



**The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh  
The Royal College of Surgeons of England  
The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow  
The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland**

Intercollegiate Committee for Basic Surgical Examinations (ICBSE)

## **APPEAL REGULATIONS**

**September 2015**

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These Regulations apply to all candidates for the examinations governed by the Intercollegiate Committee for Basic Surgical Examinations (ICBSE).
- 1.2 Candidates should note that, by entering to sit an examination, they are deemed to have understood and agreed to abide by all relevant regulations, including these Appeal Regulations.
- 1.3 Any dispute as to the interpretation of these Regulations shall be referred to the Chair of ICBSE, whose decision in the matter shall be final.
- 1.4 These Regulations are to be used to investigate all examination appeals.
- 1.5 An 'appeal' is defined as a request for a review of a decision made by or on behalf of an Examining Board about a candidate's performance in an examination.
- 1.6 A candidate who has been unsuccessful in one of the ICBSE examinations may have the right of appeal in terms of the circumstances given below. Appeals are permitted only on the following grounds:
  - 1.6.1 **Procedural defects or irregularities** in the conduct of the examination, including administrative error, which could have adversely affected a candidate's performance or the outcome of the examination.
  - 1.6.2 **Exceptional personal circumstances** should be communicated to the College in writing at the time of application or 14 days before the commencement of the examination date if appropriate. A candidate may appeal on the grounds of a failure of the College to take account of any exceptional personal circumstance, such as medical or adverse personal circumstances intimated in advance, as appropriate.
- 1.7 A candidate does not have the right of appeal against the outcome of the examination in any other circumstances, including the following:
  - Lack of understanding or awareness of the Examination Regulations
  - Seeking to question the professional or academic judgement of the examiners.
- 1.8 Subject to 1.9 below, the outcome of an appeal submitted under these Regulations may only be determined as either:
  - 1.8.1 Rejected as considered to be unsubstantiated or outside the permitted grounds.
  - 1.8.2 Rejected as out of time or incomplete.
  - 1.8.3 Upheld, result of the examination (or relevant section) annulled and attempt expunged.
- 1.9 Candidates should note that an appeal cannot lead to a fail result being changed into a pass result, unless it has been established that there was a material effect on the result meaning that had the procedural defect or

irregularity or personal circumstance not occurred, the candidate would have passed the examination concerned.

## **2 PROCEDURE**

- 2.1 A candidate must submit any appeal in writing to the Head of Examinations at the College to which the examination application was made. This must be within 30 days of dispatch of the formal result letter to which it relates. The candidate should include the grounds for appeal and enclose detailed supporting information.
- 2.2 The Head of Examinations will acknowledge receipt of the appeal documentation and will then investigate. The Head of Examinations will discuss the case with the Chair of their Board of Examiners and undertake further investigations, as he/she deems necessary. If the Head of Examinations or Chair of the Board of Examiners forms part of any alleged irregularity relating to appeal, they will be replaced by the Head of Examinations or Chair of the Board of Examiners from an unconnected surgical Royal College.
- 2.3 If the Chair of Board of Examiners considers that the appeal is within the permitted grounds, and the procedural defect, irregularity or exceptional personal circumstance has had an effect on the outcome, the matter will be referred to the Chair of ICBSE, recommending the result be annulled and the attempt expunged. The candidate's examination fee will be either refunded or they will be granted a free attempt at a future sitting (as determined by the College). The Head of Examinations will notify the candidate accordingly.
- 2.4 If the Chair of the Board of Examiners considers that the appeal is outside the permitted grounds, the appeal will not be progressed further and the Head of Examinations will notify the candidate of this. It is recognised that on occasion it may be initially unclear whether a case constitutes an appeal or a complaint; hence the individual College reserves the right to reclassify an appeal as a complaint or vice-versa at any stage in the proceedings, in consultation with the person appealing or complaining. Such reclassification will always be done so that the matter can be considered in the most appropriate and fair way, and candidates will not be required to resubmit their cases following the reclassification.
- 2.5 If the candidate is not satisfied with the reasons given for rejection of their appeal by the Chair of the Board of Examiners as considered under paragraph 2.4, they may contact the Head of Examinations within 10 working days of the date of the notification letter to request that their case be reconsidered by the Chair of ICBSE. The candidate may provide additional information at this stage. All such requests will be reviewed in the first instance by the Chair of ICBSE, who will determine whether sufficient evidence exists for consideration by an Appeal Panel.
- 2.6 If the Chair of ICBSE refers the appeal to an Appeal Panel, the candidate will be required to pay an appeal fee of £600. In the event that an appeal is upheld, the candidate will be entitled to a full refund of the appeal fee paid.
- 2.7 If the Chair of ICBSE considers that sufficient evidence does not exist for consideration by an Appeal Panel, or that the appeal is outside the permitted grounds, the ICBSE Manager will notify the candidate of this and confirm that

the appeal procedure is at an end. The decision made by the Chair of ICBSE will be final.

