

Code	AP.001
Title	Appeals Policy
Status	Active
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Approved by	Stuart Matthew Hanson
Date Approved	05.01.2026
Revision Number	Version 1.0
Date last amended	02.01.2026
Date of last review	02.01.2026
Date of next review	02.01.2027
Contact Officer	Stuart Hanson
Distribution Status	Controlled

Civil and Commercial Professional Mediation Foundation Training Course

Appeals Policy

Course: IMI CMTP – Civil & Commercial Mediation

Purpose and Scope

This Appeals Policy sets out the principles, procedures, and quality assurance mechanisms governing all appeals submitted by learners on the Veritas Mediation Academy (VMA) IMI Civil & Commercial Mediation Professional Training Course (CMTP).

This policy ensures that:

- all decisions relating to assessment outcomes are made fairly, consistently, and transparently
- learners have access to a clear, accessible route for raising concerns
- reviews and adjudications are conducted by independent and qualified individuals
- procedural fairness and regulatory compliance are upheld

This policy applies to all assessments within the CMTP, including:

- **Assessment 1** – Practical Skills Demonstration and Reflection
- **Assessment 2** – Knowledge Essay: Conflict and Negotiation Theory
- **Assessment 3** – Knowledge Essay: Adapting Practice for In-Person Mediation
- all tutors, assessors, moderators and administrative staff involved in assessment
- all enrolled learners

Principles of the Appeals Process

These principles set out the standards that VMA must follow to ensure the appeals process is fair, impartial, transparent, supportive, and fully compliant with IMI and VMA requirements. Together, they safeguard learner rights and uphold the integrity and credibility of assessment decisions.

1. Fairness and Consistency

This means:

- Every learner is treated the same way.
- Appeals are reviewed using the same published criteria, regardless of who submits them.
- No learner is advantaged or disadvantaged based on who they are or who assessed them.
- Procedures are followed exactly and consistently for all cases.

In practice:

All learners receive the same documentation, deadlines, processes, and review stages.

2. Independence and Objectivity

This means the person reviewing the appeal must not be the original assessor. The reviewer must have no conflict of interest or bias and the decision is based solely on evidence, rubrics, and policy, not opinion or personal preference.

In practice:

An independent assessor or member of the Quality Team reviews the appeal to ensure impartiality.

3. Transparency

This means that learners know exactly how to appeal and there are no hidden steps or unclear processes. The grounds for appeal are stated clearly with timelines and possible outcomes openly published.

In practice:

The appeals policy, forms, timelines, and criteria are all available to learners before assessment begins.

4. Constructive and Supportive Approach

Appeals decisions will include developmental feedback even if the appeal is not upheld; feedback is designed to build competence, not discourage learners. Learners are supported in understanding what they need to improve.

In practice:

Every appeal outcome includes comments on strengths, learning needs, and next steps.

5. Regulatory Compliance

This means:

- VMA must follow the IMI Training Programme Requirements.
- The process must align with internal VMA policies, not exclusively Assessment Policy, Feedback Policy, Role Play Policy.
- Record-keeping, timelines, independence, and fairness must meet regulatory expectations.

In practice:

Appeals must be run in ways that can be externally audited or reviewed by IMI or quality assurance processes.

Definitions

- Appeal - A formal process by which a learner challenges a decision.
- Appellant - The learner submitting the appeal.
- Enquiry - An informal initial review to confirm the accuracy of assessment outcomes.
- Stage 1 Enquiry - First-level review of the result.
- Quality Assurance - Oversight ensuring compliance with IMI and internal assessment standard.

Stages of the Appeals Process

Veritas Mediation Academy is committed to ensuring that all decisions made by its staff and representatives are fair, consistent, and aligned with its policies and procedures. Appeals serve to determine whether the correct processes, procedures, and policies have been applied in a fair and consistent manner.

The appeals process consists of three stages, with each stage needing to be completed before progressing to the next.

Stage 1 - Enquiry

At this stage learners can challenge decisions made by Veritas Mediation Academy.

- **Acknowledgment:** Veritas Mediation Academy will confirm receipt of the enquiry within 5 working days.
- **Response:** A designated staff member will review the enquiry and typically provide a response within 10 working days (more complex cases may take longer).
- **Scope:** If the enquiry falls outside Veritas Mediation Academy's remit, the enquirer will be notified in writing within 5 working days.

Requesting a Review of Assessment Results

Learners can request a review of an assessment result if they suspect an error in grading. A third-party cannot submit requests directly to Veritas Mediation Academy on behalf of a learner.

Requests must be submitted within 10 working days from the date of result publication.

Veritas Mediation Academy's Review Process Includes:

- Verifying that all assessment procedures were correctly followed.
- Ensuring all assessment components were marked, recorded, and processed accurately.
- Checking that the final result was correctly determined, including appropriate application of grade boundaries.

