

Gaiety School of Acting Appeals Policy

1. Responsibilities

1.1 Director of the School

- Chair of Assessment Review Board;
- Nominates Chair of Assessment Review Board

1.2 Programme Coordinator

- First point of official contact for any appeal;
- Passing of all relevant information to the relevant staff so that the necessary committees can be convened and procedures enacted;
- Moderates rechecks;
- Secretary on Assessment Review Board

1.3 Tutors

- Depending on the nature of the appeal, a tutor may be asked to:
- sit on an audition panel;
- recheck assessment results;
- review assessment material in line with the assessment review process;
- sit on an Assessment Appeals Board to conduct the appeals process

1.4 Programme Board

- Appoint the Assessment Review Board to conduct the review process;
- Review evidence from Assessment Review report to determine if grounds for appeal exist;
- Liaise with the Assessment Appeals Board in devising new assessment tasks where appeals have been found to be necessary;
- Discuss individual students where disciplinary appeals arise;

1.5 Academic Council

- In cases where disciplinary procedures have been appealed beyond the Programme Board, the Academic Council will be requested to review the evidence to date and provide a final decision on such cases.
- It is the responsibility of the Academic Council to see that procedures regarding appeals processes are dealt with in a fair and transparent manner and that adequate communication concerning such is maintained between all staff and students.
- To agree on procedures of matters of general misconduct, misbehaviour and academic misdemeanours.
- They are the final committee of arbitration in cases of dispute between staff and students and they hear disciplinary matters brought before it under set procedures.

2. Procedures for Appealing Outcome of an Audition

The Gaiety School of Acting is committed to pursuing best practice with regard to auditioning prospective students and providing appropriate guidance or referral.

The School undertakes to:

- Consider all applications
- Provide applicants with necessary information before and at the selection process
- Give applicants the opportunity to demonstrate their potential to fulfil the aims of the course
- Ensure that the decision-making process is fair and transparent
- Ensure the applicants are informed of the outcomes of an audition / interview

2.1 The Right of Appeal

Unsuccessful applicants will be advised of their right to appeal against the outcome of an audition. The Programme Coordinator will provide them with details of the appeals procedures on request.

2.2 Acceptable Grounds for Appeal

It will be made clear to unsuccessful applicants that appeals will only be considered where it is claimed that there were irregularities in the audition procedure. The appeals procedure permits unsuccessful candidates to appeal under the following circumstances:

- An injury occurring on the day of the audition
- Illness on the day of the audition that prevented the applicant from demonstrating their full potential
- A claim that there were irregularities in the audition procedure

Any unsuccessful applicant who wishes to appeal the decision of the audition panel can do so in writing to the Programme Coordinator. The grounds for appeal should be clearly stated and supported by supplementary evidence.

Appeals should be made within 14 days following notification of failure to obtain a place at the School.

There is a charge of €50 for a re-audition which is refunded if the appeal is successful.

The appeal is dealt with in the first instance by the Programme Coordinator who then informs the audition panel of the audition appeal. The audition panel is made up of two members of the teaching staff. It is usual for the Director of the School and a member of the teaching staff to sit on the audition panel. The Programme Coordinator requests that the audition panel re-convene with the addition of an impartial Chairperson to review the decision of the audition.

Successful appeals result in the applicant being re-auditioned at the next available audition date.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the result of their appeal which falls into one of two categories:

- a) the appeal is upheld and the candidate is re-auditioned by two members of staff who were not involved in the original audition
- b) the appeal is denied

This decision will be final in all cases.

3. Procedures for appealing assessment results

3.1 The Right of Appeal

Candidates will be advised of their right to appeal against the outcome of an assessment. The Programme Coordinator will provide them with details of the appeals procedures on request.

In line with HETAC recommendations, GSA encourages and facilitates students to discuss their results and assessment performance with the appropriate members of staff following assessment; this is so that students have guidance on how to improve at the next assessment and also to avoid further action in terms of appeals.

