

# ADC Assessments and Examinations Verification, Review and Appeals Policy

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## 1. Purpose

To define the Australian Dental Council process to handle requests for the verification, review and appeal of assessment and examination outcomes.

## 2. Overview

The Australian Dental Council (ADC) is committed to the delivery of high-quality services and follows strict and standardised assessment and examination processes to minimise the risk of any procedural errors and to ensure candidates are assessed fairly and equitably.

This policy sets out the verification, review and appeal procedures for those who believe that the outcome of their assessment or examination has been adversely affected by a procedural error. Verifications, reviews and appeals do not involve re-scoring or re-assessment of the candidate's performance on their examination. Detailed performance scores in the different components of the examination and/or examination questions and answers, are also not released to candidates.

**Verification** of examination outcomes is conducted when candidates wish to obtain confirmation that that the examination results provided to them accurately reflect the records held by the ADC. The process consists of a comparison of the results displayed on the candidate portal with the original candidate results on file, to ensure these have been reported correctly and there are no discrepancies.

**Review and appeal** of either an assessment or examination outcome is a two-stage process, distinct from verification, where a Review Panel (review stage) or an Independent Appeals Committee (appeal stage) reviews the assessment or examination processes undertaken and determines whether there have been any procedural errors that may have adversely impacted a candidate. Applications for review and appeal can be submitted only on the basis that there has been an alleged breach or error in the administrative process used.

Candidates can submit an *Application for Verification* and an *Application for Review* at the same time, as the two processes have different purposes and can occur concurrently. An *Application for Appeal* can only be submitted following determination of a review, by a candidate who remains dissatisfied with the review decision.

Prior to submitting an application for verification, review or appeal, candidates are advised to read this policy carefully. Applications must be submitted via ADC Connect within the specified timeframe and should include any relevant supporting documentation and be accompanied by the stipulated fee. Applications will not be processed until the fee has been received. For a list of current fees, please refer to the 'Fee Schedule' section on the ADC website [www.adc.org.au](http://www.adc.org.au).

The ADC reserves the right to change its assessment and examination procedures. Candidates should check the ADC website [www.adc.org.au](http://www.adc.org.au) for information.

## 3. Scope

### 3.1. In scope

This policy applies to all ADC candidates who believe their assessment or examination has been adversely affected by a procedural error. The policy allows for verification of the accuracy of the examination results provided to candidates and the review of the administrative processes carried out in the determination of their assessment or examination outcome.

### 3.2. Out of scope

This policy does not provide candidates the ability to contest the decision of ADC applications officers or ADC examiners with regards to the assessment of candidates' credentials or their performance during an examination. The re-assessment of an application and the re-marking, re-scoring or change of an examination outcome are also out of scope.

## 4. Principles

Principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will be applied in the implementation of this policy.

All ADC employees, ADC Review Panel members and Independent Appeals Committee members will behave according to the ADC values and will make decisions on the merits of each case and having regard to all relevant information available.

Candidates will be treated fairly and without biases. The ADC will advise candidates of the outcome of their application as soon as practicable following receipt and assessment of their application.

Candidates who receive an adverse assessment or examination outcome and who choose to submit an application for review or appeal will carry the burden of proof to establish the grounds relied upon in their application for review or appeal. Candidates will be afforded the opportunity to provide documentation in support of their application.

## 5. Policy

The following policy rules must be adhered to at all times during the application of this policy.

