P-1.20 APPEALS POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all appeals raised by students, personnel, or other stakeholders regarding decisions made by the organisation are managed fairly, transparently, and consistently. The appeals process is designed to uphold the principles of natural justice and ensure that all parties are treated equitably.

Scope

This policy applies to all appeals relating to decisions made by the organisation, including but not limited to:

- Application outcomes.
- Assessment outcomes.
- Disciplinary actions.
- Complaints resolution outcomes.

Rationale

ECTARC Training Services (ETS) ensures that students, personnel, and stakeholders are made aware of the appeals process through various accessible and transparent communication channels. Information about the appeals process is prominently featured in the ETS Student Handbook, organisational website, and enrolment materials. During onboarding and orientation sessions for students and personnel, the appeals process is explained to promote understanding.

ETS‘ Complaints and appeals management system is designed to uphold fairness, timeliness, and effectiveness through a structured and impartial process. Appeals are handled by unbiased personnel who are independent of the original decision being reviewed. The process ensures that appellants have an opportunity to formally present their case and are supported by clear communication and transparent timelines. Appeals are acknowledged promptly, and stakeholders are regularly updated on the progress of their appeals. Decisions are merit-based, considering all available evidence, and the process adheres to the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. Additionally, all appeals are documented via Jot Form in the Appeals Register to maintain accountability and consistency.

ETS systematically analyses appeals outcomes to identify trends, root causes, and areas for improvement. Substantiated appeals are documented and corrective actions are implemented through Continuous Improvement processes to prevent recurrence. Outcomes of appeals inform policy and procedural updates, ensuring alignment with best practices and stakeholder expectations. Regular audits of the appeals process are conducted to assess its effectiveness and identify further opportunities for refinement. Feedback from appeals also informs resource allocation, risk management, and strategic planning, contributing to the organisation’s culture of continuous improvement.

Deployment

ETS is committed to providing a fair and transparent appeals process that allows individuals to seek a review of decisions that directly affect them. All appeals are managed in a timely, impartial, and confidential manner.

ETS’ appeals process reflects the following key expectations:

- Right to appeal. All stakeholders have the right to lodge an appeal if they believe a decision was unfair or incorrect.
- Accessibility. The appeals process is easily accessible and user-friendly.
- Transparency and procedural fairness. Appeals are handled impartially, with a clear process and open communication at all stages.
- Timeliness. Appeals are acknowledged and resolved promptly, with clear timeframes communicated to all parties.
- Continuous improvement. Outcomes of appeals inform continuous improvement within the organisation.

Stakeholders are informed about avenues for appeal with information about how to make an appeal publicly available and easily accessible, including via the ETS Student Handbook and website.

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Grievances or issues not pertaining to decisions made by the organisation should be referred to ETS' complaints policies and procedures.

Grounds for an Appeal

Appeals may be considered valid and accepted for review under the following grounds:

- Procedural fairness or irregularity. Where it is believed that the original decision was made without following established procedures or policies, resulting in an unfair or biased outcome.
- New evidence. When new, relevant evidence becomes available that was not considered during the original decision-making process, and this evidence has the potential to affect the outcome.
- Incorrect or unjust application of policies or standards. If it is believed that the policies, procedures, or standards were incorrectly applied or interpreted, leading to an unjust decision.
- Bias or conflict of interest. If there is evidence of bias, discrimination, or a conflict of interest by the person(s) involved in making the original decision.
- Assessment outcome disputes. When a student believes that an assessment decision was unfair, inconsistent with assessment criteria, or not conducted in accordance with the organisation's assessment policies and standards.
- Severity of outcome or penalty. If the appellant believes the outcome or penalty applied was disproportionate, harsh, or unreasonable in relation to the situation.

These grounds ensure that appeals are raised on legitimate and substantive bases, supporting the organisation's commitment to fairness, transparency, and continuous improvement.

ETS' appeals process is free, easily accessible and facilitates requests for a review of decisions, including assessment decisions, made by ETS.

The appeals process follows the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness by allowing anyone subject to a decision by ETS, or anyone who has allegations made against them, to contribute to the information gathered before a decision is made.

ETS' process ensures that the decision-maker is independent of the decision being reviewed (for example, an assessor does not consider or decide an appeal against an assessment decision they made).

Time Frames

A General Manager acknowledges receipt of escalated appeals in writing as soon as possible and within five (5) working days of receipt of the appeal.

The General Manager refers the matter to an external dispute resolution process by a body appointed for this purpose this mat ne a state or federal government department depending on the nature of the appeal.

Investigations are expected to be resolved, and decisions made on the appeal as soon as practical and within twenty (20) working days of the escalated appeal being received in writing.

Appeals Processing Delays

If at any stage ETS considers more than twenty (20) working days are required to process and finalise an appeal, ETS:

- Informs the appellant in writing, including reasons why more time is required, and
- Regularly updates the appellant on the progress of the matter.

ETS retains records of all appeals for a period of at least ten (10) years, allowing parties to the appeal access to these records.

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Improvement Actions

ETS is committed to take appropriate action in any case where an appeal is upheld. In cases where an appeal is upheld, ETS endeavours to identify the root cause of the matter that was appealed and takes appropriate action to prevent the situation happening again.

All improvement actions arising from appeals are raised via ETS Quality Assurance processes. ETS maintains a Continuous Improvement Register in the ECTARC Student Management System for recording the receipt and management of improvement records.

ETS:

- Regularly analyses appeals to identify trends and any further improvements needed,
- Audits the appeals process on an annual basis to assess its effectiveness and improve the appeals process as needed.

Please refer to the Quality Policy for further information on the continuous improvement process.

Monitoring and Evaluation

ETS monitors and evaluates the appeals process to ensure appeals are handled objectively.

A 6 monthly process of monitoring, evaluation, and reporting has been established in the ETS Compliance Calendar for all appeals.

ETS continually improves the effectiveness and efficiency of processes. Process performance and outcomes are regularly audited to identify and remove causes of existing and potential problems, as well as to uncover any opportunities for improvement.

Please refer to the Quality System – Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement for further information on the continuous improvement process.

VERSION CONTROL	DATE RELEASED	NEXT REVIEW	APPROVED BY	AMENDMENT
Version 1	July 2025	July 2026	ECTARC Leadership	New Policy