

National Modern Languages SCITT

Academic Appeals Policy

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SCHOOL CENTRED INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance explains the procedure that The National Modern Languages 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 students who have registered or enrolled on their ITT course. It also includes those who have recently left the SCITT, although former students 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 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 academic appeal is defined as:
- "A request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards."*
- 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 National Modern Languages 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 1 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.
- 3.9 If the Appeals Committee does not uphold the appeal, the trainee can decide to contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) – contact details below.
- 3.10 If The Appeals Committee upholds the appeal, the NML SCITT will arrange a meeting with the trainee to discuss the continuation of the training and agree any adjustments to be made.
- 3.11 The Appeals Committee will comprise of:
- a) One member of The Strategic Board usually the SCITT Director;
 - b) One member of the Hub Lead Teachers Committee usually the Course Leader (provided they have not previously made the original decision);
 - c) One further member of the Hub Lead Teachers Committee such as another Hub Leader;
 - d) Two others **who have not** been involved in previous decisions.

Publishing policy

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

Trainees who have exhausted the NML SCITT's internal procedures regarding academic appeals may bring their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) within one calendar year of receiving a Completion of Procedures letter. The OIAHE's website (at www.oiahe.org.uk) contains full information, and the OIAHE can be contacted at: OIA, Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57 – 75 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 3AB, tel: 0118 959 9813 email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk. Anyone wishing to pursue a complaint through the OIAHE must complete a special Scheme Application Form, downloadable copies of which are available from the website.