Policy rule	Policy statement
<b>Verification</b>	
5.1	An <i>Application for Verification</i> must be submitted via ADC Connect, together with the required fee, within 28 days of the date examination results are released to candidates on ADC Connect.
5.2	Candidates' results will be verified to ensure that the examination results held by the ADC accurately reflect the records provided to the candidate on ADC Connect.
5.3	Verification of candidates' results does not involve re-scoring or re-assessing the candidate's performance on the examination.
5.4	The outcome of the verification is either to confirm or to amend the candidate's results.
5.5	In the event a discrepancy is found requiring amendment of a candidate's result, the verification application fee is refunded to the candidate.
5.6	Candidates will be advised of the outcome of the verification within 4 weeks of submitting their application and payment of the relevant fee via ADC Connect.
<b>Review</b>	
5.7	An <i>Application for Review</i> must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) be submitted via ADC Connect within 28 days of the date when the candidate is notified of the outcome;</li><li>b) relate only to the administrative procedures of the candidate's assessment or examination;</li><li>c) specify the relevant grounds for review, as outlined under rule 5.8;</li><li>d) include all relevant supporting documentation (where applicable); and</li><li>e) be accompanied by payment of the relevant fee.</li></ul>
5.8	An <i>Application for Review</i> is deemed eligible where a candidate can demonstrate that the following grounds for review are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) the Standards for Assessment of Overseas Trained Dental Practitioners as published on the ADC website were incorrectly applied; or</li><li>b) there were significant deficiencies in the processes used by the ADC when undertaking the eligibility assessment; or</li><li>c) the procedural requirements and instructions, as specified in the relevant Examination Handbook and in the instructions for specific examination</li></ul>

Policy rule	Policy statement
	<p>sessions provided to candidates by the ADC, were not followed or not followed to a significant extent; or</p> <p>d) the candidate's performance was adversely affected by significant deficiencies in the examination procedures beyond the control of the candidate.</p>
5.9	<p>An <i>Application for Review</i> is deemed ineligible where the grounds for review outlined under rule 5.8 are not met. By way of example, the following matters are not considered grounds for review:</p> <p>a) disagreement with the standards set by the ADC for assessment of overseas trained dental practitioners;</p> <p>b) disagreement with the standard set by the ADC for the Written or Practical Examination in the relevant Examination Handbook;</p> <p>c) the mark or grade awarded to a candidate for their Written or Practical Examination or for any section of the examination;</p> <p>d) personal or other reasons that inhibit a candidate's ability to provide the required documentation for an eligibility assessment;</p> <p>e) personal or other reasons that inhibit a candidate's ability to undertake or prepare sufficiently for an examination;</p> <p>f) personal illness experienced during an examination.</p>
5.10	<p>Upon receipt of an <i>Application for Review</i>, the Director of Assessments and Examinations assesses if the application meets the requirements outlined under rule 5.7 and the grounds for review outlined under rule 5.8.</p>
5.11	<p>Where an <i>Application for Review</i> is deemed to not meet the requirements outlined under rule 5.7 and/or the grounds outlined under rule 5.8, the candidate is notified that their application is not valid and cannot be accepted. A 50% refund of the application fee is provided for ineligible applications.</p>
5.12	<p>Where an <i>Application for Review</i> is deemed to meet the requirements outlined under rule 5.7 and the grounds outlined under rule 5.8, the ADC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) refers the application to a Review Panel.</p>
5.13	<p>The Review Panel comprises a minimum of three representatives of the ADC Assessment Committee (including the Chair) and the CEO.</p>
5.14	<p>The Director, Assessments &amp; Examinations will make relevant information and records related to the candidates claims available to the Review Panel.</p>
5.15	<p>The candidate does not have the right to appear before the Review Panel.</p>
5.16	<p>The Review Panel must consider the administrative process, the outcome and all relevant information.</p>
5.17	<p>The Review Panel may inform itself as it sees fit, subject to the rules of procedural fairness and natural justice.</p>
5.18	<p>The Review Panel may, with any conditions it considers appropriate:</p> <p>a) direct that the outcome of the candidate's eligibility assessment is overturned;</p> <p>b) direct that the candidate be permitted a further opportunity to resubmit an application for assessment to be assessed at the earliest opportunity, without charging (or refunding if already paid) an additional assessment fee;</p> <p>c) direct that steps are taken to reduce any impediments to progress of a candidate on the ADC pathway;</p> <p>d) direct that the candidate be permitted a further attempt at the examination at the earliest opportunity, without charging (or refunding if already paid) an additional examination fee. This may also include retention of the candidate's standing in relation to eligibility criteria as at the time of attempting the examination which is the subject of review;</p>

