

Examination Feedback and Appeals Procedure

Area Code:	EXAM
Author:	Stephen Fleming, Academic Affairs and Registrar Area
Head of Function responsible:	VP Academic Affairs and Registrar
Approving Authority:	Academic Council

1. Purpose of Document

Following each examination session, the Institute provides an opportunity for the candidate to discuss their results with the internal examiners (results feedback process). This should provide sufficient clarity that the candidate understands why they received the specific score(s) and that they were treated in compliance with the Institute's regulations. Inherent in this is a '**recheck**' that all parts of an examination have been marked and that no error occurred in the recording, collating or combining of marks that determined the result.

The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate a candidate who believes that they were not treated in compliance with the Institute's regulations to seek a recheck of their examination materials in whole or in part and an appeal mechanism where they are not satisfied with the outcome of the recheck.

It is the policy of the Institute to:

- (a) recognise the rights of any candidate to seek an appeal of examination results if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the recheck process.
- (b) provide arrangements in relation to examination script viewing, examination mark reviewing, and appeals concerning examination matters which ensure that they are dealt with transparently and in a timely way and which may involve, as necessary, wholly independent persons of appropriate knowledge and experience in the process.
- (c) consider all requests in relation to examination matters in accordance with the principles of natural and constitutional justice.

2. Scope

This document relates to all examinations conducted by or on behalf of the Institute of Technology Sligo, and is relevant to all registered candidates and staff.

3. Reference Documents

EXAM014 To effect a change in official examination result broadsheet
 EXAM 035 Examination Regulation Procedures
 IT Sligo Marks & Standards

Office of the Ombudsman, Ombudsman Act 1980; Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2012

[www.ombudsman.gov.ie/en/]

4. Procedure

4.1 Documentation and correspondence

- 4.1.1 All correspondence received in connection with an appeal will be date-stamped to facilitate the monitoring of response times.
- 4.1.2 All communication with a student by the Institute will be via email to the IT Sligo Student email address, except where specified otherwise.
- 4.1.3 All communication with members of the Appeals Board will be via email, except where specified otherwise.
- 4.1.4 A file will be generated for each application to include a checklist of all communication and documentation (see Appendix 1 for correspondence templates; Appendix 4 for checklist). This file will be maintained in the Office of the Assistant Registrar or nominee.

4.2 Results feedback process

- 4.2.1 Following the issuing of exam results for the semester/stage/year, a student who has a query relating to their results or who is unclear as to the make-up of the final mark should meet, or make contact, with the internal examiner(s) to discuss these during the Results Feedback Days as per the Academic Calendar. The student may have sight of the examination materials. This discussion will include a 'recheck' i.e. that all parts of an examination have been marked and specifically that no error has occurred in the recording, collating or combining of marks.
- 4.2.2 If any inaccuracy has occurred, then this can be resolved with the internal examiner(s) at this stage. If it is confirmed that there is an inaccuracy, a Broadsheet Amendment will be made (Procedure EXAM014).
- 4.2.3 If the candidate believes the result was determined in a manner not in compliance with the Institute's regulations (see grounds for appeal 4.3), they may proceed to apply for an appeal of their result.

4.3 Grounds for appeal

It is important that the person applying for an appeal explains the reason why they believe that an appeal is required (**it is not enough to simply say "I thought I should have done better"**). The following are the allowed grounds for an appeal

- 4.3.1 *The examination regulations of the Institute have not been properly implemented.*

Note: This refers to situations where the rules in the Marks and Standards have not been correctly followed. An example of this would occur in the case of student whose deferral application has not been considered by an Examination Board.

- 4.3.2 Student claims on stated grounds that the mark awarded was incorrect or inappropriate with rationale and it was not resolved in the recheck meeting with the internal examiner to discuss the mark

- 4.3.2 If there are circumstances which the Progression and Awards Board was not aware of when its decision was taken. Any appeal based on medical circumstances must include an explanation of why such circumstances were not made known prior to the Examination Board (where medical evidence is being relied upon, appropriate certification by a medical practitioner must be attached).

