

ACCREDITATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP



The British
Psychological Society
Partnership & Accreditation

Appealing against an accreditation decision

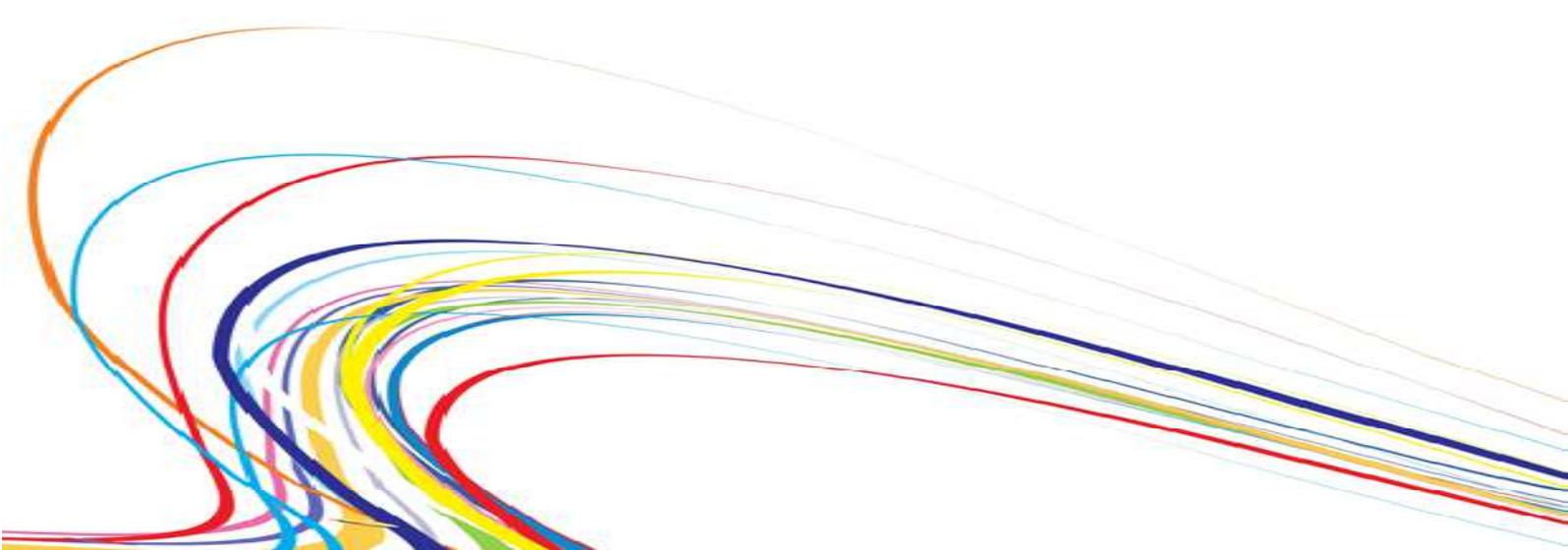
This document is aimed at education providers who are dissatisfied with a decision that the Society has taken in relation to programme accreditation, or who feel that due process has not been followed in reaching that decision. Anyone else wishing to make a complaint about an accredited programme should refer to our document on complaints (see www.bps.org.uk/accreditationdownloads).

The appeals process is designed to be equitable and transparent and has been developed to enable the processing of appeals against accreditation decisions. Accreditation decisions are taken in relation to education providers' programmes of education and training in psychology, and are normally taken by Society members undertaking visits or reviews on behalf of the Society, with support from the Society's Partnership and Accreditation Team. Visiting teams and reviewers are able to refer to other expert colleagues within the Society's education governance structure for support and advice prior to a decision being made, if required. The Partnership and Accreditation Team is responsible for advising when further advice would be appropriate, and the Partnership and Accreditation Committee is responsible, on behalf of the Membership Standards Board of the Society, for ensuring that *accreditation through partnership* is implemented in accordance with published policies and standards.

This document sets out the grounds on which an appeal can be made and how it is processed once it has been lodged with the Society. Our target is to normally conclude appeals within 40 working days of their receipt.

Lodging an appeal

All appeals must be made in writing to the Society's office within **two calendar months** of the date of the letter communicating the decision in respect of a partnership visit or review.



Grounds for appeal

An appeal can only be lodged on **one** of the following three grounds:

1. That the relevant standards were improperly applied in an individual case; or
2. That due process in the production of an accreditation report or decision letter was not followed; or
3. That further information that may have a significant bearing on the accreditation outcome has become available subsequent to a decision being made.

The onus is firmly on the education provider as the appellant to demonstrate why it believes that one of the above did not happen. Disagreeing with the decision of the Society is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

Processing an appeal

When an appeal is received it will be acknowledged and screened by the Appeals Manager. Screening will involve assessing the appeal to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been demonstrated. Screening will be undertaken with reference to the relevant standards for accreditation and the approved criteria for determining what constitutes an appeal.

No grounds for appeal

Where it is judged by the Appeals Manager that grounds for appealing against a decision have not been demonstrated, all of the documentation concerning the case will be forwarded to the Chair of the Membership Standards Board, or their representative, for review.