Policy rule	Policy statement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e) direct that the review application fee be refunded to the candidate in whole or in part, if the review upholds the candidate's submission;</li> <li>f) not uphold the candidate's claims or find them to be a non-contributing factor to the overall outcome.</li> </ul>
5.19	<p>The Review Panel may NOT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) exempt a candidate from the requirement to meet the <i>ADC Standards for Assessment of Overseas Dental Practitioners</i>;</li> <li>b) overturn the result of an examination and change a FAIL grade to a PASS grade in any section of the examination or in the examination overall;</li> <li>c) exempt a candidate from the requirement to pass an examination in a single examination attempt or exempt a candidate from any other requirements of the Examination (other than exemption from the eligibility criteria in the circumstances outlined under rule 5.18).</li> </ul>
5.20	<p>In accordance with rule 5.18, a candidate who is permitted a further attempt at the examination must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) meet any conditions imposed by the Review Panel;</li> <li>b) sit the examination at a time specified by the Review Panel.</li> </ul>
5.21	<p>The Review Panel makes a recommendation on behalf of the ADC.</p>
5.22	<p>The Review Panel is not required to give reasons for its decision.</p>
5.23	<p>The Director of Assessments and Examinations will advise the candidate of the outcome as soon as practicable following the decision of the Review Panel.</p>
5.24	<p>The ADC aims to complete the review process within 6-8 weeks of the application being lodged.</p>

## Appeal

5.25	<p>A candidate who remains dissatisfied with the decision of the Review Panel may submit an <i>Application for Appeal</i> and request a hearing from an Independent Appeals Committee (IAC).</p>
5.26	<p>A candidate may make an <i>Application for Appeal</i> only after an <i>Application for Review</i> has been made and determined.</p>
5.27	<p>An <i>Application for Appeal</i> must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) be submitted via ADC Connect within 28 days of the date when the candidate is notified of the outcome of the review;</li> <li>b) relate only to the administrative procedures of the candidate's assessment or examination;</li> <li>c) specify the relevant grounds for appeal, as outlined under rule 5.28;</li> <li>d) be made only on the same grounds considered in the <i>Application for Review</i>;</li> <li>e) include all relevant supporting documentation (where applicable);</li> <li>f) be accompanied by payment of the relevant fee.</li> </ul>
5.28	<p>An <i>Application for Appeal</i> is deemed eligible where a candidate can demonstrate that following grounds for review are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the Standards for Assessment of Overseas Trained Dental Practitioners as published on the ADC website were incorrectly applied; or</li> <li>b) there were significant deficiencies in the processes used by the ADC when undertaking the eligibility assessment; or</li> <li>c) the procedural requirements and instructions, as specified in the relevant Examination Handbook and in the instructions for specific examination sessions provided to candidates by the ADC, were not followed or not followed to a significant extent; or</li> <li>d) the candidate's performance was adversely affected by significant deficiencies in the examination procedures beyond the control of the candidate.</li> </ul>

