



**RCSI**

# Postgraduate Admissions, Complaints and Appeals

**RCSI Dublin**

RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE



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## 1. Introduction

This policy provides an overview of the College policy and procedures in relation to admission to RCSI's postgraduate programmes. This document outlines the RCSI complaints and appeals process associated with the postgraduate admissions process and seeks to provide guidance to an applicant who may wish to lodge a complaint in relation to their application. The complaints procedure described below is intended for cases in which the application is made directly to the College and where a postgraduate applicant to RCSI wishes to complain about the administration of the College's admissions policies and procedures.

The policies and procedures that are relevant to all applications are:

- Data Protection Policy
- Fees Policies
- Statement on Fraud pertaining to admission
- Statement on Feedback pertaining to admission
- Statement on Confidentiality and Declaration of Interest pertaining to admission
- RPL policy

## 2. General Provisions

The statement on Feedback outlines that application to the College is competitive and that many qualified applicants are unsuccessful due to the limited number of places within the different programmes relative to the number of qualified applicants. Appeals against the decisions of a postgraduate admissions committee may only be made on the following grounds:

- Failure to apply the relevant policy or procedures
- Bias or Prejudice. Challenges to the academic judgement of the admissions committee may not form the basis of an admissible appeal.

Queries in relation to an application should be made to the particular School in question. Complaints in relation to an application should be made in writing, to Head of Postgraduate School, 123 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.

### 2.1 Time Limits

Appeals received more than one month after the date of the letter notifying an applicant of a decision shall not be investigated unless evidence is provided of circumstances which may have made it reasonable for the complainant or appellant not to have made a submission within the normal time limit. Complaints or appeals received beyond the normal time limit shall be referred to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences who shall determine whether or not the matter will be investigated.

### 2.2 Anonymous Complaints

Complaints made anonymously shall not be investigated.

### 2.3 Responsibilities of Complainant

Complaints or appeals must be made in writing and include the complainant's full name and RCSI application number. The complaint should include as much detail as possible about the grounds for complaint or appeal, including relevant names and dates. The complaint or appeal should also include confirmation that the complainant or appellant consents to the matter being investigated with all relevant parties and to any information disclosed in the complaint or appeal being divulged to those relevant parties.

### 2.4 Monitoring

Individual departments shall keep a record of complaints and appeals received and investigated and report annually all such matters to the Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.



## 2.5 Confidentiality

All information which a complainant provides in the course of an investigation shall be treated as confidential; subject to the need to divulge such material to relevant parties in the course of the investigation and subject to any requirements of the Data Protection Acts.

Applicants who complain or appeal against the decision of an admissions committee will not be disadvantaged in any future application to RCSI as a result of the complaint or appeal.

## 3. Complaints Procedure

### 3.1 Initial Investigation

a) The Head of School of Postgraduate Studies or nominee will determine whether the complaint discloses sufficient grounds related to the administration of the College admissions policies and procedures and will, wherever possible, attempt to resolve complaints quickly and informally.

b) If the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies is the object of a complaint, the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences will make arrangements for a senior officer from another part of the College to undertake the role in relation to the complaint.

c) If it is decided that the complaint does not disclose sufficient grounds, the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies, or nominee will explain the reason(s) for this decision in writing to the complainant.

d) If it is decided that the complaint does disclose sufficient grounds, the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies, or nominee will investigate the complaint, consulting all relevant parties.

e) Once all the necessary information has been gathered, the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies or nominee will judge whether the complaint may be resolved at that point by conveying information gathered, or whether the matter needs to be considered at a higher level.

f) If it is judged that a resolution can be achieved, the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies or nominee will put the response in writing to the complainant.

g) If it is judged that the matter needs to be referred for consideration at a higher level, the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies will refer the matter to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. The Dean or nominee shall then act as Complaints Officer.

### 3.2. Investigation by the Complaints Officer

a) The Complaints Officer shall investigate the complaint and may seek any further information that is deemed necessary to come to a decision.

b) A record of all proceedings shall be maintained.

c) The Complaints Officer shall determine the outcome of the complaint.

d) The outcome may include:

- dismissal of the complaint or
- finding the complaint justified

e) As soon as possible after completion of the investigation, which shall be conducted as expeditiously as is reasonably practicable, the Complaints Officer will notify the complainant in writing of the outcome and consequential action, if any, to be taken.



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## **4. Appeals Procedure**

### **4.1. Initial Investigation**

- a) The Head of School of Postgraduate Studies or nominee will determine whether the appeal discloses a prima facie case on the specified grounds.
- b) If it is decided that it does not disclose a prima facie case, the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies or nominee will explain the reason(s) for this decision in writing to the appellant.
- c) If it is decided that the appeal does disclose a prima facie case on the specified grounds, the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies or nominee will investigate it, consulting all relevant parties.
- d) Once all the necessary information has been gathered, the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies will judge whether the appeal may be resolved at that point by conveying information gathered, or whether the matter needs to be considered at a higher level.
- e) If it is judged that a resolution can be achieved, the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies or nominee will put the response in writing to the appellant.
- f) If it is judged that the matter needs to be referred for consideration at a higher level, the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies will refer the matter to the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health sciences who will select a suitable nominee to act as the Appeals Officer.

### **4.2. Investigation by the Appeals Officer**

- a) The Appeals Officer shall be given administrative support by an administrative officer nominated by the Dean.
- b) The Appeals Officer shall investigate the appeal and may seek any further information that is deemed necessary to come to a decision.
- c) A record of all proceedings shall be maintained by the nominated administrative officer.
- d) Exceptionally, and where deemed appropriate by the Appeals Officer, the appellant and any other relevant parties may be invited to a hearing. Any person invited to attend a hearing by the Appeals Officer may be accompanied by a friend or representative. The nominated administrative officer shall provide the appellant, as soon as is reasonably practicable, with relevant case papers. The conduct of the hearing shall be for the Appeals Officer to decide.
- e) The Appeals Officer shall determine the outcome of the appeal.
- f) The outcome may include:
  - dismissal of the appeal or
  - finding the appeal justified
- g) As soon as possible after completion of the investigation, which shall be conducted as expeditiously as is reasonably practicable, the nominated administrative officer shall notify the appellant in writing of the outcome and consequential action, if any, to be taken.

## **5. Application for Review of Outcome of Appeal**

- a) An application for review of the outcome of a complaint or appeal shall be admissible only on the grounds of procedural irregularity on the part of the Head of School of Postgraduate Studies or nominee, or Complaints or Appeals Officer.
- b) A person wishing to apply for a review of the outcome of a complaint or appeal shall do so in writing, addressing the application to the CEO/ Registrar, RCSI, 123 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, within 14 days of notification of the outcome of the investigation. The CEO/Registrar may dismiss an application which does not provide a prima facie case on the specified ground.



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- c) If the CEO/Registrar, having reviewed the original complaint or appeal file and sought any evidence as appears to be necessary to reach a decision, considers there to be grounds for review, the matter shall be referred to the external independent arbiter of the College.
- d) The external independent arbiter of the College will determine the outcome of the review which shall be final.
- e) There shall be no further opportunities for review within the College.