- ⇒ If the Chair is in agreement with the Appeals Manager the education provider will be advised in writing that the appeal is not allowable and the reasons for this will be clearly stated.

Grounds for appeal

Where the Appeals Manager judges that the grounds for an appeal have been made out case papers will be prepared. These case papers will consist of:

- Cover sheet detailing the grounds for appeal;
- Outline accreditation history including a chronology of applications made and outcomes;
- Copies of relevant correspondence and file notes relating to contact with the education provider.

The case papers will be forwarded to the Chair of the Membership Standards Board, or their representative, for review.

If the Chair is not in agreement with the Appeals Manager that there are grounds for appeal your case will automatically be referred to an Appeals Panel for it to decide whether you have grounds for appeal.

- ⇒ If the Chair is in agreement that grounds for an appeal have been demonstrated, the case papers will be forwarded to the Partnership and Accreditation Team with a request that a full report be prepared and submitted on the decision making process in this particular case.

Note: In all cases where the Appeals Manager and the Chair of the Membership Standards Board, or their representative, do not agree on whether grounds for appeal have been demonstrated, the case will automatically be referred to an Appeals Panel for consideration.

How an appeal progresses

The report produced by the Partnership and Accreditation Team will detail:

- How and why the decision was reached;
- What were the key factors that influenced the decision; and
- How the relevant standards were applied in reaching the decision.

In the interests of transparency and equity copies of the case papers and the Partnership and Accreditation Team's report will be forwarded to the education provider, the Chair of the relevant Society Training Committee, and the Chair of the Membership Standards Board.

Arbitration

Following the receipt by the education provider of the Partnership and Accreditation Team's report, the Appeals Manager, with the agreement of the education provider, may, if deemed appropriate, attempt to resolve the appeal informally through arbitration.

Such arbitration may be undertaken through telephone calls, e-mail or by letter and should only be used in cases where the appeal appears to have originated from a misunderstanding which is easy to resolve without convening an Appeals Panel hearing.

In some cases it may be appropriate to arrange a meeting with both parties to have an informal discussion about the decision with an appropriate member of staff – normally either the Education and Professional Development Manager or the Director of Membership Support and Services – in attendance.

If a satisfactory outcome is not achieved then the education provider will have recourse to the next stage of the appeals process, which is to convene a formal Appeals Panel to hear the appeal.

If the education provider does not want to have their appeal dealt with via the Arbitration process where offered it will progress directly to an Appeals Panel.

Appeals Panel

The Appeals Panel consists of three Chartered Psychologists who are members of either the Membership Standards Board or the Partnership and Accreditation Committee, who have been trained in the appeals procedure. No-one who has been involved with the education provider at any level will be included in the Appeals Panel. Members of the Panel will be required to declare any potential conflict of interest.

The Appeals Panel will be constituted as follows:

- Chair – a Chartered Psychologist who is a member of the Membership Standards Board;
- Two Chartered Psychologists from either the Partnership and Accreditation Committee or the Membership Standards Board, one of whom shall have relevant subject expertise.

A copy of the case papers previously received by the education provider, and the report from the Partnership and Accreditation Team will be forwarded to each member of the Appeals Panel. Should the Panel require any additional information it will be gathered via the Appeals Manager in advance of the hearing and be made available to both parties. This additional information may include:

- Additional information or clarification from the education provider;
- Information from the relevant committee(s) who have had oversight of the decision;
- Information from other sources if deemed necessary may be sought with the education provider's full knowledge.

Usually the Appeals Panel will meet to consider an appeal via teleconference. The education provider will be invited to be part of the discussions, however, they will be asked to leave the proceedings at the point the Panel deliberates its decision. If the Chair deems it appropriate, a face-to-face hearing may also be convened. The education provider is not able to choose how their appeal is heard.

The appeal will be considered in the light of the information collected and the standards that were applicable at the time of the accreditation visit to which the appeal relates.

The Appeals Panel, when reaching a decision, must not consider issues which fall beyond its remit and must restrict its deliberations to those matters which are of direct relevance to the appeal, paying due reference to the standards that apply in this instance.

Decisions of the Appeals Panel

The Appeals Panel will reach one of the following decisions:

- The appeal will be upheld and the original decision overturned;
- The appeal will be rejected;
- The appeal will be rejected, but with a recommendation that the Partnership and Accreditation Committee review its standards or procedures and the ways in which these are implemented by visitors and reviewers.

The education provider will be informed of the Appeals Panel's decision and if they are aggrieved by it then they have recourse to the Membership Standards Board, who will consider an appeal against the decision only on the grounds of due process not having been followed. In such cases the decision of the Membership Standards Board will be final and irrevocable.

More information

For more information on how to appeal and the appeals procedure please contact the Appeals Manager, Kajal Panchal, at the Society's Leicester office on 0116 252 9919 (direct line) or e-mail kajal.panchal@bps.org.uk.

Please note that a fee of £500 will be charged for the assessment of appeals against an accreditation decision.

In the event that the appeal is upheld, the Society will refund the total amount of £500.