



# **CIFA Appeals Policy**

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# Appeals Policy

## Section 1 - Introduction

The Certified Institute for Further 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 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 engage with the CIFA's **Complaints and Feedback process (Doc Ref: CFP)** for examinations. To raise a query, candidates are required to complete an online feedback form please see **Appendix 2** 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 to challenge CIFA's decisions concerning a variety of issues, including:

- Examination content for multiple-choice questions (MCQ)
- Applications for reasonable adjustments or special consideration (**refer to the CIFA's Reasonable Adjustment & Special Considerations Policy) OPS-RASC**

If a candidate needs to contest the judgment 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 should consult Section 2 below for further guidance and **refer to the Malpractice and Maladministration policy, (Doc Ref: MMP).**



## **Section 2 – Appeal Process**

See Appendix 1

### **2.1: Grounds for Appeal**

Candidates have the right to appeal the outcome of a decision following a malpractice and/or maladministration investigation as outlined in the Malpractice & Maladministration Policy, (**Doc Ref: MMP**)

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 which is now available: unfair judgement or disproportionate severity of penalties or sanctions following a malpractice or maladministration investigation.

#### **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, including disagreement with the evidence or conclusions reached by CIFA.

### **2.2 Submission of an Appeal**

The term 'appellant' refers to the candidate seeking to appeal a decision made by CIFA.

To initiate an appeal with CIFA, appellants must complete the appeal application form (please see **Appendix 2**) and submit it via email located on our Contact Us drop-down tab, selecting the Appeals tab.



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 for special considerations as specified in Section 1.1 with their application, which should be referenced in the application form **(please see Appendix 2)**.

A charge of £100 is payable upon submitting an appeal application. This fee is fully refundable should the appeal be upheld.

### **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.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Deadline for Appeal Submission</b>            | <b>No later than 10 working days following the notification of CIFA's decision.</b> |
| <b>CIFA's Acknowledgment</b>                     | <b>Within 5 working days from the receipt of the appeal application.</b>            |
| <b>CIFA's Appeals Panel Meeting</b>              | <b>Within 4 weeks from the appeal application date.</b>                             |
| <b>Response to CIFA's Panel Meeting Decision</b> | <b>Within 10 working days from the date of the appeals panel decision.</b>          |

### **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 fee refund 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 from a different department within CIFA who 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 decision. All information, including details from the appellant and records from CIFA, will be scrutinised to verify 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.

