

# National Specialist SCITTs

## National Mathematics and Physics SCITT

## National Modern Languages SCITT

### Academic Appeals Policy

**Important:** This document can only be considered valid when viewed on the SCITT intranet and SCITT website. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document online.

The accredited provider for both the National Mathematics and Physics SCITT and the National Modern Languages SCITT, is Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance explains the procedure that the SCITT will follow in considering a trainee's academic appeal.
- 1.2 The SCITT **academic appeals procedures** are intended to be used by its trainees. The term 'trainee' refers to applicants who have registered or enrolled on a SCITT course. It also includes those who have recently left the SCITT, although former trainees may only be able to raise issues of complaint or academic appeal within an explicitly defined period after the end of their studies. Trainees will usually be able to access and submit a complaint or academic appeal themselves. However, there may be cases where a trainee is unable or reluctant to make a complaint or academic appeal without support. The SCITT will permit trainees to be supported, advised or represented by third parties, for example a students' union or trade union officer or adviser. Where the issues raised affect a number of trainees, those trainees can submit a complaint or academic appeal as a 'group complaint' or a 'group appeal'. In such circumstances, the SCITT can ask the group to nominate one trainee to act as group representative. The SCITT may decide to communicate only through the representative and expect him or her to liaise with the other trainees.
- 1.3 Trainees should have confidence that they will be protected under the terms of the SCITT's **complaints procedure** and it should not be necessary to bring anonymous complaints. Exceptionally, however, a provider may decide to consider an anonymous complaint if there is a compelling case – supported by evidence – for the matter to be investigated. The SCITT will explain to the trainee that raising a concern anonymously might impede the investigation and communication of the outcome.

## 2. What is an academic appeal?

- 2.1 For the purposes of this framework, and in line with the [UK Quality Code](#), an appeal is defined as:  
*"A request for a review of a decision of an academic body around a mark, outcome or decision. Students may appeal an outcome on the basis of evidence or procedure, but not on the basis of disagreement with academic judgement."*
- 2.2 An academic appeal relates to the outcome of an assessment or a trainee's progression, and may be based on:
- A procedural irregularity in the assessment process
  - Bias or a perception of bias
  - Mitigating (extenuating) circumstances where, for good reason, the assessing body was not made aware of a significant factor relating to the assessment of a trainee when it made its original decision.
- 2.3 The following are not normally considered to be legitimate grounds for an academic appeal:
- Where a trainee questions the exercise of academic judgment, that is, the decision made by SCITT, school or academic staff on the quality of the evidence provided or work itself or the criteria being applied to mark the work (rather than the administrative marking process)

- b) Where a trainee disagrees with the conclusions reached by the individual or panel which considered his or her mitigating (extenuating) circumstances.

### 3. SCITT Academic Appeals Procedure

- 3.1 Trainees completing their Initial Teacher Training through the SCITT have a right of appeal against decisions and recommendations made by SCITT staff and the Assessment Board. The following sets out the grounds of appeal permitted and the process to make an appeal. These procedures also set out the grounds on which an academic appeal is not permissible. For other complaints, for instance, relating to the quality of teaching and supervision or the delivery of the training programme, these should be made through the **Complaints Policy & Procedure**.
- 3.2 All appeals will be treated in confidence and considered carefully. The documentation presented in support of the appeal will be reviewed by the Appeals Committee for final consideration. Trainees will not be disadvantaged as a result of making an academic appeal. The SCITT Director will request copies of all documentation for the Appeals Committee.
- 3.3 Appeals may be made in respect of a formal assessment from:
- a) a teaching observation (including Final Assessment observation(s))
  - b) a review point
  - c) the decision following a **Cause for Concern process**
  - d) the Final Assessment outcome including the decision to fail the trainee.
- 3.4 The following grounds **can** be considered as the basis for an appeal:
- a) Circumstances affecting a trainee's performance which the SCITT and assessor(s) were not aware of prior to the assessment given
  - b) Irregularities in the conduct of an assessment or in reaching the decision.
- 3.5 The following grounds **cannot** be considered as the basis for an appeal:
- a) Dissatisfaction with the judgment of the assessor(s), unless there are reasonable grounds
  - b) Dissatisfaction with the formative review point of the assessor (School-based Mentor or SCITT staff)
  - c) Second marking or moderation
  - d) Matters that are dealt with under the **Complaints procedure** for trainees.
- 3.6 A formal appeal must be submitted within ten working days of being notified of an assessment decision. It is a trainee's responsibility to inform the SCITT, without delay, of any circumstances that they think may affect their performance in an assessment.
- 3.7 The Appeals Committee will be convened within one calendar month from the receipt of the appeal.
- 3.8 An appeal will be considered on the evidence submitted. Trainees should ensure that all relevant evidence which they wish to be considered is submitted with their appeal. Any evidence not submitted with the appeal will not be considered at a later date. Where practicable, the SCITT will process the complaint within 90 calendar days. This will be the case in most circumstances, but this timeline may need to be adjusted.

- 3.9 If the Appeals Committee does not uphold the appeal, the trainee will be provided with a Completion of Procedures Letter within five working days.
- 3.10 A trainee can decide to contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) – contact details below. This can only be considered by the OIA if an OIA Complaints Form is submitted within one calendar year of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter.
- 3.11 If the Appeals Committee upholds the appeal, the SCITT will arrange a meeting with the trainee to discuss the continuation of the training and agree any adjustments to be made.
- 3.12 The Appeals Committee will comprise of:
- One member of the Strategic Board usually the SCITT Director
  - One member of the Hub Lead Teachers Committee usually the Course Leader (provided they have not previously made the original decision)
  - One further member of the Hub Lead Teachers Committee such as another Hub Lead Teacher
  - Two others **who have not** been involved in previous decisions.

## 4. Publishing this policy

This policy is available through the SCITT website and our SCITT Intranet. A copy can also be requested via our SCITT office.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs, and the accredited provider for the National Modern Languages (NML) SCITT and the National Mathematics and Physics (NMAP) SCITT is a member of this scheme. If a trainee teacher is unhappy with decisions made by the SCITT regarding this Policy, they may be able to ask the OIA to review this decision. More information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right if something has gone wrong can be found here:

<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

You normally need to have completed Academic Appeals Policy before you complain to the OIA. The NML SCITT will send you a letter called a "Completion of Procedures Letter" when you have reached the end of our processes and there are no further steps you can take internally. If your appeal is not upheld, The NML SCITT will issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically. If your appeal is upheld or partly upheld, you can ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter if you want one. You can find more information about Completion of Procedures Letters and when you should expect to receive one here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>