



**The British  
Psychological Society**  
Membership Standards Board

# Appeals against decisions in relation to Membership of the Society, admissions to its registers and conferment of post-qualification awards

*September 2010*

## **Appeals Process**

In February of 2004 the Membership and Professional Training Board (MPTB), now known as the Membership Standards Board (MSB), approved a process for administering appeals made against decisions in respect of applications for membership of the Society and its Divisions.

The appeals process is designed to be equitable and transparent and has been developed to enable processing of appeals against decisions in respect of applications for membership of the Society and its Divisions. Decisions on applications for the Society's registers and post-qualification awards have subsequently been incorporated in the process.

This booklet sets out the grounds on which an appeal can be made and how it is processed once it has been lodged with the Society. We aim that you will have a decision regarding your appeal no more than 40 working days from its receipt.

## **Appeals Procedure**

**Lodging an appeal** – if you wish to appeal against a decision in respect of admission to membership or a Society register or a post-qualification award, your appeal 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 your application.

## **Grounds for appeal**

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

1. That the criteria and rules were improperly applied in an individual case; or
2. That due process in the assessment of an application was not followed; or
3. That further information that may have a bearing on the application has become available subsequent to a decision being made.

The onus is firmly on you as the Appellant to demonstrate why you believe that one of the above did not happen. Disagreeing with the decision is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

## **Processing an appeal**

When your appeal is received it will be acknowledged and screened by the Appeals Manager. Screening will involve assessing your appeal to determine whether you have made out the required grounds for appeal and will be undertaken with reference to the relevant application criteria and the criteria developed for what constitutes an appeal.

## **No grounds for appeal**

Where it is judged by the Appeals Manager that the 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 MSB, or their representative, for review. If the Chair, or their representative, is in agreement with the Appeals Manager you will be advised in writing of the reasons why your appeal is not allowable and the reasons for this will be clearly stated.

## **Grounds for appeal**

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

- A cover sheet detailing your grounds for appeal
- An outline of your application history including a chronology of your applications and their outcomes
- Copies of relevant correspondence and file notes relating to contact with yourself

The case papers will be forwarded to the Chair of the MSB, or their representative, for review. If the Chair, or their representative, is not in agreement with the Appeals Manager that there are no grounds for appeal your case will automatically be referred to an Appeals Panel for it to decide whether you have grounds for appeal.

NB: In all cases where the Appeals Manager and the Chair of the MSB, or their representative, do not agree on whether you have made out grounds for appeal, your case will automatically be referred to an Appeals Panel for it to decide whether you have made out grounds for an appeal.

## **How an Appeal Progresses**

If it is judged that grounds for an appeal have been made out, the case papers will be forwarded to the Membership Manager with a request that a full report be prepared and submitted on the decision making process in your case. The report will detail:

- How and why the decision was reached
- What were the key factors that influenced the decision
- How the relevant rules or criteria were applied in reaching the decision.

In the interests of openness and transparency a copy of the case papers and the report from the Membership Manager will be sent to both yourself and the Chair of the MSB, or their representative.

## **Arbitration**

After you have received the report of the Membership Manager the Appeals Manager, with your agreement, will attempt to resolve your appeal informally through arbitration.

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

In some cases it may be appropriate to arrange a meeting with yourself and the Membership Manager, or an appropriate representative, to have an informal discussion about the decision with the Appeals Manager in attendance.

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

If you do not want to have your appeal dealt with via the arbitration process it will progress directly to an Appeals Panel.

## Appeals Panel

The Appeals Panel consists of three members of the, MSB, or their representatives, who have been trained in the appeals procedure. No-one who has been involved in assessing your application will be included in the Appeals Panel. Members of the Panel will be required to declare any potential conflict of interest when they become aware of your identity.

The Appeals Panel will be constituted as follows:

- Chair – a Chartered Psychologist who is a member of the MSB
- Two Chartered Psychologists from MSB, or their representative, one of whom shall have experience of the relevant specialism

A copy of the case papers previously received by you and the Chair of the MSB, or their representative, and the report from the Membership Manager 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 yourself and/or the Membership Manager
- Information from other sources if deemed necessary may be sought with your full knowledge.

Usually the Appeals Panel will meet to consider an appeal via teleconference. Yourself and the Membership Manager, or an appropriate representative who has knowledge of your case will be invited to be part of the discussions, however, both of you 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. You are not able to choose how your appeal is heard.

The appeal will be considered in the light of the information collected and the rules and criteria that were applicable to the original application.

The Appeals Panel, when reaching a decision, must not consider issues which fall outside of its remit and must restrict its deliberations to those matters which are relevant to the consideration of applications with due reference to the relevant rules and criteria that will have been determined at the outset of the appeal.

## Decisions of the Appeals Committee

The recommendations that can be reached by the Appeals Panel are limited to:

- That the appeal be upheld and the original decision overturned
- The rejection of an appeal
- The rejection of an appeal but with a recommendation that MSB review some aspects of the rules, criteria or procedures.

You will be informed of the Appeals Panels decision and, if you are aggrieved by it, you have recourse to the MSB who will consider an appeal against the decision **only** on the grounds of process having not been followed. In such cases the decision of the MSB 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 offices on 0116 252 9919 (direct line) or e-mail [kajal.panchal@bps.org.uk](mailto:kajal.panchal@bps.org.uk)

**PLEASE NOTE THAT AS FROM 1 JANUARY 2009 A FEE OF £125 WILL BE CHARGED FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF APPEALS. IN THE EVENT THAT THE APPEAL IS UPHeld THE SOCIETY WILL REFUND THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF £125.**