To initiate a review, an Appeals form must be submitted within 10 working days of receiving the initial result. Applications should be sent to info@veritasmmediationacademy.com

Outcome of Enquiries

The learner will receive a response within 10 working days of submitting the request. The response will include the final outcome and, if necessary, details on how to proceed with an appeal (Stage 2).

Stage 2 – Appeal Process

An appeal determines whether Veritas Mediation Academy followed the correct processes, procedures, and policies. Appeals are reviewed by independent individuals who were not involved in the original decision and have no personal interest in the outcome.

The appellant must specify the reasons for their appeal and provide evidence of procedural errors. Additional documents may be submitted but must be clearly referenced.

For appeals following a Stage 1 enquiry, the appellant must demonstrate how Veritas Mediation Academy failed to follow proper procedures during the initial review. If the appeal lacks required information, it will be returned with instructions on what needs to be added. A deadline will be given for resubmission; failure to meet this deadline will result in the appeal being dismissed.

Appeals must be submitted in writing within 10 working days of receiving the enquiry outcome. Veritas Mediation Academy aims to review and respond to appeals within 20 working days.

Appeal Grounds and Limitations

Veritas Mediation Academy accepts appeals on the following grounds:

Type of Appeal

- A. Outcome of an enquiry regarding assessment results
- B. Malpractice – decision, penalty, or sanction following an investigation

Appeals will not be accepted if:

- They are submitted on behalf of a learner or group of learners.
- They lack sufficient details to support an investigation (the appellant will be given a chance to provide more evidence).

A representative from Veritas Mediation Academy, who was not involved in the original decision, will review the appeal, examining all relevant documents and policies to determine whether procedures were correctly followed.

- Type A appeals (assessment results) will only be reviewed after the enquiry stage is complete.
- Type B appeals (malpractice) can only challenge the resulting decision, not the actual findings of the investigation.

Outcomes of Stage 2:

A Stage 2 appeal can result in either rejection or approval:

- **Rejection:** If the review confirms that policies and procedures were followed fairly, the appeal is denied. The appellant will be informed and, if applicable, provided with details on how to escalate the appeal to an Independent Reviewer.

- **Approval:** If any procedural errors are found, the appeal is upheld. The appellant will be notified, and corrective actions will be outlined with appropriate deadlines.

If the appeal outcome raises concerns about other results, Veritas Mediation Academy will take necessary steps to safeguard all learners, cooperate with regulatory investigations, and implement any required remedial actions.

Appellants should be aware that investigations may impact learners' results, potentially causing delays or changes in final achievements.

Stage 3 – Independent Appeals Review

If dissatisfied with a Stage 2 appeal outcome, the appellant may request an Independent Appeals Review to verify whether Veritas Mediation Academy adhered to proper procedures.

- Stage 3 appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of receiving the Stage 2 decision.
- Veritas Mediation Academy will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days.
- The appeal must clearly explain how Veritas Mediation Academy failed to follow the required procedures.

If an appeal lacks necessary information, it will be returned with a deadline for completion. If not resubmitted within this timeframe, the appeal will not proceed.

Review Process:

- The appeal will be assessed by an independent reviewer with no ties to Veritas Mediation Academy.
- The review will take place within 20 working days of receiving a fully completed application.
- The reviewer ensures Veritas Mediation Academy met all regulatory requirements and properly handled the previous investigations.

Possible Outcomes:

1. If the review finds all policies and procedures were followed correctly, the appeal will be rejected.
2. If any procedural errors are identified, the appeal will be upheld, and corrective actions will be implemented.

The Independent Appeals Review is the final stage. If the appellant remains dissatisfied, they may contact the relevant regulatory body. Instructions will be provided in the outcome notification.

Internal Reviews and Corrective Actions

If an appeal or enquiry exposes procedural failures, Veritas Mediation Academy will:

- Identify any other affected learners.
- Correct the issue or, if not possible, minimise its impact.
- Implement measures to prevent future occurrences.

Corrective actions may involve additional reviews of learners' work, with up to 100% of samples verified. The Managing Director will oversee the response.

Appeal Fees

Stage	Fee	Notes
Stage 1 – Enquiry	Free	No cost to learner
Stage 2 – Appeal	£50	Refunded if appeal upheld
Stage 3 – Independent Review	£300	Refunded if appeal upheld

Protection of the Learner

No learner will be disadvantaged for submitting an appeal.

Vexatious Correspondence and Behaviour

Veritas Mediation Academy will not engage with:

- Abusive or threatening enquirers/appellants (via phone, email, video, or in person).
- Excessive, repetitive contact without new evidence.
- Unreasonable demands beyond the investigation scope.

- Accusations against Veritas Mediation Academy staff handling the case.

Such cases will be escalated to the Managing Director.

Zero Tolerance Policy

VMA enforces a zero-tolerance policy and prioritises a respectful and safe environment. Harassment, verbal abuse, and disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated. Severe cases may result in withheld services or legal action.

Monitoring and Policy Review

- This policy will be reassessed every two years or sooner if required due to feedback, regulatory updates, or operational changes.
- Updates may be made to ensure continued effectiveness.