registrar shall also inform the Head of Department in writing of the decision of the Appeals Board who, in turn, shall also provide a copy of this communication to the internal examiner(s). In the event of an appeal being upheld, the basis of the decision shall also be given. If the internal examiner wishes to obtain further information in relation to the appeal, this shall be obtained through the Head of Department. Such information shall be conveyed by the Registrar to the Head of Department on request.
- 10.3 In exceptional circumstances, in order to preserve the confidentiality of personal information submitted by the appellant, it may be necessary that the conveying of information in accordance with the terms of 10.2 above be restricted.

11. Annual Report

The Registrar shall prepare a report before November 1st each year covering examination appeals, their processing and outcomes. This report should be presented at a plenary meeting of the Academic Council.

This report shall list:

- a) The number of appeals made under each of the grounds listed in section 3 of this document;
- b) The general basis on which each appeal was upheld (without mentioning the appellant, department or examiner);
- c) Recommendations of the Examination Appeals Board.

In light of this annual report, the Academic Council shall consider whether the Appeals Procedure needs to be amended in any way.