3.2 Acceptable Grounds for Appeal

The acceptable grounds may be summarised as:

- i) That there was 'substantive irregularity' in the conduct of the assessment. An irregularity might be, for example, a significant error in an exam paper or misleading directions given before or during the assessments or some other irregularity in the employment of the assessment procedures.
- ii) That the applicant suffered from an illness or some personal or family trauma around the time of the assessment of which the examiners were unaware. The determining criteria in assessing the merit of your appeal is whether your particular circumstances prevented you from performing in the assessment at the level of which you would normally be capable. These circumstances must be shown to have affected you in the assessment itself or in the period immediately leading up to it.
- iii) That, on stated grounds, you believe the mark or grade awarded to be incorrect.

3.3 Method of Appeal

Requests for rechecks or reviews must be received in writing by post to the Programme Coordinator within 14 days of the issuing of results will be considered. Students are advised to send this by registered post.

Letters received must contain details element(s) of assessment which are being appealed and grounds for appealing the result.

All appeals are handled on site. Documentation concerning assessment can not be removed from GSA premises for any reason.

3.4 Stages of Appeals

There is a hierarchy of decision making used at each level outlined below. A decision made at any one level can be altered at the next level. The final stage is the appeal, and at this stage the decision made is considered final.

There are two initial options open to students who have a grievance with a result. Both of the actions in the stages below must be sought in writing to the Programme Coordinator. On receipt of this notification, the Programme Coordinator will convene the necessary bodies as detailed below

3.4.1 Initial Stage: Recheck

Recheck: the Programme Coordinator and internal examiner/tutor will check the recording and addition of marks to ensure they are correct.

There is a charge of €60 for a recheck which is refunded if the recheck is successful in the student's favour.

Records are maintained to facilitate monitoring and reviews. To this end the School maintains records of minutes of examination board meetings, external examiners' reports, other committee minutes and *broadsheets of results*. Please refer to Policy on Record Management for record-keeping procedures and arrangements.

3.4.2 Second Stage: Review

Review: a detailed consideration of all or part of the assessment material where feasible by the Assessment Review Board. The Assessment Review Board is appointed by the Programme Board to carry out the review process.

An Assessment Review Board is established, consisting of:

- Chair: Director of the School
- A Head of Department other than the department under which the module being appealed falls
- An impartial representative – another member of the teaching staff agreed by the Chair with the student

There is a charge of €60 for a recheck which is refunded if the recheck is successful in the student's favour.

The Assessment Review Board:

- Can ask the internal examiner to remark the assessment material;
- Can consult with other members of staff regarding the assessment and the grading of it;
- Vote on the outcome of the review – where the vote is tied, the Chair will have the casting vote
- Write a brief report on the conduct of the review, the evidence presented, the voting process and the outcome. Such a report will be necessary should the next stage of the appeals process be necessary.

Students must be made aware from the outset that their grade can go down as well as up as result of any appeal.

If a student is satisfied following the above steps of review or recheck, the matter is deemed resolved and their new grade (if a new grade is allocated) is recorded. It will be recorded that a new grade is allocated on foot of a review.

3.4.3 Third Stage: Appeal

If the student is dissatisfied following the above steps, they may appeal. As in the stages listed above, the student should write to the Programme Coordinator. They should state clearly their grounds for appeal and where their concerns have not been address at the previous stages.

The Programme Board will read the student's letter plus the report from the Assessment Review Board to ascertain whether grounds for appeal exist. If it is deemed that they are, the Programme Board will appoint an Appeals Board to conduct the appeals process and to report its findings to the learner in question.

There is a charge of €60 for an appeal which is refunded if the recheck is successful in the student's favour.

