

Recruitment into Sub-specialty Training Appeals Policy and Procedures

1. Principles

The RCPCH recruitment process into sub-specialty training aims to be fair, reasonable, transparent and free from discrimination. Decisions are made in accordance with best practice, relevant College and national policies, employment legislation and statutory procedures.

Whilst the College tries to respond to the wishes and aspirations of the applicants undertaking the recruitment process, we also recognise that, on occasion, the recruitment experience may fall short of expectations. If an applicant who has been involved in the process believes this has happened, they can make use of this policy and the procedures described, which outlines how to make an appeal and how it will be handled. All appeals received regarding the quality of delivery of a specific part of the recruitment process will be dealt with in a consistent and equitable way.

Applicants wishing to make an appeal should only do so having read this document. In the case of appeals against the interview process, an applicant will also need to have read and agreed to the applicant declaration. Candidate appeals, and all accompanying statements and records, will be kept confidential as far as is possible and consistent with facilitating a fair and thorough investigation. Whilst a candidate's privacy and confidentiality will be respected, this therefore needs to be balanced with:

- The need for an open and fair investigation
- Any necessary remedial action being taken
- Appropriate reporting of the outcome of the investigation
- Any action(s) to be taken to improve the College's processes and quality of service

Candidate appeals may therefore need to be shared with other stakeholders who have been involved with the recruitment process and are responsible for its design and delivery. Examples include CSAC members, interviewers, shortlisters and members of the RCPCH Medical Recruitment Board. In such instances information will always be stored and shared securely and will not be retained longer than necessary.

2. Scope of the policy

Candidates can lodge an appeal about any aspect of the recruitment process. All appeals must be supported by clear evidence that published processes or procedures related to their application, shortlisting or interview have not been followed correctly.

3. What can applicants make an appeal about?

- Application - Not meeting the application window deadline or providing appropriate information regarding their eligibility: Evidence must be provided to show that the application form or other documentation required as part of the longlisting process were submitted in time¹ with clear evidence as to why an applicant feels they did all they could to meet the published deadlines or other published requirements. Evidence should be in the form of screenshots. This evidence can be verified by comparing with the internal audit log held in the Oriel system.
- Shortlisting - Appeals regarding scores given: An applicant must provide evidence that the stated shortlisting processes or procedures have not been followed correctly or that the accuracy of the score is incorrect: e.g., the applicant feels they have not been given the appropriate number of points for something that is clearly exemplified in the shortlisting scoring criteria².

¹ Deadlines could refer to either the published application window times or those applied to specific applicants during longlisting, who are required to provide additional evidence to prove eligibility. This would normally be 48 hours from when the College team have made the request for additional information.

² Appeals about the accuracy of the scoring should refer to specific items that are noted in the shortlisting scoring criteria, such as number of examples given/required, named roles, levels, or courses/events.

- iii. **Interview:** An applicant must provide evidence that the stated interview processes or procedures have not been followed correctly. All applicants will have the opportunity to bring any issues to the attention of the RCPCH Medical Recruitment Team, during a debrief that takes place as soon as their interview is complete. It is important therefore that applicants do not log out of the Osler system until they have been met by a member of the College team.

4. What is excluded from the appeals process?

The College excludes the following from its appeals process:

- i. Disagreeing with any of the objective judgements that have been made by the shortlisting or interview panels
- ii. Alleging unfairness of practice and/or process but not supplying evidence to substantiate the allegation
- iii. Anonymous appeals or appeals sent on behalf of an applicant
- iv. Appealing against any decisions the College is obliged to take to remain within appropriate employment law

5. Longlisting and shortlisting appeals

Before raising an appeal, please ensure it meets the criteria in 3 (i) or (ii). An applicant wishing to pursue an appeal will need to complete the Appeals Submission Form (appendix 1) below and submit it with full supporting evidence to subspecialty@rcpch.ac.uk. A Word version of the Appeals Submission Form is also available to download separately on the website here: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/recruitment-sub-specialty-training-application-guidance#downloadBox>

Failure to provide this evidence will mean that the appeal cannot be investigated.

