

Current from July 2019; renewable July 2020

## **APPEALS POLICY**

### **PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING AN APPEAL & APPEALS FORM**

#### **Introduction**

The Spiritual Companions Trust (SCT) is an educational charity that delivers the Diploma in Practical Spirituality and Wellness (Crossfields Institute Level 3).

Following the conditions of Ofqual and our accrediting body, the Crossfields Institute, achieving this qualification requires rigorous and fair assessment.

Situations may occasionally arise when a student considers that their assessment has been unfair and wishes to appeal against it. This policy represents an appeals framework that ensures students can request a review of an assessment decision made by SCT where there are grounds to do so.

This policy clarifies what constitutes an appeal and the procedure for lodging an appeal.

For the purposes of this Procedure, SCT has adopted the following definition of academic appeal: 'A request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progress, assessment and awards.' (QAA UK Quality Code).

#### **Our Commitment**

In the event of an appeal the Spiritual Companions Trust wants, in the first place, to express our commitment to a friendly and equitable process with a satisfactory resolution for all involved. Our approach to education and learning is holistic and learner-centred.

We also want to assert our commitment to an educational approach of early intervention, so that potential challenges and problems are acknowledged and resolved as early as possible during a course.

This policy aims to ensure appropriate, fair and consistent treatment of all students.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that assessments awarded to students are fair and that SCT meets its obligation to assure assessment practice is in accordance with national standards and our awarding body's requirements.

It is SCT's policy that all appeals against assessment decisions are considered in an equitable, open and expedient manner and are resolved as early in the procedure as possible.



## Legitimate Grounds for an Appeal

Appeals against assessment decisions are considered on the following grounds:

- a. The assessment procedures have not been conducted in accordance with approved regulations.
- b. There has been some material administrative error or irregularity.
- c. The Assessor has been unaware of mitigating circumstances, which might have adversely affected the student's performance.
- d. Unfair discrimination is alleged.

If having exhausted the two stages of the appeals procedure, SCT does not agree that there are reasonable grounds for an appeal, the student may still decide to go ahead with an appeal directly to the SCT accrediting body, the Crossfields Institute.

## PROCEDURE

### Stage 1 — Informal resolution

1. If a student wishes to make an appeal relating to an assessment, the matter should be raised initially with the student's tutor. The appeal should be raised orally in the first instance. This must be done within ten working days of notification of the assessment decision.
2. The tutor will attempt to resolve the appeal informally. They will discuss it fully with the complainant and listen carefully to all the information provided.
3. The date of this informal meeting however and its outcome will be noted and communicated to the course IQA.
4. The tutor will communicate their response and their decision to the complainant as soon as possible, possibly during the meeting but no longer than five working days. This will normally be communicated orally.
5. If the student is not satisfied with their tutor's decision, they may then progress to the next more formal stage.

### Stage 2 — Formal Resolution

1. If the tutor is dissatisfied with the tutor's response they can now complete the Assessment Appeal form (Appendix 1) within 10 working days of the outcome at Stage 1. The completed form is then emailed to [admin@spiritualcompanions.org](mailto:admin@spiritualcompanions.org) with a subject header of 'Assessment Appeal'.
2. The Assessment Appeal form will then be passed immediately to the SCT Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) team. The IQA team will undertake an initial evaluation to check that the assessment appeal:
  - a. Is submitted under the correct procedures.
  - b. Falls within the grounds upon which an appeal may be made.



- c. Is submitted within the appropriate deadline.
  - d. Is in the required format.
3. If any of the above are not fulfilled then the IQA team will contact and explain the situation to the student within ten working days. They will also provide advice as to relevant next steps, which may for example fall within the scope of other SCT policies such as complaints.
  4. If the appeal satisfies the criteria as set out above, the IQA team will convene an Appeals Board meeting, normally within 10 working days of receiving the appeal. The composition of the Appeals Board will be made up of an IQA officer and two SCT educators.
  5. This board will not include staff who have considered the appeal at an earlier stage or been involved in delivery of the student's course. The student will be notified of the board's membership in advance of the hearing and may bring a friend or student representative with them to the hearing.
  6. If the student does not attend the Appeals Board, the board may continue to consider the appeal in the student's absence. The board may, if it wishes, adjourn the meeting if reasonable grounds for non-attendance have been provided (e.g. sickness absence)
  7. The decision of the Appeals Boards will be communicated in writing, via a formal report, to the student normally within 10 working days.

### **Further Appeal**

The SCT Appeals Board is the final stage of the internal procedure.

If the complainant still believes that the matter requires further attention then they must make representation to the SCT accrediting body, the Crossfields Institute, which has its own appeals policy and procedure.

**Appendix 1**

**Spiritual Companions Trust Assessment Appeal**

**P.1**

**APPEALS FORM**

Submission of this form initiates the formal stage of the Spiritual Companions Trust Appeals against Assessment Decisions procedure.

Before submitting a formal appeal you should have attempted to resolve the appeal informally by discussing the matter with your tutor to better understand the reason for the result or decision against which you wish to appeal. If the informal discussions have not resolved your concerns, you may invoke the procedure.

Please make sure that you sign the Declaration on Page 3.

**Note:**

You are responsible for submitting your own appeal. An appeal submitted by a third party will not be accepted unless SCT has received your written permission to do so

The Appeal Form must be emailed to [admin@spiritualcompanions.org](mailto:admin@spiritualcompanions.org) and include the subject header 'Assessment Appeal' within 10 working days of receiving notification of the outcome of the appeal at Stage 1

The Appeal document should be completed in full.

Any evidence in support of the appeal should also be included.

**Your details**

Full Name:	
SC Centre:	
Tutor name:	
Address for Correspondence:	
Tel No:	Mobile:
Email address:	



SCT Assessment Appeal

P.2

About your Appeal

**(A) Please state clearly the assessment decision you are appealing against.**

**(B) Please tick the box(es) below to indicate the grounds for your appeal**

<b>1. The assessment/examination procedures have not been conducted in accordance with the approved regulations.</b>	
<b>2. A material administrative error or irregularity has occurred.</b>	
<b>3. The tutor/assessor has been unaware of mitigating circumstances which may have adversely affected my academic performance.</b>	
<b>4. Unfair discrimination is alleged.</b>	

**(C) Please indicate the supporting evidence you are submitting in support of your appeal (e.g. medical certificate, emails and other correspondence)**

**(D) Please indicate without prejudice, what outcome you are expecting to see as a result of your appeal (e.g. "I would like the opportunity to re-submit my assignment/evidence.")**

**SCT Assessment Appeal**

**Declaration:**

I declare that the information given in this form is true. I confirm that I have completed the informal appeal stage and have consulted the Procedure before completing the form.

Signed:

Date:

**NB**

- SCT will endeavour to maintain confidentiality in relation to your appeal, but in order for this to be considered fully, the content will need to be disclosed to members of SCT staff who are involved in enacting the procedure as well as SCT staff whose involvement may be required to respond to the issues you have raised.
- By signing the declaration above you are consenting to the sharing of information relevant to the appeal within SCT at all stages of the procedure.