

## Enquiries and Appeals Policy – Graded Music Examinations

### 1. Introduction

This policy is aimed at candidates who take RSL Graded Music Examinations from Debut to Grade 8 (Entry level 2 to Level 3 of the RQF) and their teachers and parents. It covers all units and assessment modes including Graded Examinations, Graded Certificates, and Performance Certificates both live and via video.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the procedures that users of these qualifications should follow if they wish to make an enquiry about a result or an appeal.

Separate policies are available for:

- Vocational qualifications
- Diplomas (post 2019)
- Music Theory and Music Production
- Performance Arts Awards (musical theatre and dance examinations)

All policies are available on the RSL website at <https://www.rslawards.com/about-us/policies-regulations/>  
Please check that the appropriate policy is being used as there are different approaches and procedures to follow.

This policy will be subject to review and monitoring by RSL and if necessary, will be amended and updated following feedback from candidates and centres. All future versions of this policy will be flagged and will be posted on our website.

Please note that we treat all appeals in confidence and will not make details available to any other parties except where requested by the appellant.

### 2. Issue and review

The date of issue of this policy is April 2020. This policy will be reviewed annually.

### 3. Procedure for enquiries and appeals

If a candidate wishes to make an enquiry about a result or an appeal, they (or their teacher or parent) may do so in writing to:

**Operations Manager (UK)**  
**Enquiries and Appeals**  
**RSL Awards Ltd.**  
**Harlequin House**  
**7 High Street**  
**Teddington**  
**TW11 8EE**

or via email to: [appeals@rslawards.com](mailto:appeals@rslawards.com)

Enquiries or Appeals should be **clearly marked** as such.

The following information should be included:

- Name
- Candidate number
- Nature of the enquiry or appeal (i.e. the basis on which the result is disputed or being questioned)

Please provide as much information as possible to enable a thorough investigation to be carried out.

If a candidate, teacher or parent has contacted RSL by telephone they should follow any verbal contact with an appeal in writing to the Operations Manager (UK).

An enquiry or appeal may be requested by the candidate themselves if they are aged 16 or over, their teacher, or a designated person acting on the candidate's behalf (e.g. a parent or carer).

The Appeals Panel for Graded Music Examinations will meet to consider enquiries and appeals on specific dates in 2020. These dates will be published on RSL's website.

RSL will not enter into discussion about an active enquiry or appeal with either the appellant or any other interested party.

**RSL will consider applications made in the following categories:**

**a) Enquiries about results**

A candidate or teacher may enquire about the accuracy or reliability of a result awarded.

**b) Appeals against errors in procedure**

A candidate or teacher may make an appeal if they feel that the processes and regulations set out for examiners and candidates have not been followed and this has materially affected the result of the exam.

**c) Appeals against RSL's decisions on special considerations or reasonable adjustments**

A candidate or teacher may make an appeal against a decision regarding an application for special consideration or reasonable adjustment.

**d) Appeals against RSL's decision on the outcome of a malpractice or maladministration investigation**

A candidate or teacher may make an appeal against decisions or judgements made by RSL in respect of a malpractice or maladministration investigation.

**4. Enquiries procedure**

***Video examinations (Graded Certificate / Performance Certificate)***

A re-mark of the video examination will be conducted by a Senior Examiner.

Please note that a re-mark may be higher *or* lower than the original mark, and the re-mark will stand as the official result.

The enquirer will normally be informed within **20 working days** of the panel meeting of the outcome of the enquiry. Where an enquiry involves further evidence to be collected or further review which will impact this timescale, they will be informed within the 20 working days that this is the case and a revised timescale provided.

Where an enquiry is made within **7 working days** of the end of a period, every effort will be made to resolve the enquiry prior to the appeal panel meeting at the end of the period. Should this not be possible, the enquirer will be informed of the revised timescale for the enquiry to be resolved, which may result in certification being delayed until the end of the following period.

A fee of **£35** will be charged per candidate for each enquiry submitted.

***Live examinations (Graded Examination, Performance Certificate)***

Each enquiry will be investigated and reported on.

Enquiries will be considered by the Appeals Panel (Graded Music Examinations) and the outcome will be reported after the panel has met. Enquirers will be informed of the date of the meeting in advance.

The investigation will consider any or all of the following as appropriate:

- evidence from statistical analysis including the result history of the candidate, results of other examinations in the same session, results awarded by the same examiner over time, etc.
- feedback from the examiner
- evidence / information provided by the person making the enquiry

The report may also consider the wider impact on a cohort or cohorts of candidates, depending on the nature of the enquiry and the initial findings.