As the recruitment process follows tight deadlines, it is important that appeals are submitted according to the following timeframes:

- i. Longlisting appeals – evidence should be submitted within 48 hours of the application window closing deadline or within 48 hours of receiving a request for additional evidence from the Recruitment team.
- ii. Shortlisting appeals – evidence should be submitted by 9am GMT Wednesday 4 January 2024

Please note that even if a shortlisting score is revised, it may still not mean that the applicant concerned will reach the standard for being invited to interview. Candidates should be aware that on review, shortlisting scores may increase or decrease if the shortlisting guidance has not been followed.

6. Interview appeals

The College team aim to resolve any issues that may occur during the interview, on the day. As stated above, all applicants will have the opportunity to discuss any issues they feel they have experienced during a short debrief session that takes place directly after the interview has finished. During this debrief applicants will be asked about their interview experience by a member of the RCPCH Medical Recruitment Team, who will address any issues immediately if appropriate or alternatively record and forward them to the appropriate party.

If there is a serious issue, such as having major technical problems which may have led to concerns around the panel's ability to hear an applicant's answer, this may be escalated to a senior member of the Recruitment Team, who will be either a senior member of College staff, the Lay Advisor or the independent Clinical Lead on the day.

In extreme circumstances, an applicant may be offered the chance to resit the interview at the end of the day. It will not be possible to give another interview on a different day as this would potentially give candidates an advantage over other candidates. It will also not be possible to consider additional posts in the recruitment round to accommodate a trainee who has had a technical problem during their interview. These trainees will have to reapply during the next recruitment round. This means that anything raised after the day of the interview will have limited options, but candidates retain the right to submit an appeal until

6pm GMT on the day after the interview. This should be in the form of a phone call on the day (up to 6pm GMT), or via the Appeals Submission Form (appendix 1), after that point.

Dealing with appeals

The RCPCH will acknowledge submitted appeals against longlisting/shortlisting decisions within 48 hours after the appeals deadline if not before. The RCPCH aims to investigate and respond fully to all appeals within a reasonable window of time, depending on the stage of the process concerned.

- i. Longlisting appeals: should be dealt with before the shortlisting window opens, following the deadline for applications, so that any applicants whose appeals are upheld can be included in the shortlisting process. As such it is vital that all appeals are submitted within the times stated above in 5 (i).
- ii. Shortlisting appeals: will be dealt with via panel discussion, with decisions provided to the applicants thereafter with appropriate time allowed before the interview period. The panel will consist of the Assistant Officer for Recruitment (sub-specialties), Lay Chair for the sub-specialty recruitment process, trainee representative, Head of Medical Recruitment and the Medical Recruitment Co-ordinator or their appointed deputies.
- iii. Interview appeals not resolved on the day of interview will be dealt with via panel discussion. In the unlikely event that an issue cannot be dealt with on the day a panel, consisting of the Assistant Officer for Recruitment (sub-specialties) and/or Independent Clinical Lead for the interview day, Lay Chair for the sub-specialty recruitment process, trainee representative, Head of Medical Recruitment and the Medical Recruitment Co-ordinator, or their appointed deputies will make a decision regarding the appeal.

The RCPCH Medical Recruitment Team will write to any applicant submitting an appeal, explaining the reasons for the decision or why an appeal cannot be investigated as it falls outside the criteria of 3 (i), (ii) or (iii).

Where the College has upheld an appeal and proposes a solution, the applicant will be informed about this outcome in as timely a way as appropriate.

An applicant can withdraw their appeal at any stage in the process, by writing to subspecialty@rcpch.ac.uk.

7. Reappealing a decision

If an appeal is not upheld, an applicant may reappeal to subspecialty@rcpch.ac.uk within seven working days of being sent the decision. Applicants cannot simply reappeal because they disagree with the earlier decision, restate their appeal in a similar way, or provide evidence, which was previously available but not disclosed.