The Appeals Board is composed of:

- Chair: an impartial person nominated by the Director
- A competent, experienced external representative who is well placed to moderate on proceedings
- An internal, impartial member of teaching staff who has not been involved with proceedings up to this point

The Appeals Board will:

- Review all of the material to date – the recheck, the assessment review and its report, and the student's written and documentary evidence requesting the appeal.
- If deemed necessary, ask the learner in question to address the responses to the Assessment Review Board's report in further detail
- Consult with members of the Programme Board to devise an alternative means of assessment which is fair and in keeping with the remit of the original assessment in terms of, for example, its

addressing of learning outcomes for the module concerned, level of difficulty, format.

- Grade the alternative assessment – forming a final decision on the appeal
- Write a report on the process of the review

The student's grade as a result of alternative assessment will be added to their record in place of their original grade. It will be recorded that this grade is allocated on foot of a re-sit and appeal.

Students must be made aware from the outset that their grade can go down as well as up as result of any appeal.

3.4.4 Fourth Stage: Academic Council

If a student feels that they have not received a fair response to their appeal they may wish to take their appeal further. In such cases, they may request of the Programme Coordinator that their case be brought before the Academic Council who will review all evidence to date and arbitrate in line with their terms of reference.

No new evidence will be considered at this stage. The Academic Council will review:

- the evidence and argument for appeal presented by the student at each stage;
- the report of the Assessment Review Board;
- the report of the Assessment Appeals Board;
- all grading information amassed to date

In such instances, the decision made by the Academic Council will be final.

4. Procedures for Appealing Disciplinary Action

The GSA expects a high level of commitment, effort and work from all students.

To this end, students are asked to sign a Rules and Regulations document at the beginning of each year in which they commit to abide by the school's policies. This document is updated each year should any new information or pertinent circumstances or instances come to light.

Students are monitored in the following manner:

- Tutors, Heads of Departments, the Programme Coordinator and the School's Director meet in the final weeks of each term of each year.
- This is a group meeting allowing for open discussion of each individual student with reference to their work, effort, attitude, conduct and attendance/time-keeping to date.
- Discussions at these meetings are noted. Comments are fed into tutorials with the students which take place in the final week of term.
- Tutorials are one-on-one informal discussions in which any issues are openly discussed with a view to resolving problems, outlining where

progress might be achieved and ensuring the student achieves their full potential.

- If it is felt that attitude or a behavioural problem (such as misuse of substances, poor time keeping, disruptive attitude etc) due process will be followed according to the School's rules and regulations. If a student fails to respond to these processes and continues to present a problem by contravening rules and regulations they can be asked to leave the School according to the disciplinary procedures outlined in the rules and regulations document.
- In such circumstances, students have the right to appeal which consists of:
 - Their submission of appeal in writing to the Programme Coordinator within 2 weeks of their being asked to leave.
 - On receipt of this, the matter is brought to the Programme Board for discussion
 - The student will be asked to clearly state in writing their grounds for appeal and to explain why they feel they should be readmitted to the course and how they feel they can remedy their behaviours to comply with rules and regulations in future.
 - This information will be reviewed by the Programme Board and a decision will be made and informed to the student in writing.
 - If a student is deemed eligible to return (i.e. if their appeal has been successful), they will be invited back to the coming year under the condition that they are under review on the following basis:
 1. they will have weekly meetings with a supervisor to monitor their progress and work
 2. they will be given an overall review every five weeks
 3. if it is felt they are not making progress their place on the course will be withdrawn at the end of a 5-week review cycle

5. Procedures for Appealing an Application for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Applicants who have applied for entry to the programme or for exemption from a particular module may appeal the decision of the Programme Board on the grounds of process.

A person who wishes to make an appeal should do so in writing to the GSA within 10 working days of receiving notice of the decision. The appeal should set out the precise grounds for appeal. The appeal is made to the Academic Council.

If the GSA decides to uphold an appeal it will arrange for a new assessment of the original submission and the outcome of this process will be final.

An applicant that accepts a place with credit in the GSA who is found to have submitted false or misleading evidence is in breach of GSA regulations and will be subject to disciplinary action.

The following flow chart outlines the steps for students appealing an assessment result.