### **3 CONDUCT OF AN APPEAL PANEL**

3.1 A meeting of an Appeal Panel shall be organised by the ICBSE Manager. The ICBSE Manager, or an alternate, shall act as Secretary to the Panel.

3.2 The Appeal Panel shall meet as soon as reasonably practicable and shall comprise three individuals. The Appeal Panel will consist of:

- The Chair of the ICBSE Sub Group to which the exam relates (who will act as the Chair of the Appeal Panel).
- An Examiner from a surgical Royal College not involved in the appeal.
- A Lay Representative from a surgical Royal College not involved in the appeal.

The Chair of the Appeal Panel may request attendance of other representatives and details of these representatives will be provided to all parties in advance of the Appeal Panel meeting.

3.3 The ICBSE Manager's role shall be to record the proceedings and deliberations of the Appeal Panel and advise on procedural or regulatory matters as required. He or she may not influence the decisions of the Appeal Panel in any way.

3.4 The candidate shall have the right to be present at the Appeal Panel meeting and to present their written or oral evidence to the Appeal Panel. Proceedings of the Appeal Panel shall not be invalidated by reason of the absence of the candidate.

3.5 The candidate has the right to be accompanied, but not represented, by a companion, who normally may not be a legally-qualified representative. The companion may advise and counsel the candidate, but may not cross-examine any other person present at the Appeal Panel meeting. If the candidate wishes to be accompanied by a companion, they must provide the ICBSE Manager with the name, address and role of the nominated person not less than five working days before the Appeal Panel meeting.

In exceptional circumstances a candidate may be accompanied by a legal representative. This will be granted at the discretion of the Appeal Panel on a case by case basis. Under these circumstances the ICBSE reserves the right to also have legal representation present.

3.6 The ICBSE Manager shall inform the candidate of the scheduled date of the Appeal Panel meeting as soon as possible and not less than 15 working days before the date of the meeting. The Appeal Panel may convene at any of the four Royal Colleges of Surgeons in the UK or Ireland. The ICBSE Manager will then arrange for a copy of each document that is to be presented to the Appeal Panel to be sent to the candidate not less than 10 working days before the meeting date set. Such documents shall include any statement(s) provided by the candidate, whose responsibility it is to ensure any such documents are received by the ICBSE Manager at least 12 working days

before the meeting date set. Documents may not be presented to or referred to by the Appeal Panel, unless they have been circulated in this manner.

#### **4 APPEAL PANEL PROCEDURE**

- 4.1 The Appeal Panel may, at its discretion, meet before the scheduled start of the meeting for preliminary discussions.
- 4.2 At the start of the Appeal Panel meeting all present shall introduce themselves. The Appeal Panel Chair shall then invite the candidate to present their appeal and any documentary evidence in support of their case. The Appeal Panel may then question the candidate.
- 4.3 Before the Appeal Panel meeting is closed, the Chair shall give the candidate the opportunity to make a closing statement.
- 4.4 The Appeal Panel shall then consider the matter and reach a decision.
- 4.5 The Appeal Panel shall be empowered to make the following decisions:
  - 4.5.1 Appeal rejected with no further action to be taken; or
  - 4.5.2 Appeal upheld, result of the examination (or relevant section) annulled, attempt expunged and appeal fee refunded. The candidate's examination fee will be either refunded or they will be granted a free attempt at a future sitting (as determined by the College).
- 4.6 The ICBSE Manager will notify the candidate of the outcome within 10 working days of the Appeal Panel meeting.
- 4.7 The decision of the Appeal Panel will be final.
- 4.8 The ICBSE Manager will advise the ICBSE at their next meeting of the decision of the Appeal Panel.

Start Date: September 2015

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