



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

# Academic Career Pathways 2022 (Research & Teaching)

Feedback and Appeals  
**2021-2022**

V1: September 2021

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# Feedback

The purpose of feedback is to provide an unsuccessful applicant with a clear sense of what they would need to do in order to raise the level of their achievement to the standard required to obtain promotion in a future exercise. Every attempt should be made to provide feedback that is helpful and constructive. See the Timetable for the provision of feedback and the lodging of Appeals.

After the General Board (GB) has met and agreed the outcome of each application, the Chairs of the School Committee, having discussed these cases with the relevant Heads of School, are encouraged to meet with the relevant Heads of Institution, individually or together, to give feedback on the unsuccessful applicants.

Heads of institutions may also find it useful to invite the Chair of the relevant FC to attend. This feedback will be collated by the Secretaries of the SCs and provided to their Chairs in advance of the meeting with the relevant Head of Institutions and as soon as possible after applicants have been informed of the outcome of their application.

Heads of Institutions are responsible for communicating written feedback to unsuccessful

applicants and must also provide an opportunity for feedback in person (either by them or by the senior colleague who previously provided mentoring or other support to the applicant), if this is requested by an applicant. At the feedback meeting, the Head of Institution should provide a copy of the feedback statement prepared by the relevant SC. They may wish to discuss with their Head of School the feedback to be provided to unsuccessful applicants before holding individual meetings.

The feedback statement set out in the SC minutes, together with any other relevant documents, must be disclosed to the applicant as part of the feedback process after the meeting of the GB if requested by the applicant, along with copies of References where referees have agreed to the release in line with data protection legislation.

All parties are asked to be mindful of the sensitivities involved in providing feedback and to allow reasonable time for the feedback process to enable the individuals concerned to fully consider the information provided.

## Feedback Summary



Specific comments relating to their application;



A generic statement of the overall standard of applications for each office applied to;



Statistical data to help convey a sense of the standard that must be reached in future exercises;



The applicant's overall score

# Appeals

The timetable for the provision of the lodging of appeals is specified in the [Timetable](#). Appeals may be made only on the ground of an alleged material defect in the application of the procedure or in the documentation which was not prepared by the applicant and was used by [Committees](#) which have considered the appellant's application. For example, where it is alleged that the documentation placed before a Committee(s) was incomplete, or where it is alleged that a Committee(s) must have overlooked or misapprehended a significant fact.

There is no right to Appeal for applications made under Associate Professor [Grade 10 Pay Progression Scheme B](#).

ACP applicants have the right to lodge an appeal against the decision of the [Vice-Chancellor's Committee](#) (VCC). Appeals must be made in writing to the Secretary of the AC by the date specified in the [Timetable](#) and give clearly the reasons on which the appeal is grounded.

## The Role and Membership of the Appeals Committee

The role of the Appeals Committee (AC) is limited to considering whether or not procedural fairness has prevailed in the consideration of an application. Accordingly, an appeal will **not** be a re-hearing or a general review of the application. The consideration of the AC will be confined to the issues raised in the grounds of the appeal. The AC will not consider fresh evidence in support of the appellant's application unless it relates to a fault in the application of the procedure of a Committee or in the documentation.

The [General Board](#) (GB) will appoint an AC to hear appeals after the VCC has made its recommendations to the GB and these have been communicated to the applicants. The Committee will consist of a Chair and four other members and each member should be present at the meeting(s). If there are circumstances where this is not reasonably practicable, the quorum necessary to reach a substantive decision will be a simple majority of the members, i.e. three.

### Key Principles of the AC

- Members must not be eligible to apply for promotion/progression under that year's scheme;
- A member may not take part in the consideration of a particular applicant's appeal if they were a member of a [Committee](#) which considered an appellant's application in that year's exercise;
- All persons involved in the process and in the consideration of applications should exercise impartiality and fairness and be seen to do so;
- If the Chair of the Committee withdraws for the whole or part of a meeting, the Committee shall appoint a Chair to act in their absence; and,
- The Assistant Director of Human Resources (Operations) will act as the Secretary.
- Meetings may take place in person and/or by videoconference.

## Procedure

The AC will receive a copy of this guidance and the following documentation in respect of each appeal lodged:

- A statement of appeal (with any supplementary documents) submitted by the applicant;
- The minutes of the meeting(s) of the relevant Committees; and,
- The complete set of the documentation received by the relevant Committees when they considered the case for promotion.

In preparing for a meeting at which appeals will be considered, individual members of the AC may wish to form their own preliminary view as to whether, on the ground(s) of appeal, there is reason to question the correctness of the outcome prior to the meeting to discuss each appeal. The AC should aim to confine its consideration of appeals to the documentation and applicants will not be asked to attend a hearing, but the AC may exercise discretion to invite an appellant to attend, if that is considered necessary. (The right to be heard does not mean literally that the 'hearing' must be oral; it may be entirely on the basis of documentation. If questions arise, an appellant may be asked for a clarification in writing).

The AC will, before proceeding to a final consideration of the appeal, give the Chair(s) of the relevant Committee(s) the opportunity to submit a written statement responding to the grounds on which the appeal was lodged. The Chair of the relevant Committee may consult members of the Committee, as they deem appropriate, or, if necessary, reconvene the Committee to consider the terms of the response.

Decisions on appeals should be made collectively at the meeting. The Secretary of the AC will be responsible for recording the decision in each case. If there is an equal division of opinion, the Chair shall exercise a casting vote.

## Determination of Appeals

The Appeals Committee will determine an appeal by doing one of the following:

- 1) Allow the appeal by upholding one or more of the grounds of appeal and stating that, in their view, the grounds on which the appeal has been upheld might have made a difference to the decision of the VCC, referring the appellant's application for promotion/progression back to that Committee for reconsideration.
- 2) Uphold one or more grounds of appeal but stating that, in their view, the grounds on which the appeal has been upheld would have made no material difference to the decision of the VCC, nevertheless, referring the appellant's application for promotion/progression back to that Committee for reconsideration.
- 3) Reject the appeal on all grounds.
- 4) Strike out an appeal on the grounds that it is frivolous, vexatious, or otherwise an abuse of process.

If it is appropriate in a particular case, the AC, in referring the application back to the VCC, may recommend that that Committee refers it back to the earlier Committee stage at which the fault is alleged to have occurred. There is no right of appeal against the AC's determination of an appeal.

## Minutes and Subsequent Action

The Secretary shall record the outcome of the AC's consideration of each appeal in a separate minute. The minute shall state the ground(s) of the appeal and its outcome. The outcome of the appeal will be conveyed to the appellant by the Secretary of the AC after consultation with the Chair and the Director of the Human Resources Division.

In the case of appeals determined under 1 or 2 above, the Secretary of the AC will refer the appellant's application back to the VCC for reconsideration. The Secretary of the AC will inform appellants whose appeals have been determined under 3 or 4 above by letter and copies of these letters should be sent for information to the Chairs and Secretaries of the VCC, the relevant SC and FC.

The VCC will receive and consider the written report(s) on the appeal(s) considered by the AC and determined under 1 and 2 above, bearing in mind any recommendation by the AC that the application be referred back to an earlier Committee stage, with a view to deciding whether the applicant should or should not be promoted/progressed to the office/post for which they have applied.

In considering any appeal referred to them by the AC, the VCC will comprise five members, including the external member relevant to the field of the appellant; the Committee may vary its procedure as necessary. The Secretary of the VCC will inform each appellant of the VCC's reconsideration of their application. There is no right of appeal against the outcome of the reconsideration of an application by the VCC.



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