4.4 Application for examination appeal

- 4.4.1 Only a completed request made on form EXAM027_001 received by the Examinations Office not later than 5pm on the third working day after the examination results have been released on the Institute website will be considered. The candidate will be required to confirm that they have, where possible, viewed their script(s) and discussed their results with the internal examiner(s) during the Results Feedback Days as per the Academic Calendar. The request may be emailed to **appealresults@itsligo.ie**
- 4.4.2 The appeal will be reviewed by the assistant registrar and the examination secretary or nominee to determine the eligibility of the appeal. A request for an appeal must state the grounds upon which the appeal is sought. If the grounds are not met / not legitimate and it is evident that the student should have followed other procedures, the appeal will be rejected.
- 4.4.3 The Head of Department is notified by the Examinations Secretary or nominee of the appeal request (s) and furnished with the grounds of the appeal. He/she will communicate this information to the internal examiner.
- 4.4.4 The internal examiner must respond to the Head of Department in writing regarding to the appeal and confirm if the External Examiner reviewed the assessment relating to the appeal. This communication may extend beyond the end of the academic year where required or practicable. If not, the Head of Department should organise for this to be reviewed by the relevant external examiner. The Head of Department will return their findings to the Examination Secretary using the guidelines in Appendix 2.
- 4.4.5 Where the request for an appeal involves a failed module(s), the candidate is to be advised to apply to re-sit the module(s) on the appropriate examinations repeat application form (online), pending the outcome of the appeal.
- 4.4.6 The fee for an appeal shall be €50 per module or, if the appeal applies to the overall grade for a stage/year, €50 in total. If the Appeals Board upholds the appeal no fee is applied. The fee will be added to the student account after the decision of the appeal board.
- 4.4.7 The Institute will endeavour to complete all appeals as per the indicative time scale, see 4.8.

4.5 Appeal board membership

- 4.5.1 An Appeals Board will be established by the Assistant Registrar or nominee to process applications that have been accepted after each examination session. The Board will stand for a two-year term.
- 4.5.2 The membership of the Appeals Board will be as follows:

- *Chair*: Assistant Registrar or nominee
- Three Heads of Department (one from each Faculty)
- Three Academics (one from each Faculty)
- Student Union President or Student Union Officer (nominated by Student Union President).

4.5.3 No person connected with any case for review may be a member of the Appeals Board.

4.5.4 A quorum shall be 4 and must include a majority of academic members.

4.5.5 All decisions of the Appeals Board will be by majority vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair will have a casting vote.

4.5.6 The Examinations Secretary, or their nominee, will act as Recording Secretary to the Appeals Board (see Appendix 3 for appeals board records).

4.6 Appeals board process

4.6.1 The Appeals Board will assess all applications for appeal and decide whether they are acceptable under the grounds for appeal. The Board will review the feedback from the internal and external examiners. It may consult with such persons as it deems appropriate. The Appeals Board may require that a re-marking of a script/assessment be undertaken by the Internal and External Examiners and/or by one or more other appropriate examiners.

4.6.2 Where different recommendations are returned from the Internal Examiner(s) and External Examiner(s), and/or any additional examiners, the Appeals Board will make the final decision.

4.7 Outcome of the Appeal

4.7.1 The Appeals Board shall determine the appeal by giving a decision. The Assistant Registrar or nominee shall inform the appellant, the Examinations Office, the Internal Examiner and the Head of Department of the outcome of the appeal in writing.

4.7.2 The permissible outcomes of an appeal are:

- The original mark/grade stands
- The original mark may be increased
- The original mark may be decreased.
- A retrospective deferral shall be awarded.

4.8 Indicative time line for Appeals

Indicative Timing	Action
Exam results are issued as per Academic Calendar	Student views results on the Institute website and meets with the Internal Examiner(s) to obtain feedback. Student discusses with the Internal Examiner(s) or HoD the appropriateness of applying for an appeal.
By 5pm on 3rd working day after issue of results	Student makes an application for an appeal on Form EXAM027_01 including supporting documentation.

Within 3 working days of the deadline for receipt of appeal applications	The Assistant Registrar or nominee decides on the eligibility of the applications.
Within 6 weeks of the deadline for receipt of applications or as per the Academic Calendar (if some evidence is outstanding, the appeal will be referred to the next available Board)	The Appeal Board will consider the evidence presented to it and decide the outcome of the appeal. The Assistant Registrar or nominee informs the student, the relevant examiners and the student's HoD of the outcome of the appeal, by email to student and staff email addresses.

4.9 Right to review by the Ombudsman

If an appellant feels that he/she is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they may contact the Ombudsman. By law, the Ombudsman can investigate complaints about any of the administrative actions or procedures of the Institute as well as delays or inaction in the candidate's dealings with the Institute. The Ombudsman is fair, independent, and free to use.

The Ombudsman will ask you for details of your complaint and appeal response.

