



Appeals Policy

Appeals

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the process for applicants appealing against an accreditation outcome for Courses, Programmes and Schools evaluated by the International Council for Accreditation and Advancement of Public Health Education (ICAPHE). The appeal procedure applies to accreditations conducted under the relevant ICAPHE Accreditation Handbooks and aligns with best practice principles for evaluation agencies, including the ESG 2015.

Applicants may request an appeal in cases where:

1. The applicant receives conditional accreditation, requiring further improvements before reconsideration.
2. The applicant is not accredited or accreditation is revoked.

An appeal request must be based on procedural non-compliance with the relevant Accreditation Handbook, raising concerns about the fair and equal treatment of applicants. Only the applicant institution directly affected by the accreditation outcome may file a request.

2. External Review Committee for Accreditation Disputes (ERCAD)

ICAPHE will appoint the External Review Committee for Accreditation Disputes consisting of:

- Three primary members.
- A Chairperson elected from among the members.

The members of the ERCAD should consist of experienced evaluators representing relevant sectors of higher education.

Independence & Conduct

The External Review Committee for Accreditation Disputes functions independently, free from influence by higher education institutions, government bodies, stakeholders or ICAPHE. Members do not represent their background organisations but work to ensure fair and transparent decision-making within ICAPHE.

ICAPHE provides administrative support to the External Review Committee for Accreditation Disputes, ensuring that no involved officials participated in the original accreditation process of the applicant requesting the review.

All members must sign a confidentiality, conflicts, and ethics declaration. Any individual with a real or perceived conflict of interest will be disqualified from participating in the review.

This procedure ensures a structured, fair, and transparent review process, maintaining the integrity of ICAPHE's accreditation framework.

3. Filing and Processing an Appeal Request

Submission of Requests

- The accreditation outcome is communicated to applicants immediately following the ICAPHE Accreditation Review Board decision-making meeting.
- A request for Appeal must be submitted within 30 days of receiving the accreditation outcome (excluding the day of notification). Late submissions will not be processed.
- Requests must be emailed to appeals@icaphe.org.

Request Requirements

A valid request must be in writing and include:

1. The accreditation outcome being challenged.
2. The grounds for the request, specifying alleged procedural violations.
3. Supporting documents available during the original accreditation process (new materials will not be accepted).
4. The applicant's designated contact person for the Appeal process.

The request must also include a valid address for correspondence and be signed by the authorised representative of the applicant institution.

Request Incompletion & Supplementation

If a request is incomplete, the applicant will have 14 days to provide the necessary supplemental information.

4. Appeal Process

Evaluation of Requests

The External Review Committee for Accreditation Disputes (ERCAD), appointed by ICAPHE, will handle appeal requests. Upon receipt of a request, ICAPHE will forward all relevant documents to ERCAD including:

- The appeals document
- The accreditation report.
- The self-evaluation report and other materials submitted by the applicant during the accreditation process.
- Additional Accreditation Review Panel documents used in the accreditation decision.

ERCAD will assess the materials and may conduct hearings with the applicant and other relevant parties before issuing a resolution. Requests are generally processed within three months of submission.

External Review Committee for Accreditation Disputes Decision

ERCAD will examine the accreditation process holistically. If procedural error/s are found that may have impacted the fairness or equality of the accreditation decision, The procedural error/s must be explicitly stated in ERCAD's resolution. ERCAD decisions are final and may **uphold, modify or overturn the decisions** of the Accreditation Review Board.

If the request lacks the required supporting materials or contains new evidence not available during the accreditation process, it will not be processed.

Statement of Findings

The ERCAD's decision will be documented, including:

1. The date of the statement.
2. The applicant and accreditation outcome under review.
3. The final decision and its justification.

Applicants will be notified of the decision immediately following ERCAD's decision meeting.

Terms of Reference for the External Review Committee for Accreditation Disputes (ERCAD)

1. Introduction

Purpose

The External Review Committee for Accreditation Disputes (ERCAD) is established to ensure a fair, independent and transparent review of appeals submitted by entities contesting accreditation decisions made by the accrediting body. This document defines the Committee's terms of reference, ensuring consistency, integrity and procedural fairness in handling appeals.

2. Composition

Independence

The ERCAD shall consist of two members and a Chairperson, all of whom must remain impartial and independent. Members cannot have:

- Served on the original Accreditation Review Panel for the School, Programme or Course under appeal.
- Been involved in any capacity in the decision-making process that led to the appeal.
- Any real or perceived conflict of interest, as defined by ICAPHE's confidentiality, conflict of interest and ethical policy.

Expertise

Committee members must possess relevant experience and knowledge in accreditation processes to ensure an informed and competent review of appeals.

Chairperson

The ERCAD will appoint a Chairperson, who is responsible for:

- Leading and overseeing the Committee's proceedings.
- Facilitating discussions and ensuring constructive deliberations.
- Ensuring adherence to the terms of reference and procedural guidelines.

3. Responsibilities

Appeal Review Process

The ERCAD is responsible for conducting a comprehensive and impartial review of submitted appeals to determine whether to uphold, modify or overturn the original accreditation decision. This includes evaluating all relevant documentation and ensuring that the appeal process is conducted in accordance with accreditation policies and standards.

The ERCAD may seek further information or clarification from:

- The appellant.
- The original review team.
- ICAPHE Boards.
- The Secretariat Team.
- Any other relevant stakeholders deemed necessary to ensure a well-informed decision.

Appeal Hearings

If required, the ERCAD may conduct an appeal hearing, allowing the appellant to present their case in person or via a virtual platform. The hearing provides an opportunity for:

- The appellant to clarify concerns and present supporting evidence.
- Committee members to ask questions and gain additional insights before making a decision.

4. Decision and Reporting

Following the review process, the ERCAD will submit a written report to ICAPHE, outlining:

1. The date of the statement.
2. The applicant and accreditation outcome under review.
3. The appeal's key issues and considerations.
4. Whether the appeal grounds were satisfied or not.
5. A decision on whether to uphold, modify or overturn the original accreditation decision.
6. Justifications supporting the decision.

5. Confidentiality and Integrity

All proceedings, documents and deliberations of the ERCAD shall remain strictly confidential. Members must uphold the highest standards of integrity, impartiality and fairness, ensuring due process and the protection of all parties involved.

These Terms of Reference serve as a guiding framework for the operations of the External Review Committee for Accreditation Disputes, reinforcing a transparent and just accreditation appeals process.

This policy document is subject to periodic review.