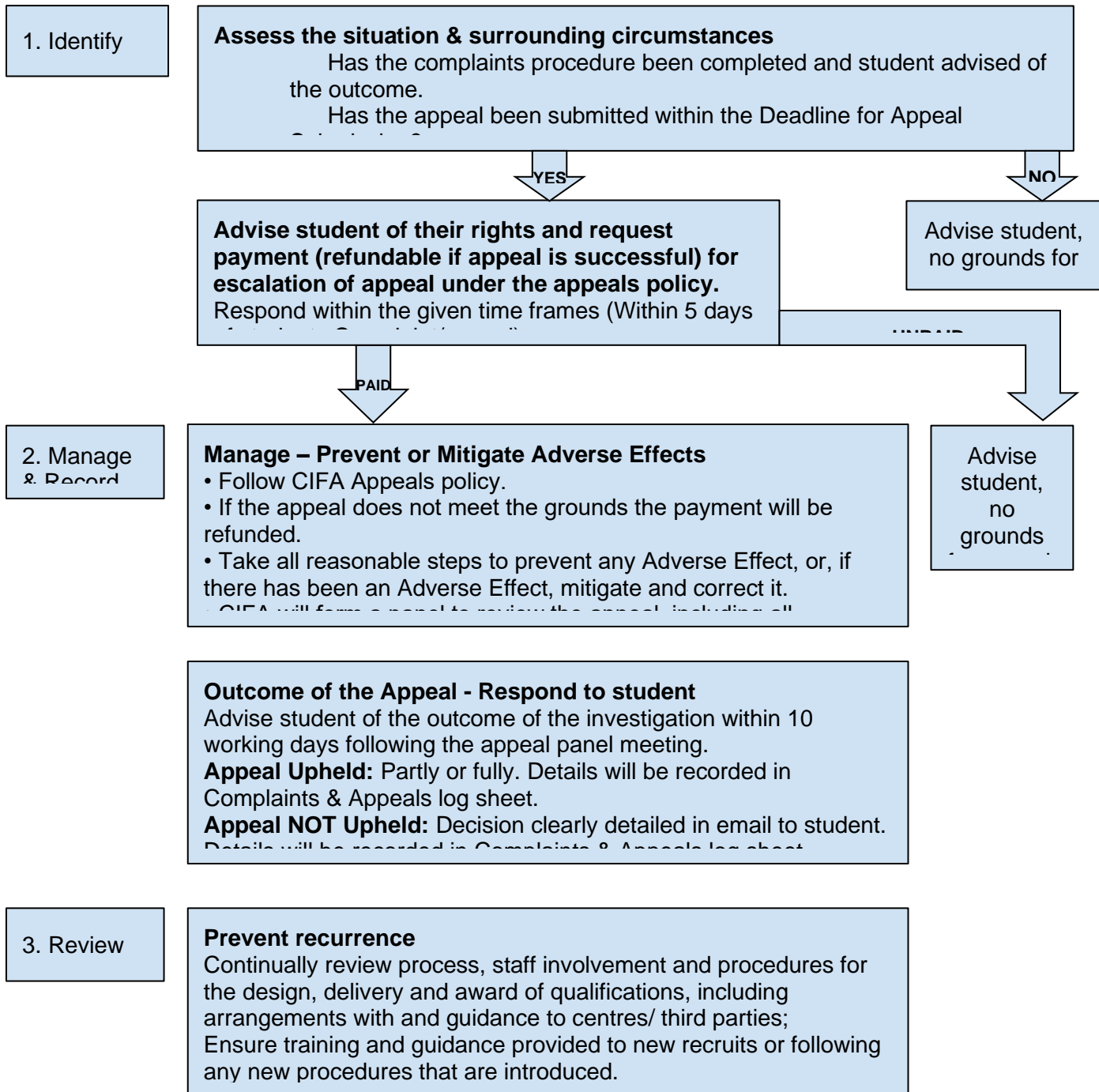
**There are two possible outcomes:**

- **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 for their appeal 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. A refund will not be issued.

If an appeal highlights an error in CIFA's processes, we will take corrective action to prevent the same issue from occurring in the future. Previous similar cases will be reviewed and rectified accordingly. This ensures fairness, consistency and transparency are applied to all candidates and procedures.



## Appendix 1 - Appeals Process





## Appendix 2

### APF-Form

### Appeals Application Form

TO BE COMPLETE BY  
CIFA  
Appeal case number

### Certified Institute for Further Accreditation (CIFA)

This form must be completed by candidates who wish to submit an appeal against a decision made by CIFA under the Appeals Policy. Please ensure you have read the Appeals Policy thoroughly before completing this form. **Refer to Appeals Policy (Doc Ref: AP)**

Appeals must be submitted within 10 working days following notification of CIFA's decision. Completed forms should be submitted via the policy drop-down tab on our website, by selecting the Appeals tab.

### Section 1 – Candidate Information

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

CIFA Candidate Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Original Decision: \_\_\_\_\_





## Section 2 – Appeal Details

Please indicate the area of your appeal (tick all that apply):

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Proctor Report Decision</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  | <b>Reasonable Adjustment Application Decision</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Special Consideration Application Decision</b> <input type="checkbox"/>                     | <b>Exemption Application Decision</b> <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| <b>Malpractice or Maladministration Decision, Penalty or Sanction</b> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>MCQ Outcome</b> <input type="checkbox"/>                                |

## Section 3 – Grounds for Appeal

Please select the grounds for your appeal (tick all that apply):

|   |
|---|
| <b>Inconsistencies or failures in the application or adherence to CIFA's established policies and procedures</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Substantial new information or evidence previously unavailable is now available</b> <input type="checkbox"/>                           |

(Please note: Disputes over academic judgment or the findings of malpractice/maladministration investigations are not valid grounds for appeal.)

## Section 4 – Appeal Statement

Please clearly explain the reasons for your appeal, including why you believe the grounds selected above are applicable. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

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## **Section 5 – Supporting Documents**

Please list any supporting documents you are submitting with this appeal. Ensure all documents are referenced in your appeal statement (i.e.1,2,3).

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## **Section 6 – Declaration**

I confirm that I have read and understood the CIFA Appeals Policy and that the information provided in this application is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that CIFA may reject my appeal if it does not meet the specified grounds outlined in the policy.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(For details on the appeals process and requirements, please refer to the CIFA Appeals Process Policy, **Section 2 Appendix 1.**)