



Appeals Policy

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Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. The **Executive Steering Group** is responsible for approving this policy and monitoring its effectiveness. The Executive Steering Group is responsible for ensuring that staff are treated fairly and consistently in the application of this policy and procedure. The Executive Steering Group has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to the SCITT Director. The SCITT Director has specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and that procedures are followed

Introduction

Ripley ITT is part of The Bay Learning Trust (Trust). To ensure the efficient operation of the SCITT, the Trust has a suite of policies and procedures in place. This policy deals with the various appeals that can be raised in different scenarios, by trainees, during their time at the SCITT. This policy should be read in conjunction with the trainee contract. The term 'trainee' includes 'teacher apprentice' and 'assessment only candidates' The SCITT may amend this policy at any time.

Purpose

The purpose of this Appeals Policy is to provide clear procedures for dealing with Trainee appeals arising out of various scenarios involving decisions taken by Ripley ITT and/or School Direct Partners.

Scope

a. Assessment Boards

All trainees have the right to submit an academic appeal against the outcomes of SCITT Assessment Boards. Trainees may only appeal on the grounds of:

- Material, computational or administrative error
- Irregularity in conduct of an assessment board in contravention of the relevant regulations or structures
- Exceptional mitigating circumstances, details which were, for good reason, not previously available to the appropriate Assessment Boards.

Disagreement with a decision made by an Assessment Board or Panel shall not, in itself, form grounds for an appeal. The SCITT full reserves its right to reject an appeal in the event that it does not meet any of the criteria above or it fails to substantiate the points being asserted.

Trainees can only appeal following the formal publication of results/receipt of panel decision letter and must appeal by the deadline stated with the results information or decision letter.

Appeals against the PGCE academic assessment boards must follow the applicable University appeals process, which is independent of Ripley ITT and we have no power to amend or vary such processes.

b. Disciplinary Panel

All trainees have the right to submit an appeal against the outcomes of a disciplinary panel. They must clearly state which aspect(s) of the decision and/or procedures they wish to appeal against with detailed reasons for their appeal and by the deadline stated in the outcome letter. The Ripley ITT Fitness to Practise Policy includes the appeals process relevant to that Policy.

c. Recruitment and selection

Shortlisting of applicants for interview:

Applicants who meet the entry requirements for the programme (as stated within the Government's published criteria, as amended, and Ripley ITT websites) will be shortlisted for interview according to details provided on their application form, including references. Applicants whose application form indicates that they do not meet the minimum entry requirements will not be shortlisted for interview.

Selection interviews:

All interviewees will be interviewed by a panel which may include SCITT or School Direct leaders, mentors and subject experts from the partner schools. Secondary interviews are held at the SCITT and School Direct lead school, and primary interviews at a SCITT partner primary school. For applicants overseas and in circumstances where it is not possible to attend school for an interview, such as school closures or summer holiday season, interviews may be held remotely via an online interview and email. Candidates will be issued with an information booklet telling them what to expect

and what to bring.

Interviews involve:

- Submission of a lesson plan which will be discussed in depth
- Pupil panel
- Panel interview – standard questions agreed before the recruitment cycle begins
- Subject knowledge task – subject-specific measures of subject knowledge for teaching
- Functional English skills task – ITT providers must assure that trainees have the required skills by the end of their training. There is insufficient time within a one-year ITT course to teach these as well, so we need to assess that candidates have at least the basics of these skills before starting the programme. It will also help us to identify any minor skills gaps and help trainees to improve these during the course.

Interviewees are assessed on all the above aspects, including pupil feedback on the pupil panel. Standardised documents are used for each member of the interview panels to make notes, record their judgements and allocate a grade for each of the above tasks. One final document is produced which summarises the interviewees' performance on all aspects of the interview. This is issued to all successful applicants who accept an offer of a place on the programme and is the starting point for their initial training plan.

Successful interviewees receive the above document and a list of all conditions of the offer, which includes DBS and medical checks, on-line checks, right to work in the UK, degree class where still pending for undergraduates and any additional requirements such as SKE and references.

Unsuccessful interviewees will receive a feedback proforma which offers constructive comments on how they could succeed at an ITT interview in future.

All interview decisions are communicated by email with the relevant feedback documents attached.

Unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal need to do so in writing to the SCITT Director/School Direct Programme Leader within 5 working days of receiving the selection outcome. They must clearly state which aspect(s) of the decision and/or feedback given they wish to appeal against with detailed reasons for their appeal. A response to the appeal will be provided within a reasonable period to allow for appropriate consideration and determination.

Stages in the Procedure

There are four potential stages within this policy as follows:

1. Stage One: Informal Stage (only applicable to Assessment Board);
2. Stage Two: Formal Stage;
3. Stage Three: Review Stage;
4. Stage Four: Independent external review (Office of the Independent Adjudicator)

The Procedure

Stage One: Informal Stage (Assessment Boards Only)

This Stage of the Procedure will only apply to appeals against the outcomes of Assessment Boards given that the Disciplinary Policy and Fitness to Practise Policy already provides for resolution at an informal stage. Trainees should follow these separate policies. Regarding Recruitment and Selection, paragraph 3 already provides for the provision of feedback.

