

1. Document Details

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| Title: | Policy Governing Assessment Appeals and Correction of Errors and Omissions in Respect of Assessment |
| Author(s): | Academic Council Working Group on Assessment Appeals |
| This Version Number: | 1.1 |
| Status: | Approved |
| Effective Date: | December 2018 |
| Review Date: | December 2020 |

Important Note: If the 'Status' of this document reads 'Draft', it has not been finalised and should not be relied upon.

2. Revision History

| Version Number | Revision Date | Summary of Changes | Changes tracked? |
|----------------|---------------|---|------------------|
| 1.0 | April 2016 | Changes as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> renaming of the policy and procedures related to Examination Appeals to reflect the fact that they apply to all forms of assessment and not just examinations. changes to the policy required to reflect the fact that the Institute has a comprehensive policy relating to Individual Extenuating Circumstances. the reframing of appeals on the grounds of Error in the Evaluation of Assessment Material/Performance as part of a broader policy addressing the correction of errors in relation to assessment and grading. | No |
| | February 2017 | Minor change to correct omission of reference to internal examiner in Section 11.2 | |
| 1.1 | October 2018 | Increase maximum number of Board members from eight to ten | |
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3. Relevant/Related Existing Internal Documents

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4. Relevant/Related Existing External Documents

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5. Consultation History

This document has been prepared in consultation with the following bodies:

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| Academic Management, Academic Staff and Students (via Academic Council) |
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6. Approvals

This document requires following approvals (in order where applicable):

| Name | Date | Details of Approval Required |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Academic Council | 20-5-2016 | |
| Governing Body | 06-2016 | |
| Academic Council | 10-2-2017 | |
| Academic Council | 09-11-2018 | Version 1.1 |
| Governing Body | 13-12-2018 | Version 1.1 |

7. Purpose

An assessment appeal allows a student to seek mitigation where he or she believes that circumstances have had an undue negative impact on her or his academic performance. This policy is intended to detail the Institute's provision and support for students who wish to submit an assessment appeal or seek to have an error or omission in respect of assessment addressed.

8. Scope

This procedure applies to all taught programmes of study leading to a Cork Institute of Technology award. This applies to programmes delivered by other institutions as may be authorised by Cork Institute of Technology.

9. Principles

This policy is based on the following principles:

- Support of the student – CIT is at its core a student centred institution and for this reason it seeks to provide every support possible to allow its students to achieve their true potential. This assessment appeals policy is intended to address certain circumstances which impact directly and negatively on a student's assessment performance. This policy is not intended to provide compensation for all challenging and difficult circumstances a student may experience during the course of her or his studies.
- Protection of academic standards - academic credit and awards can only be granted once the student has demonstrated that he or she has achieved the required learning. It is essential that the integrity of the Institute's academic standards is not undermined by any action or provision in relation to assessment appeals.
- Fairness and consistency – Any provision or action in relation to assessment appeals should have due regard for the Institute's obligation to ensure fair and consistent treatment for all its students.
- Right to appeal – A student has the right to appeal. The extent of that right is defined by the terms of this policy and the associated policies and procedures. As a general principle no employee of the Institute should act in such a manner as to impede or frustrate the student's right to appeal.
- Outcome of appeal or review – An appeal or review may result *inter alia* 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.

10. Definitions

10.1 Defining Assessment Appeals

The assessment appeal process exists to allow a student to seek mitigation in respect of certain circumstances which the student perceives had a negative impact on his or her academic performance. Specifically, assessment appeals relate to circumstances which prevented the student from performing to her or his potential during an assessment or assessments.

An assessment appeal is for and by the student. Only the student impacted may initiate an assessment appeal and no other individual, group or organisation (whether internal to CIT or external) may initiate an appeal on behalf of a student.

10.2 Defining Grounds for Appeal

An appeal may be submitted on the following grounds:

1. Individual Extenuating circumstances which were not know at the time of the assessment or which were submitted sub rosa;
2. Procedural or administrative errors on the part of CIT in the conduct of assessment or in the application of regulations governing assessment;

Individual Extenuating Circumstances

Individual extenuating circumstances are unexpected circumstances which are beyond the student's control and which have a significant impact on assessment performance. IECs are defined in detail in the Institute's Policy Governing Individual Extenuating Circumstances Relating to Examinations and Assessment. Any consideration of extenuating circumstances as part of an assessment appeal must take place in the context of this comprehensive policy.