The only grounds on which an applicant can reappeal are:

- a) New evidence has come to light, which was previously unavailable
- b) There is clear evidence that the College misunderstood or did not consider the initial appeal fairly and/or fully

Evidence to substantiate the basis for the reappeal must be clearly provided. The College will acknowledge a reappeal within 48 hours and subsequently review the documentation provided and confirm whether sufficient grounds have been provided for the appeals process, within five working days of its receipt.

If evidence is sufficient to meet this requirement, it will be passed on to the RCPCH Officer for Recruitment, who will review all the evidence provided independently, and share their decision with the panel listed above. The applicant will then be advised of the outcome within twenty working days of the College confirming that the reappeal can proceed.

Where the College upholds a reappeal and/or proposes a solution, the applicant will be contacted about this outcome.

Appendix 1: Appeals Submission Form

Guidance on filling out the form

Applicants should only complete this form if they have read and understood the Recruitment into Sub-specialty Training Appeals Policy and Procedures 2023/2024 in full. In particular, applicants should be clear that their appeal meets the criteria in 3 (i), (ii) or (iii) of the process:

- iv. Application - Not meeting the application window deadline or providing appropriate information regarding their eligibility: Evidence must be provided to show that the application form or other documentation required as part of the longlisting process were submitted in time³ with clear evidence as to why an applicant feels they did all they could to meet the published deadlines or other published requirements. Evidence should be in the form of screenshots. This evidence can be verified by comparing with the internal audit log held in the Oriel system.
- v. Shortlisting - Appeals regarding scores given: An applicant must provide evidence that the stated shortlisting processes or procedures have not been followed correctly or that the accuracy of the score is incorrect: e.g., the applicant feels they have not been given the appropriate number of points for something that is clearly exemplified in the shortlisting scoring criteria⁴.
- vi. Interview: An applicant must provide evidence that the stated interview processes or procedures have not been followed correctly. All applicants will have the opportunity to bring any issues to the attention of the RCPCH Medical Recruitment Team, during a debrief that takes place as soon as their interview is complete. It is important therefore that applicants do not log out of the Osler system until they have been met by a member of the College team.

Deadlines for the Appeals Submission Form

Taken from criteria 5 (i), (ii) and 6 of the policy.

- iii. Longlisting appeals – evidence should be submitted within 48 hours of the application window closing deadline or within 48 hours of receiving a request for additional evidence from the Recruitment team.
- iv. Shortlisting appeals – evidence should be submitted by 9am GMT on Wednesday 4 January 2024
- v. Interview appeals – issues should be raised on the interview day in the debrief that takes place directly after the interview has finished. Anything raised after the day of the interview will have limited options, but candidates retain the right to submit an appeal until 6pm GMT on the day after the interview.

Completed forms and any accompanying evidence must be submitted to subspecialty@rcpch.ac.uk

³ Deadlines could refer to either the published application window times or those applied to specific applicants during longlisting, who are required to provide additional evidence to prove eligibility. This would normally be 48 hours from when the College team have made the request for additional information.

⁴ Appeals about the accuracy of the scoring should refer to specific items that are noted in the shortlisting scoring criteria, such as number of examples given/required, named roles, levels, or courses/events.

Appeals submission form

This form is also available on the RCPCH website in Microsoft Word

Name of applicant:	
Sub-speciality/specialties applied to:	
Part of process: Application/Shortlisting/Interview:	
Nature of appeal:	
Evidence (N.B. please provide any additional evidence as an attachment):	
Any additional, relevant information:	
Signed by applicant:	
Date:	

N.B. Personal information on this form will be used by RCPCH only for dealing with the appeal raised and determining if the appeal should be upheld. There may be limited circumstances where we would share your information with a third party, but we would inform you of this first.

Please supply any evidence as a separate attachment to this form.