



Appeals Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

The Certified Institute For Accreditation (CIFA) is committed to ensuring fairness, consistency, and validity in all of the following areas:

- Examinations: Computer-based multiple-choice questions (MCQ)
- Decisions on applications for reasonable adjustments
- Decisions on applications for special consideration
- Decisions on applications for exemptions from a CIFA examination
- Decisions, penalties, and sanctions arising from investigations into malpractice or maladministration.

The CIFA's Appeals Policy is available to candidates and centres who wish to appeal a decision made by CIFA concerning any of the above.

1.1 Pre-Appeal Process – CIFA'S Query Procedure

Before initiating an appeal, candidates must first engage with the CIFA's [Feedback and Complaints process](#) for examinations. To raise a query, candidates are required to complete an online feedback form within five working days following their examination deadline, or upon receiving their results. CIFA will acknowledge the receipt of feedback within two working days.

This query process provides an opportunity for candidates or centres to challenge CIFA's decisions concerning a variety of issues, including:

- Examination content for multiple-choice questions (MCQ)
- Applications for reasonable adjustments (refer to the CIFA's Reasonable Adjustment Policy)
- Applications for special consideration (refer to CIFA's Special Consideration Policy)

If a candidate or centre needs to contest the judgement or severity of a penalty or sanction resulting from a malpractice or maladministration investigation, they may directly proceed to an appeal. For guidance on appealing these specific decisions, candidates and centres should consult Section 2 below for further guidance.



Section 2 – Appeal Process

2.1 Grounds for Appeal

Candidates or centres have the right to appeal the outcome of a query, as well as the judgement and/or severity of penalties or sanctions following a malpractice and/or maladministration investigation, as outlined in the CIFA Appeals Policy Version 2 – April 2024.

The objective of an appeal is to verify that CIFA's procedures were consistently and fairly applied and were properly followed. Appeals do not revisit the factual circumstances that led to the original decision.

Valid grounds for an appeal include:

- Inconsistencies or failures in the application or adherence to the established policies and procedures by CIFA.
- Substantial new information or evidence, previously unavailable or unknown to CIFA, or that could not have been presented to CIFA at the time of the original decision, is now available.

The following do not qualify as grounds for appeal:

- Disputes over the academic judgement of examiners, assessors, or moderators, including requests for additional reviews or reassessment of a candidate's work.
- Challenges to the actual findings of a malpractice or maladministration investigation.

2.2 Submission of an Appeal

The term 'appellant' refers to the candidate, centre staff member, or centre seeking to appeal a decision made by CIFA.

To initiate an appeal with Cifa, appellants must complete the appeal application form and submit it via email.

An appeal fee of £100.00 is required at the time of submission. Appellants should provide their contact details on the Appeal Application Form to facilitate the payment process. If the appeal is successful, the full fee will be refunded.

The appeal application must clearly articulate the reasons why the appellant believes the grounds for appeal, as described in Section 2.1, are applicable. Appellants may also include



additional supporting documents with their application, which should be referenced in the application form.

2.3 Appeal Submission Timeline

An appeal application must be submitted within the specified period outlined below. Applications received outside of this timeframe will not be accepted.

Deadline for Appeal Submission	No later than 10 working days following the notification of CIFA's decision.
CIFA'S Acknowledgment	Within 5 working days from the receipt of the appeal application.

2.4 Processing an Appeal

Upon receiving an appeal application, CIFA will initially review the submission to ensure it aligns with the acceptable grounds specified in Section 2.1. If the appeal does not meet these criteria, it will be rejected. The appellant will receive a refund of the fee along with an email explaining why the application was declined.

If the appeal is accepted, CIFA will form a panel to review the case. This panel will include at least one person who is independent of CIFA and has had no prior involvement in the decision being appealed. The panel is scheduled to convene within four weeks of receiving the application.

The panel will thoroughly examine the appeal application along with any supporting documents and/or records related to the original CIFA's decision. All information, including details from the appellant and records from CIFA, will be scrutinised to verify if the established procedures and policies were consistently and fairly applied. This standard process is adhered to for all types of appeals.

2.5 Outcome of the Appeal

CIFA will notify the appellant of the appeal's outcome within ten working days following the appeal panel meeting.

There are two possible outcomes:



- Appeal Upheld: Whether in part or fully, if the appeal is upheld, CIFA's correspondence will detail any corrective actions to be taken by CIFA, and the appellant will receive a refund of their fee.
- Appeal Not Upheld: If the appeal is not upheld, the reasons for this decision will be clearly detailed in CIFA's email to the appellant.

In instances where the appeal reveals a flaw in CIFA's processes, any corrective actions taken will also be extended to other affected candidates or centres to ensure fairness and consistency across all cases.