



Embrace  
S C I T T



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**Person(s) Responsible for Review:**

Head of SCITT & Operational Leadership Group

**Approved by:**

Strategic Leadership Group

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2.10.2023

**Signed on behalf of the Strategic Leadership Group:**

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*CEO & Accounting Officer*

# 1. Introduction

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. This policy is relevant for:

- An applicant to an Embrace SCITT Initial Teacher Training programme.
- A current Trainee on an Embrace SCITT Initial Teacher Training programme.
- A former Trainee who has withdrawn of their own volition, been expelled or graduated from an Initial Teacher Training programme no more than 12 months from the submission of the appeal.

# 2. Purpose

- 2.1. 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 Embrace SCITT and its Lead Partners.

# 3. Assessment Boards

- 3.1. All trainees have the right to submit an academic appeal against the outcomes of SCITT Assessment Boards for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
- 3.2. Trainees may only appeal on the grounds of:
  - 3.2.1. Material, computational or administrative error
  - 3.2.2. Irregularity in conduct of an assessment board in contravention of the relevant regulations or structures
  - 3.2.3. Exceptional mitigating circumstances, details which were, for good reason, not previously available to the appropriate Assessment Boards.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. 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.
- 3.5. Appeals against the PGCE academic assessment boards must follow the applicable University appeals process, which is independent of Embrace SCITT and we have no power to amend or vary such processes.

# 4. Disciplinary Panel

- 4.1. All trainees have the right to submit an appeal against the outcomes of a disciplinary panel if proper process has not been followed. 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.
- 4.2. The Embrace SCITT 'Disciplinary Policy' includes the appeals process relevant to that Policy.

# 5. Recruitment & Assessment

- 5.1. Applicants who meet the entry requirements for the programme (as stated within the Government's published criteria, Embrace SCITT's programmes on the DfE Apply platform and the Embrace website) will be shortlisted for interview according to details provided on their application form, including references.
  - 5.1.1. Applicants whose application form indicates that they do not meet the minimum entry requirements will not be shortlisted for interview.
- 5.2. All shortlisted applicants will be interviewed by a panel which may include SCITT or Programme Leaders, Mentors and Subject Experts from the partner schools.
  - 5.2.1. Applicants are assessed on the aspects identified in the 'Recruitment Policy and Procedure', including pupil feedback from the pupil focussed aspect of the assessment. 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.

**5.2.2.** Successful applicants receive notification of the offer verbally. Additionally, this is formally offered via the DfE Apply platform with detailed requirements of the conditional offer which will always include (as a minimum); DBS, medical checks and references.

**5.2.3.** The recruitment panel can identify additional suggestions (which are not compulsory) or conditions (which are compulsory) to support the Trainee in having a successful training experience. These are bespoke to the applicant and ensure compliance and the Trainee's future success.

**5.3.** Unsuccessful shortlisted applicants will receive brief verbal feedback and then offered an opportunity to discuss how they can success at a future interview for Initial Teacher Training programme interview. This is voluntary and only offered once.

**5.4.** All interview outcomes are communicated verbally and then formally via the DfE Apply platform.

**5.5.** Unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal need to do so in writing to the Programme Leader or Head of SCITT 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 (typically no more than 20 days).

## 6. Stages in the procedure

**6.1.** There are four potential stages within this policy as follows:

**6.1.1.** Stage 1 – Informal (only applicable to the Assessment Board)

**6.1.2.** Stage 2 – Formal

**6.1.3.** Stage 3 – Review

**6.1.4.** Stage 4 – Independent External Review (Office of the Independent Adjudicator)

## 7. The Process

**7.1.** Stage 1 – Informal (Assessment Boards only)

**7.1.1.** This Stage of the Procedure will only apply to appeals against the outcomes of Assessment Boards given that the Disciplinary Policy and Capability Policy already provides for resolution at an informal stage. Trainees should follow these separate policies.

**7.1.2.** Trainees should initially email their concerns to the Programme Leader / Head of SCITT to request written feedback, where none has already been provided, on any assessment decisions.

**7.1.2.1.** This will be based on the evidence collected and quality assured throughout the year.

**7.1.2.2.** This will enable the Programme Leader / Head of SCITT to clarify the reasons for the judgement and to discuss the issue with the trainee before they decide to make a formal appeal.

