

Appeals Policy

Graded Exams and Diplomas

1. Introduction

This policy is aimed at centres and candidates who are involved in the assessment of:

- Rockschool Graded Music exams
- PAA Graded Performance Arts exams
- RSL Diploma qualifications

The purpose of this policy is to set out the procedures that candidates, parents and teachers should follow if they wish to make an appeal to RSL.

This policy will be subject to review and monitoring by RSL and if necessary will be amended and updated following feedback from candidates and centres. All future versions of this policy will be flagged and will be posted on our website.

For other qualifications offered by RSL please visit our website for the Appeals policy applicable to your qualifications. These policies are available on our website at www.rslawards.com

Please note that we treat all appeals in confidence and will not make details available to any other parties.

2. Issue and review

The date of issue of this policy is January 2017. This policy will be reviewed annually.

3. Procedure for appeals

If a candidate wishes to make an appeal they may do so in writing using the Appeals form available on the RSL website and send to:

Exams Manager (UK)
Harlequin House
7 High Street
Teddington
TW11 8EE

or via e-mail to: appeals@rslawards.com

4. Appeals by candidates will be considered if they concern:

- a) Appeals against RSL's decisions on reasonable adjustments or special considerations requests
- b) Appeals against RSL's decision on the outcome of a malpractice or maladministration investigation
- c) Appeals in respect of errors in procedure
- d) Appeals in respect of errors in matching comments to marks awarded

a) Appeals against RSL's decisions on special considerations or reasonable adjustments

A candidate or teacher may make an appeal against RSL, if RSL has declined a request for a special consideration or reasonable adjustment. In these cases, the Head of Quality, will review the application and make a final decision about whether the grounds for refusal were justified in terms of fair access to assessment and the Equal Opportunities and Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policies. If a candidate wishes to take their appeal further, they can contact the relevant regulatory authorities.

b) Appeals against RSL's decision on the outcome of a malpractice or maladministration investigation

A candidate or teacher may make an appeal against decisions or judgements made by RSL on the outcome of a malpractice or maladministration investigation. In these cases, the Quality Committee will review the investigation and make a final decision about whether the decision was justified in terms of the malpractice and maladministration policy. If a candidate or teacher wishes to take their appeal further, they can contact the regulatory authorities.

c) Appeals against errors in procedure

Appeals against errors in procedure will only be accepted if the processes set out in the Examiner Handbook and any published syllabi have not been followed. If the appeal is upheld, RSL will only offer an uncapped re-sit of the examination.

d) Appeals against errors in matching comments to marks awarded

Appeals against errors in matching comments to marks awarded will only be accepted if the comments made by the examiners on report forms do not match the marks awarded and/or do not relate to the advertised assessment criteria and grading descriptors. Appeals which question the technical judgment of the examiner or the marks awarded will **not** be accepted if appropriate process has been followed. If the appeal is upheld, RSL will only offer an uncapped re-sit of the examination.

Please note any appeals received that do not comply with the four areas as stated above will either be re-classified to a complaint and dealt with via RSL's Complaints Policy, or forwarded to the relevant customer services department. The appellant will be informed of this judgement within 7 days of the Examinations Manager (UK) receiving their completed Appeals form.

5. Procedure for making an appeal

Candidates, parents or teachers should contact the Examinations Manager (UK) in the first instance no later than 30 days from the postmark of the result slip, with their completed Appeals Form. Please provide as much information as possible to enable a thorough investigation to be carried out.

An appeal can only be made once the result has been received. If a candidate, centre or teacher has contacted RSL by telephone they should follow any verbal contact with their appeal in writing to the Examinations Manager (UK) (email is sufficient to appeals@rslawards.com).

Only one appeal per examination will be accepted. This may come from either the candidate themselves if they are aged over 16, their teacher, or a designated person acting on the candidate's behalf e.g. a parent or carer.

6. Appeals procedure

All appeals consist of three levels.

First Level Appeal

The first level appeal will be managed by the Head of Assessment. A review will be carried out of the evidence available from the examination and judgement made about whether the appeal should be upheld or rejected.

We will inform you within **28 days** of acknowledgement of receipt of the appeal whether the appeal is successful.

Once the judgement has been made the appellant will receive written confirmation of the outcome. If the appeal is upheld and a free re-sit is offered RSL will agree a time limit with the candidate to protect the interests of all concerned and reproduce the original conditions as closely as possible.

The offer and acceptance of a re-sit will terminate the appeals process in regards that examination.

If no response to the appeal decision is received within 28 days of the decision being communicated to the appellant, RSL will close the appeal and no further correspondence will be entered into.

Second Level Appeal

If the appellant is unhappy with the judgements made in the first level appeal, then they have the right to a second level of appeal. The second level appeal involves a review of the decisions made in the first appeal by an appeals panel and a judgement made about whether the decisions reached in the first level of appeal should be upheld.

Once the judgement had been made the appellant will receive written confirmation of the outcome.

Second level appeals must be made no later than 14 days from the date of the previous decision.

We will inform you within **28 days** from the beginning of the second stage of the process whether the appeal is successful. A fee of **£25** will be applicable for each candidate up to a maximum of **£125** for five candidates or more which will be refunded if the appeal is upheld.

If no response to the appeal decision is received within 28 days of the decision being communicated to the appellant, RSL will close the appeal and no further correspondence will be entered into.

Third Level Appeal

If the appellant is unhappy with the decisions reached in the second level appeal, they may take their appeal to the third level which consists of a review by an independent representative who has no direct involvement with RSL. The decision of the independent representative will be reviewed by the Quality Committee and a final decision taken.

Third level appeals must be delivered to the RSL head office for the attention of the Examinations Manager, clearly marked as an appeal, no later than 14 days from the date of the previous decision. The decision of the Quality Committee is final.

We will inform you within **28 days** from the beginning of the third stage of the process whether the appeal is successful. A fee of **£50** will be applicable per candidate up to a maximum of **£250** which will be refunded if the appeal is successful.

If no response to the appeal decision is received within 28 days of the decision being communicated to the appellant, RSL will close the appeal and no further correspondence will be entered into.

Final Level Appeal

If a candidate is unhappy with the decisions reached in the third level appeal, they may take their appeal to the relevant regulatory authority. For England this is Ofqual www.ofqual.gov.uk, for Wales Qualifications Wales www.qualificationswales.org, for Northern Ireland CCEA www.ccea.org.uk; and for Scotland SQA Accreditation www.sqa.org.uk.

For qualifications taken in Scotland, candidates may appeal to SQA Accreditation at any point during the appeals process.