Policy rule	Policy statement
5.29	<p>An <i>Application for Appeal</i> is deemed ineligible where the grounds for appeal outlined under rule 5.28 are not met; and/or new or additional grounds not already specified in the original <i>Application for Review</i> are raised. By way of example, the following matters are not considered grounds for review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) disagreement with the standards set by the ADC for assessment of overseas trained dental practitioners;</li> <li>b) disagreement with the standard set by the ADC for the Written or Practical Examination in the relevant Examination Handbook;</li> <li>c) the mark or grade awarded to a candidate for their Written or Practical Examination or for any section of the examination;</li> <li>d) personal or other reasons that inhibit a candidate's ability to provide the required documentation for an eligibility assessment;</li> <li>e) personal or other reasons that inhibit a candidate's ability to undertake or prepare sufficiently for an examination;</li> <li>f) personal illness experienced during an examination.</li> </ul>
5.30	<p>Upon receipt of an <i>Application for Appeal</i>, the CEO assesses if the application meets the requirements outlined under rule 5.27 and the grounds for review outlined under rule 5.28.</p>
5.31	<p>Where an <i>Application for Appeal</i> is deemed to not meet the requirements outlined under rule 5.27 and/or the grounds for review outlined under rule 5.28, the candidate is notified that their application is not valid and cannot be accepted. A 50% refund of the application fee is provided for ineligible applications.</p>
5.32	<p>Where an <i>Application for Appeal</i> is deemed to meet the requirements outlined under rule 5.27 and the grounds for review outlined under rule 5.28, the CEO convenes an IAC.</p>
5.33	<p>The IAC comprises of two external dental practitioners and at least one practitioner from another profession with experience in academia and assessments or examinations. All members are independent of the ADC and the ADC Review Panel.</p>
5.34	<p>The candidate has the right to appear and address the IAC and may be accompanied by a support person, but is not entitled to bring an advocate or spokesperson or legal representation before the IAC, unless the IAC has given its prior consent.</p>
5.35	<p>The IAC must decide each appeal on its merits.</p>
5.36	<p>The IAC is not bound by the rules of evidence and, subject to this policy and the rules of natural justice and procedural fairness, may regulate its own conduct and operation as it thinks fit, and may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) inform itself on any matter, and in such manner as it thinks fit;</li> <li>b) consider all relevant information which it thinks fit;</li> <li>c) invite any person to appear before it or to provide information.</li> </ul>
5.37	<p>The proceedings of the IAC, and other information provided to the IAC, shall be kept confidential except information released with the consent of the candidate and the report of findings to the ADC.</p>
5.38	<p>The IAC may, with any conditions it considers appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) direct that the outcome of the candidate's eligibility assessment is overturned;</li> <li>b) direct that the candidate be permitted a further opportunity to resubmit an application for assessment to be assessed at the earliest opportunity, without charging (or refunding if already paid) an additional assessment fee;</li> </ul>

Policy rule	Policy statement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c) direct that steps are taken to reduce any impediments to progress of a candidate on the ADC pathway;</li> <li>d) direct that the candidate be permitted a further attempt at the examination at the earliest opportunity, without charging (or refunding if already paid) an additional examination fee. This may also include retention of the candidate's standing in relation to eligibility criteria as at the time of attempting the examination which is the subject of the appeal;</li> <li>e) direct that the appeal application fee be refunded to the candidate in whole or in part, if the appeal upholds the candidate's submission;</li> <li>f) not uphold the candidate's claims or find them to be a non-contributing factor to the overall outcome, and reject the appeal.</li> </ul>
5.39	<p>The IAC may NOT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) exempt a candidate from the requirement to meet the <i>ADC Standards for Assessment of Overseas Dental Practitioners</i>;</li> <li>b) overturn the result of an examination and change a FAIL grade to a PASS grade in any section of the examination or in the examination overall;</li> <li>c) exempt a candidate from the requirement to pass an examination in a single examination attempt or exempt a candidate from any other requirements of the Examination (other than exemption from the eligibility criteria in the circumstances outlined under rule 5.38).</li> </ul>
5.40	<p>In accordance with rule 5.38, a candidate who is permitted a further attempt at the examination must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) meet any conditions imposed by the IAC;</li> <li>b) sit the examination at a time specified by the IAC.</li> </ul>
5.41	The decision of the IAC is final.
5.42	The IAC is not required to give reasons for its decision.
5.43	The CEO will advise the candidate of the outcome as soon as practicable following the decision of the IAC.
5.44	The ADC aims to complete the appeal process within 8-10 weeks of the application being lodged.