**7.1.2.3.** A record will be maintained of this Stage and the Programme Leader / Head of SCITT will provide the trainee with a written outcome.

**7.2.** Stage 2 – Formal

**7.2.1.** If an appeal is not resolved at Stage One, a Trainee should refer the matter in writing to the SCITT Administrator.

**7.2.1.1.** An appropriate member of the SCITT Leadership Team will investigate and determine the stage two appeal.

**7.2.1.2.** The appointed member of staff shall have had no prior involvement in the issues to be considered.

**7.2.1.3.** 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.

**7.2.1.4.** On receipt of the statement, the Head of SCITT or appointed member of staff will:

- 7.2.1.4.1. Conduct an initial evaluation to check that the appeal is being dealt with under the correct procedures;
- 7.2.1.4.2. Check that the appeal falls within the grounds upon which an appeal may be made;
- 7.2.1.4.3. Ensure that the appeal has been submitted in the correct format and within the correct timeframe;
- 7.2.1.4.4. Make enquiries with Embrace SCITT or relevant school staff and consider assessment records and other evidence;
- 7.2.1.4.5. Write to the trainee informing them of their decision.

7.2.1.5. The appointed member of staff dealing with the matter may, at their absolute discretion, speak to the trainee about the appeal.

7.2.1.6. The appointed member of staff will normally acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 5 school days.

7.2.1.7. 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 30 school days of receipt of the appeal. If the investigation will take longer than 30 school days then the trainee will be notified. The Trainee will be notified of the revised time limits and will be updated on progress.

7.2.2. 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:

- 7.2.2.1. The trainee's right to take the appeal to the review stage and the grounds for such a referral;
- 7.2.2.2. The time limit for escalating to the review stage;
- 7.2.2.3. The appropriate procedure and support available

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

### 7.3. Stage 3 – Review

7.3.1. If a Trainee is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage Two, they 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 Embrace SCITT Strategic Leadership Group (and, if necessary, Partnership School Leaders), will consider the way in which the appeal was investigated in Stage Two. The Panel shall have three members.

7.3.1.1. A review panel may cover:

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

7.3.1.2. The review will not:

- 7.3.1.2.1. Re-hear the appeal afresh;
- 7.3.1.2.2. Consider new allegations not raised at Stage Two.

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

7.3.3. 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:

- 7.3.3.1. Offer the trainee the opportunity to be accompanied to the hearing by a peer, or representative from a teaching union or students' union;
- 7.3.3.2. Inform the trainee of the composition of the panel;
- 7.3.3.3. Provide the trainee with a summary of the evidence to be considered;
- 7.3.3.4. Provide information about the support that is available to them including contact details.

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

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

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

**7.3.7.** 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.

**7.3.8.** The Review Panel will consider the following questions:

**7.3.8.1.** Were the relevant procedures followed during Stage Two;

**7.3.8.2.** Was the outcome reasonable in all the circumstances;

**7.3.8.3.** Has the trainee received clear reasons why the appeal was rejected at the earlier stage?

**7.3.8.4.** If new evidence has been provided, has the trainee given valid reasons for not supplying this earlier?

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

**7.3.9.1.** Overturn the outcome of Stage Two in whole or in part and recommend a remedy;

**7.3.9.2.** Remit the appeal back to Stage Two for reconsideration; or

**7.3.9.3.** Uphold the outcome of Stage Two in whole or in part.

**7.3.10.** 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 30 school 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.

**7.4.** Stage 4 – Independent External Review (Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA))

**7.4.1.** 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.

**7.4.2.** 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.

## 8. Data Protection

**8.1.** Embrace SCITT 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.

**8.2.** Embrace SCITT will only disclose information to those who need it to investigate, review or to respond to the issues raised.

**8.3.** When a Trainee submits an appeal or responds to enquiries raised on investigation they should only include any necessary information about third parties.

**8.4.** 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, Embrace SCITT do not need to see the detailed medical information about that person, just enough to substantiate the assertion made on appeal.

WEB SITE: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>

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## Appendix A – Appeals Process Summary