The best way to contact the Ombudsman is by:

- **Clicking on the 'Make A Complaint' link at www.ombudsman.ie**
- Or writing to: Office of the Ombudsman, 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773
- Or calling the Ombudsman on 01 639 5600 if you have any queries or if you need help making your complaint.

4.10 Recording of changes to marks/grades

4.10.1 Changes to amend the exam result after an Appeal Board will be made by staff in the Examinations Office, on approval by the Assistant Registrar or nominee.

4.10.2 If an appeal leads to an overall grade entering a borderline (see Marks and Standards) then the overall grade will be referred to the next Examination Board for decision.

5. Records generated by this Policy

Appeal files including applications, correspondence to student, internal and external examiners, minutes of board meeting and checklist are held by the examination office.

6. Measurement of Effectiveness of this procedure

The Assistant Registrar or nominee will audit the appeals process following each examination session and report to the Academic Council following each academic year on the statistics, analysis and on the compliance with the procedures. This will include confirmation that the relevant files are properly closed out and contain all of the necessary documents (as listed in Appendix 5).

7. Revision History

Revision No	Description of Change	Issue Date	Status
001	New procedure (approved by the Selections, Admissions, Examinations and Standards Committee and endorsed by Academic Council on 11.10.13)	20.06.13	Approved by Academic Council
002	Procedure updated following first implementation	01.05.14	Approved by Academic Council
003	Approved by Academic Processes Committee (21.05.14) and Academic Council (23.05.14)	23.05.14	Approved by Academic Council
004	Procedure updated following implementation of Rev 2; Approved by Academic Processes Committee (28.01.15) and Academic Council (13.02.15)		Approved by Academic Council
005	Procedure updated following implementation of Rev 3; Approved by Academic Process Committee (12.11.2015) and Academic Council (27.11.2015)		Approved by Academic Council
006	Procedure updated. Recommended for Approval by Academic Processes Committee (2/5/17) and Academic Council (5/5/17)	5/5/2017	Approved by Academic Council
007	Removed Review stage in this procedure.	20/05/20	Approved by AC 01/04/20
008	Change contact details for Ombudsman	30/06/2021	Approved by VP Academic Affairs and Registrar 29/06/2021

Appendix 1

Sample correspondence with candidate (this will be sent to the student email address)

a) Template letter to the candidate confirming status of the Appeals Application (from the Assistant Registrar) where the application was not accepted.

Dear 'Candidate'

Thank you for your application for an Appeal of your 'year' examination results. Your application was considered by the Assistant Registrar on 'date'. The decision of the Assistant Registrar is to not grant your request.

The basis of the decision of the Assistant Registrar is

b) in the case where the application was granted

Dear 'Candidate'

Thank you for your application for an Appeal of your 'year' examination results. Your application was considered by the Assistant Registrar on 'date'.

You will be issued with a letter confirming the decision of the Appeals Board. The Board will endeavour to complete the appeals process by DD/MM/YYYY. We will be in contact with you after this date.

c) Template letter to the candidate advising them of the decision of the Appeals Board

Dear 'Candidate'

Further to correspondence of dd/mm/yyyy, the Appeals Board has conducted a review of your 'year' examination results. The decision of the Appeals Board is to change/not change your results. The basis of the decision of the Appeals Board is

(in case a change is recommended)

The following change will be made to your examination results:

Module	Results issued on dd/mm/yy	New result following decision of Appeals Board

(In case an appeal was not successful)

The basis of the decision of the Appeals Committee is

We hope that we have been able to resolve your appeal satisfactorily. However, if you remain unhappy with our response then you can refer your complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is fair, independent, and free to use.

The Ombudsman will ask you for details of your appeal and a copy of this email. The best way to contact the Ombudsman is by:

- **Clicking on the 'Make A Complaint' link at www.ombudsman.ie**
- Or writing to: Office of the Ombudsman, 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773
- Or calling the Ombudsman on 01 636 5600 if you have any queries or if you need help making your complaint.