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 be admitted as grounds for an assessment 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. The responsibility for submitting evidence of individual extenuating circumstances rests with the student.

Procedural or Administrative Errors

Where the Institute (as a corporate entity or through the actions of individual employees) commits a procedural or administrative error this may in turn have a negative impact on the academic performance of a student. Issues which could give rise to such appeals include the following:

- (a) The examination was significantly at variance with the module descriptor or the directed course of study;
- (b) There were circumstances in the conduct of the examination which had a significant adverse effect 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) Irregularities in the conduct of the examination were not taken into account by the Examination Board.

If a procedural or administrative error 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. 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. The student has a responsibility to inform the Institute of any known procedural or administrative errors at the earliest opportunity and failure to do so may result in an appeal under these grounds being disallowed.

Issues which are not valid grounds for Appeal

A situation may arise where it is perceived or alleged that an employee of the Institute fails to carry out her or his duties in a professional manner and as such is perceived or alleged to be guilty of professional misconduct. It is possible that this professional misconduct may have a negative impact on a student's academic performance. However, professional misconduct cannot be cited as grounds for appeal. This is because professional misconduct is a very serious matter and as such the investigation of the primary issue (i.e. the alleged misconduct) takes precedence over the secondary effects or impacts of the behaviour. If professional misconduct is proven after due process then the other issues (i.e. impact on assessment, etc.) will also be addressed in due course. The assessment appeals process cannot address accusations of professional misconduct and these must be processed via the Institute's Student Grievance Policy/Procedure.

A student may believe that the mark they received does not reflect fairly their work or performance in the assessment. However, disagreement/dissatisfaction with an assessment mark cannot be cited as grounds for appeal. If a student believes that he/she did not receive the correct mark then this matter can be pursued via the Procedure for Correction of Errors and Omissions in Respect of Assessment.

10.3 Defining Errors and Omissions in Respect of Assessment

The Institute implements a comprehensive academic quality process aimed at ensuring that marks awarded to students in a fair and consistent manner. The academic quality process involves internal examiners who are skilled, professional and experienced. The work of the internal examiners is moderated by external examiners who are discipline area experts and the overall process is overseen by formal Examination and Progression and Award Boards. Notwithstanding these robust quality processes errors and omissions may still occur. In general these fall into two categories:

1. Error in calculation or recording of marks.
2. Error in evaluation of assessment material or performance.

Error in calculation or recording of marks

This types of errors or omissions come about when an element of the assessment has been correctly marked but the mark has not been correctly included in the calculation of the overall mark. Examples include:

- (a) Question marked on script but mark for question not included in calculation of overall mark.
- (b) Element of continuous assessment omitted from calculation of overall mark.

- (c) Incorrect mark awarded for assessment or part of an assessment due to calculation error.

In general these errors and/or omissions should be clearly identifiable from a review of the assessment material(s).

Error in evaluation of assessment material or performance

An examiner applies her or his academic judgement in order to determine the appropriate mark for each item of assessment. As outlined above this academic judgement is subject to overview and external moderation. However, a student may believe that the mark received does not accurately reflect her or his performance in the assessment and that an error occurred in the evaluation of the assessment material or performance.

11. Policy

11.1 Assessment Appeals

This section provides an outline of the procedures with respect to the initiation and processing of assessment appeals. The initiation and processing of assessment appeals are addressed in detail in the Institute's Procedure for Processing Assessment Appeals.

Initiating an Assessment Appeal

An assessment appeal must be initiated by the student and cannot be initiated by any other individual, group or organisation on behalf of the student.

To initiate an appeal the student must complete an official CIT assessment appeal form and submit this along with the appropriate assessment appeal fee and supporting evidence to the CIT Registrar's Office.

In initiating an assessment appeal the student must clearly identify the grounds for appeal and must explain why he/she believes that these grounds apply in her/his case. A single appeal may only refer to a single ground for appeal (i.e. a single appeal cannot cite multiple grounds for appeal). The student may appeal on multiple grounds but each must be initiated as a separate appeal and will attract a separate fee. CIT provides a different assessment appeal form format for each of the 2 different grounds for appeal and appeals on different grounds by the same student must be submitted on different forms. Appeals must be submitted within the official timeframe. 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.