The outcome of an enquiry could include:

**a) Upholding the enquiry** – this would be by majority decision of the panel and may include the offer of a free re-sit of the examination at the next available opportunity, or in exceptional circumstances, where there is clear evidence that an error of assessment is likely to have taken place, a small adjustment of the marks. If a re-sit is offered, RSL will agree a time limit to protect the interests of all concerned and reproduce the original conditions as closely as possible. The offer of a re-sit or adjustment to marks will terminate the enquiry.

**b) Rejecting the enquiry** – this would be by majority decision of the panel and no further action will be taken.

**c) Referral to an independent party** – in cases where the panel decision is inconclusive or split, the enquiry would be referred for decision by the RSL Quality Consultant who is not part of the panel and will have no prior knowledge of the enquiry.

The enquirer will normally be informed within **20 working days** of the panel meeting of the outcome of the enquiry. Where an enquiry involves further evidence to be collected or further review which will impact this timescale, they will be informed within the 20 working days that this is the case and a revised timescale provided.

Where an enquiry is made within **7 working days** of the end of a period, every effort will be made to resolve the enquiry prior to the appeal panel meeting at the end of the period. Should this not be possible, the enquirer will be informed of the revised timescale for the enquiry to be resolved, which may result in certification being delayed until the end of the following period.

A fee of **£35** will be charged per candidate for each enquiry submitted.

## **5. Appeals procedure**

The appeals procedure relates to alleged errors in procedure, or decisions on reasonable adjustments or malpractice. The appeals procedure can also be used where an individual is dissatisfied with the result of an enquiry. All appeals follow the same process as set out below.

### **5.1 First Level Appeal**

All first level appeals will be investigated by the Quality Assurance Team and reported to the Appeals Panel (Graded Music Examinations). The outcome of the appeal will be reported after the panel has met. Appellants will be informed of the date of the appeal meeting in advance.

Once the judgement has been made the appellant will receive written confirmation of the outcome. If the appeal is upheld, RSL may offer a free re-sit at the next available opportunity. If a re-sit is offered, RSL will agree a time limit with the candidate to protect the interests of all concerned and reproduce the original conditions as closely as possible.

We will inform the appellant within **20 working days** of the panel meeting whether the appeal has been successful.

Where an appeal is made within **7 working days** of the end of a period, every effort will be made to resolve the enquiry prior to the appeal panel meeting at the end of the period. Should this not be possible, the appellant will be informed of the revised timescale for the appeal to be resolved, which may result in certification being delayed until the end of the following period.

The offer and acceptance of a re-sit will terminate the appeals process.

If no response to the appeal decision is received within 20 working days of the decision being communicated to the appellant, RSL will close the appeal and no further correspondence will be entered into.

A fee of **£35** will be applicable per candidate involved in the appeal, which will be refunded if the appeal is successful.

### **5.2 Second Level Appeal**

If the appellant is unhappy with the decision reached in the first level appeal, they may take their appeal to the second level which consists of a review by an independent person who has no involvement with RSL, either currently or at any time in the past. The decision of the independent person will be final.

Second level appeals must be delivered to the RSL head office for the attention of the Operations Manager (UK), clearly marked as a second level appeal, no later than **14 working days** from the date of receipt of the previous decision.

A fee of **£50** will be applicable per candidate involved in the appeal up to a maximum of **£250**, which will be refunded if the appeal is successful.

The decision of the Quality Committee is final.

We will inform the appellant within **28 working days** from the date of receipt of the second level appeal whether the appeal has been successful.

Where an appeal is made within **7 working days** of the end of a period, every effort will be made to resolve the enquiry prior to the appeal panel meeting at the end of the period. Should this not be possible, the appellant will be informed of the revised timescale for the appeal to be resolved, which may result in certification being delayed until the end of the following period.

If no response to the appeal decision is received from the appellant within 28 working days of the decision being communicated, RSL will close the appeal and no further correspondence will be entered into.

### **4.3 Contacting the regulators**

If a candidate is unhappy with the decision reached in the second level appeal, they may contact the relevant regulator. For England, this is Ofqual [www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk); for Wales, Qualifications Wales [www.qualificationswales.org](http://www.qualificationswales.org); for Northern Ireland, CCEA [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk); and for Scotland, SQA Accreditation [www.accreditation.sqa.org.uk](http://www.accreditation.sqa.org.uk).