Trainees should initially email their concerns to the SCITT Director/School Direct Programme Leader to request written feedback, where none has already been provided, on any assessment decisions. This will be based on the evidence collected and quality assured throughout the year. This will enable the SCITT Director/ School Direct Programme Leader to clarify the reasons for the judgement and to discuss the issue with the trainee before they decide to make a formal appeal. A record will be maintained of this Stage and the SCITT Director/School Direct Programme Leader will provide the trainee with a written outcome.

a. Stage Two: Formal Stage

If an appeal is not resolved at Stage One, a Trainee should refer the matter in writing to the SCITT Administrator. An appropriate member of the SCITT senior team will investigate and determine the stage two appeal. The appointed member of staff shall have had no prior involvement in the issues to be considered. The trainee is expected to provide details of the case in a clear and succinct statement referring to, and including, any available and relevant evidence. On receipt of the statement, the SCITT Director or appointed member of staff will:

- i) Conduct an initial evaluation to check that the appeal is being dealt with under the correct procedures;
- ii) Check that the appeal falls within the grounds upon which an appeal may be made;
- iii) Ensure that the appeal has been submitted in the correct format and within the correct timeframe;
- iv) Make enquiries with Ripley ITT or relevant school staff and consider assessment records and other evidence;
- v) Write to the trainee informing them of their decision.

The appointed member of staff dealing with the matter may, at their absolute discretion, speak to the trainee about the appeal. The appointed member of staff will normally acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 3 school days. Following investigation the trainee will receive a written response either deferring the matter to a different procedure, upholding or dismissing the appeal. This will be sent via email, normally within 20 school days of receipt of the appeal. If the investigation will take longer than 20 school days then the trainee will be notified. The Trainee will be notified of the revised time limits and will be updated on progress.

If the appeal is dismissed the appointed member of staff dealing with the matter will write to the trainee setting out the outcome of Stage Two, outlining the reasons for each decision made. This letter will also include information about:

- i) The trainee's right to take the appeal to the review stage and the grounds for such a referral;

- ii) The time limit for escalating to the review stage;
- iii) The appropriate procedure and support available.

Where the appeal has been upheld, Ripley ITT SCITT will explain how and when it will implement any remedy and whether that includes an apology.

b. Stage Three: Review Stage

If a Trainee is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage Two, he/she can request a review within the relevant timescales. Any request for a review must be submitted in writing to the SCITT Administrator. A Review Panel drawn from the Ripley ITT SCITT Executive Steering Group will consider the way in which the appeal was investigated in Stage Two. The Panel shall have three members.

A review panel may cover:

- i) A review of the procedures followed at Stage Two;
- ii) A consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable;
- iii) Any new material evidence that the trainee was unable, for valid reasons, to provide at Stage Two.

The review will not:

- i) Re-hear the appeal afresh;
- ii) Consider new allegations not raised at Stage Two.

An appeal must have been considered at Stage Two before it can be escalated to the review stage.

The trainee will be invited in writing to attend a Review Panel hearing and given 10 days' notice of the hearing date. The letter of invitation to attend the hearing will also:

- i) Offer the trainee the opportunity to be accompanied to the hearing by a friend, family member or representative from a teaching union or students' union;
- ii) Inform the trainee of the composition of the panel;
- iii) Provide the trainee with a copy of the evidence to be considered;
- iv) Provide information about the support that is available to them including contact details.

The Review Panel will consider the evidence and there will be an opportunity for the trainee and Stage Two decision maker to make representations.

The Review Panel's membership will be drawn from members of the Executive Steering Group and/or any other professional who we determine holds sufficient qualifications to undertake the review.

A record of the meeting will be taken recording the date, people in attendance and a brief summary of the meeting.

Please note that audio and video recordings of meetings by Trainees or any person accompanying them is strictly prohibited. Any recordings made without the express consent of the Chair of the Review Panel could lead to separate disciplinary action for the Trainee.

The Review Panel will consider the following questions:

- i) Were the relevant procedures followed during Stage Two;
- ii) Was the outcome reasonable in all the circumstances;
- iii) Has the trainee received clear reasons why the appeal was rejected at the earlier stage?
- iv) If new evidence has been provided, has the trainee given valid reasons for not supplying this earlier?

The Review Panel, having considered the material submitted to them, may:

- a) Overturn the outcome of Stage Two in whole or in part and recommend a remedy;
- b) Remit the appeal back to Stage Two for reconsideration; or
- c) Uphold the outcome of Stage Two in whole or in part.

The Chair of the Review Panel will notify the trainee, in writing, by way of a Completion of Procedures letter, the outcome of the review process, including an outline of the reasons for their decision, as soon as reasonably practicable but in any event within 28 days. Where appropriate, this letter will also advise the Trainee on their right to submit a complaint to the OIA, the time limit for doing so, and where and how to access advice and support with this process.

Stage Four: Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA)

Once the review stage is completed, the Trainee is entitled to ask the OIA, the independent ombudsman system, to review their complaint about the outcome of the relevant appeals process. The complaint should be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter from the Chair of the Review Panel.

1. Data Protection

Ripley ITT will retain data related to the investigation for 7 years from the start of the investigation and after this time all data will be deleted. All data will be stored securely during this time.

All investigations will be treated confidentially. Ripley ITT will only disclose information to those who need it to investigate, review or to respond to the issues raised.

When a Trainee submits an appeal or responds to enquiries raised on investigation they should only include any necessary information about third parties. Evidence provided must focus on the matters subject to the appeal. For example, if the investigation is based on the health of a family member, Ripley ITT do not need to see the detailed medical information about that person, just enough to substantiate the assertion made on appeal.