Any appeal which is submitted without valid grounds, as judged by the Chair of the Assessment Appeals Board, will be deemed cancelled pending submission of additional information.

Evidence Supporting an Assessment Appeal

An assessment appeal must be accompanied by evidence which supports the student's claim(s) in respect of the grounds for appeal.

This evidence must be independent, sufficient and relevant.

The evidence must be independent and credible. Where possible statements from relevant professionals or third parties should be submitted (e.g. medical certificates, Garda statements, letters from state agencies, etc). The student's own account or statements from relatives, friends and other acquaintances do not constitute independent evidence.

The evidence submitted must be sufficient to establish the validity of the claimed grounds for appeal.

The evidence must be specifically relevant to the circumstances claimed as grounds for appeal. In particular the evidence submitted should not relate to other circumstances which are not relevant to the grounds for appeal.

If the evidence submitted is judged, by the chair of the Assessment Appeals Board, to be inadequate additional evidence may be requested and if such additional evidence is not available the appeal may be cancelled.

Processing Assessment Appeals

Assessment appeals will be processed in a timely manner in accordance with the timelines specified by the Academic Council. All appeals will be reviewed by the Chair of the Assessment Appeals Board in the first instance and a determination will be made with respect to:

- Whether or not there are valid grounds for appeal
- Whether or not the evidence to support the appeal is adequate

Following review by the Chair of the Assessment Appeals Board the appeal will be deemed valid or invalid. Appeals deemed valid will be forwarded to the relevant school or unit for processing. Any appeal deemed invalid will be referred back to the student with an explanation as to why the appeal was judged to be invalid. The student will be provided with an opportunity to address the issues identified. If these issues are not addressed the appeal will be deemed cancelled and the appeal fee will be returned to the student.

All valid appeals will be processed by the relevant academic department (or administrative unit). The student's submission, supporting evidence and any other relevant documentation will be forwarded to the Head of Department (or other relevant employee). The claims will be considered and the Head of Department may consult any individuals he/she deems necessary while also taking due regard for the student's right to privacy and confidentiality. The Head of Department (or equivalent) will provide a written submission addressing the issues and claims outlined in the student's submission and will provide appropriate advice to assist the Assessment Appeals Board in adjudicating on the appeal.

Each valid appeal will be the subject of an Assessment Appeals Board hearing. The student's submission and related evidence as well as the submission of the Head of Department (or equivalent) and all other relevant information will be considered by the Assessment Appeals Board. The student is not entitled to attend the Assessment Appeals Board hearing. The Head of Department and other relevant individuals may be requested to attend the relevant Assessment Appeals Board hearing.

Following its consideration of the assessment appeal the Assessment Appeals Board may decide to accept or reject the appeal. If an appeal is rejected the student forfeits the appeal fee and no further

action is taken. If the Assessment Appeals Board decides to accept an appeal it must also determine the appropriate action to be taken. In determining the appropriate action the Assessment Appeals Board is restricted to the actions allowed by the Institutes Regulations for Modules and Programmes. In this context the Assessment Appeals Board is acting in lieu of the original Module Examination Board and/or Progression and Awards Board and as such has the same powers available. In extraordinary cases where the Assessment Appeals Board believes that the actions available to it are insufficient to provide sufficient redress to the student the Board may decide to refer the matter to the Registrar for action. If an appeal is accepted the student will receive a full rebate of the appeal fee.

Assessment Appeals Board

The Assessment Appeals Board is a sitting Board appointed for a minimum term of 1 academic year and a maximum term of 3 academic years by the Academic Council. In appointing the Assessment Appeals Board the Academic Council will give consideration to continuity and therefore where possible there will be overlap between the membership of the incoming and outgoing Boards. The Board will have a permanent Chair appointed by the Academic Council for the full term of the Assessment Appeals Board. The Chair of the Assessment Appeals Board should be a senior academic with experience of the examination processes of the Institute. The Assessment Appeals Board will have a maximum of 10 members including the Chair and shall include at least 1 sabbatical officer of the Students' Union. The Board's members have a duty to declare any conflicts in relation to specific appeal(s) and where such conflicts of interest exist the Board member shall exclude themselves from the relevant hearing(s).