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

### 6.1. Candidates

Candidates are required to:

- Act in accordance with the ADC values
- Submit a complete application within the required timeframes
- Demonstrate the grounds for review or appeal are met
- Meet any conditions imposed by the ADC Review Panel and Independent Appeals Committee
- Accept the decision of the Independent Appeals Committee as final

### 6.2. ADC Employees

All ADC employees are required to:

- Act in accordance with the ADC values
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality are maintained
- Observe the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness
- Be compliant with this policy in the performance of their duties
- Keep the candidate informed of the process as appropriate

- Ensure continuous process improvements are implemented, where required, to avoid the likelihood of any administrative errors

### 6.3. ADC Review Panel members and Independent Appeals Committee members

ADC Review Panel members and Independent Appeals Committee members are required to:

- Act in accordance with the ADC values
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality are maintained
- Observe the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness
- Make decisions in line with this policy
- Recommend to the CEO actions to be undertaken, in line with this policy, as a result of their deliberations

## 7. Additional guidance

Candidates who require assistance with their verification, review and appeal application can contact the ADC at [assess@adc.org.au](mailto:assess@adc.org.au) regarding initial assessments and skills assessment, [written@adc.org.au](mailto:written@adc.org.au) regarding the written examination, or [practical@adc.org.au](mailto:practical@adc.org.au) regarding the practical examination.

Further information can be found on the ADC website.

## 8. Related documents

- [ADC Standards for Assessment of Overseas Dental Practitioners](#)
- [Candidate misconduct policy](#)
- [Privacy policy](#)
- [Examination withdrawal procedure](#)
- [Written examination handbook for general dentistry](#)
- [Written examination handbook for dental hygiene and dental therapy](#)
- [Practical examination handbook for dentists](#)
- [Practical examination handbook for dental hygiene and dental therapy](#)

## 9. Document information

<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Director, Assessments and Examinations		
<b>Approval date:</b>	18/02/2022	<b>Approved by:</b>	Board of Directors
<b>Effective date:</b>	28/02/2022		
<b>Date for review*:</b>	28/02/2024		
<b>File reference:</b>			

\*unless otherwise indicated, this policy will continue to apply beyond the review date

## Appendix A - Definitions

The following definitions are applicable throughout this policy:

### Appeal

An appeal consists of the review by an independent external panel (Independent Appeals Committee) of the administrative process undertaken to reach an assessment or examination outcome. An Application for Appeal can only be submitted after completion and determination of a review.

### Assessment

Assessment refers to the candidate's initial assessment and/or skills assessment.

### Examination

Examination refers to either the ADC Written Examination or the ADC Practical Examination relevant to the candidate's application for verification, review or appeal.

### Independent Appeals Committee

An Independent Appeals Committee (IAC) is an impartial committee convened by the CEO which comprises members independent of the ADC and the Review Panel. The IAC is composed of two external dental practitioners and at least one practitioner from another profession with experience in academia and assessments or examinations. The role of the IAC is to hear a candidate's appeal about an adverse assessment or examination outcome and to reach a final decision regarding the candidate's appeal application.

### Natural justice and procedural fairness

The principles underpinning the procedures used when making a decision. In practice these focus on the process rather than the outcome of a decision. Natural justice and procedural fairness relate to the responsibility for those making decisions to adopt fair processes and consider relevant information, and to the right for an applicant to be heard and to be treated fairly and without biases.

### Review

A review consists of the review by an ADC internal panel (Review Panel) of the administrative process undertaken to reach an assessment or examination outcome. Review is separate from verification and an Application for Review can be submitted at the same time as an Application for Verification.

### Review Panel

A Review Panel comprises a minimum of three representatives of the ADC Assessment Committee (including the Chair) and the CEO. The role of the Review Panel is to consider a candidate's Application for Review and to make recommendations to the ADC regarding the outcome of the candidate's application.

### Support person

A support person can assist and provide support to a candidate during the hearing of the IAC. Their role is to provide emotional support, or help clarify responses; it is not to be an advocate, spokesperson or legal representative for the candidate. A support person may take notes but is not entitled to address the IAC or speak on behalf of the candidate.

### Verification

A verification consists of the process of verifying that the soft copy records of the candidate's results held by the ADC accurately reflect the results provided to the candidate. Verification is separate from review or appeal and an Application for Verification can be submitted at the same time as an Application for Review.