Appendix 2

Guidelines to HODs/Internal examiner when responding to the Examination Appeals Committee

In response to appeals please:

- State student name and ID number
- Address each of the points made by the appellant under each of the grounds (i), (ii), (iii)

Indicate/confirm where applicable:

- a) Title of element being appealed (module/dissertation/programme)
- b) Programme
- c) Year
- d) ECTS
- e) Lecturer(s) responsible
- f) Assessment methods
- g) Weighting for each assessment component
- h) Marking criteria/scheme, as appropriate
- i) Confirm if the assessment sighted by the external examiner

Additional information suggested where applicable, by grounds of appeal

In the case of appeals under ground (i) *the examination regulations of the Institute have not been properly implemented* and

in the case of appeals under ground (ii) *If student claims on stated grounds that the mark awarded was incorrect or inappropriate:*

1. State how the student performed on the element being appealed, and marks achieved for each assessment component.
2. Indicate if and how informal feedback was provided (include lecturer's name) and/or the outcome of a recheck.
3. Outline the basis for the mark/grade awarded for the element being appealed
4. Indicate who reviewed the student's work in response to the appeal.
5. Outline the basis for any recommended change in mark/grade, where appropriate.
6. Was appropriate consideration given to the implications of the revised mark for the overall award?

Note that it is highly recommended to arrange marking by a second internal examiner (where available) or refer to the external examiner for adjudication where necessary.

In the case of appeals under Ground (i), please add any information available to the Department regarding the conduct of the examination pertinent to the student's appeal, if such information is available.

In the case of appeals under ground (iii) *If there are circumstances which the Progression and Awards Board was not aware of when its decision was taken:*

Indicate if the Department was aware of the particular circumstances:

- a) at the time of the conduct of the examination/assessment or
- b) at the Exam Board

If so, indicate what consideration was given at the time, if any, and the reason for the decision taken.

If the Department was unaware of the particular circumstances at the time, please recommend an appropriate adjustment to the mark/grade, if any. Please give reasons.

Liaise with the Head of Department to determine any additional relevant information.

Please email your completed response as an attachment to examinations@itsligo.ie, with subject "Response by [name of Department] to appeal by [name of student]".

Any further relevant materials (which cannot be sent electronically) may be sent to the Exams Secretary, Examinations Office, IT Sligo, Sligo.

Appendix 3 Records of the Appeals Board

The following records will be minuted by the Appeals Board for each Appeal Application:

- i. Members of the Appeals Board (including Assistant Registrar's nominee if appropriate), identifying the Chairperson and those who are in attendance.
- ii. Date of meeting/s
- iii. The Agenda for the meeting, including a list of candidates being considered and (for subsequent meetings of the Board) the minutes of the previous meeting and an updated list of candidates with notes on the outcomes to-date of the appeal for each candidate granted an appeal.
- iv. Candidate Name
- v. Date of application
- vi. The recommendation in regard to the granting/not granting the Appeal
- vii. The grounds for the recommendation under (iii) above
- viii. Specification of the actions that are to be undertaken in the case of an application for an Appeal that is granted
- ix. The final decision of the Appeals Board (following a subsequent meeting) of the outcome of the appeal and related rationale.

In addition to the above, the candidate Appeal file will contain copies of email correspondence with the intern and extern examiners requesting the review of scripts with time limits on the response and all related feedback and documentation.

Appendix 4

Checklist of records of all communication and documentation correspondence related to this procedure

Item (ALL DATE STAMPED)	Date sent/received (insert below)
Request for an appeal held in the Examinations Office	
A copy of the student's full results	
Communication with the Head of Department and internal reviewers and related correspondence	
Minutes of all meetings of the Appeal Board as per Appendix 3	
Notification to the candidate of decision of the Appeal Board on the eligibility of the application	
Record of the fee charge if any.	
Final notification to the candidate of results of the Appeal	
Correspondence notifying the internal examiner, Head of Department and Head of School	

Appendix 5

A Glossary of terms used in the procedure is provided below.

Appeal - Request for a appeal of a decision of an academic body charged with decisions on candidate progression, assessment and awards. Re-consideration in detail of all or part of the existing examination material where feasible by the internal examiner(s) and, if appropriate, by external examiner(s) and reconsideration of a full set of results. An appeal will automatically include a recheck of calculations.

Candidate - Registered student of IT Sligo who has entered for an examination at Institute of Technology Sligo leading to an IT Sligo or QQI award

Examination - Any summatively assessed work that contributes to the determination of, or forms part of, an IT Sligo or QQI award

Feedback - Formative communication from lecturer to learner in relation to assessed work

Grade – (a) numeric grade (module or stage) or (b) award classification

Mark/grade/performance indicator - Numerical score, or other performance indicator accorded to any work, module, element or part of a module by an examiner(s) that in their opinion is indicative of learner achievement in that work, subject, element or part of that module

Outcome - decision in relation to an appeal

Recheck - Administrative operation of checking the recording and/or combination of component marks for a module/stage

Result - decision taken by IT Sligo in relation to a candidate's progression or eligibility for award