11.2 Correction of Errors and Omissions

This section provides an outline of the procedures with respect to the correction of errors and omissions related to assessment. The correction of errors and omissions related to assessment are addressed in detail in the Institute's Procedure for Correction of Errors and Omissions Related to Assessment.

Reviewing assessment material

Following the publication of examination results students will be afforded an opportunity to review assessment material.

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. If a student so requests, another person of the student's choosing may accompany her/him for the purpose of viewing the examination material.

The responsibility for requesting an opportunity to view assessment material will lie with the student. The viewing must be under the direct supervision of a member of the staff of the Institute. Examination scripts or other assessment material being inspected by a student may not be copied (including video or photograph), written on or altered in any way by the student or the individual accompanying the student. The student may however make personal notes during the viewing.

Following the inspection of assessment material the student may, within the defined timeframe, request a review to address a perceived error in the calculation or recording of marks, or a perceived error in the evaluation of assessment material or performance. Inspection of assessment material is a mandatory pre-requisite to the submission of either of these reviews.

Addressing an error in the calculation or recording of marks

Following a review of the relevant assessment material a student may identify instances where he/she believes that there was an error in the calculation or recording of marks. The student can request to have a review of the perceived instances of error and (where an error has occurred) to have those errors corrected. The student must complete the official form and must specify in detail the nature of the perceived error by identifying the items of assessment and/or specific questions effected. There is no fee required to submit this type of review.

The relevant Head of Department will, in consultation with the internal and/or external examiner(s) where necessary, review each perceived error and determine if it is valid or not. A written report commenting on the status of each of the perceived errors will be submitted to the Registrar's Office.

The student will be informed in writing of the outcome of the review and if necessary the student's grades will be amended.

Addressing an error in the evaluation of assessment material or performance

Following a review of the relevant assessment material a student may disagree with the academic judgement of the examiner and he or she may request to have the assessment material or performance re-evaluated. The student must complete the official form within 5 working days of reviewing the assessment material and must specify in detail the nature of the perceived error by identifying the items of assessment and/or specific questions effected. The student will be charged a fee to submit this type of review.

The relevant Head of Department/Module Co-ordinator will arrange to have the assessment material reviewed by an appropriate review examiner not previously involved in the delivery or assessment of the module(s) under review to the student cohort of which the appellant is a member. The review examiner may be a member of the academic staff of CIT or may be external to CIT. The review examiner will review the relevant assessment material in accordance with the approved marking scheme and outline solutions and taking account of the student's submission. The review examiner will issue a recommendation to the Head of Department as well as his or her reasons for making that recommendation.

If the review examiner determines that no error has occurred and does not recommend a change to the student's grade the Head of Department may determine the outcome of the review based solely on the review examiner's recommendation. If the review examiner recommends a change to the student's grade the Head of Department will discuss this recommendation with the original internal examiner(s). The Head of Department will determine the final outcome of the review in consultation with the original internal examiner and the review examiner. A written report outlining the outcome of the review, including the any corrective action to be taken, will be submitted to the Registrar and

Vice President for Academic Affairs within 20 working days of the date on which the review request was submitted by the student.

Within 5 working days of receipt of the report from the Head of Department the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs will consider the report from the Head of Department and in the absence of any issues or irregularities will ratify the outcome of the review. If the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs is unable to ratify the outcome of the review due to issues or irregularities she/he may refer the matter back to the Head of Department for further consideration or may refer the matter to the Academic Council for its consideration.

As soon as is practicable following the ratification of the outcome by the Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs the student will be informed in writing of the outcome of the review and any action deemed necessary will be carried out.

11.3 Appealing the outcome of an Assessment Appeal or a review addressing errors or omissions

The outcome of an Assessment Appeal as determined by the Assessment Appeals Board or the outcome of a review addressing errors or omissions (as described in 11.2 above) may be appealed by the appellant (the student) to the President via the formal Procedure Governing Appeal to the President.

12. Procedures

Procedure Governing the Processing of Assessment Appeals

Procedure Governing the Correction of Errors and Omissions

13. Responsible Officer(s)

Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs

14. Supporting Documents

Procedure Governing Appeal to the President