

Arboricultural Association

APPEALS PROCEDURE

May 2026

1. Background

- 1.1 The Arboricultural Association (the Association) administers membership and accreditations such as the Approved Contractor (AC) Scheme, Registered Consultants (RC) Scheme, Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and VETcert, amongst others. It also deals with professional complaints against members via its Complaints Procedure.
- 1.2 On occasion, an individual or company may not be satisfied with the decision of the Association pertaining to membership, accreditation or a complaint. When this happens, an appeal may be submitted for consideration.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Appeals Procedure is to create a single consistent approach to appeals which will be used across all areas of the Association's work.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure covers appeals relating to the following:
 - a) AC Scheme re/assessments and desktop audits.
 - b) RC applications, interviews and the quality assurance process.
 - c) CEnv applications and interviews.
 - d) VETcert examinations.
 - e) Membership applications and interviews.
 - f) Outcomes delivered through the Complaints Procedure.
- 2.2 This procedure does not apply to internal HR issues, complaints or grievances.

3. Grounds for appeal

- 3.1 Disagreement with a decision made by the Association is not necessarily grounds for an appeal. The purpose of an appeal is not to reconsider the original decision in full; it is to assess whether or not the original decision was a reasonable one.
- 3.2 An appeal can only be made on the following grounds:
 - a) The criteria used for making the original decision were incorrectly interpreted or applied by the people making the decision.
 - b) An administrative or procedural error was made by the Association which materially affected the outcome of the decision.
 - c) Extenuating circumstances occurred during the decision-making process of which the original decision makers were not aware but which would have materially affected the outcome.

4. Process

- 4.1 Appeals must be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Association. If the appeal is about a matter which directly concerns the CEO, such as a complaint about them, then appeals can be made in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- 4.2 Appeals must be submitted within 28 days of the date when the decision being appealed against was communicated to the relevant person, unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why it was not possible to appeal within 28 days. This will be determined at the discretion of the CEO and the Chair of Standards Committee.
- 4.3 An appeal must clearly set out the reasons for the appeal, with reference to the list of grounds for appeal set out in section 3.
- 4.4 Any supplementary evidence supporting the appeal should also be submitted at this time. Please note that if additional evidence is being presented at the time of the appeal, it must be evidence which was not available to the appellant at the time of the original investigation or decision. Any other evidence will be disregarded.
- 4.5 Upon receipt of an appeal, the CEO will inform the Chair of Standards Committee that it has been submitted. The CEO and the Chair of Standards Committee will then determine whether or not it is a valid appeal within the context of this procedure.
- 4.6 The appellant will be informed about whether or not the appeal has been validated within 14 days of the date of submission. If it is not validated, the CEO will communicate the reasons to the appellant in writing.

5. Appeal Panel

- 5.1 If the appeal is validated, the CEO and the Chair of Standards Committee will form an Appeal Panel of a minimum of three appropriate individuals to consider the appeal and make a recommendation.
- 5.2 "Appropriate individuals" might include members of the Association's Board of Trustees or working groups, Association members, Association staff, AC assessors, RC assessors, CEnv interviewers or VETcert examiners. This decision is at the discretion of the CEO and the Chair of Standards Committee.
- 5.3 The composition of the Appeal Panel will vary depending on the nature of the appeal. For example, an Appeal Panel relating to an AC assessment would likely be different to an Appeal Panel relating to a CEnv interview.

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The Malthouse, Stroud Green, Standish, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire GL10 3DL

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5.4 Before sending the appeal documentation to members of the Appeal Panel, the CEO will ensure that none of the prospective members have any conflict of interest with the parties involved, and that they were not involved in the original decision.

5.5 The Appeal Panel will be asked to review the available evidence and will decide, either individually or as a group, if the original decision should be:

- overturned in its entirety;
- amended; or
- upheld.

This recommendation will be communicated to the CEO and the Chair of Standards Committee.

5.6 The CEO and the Chair of Standards Committee will make a final decision based on the recommendation of the Appeal Panel. This decision will be communicated in writing to the appellant within seven days of the decision being made.

5.7 Where the appeal relates to a complaint, the final appeal decision will also be communicated in writing to the individual who made the original complaint within seven days of the date of the decision.

5.8 The decision relating to the appeal is final, and there is no further right of appeal.

6. Upheld appeals

6.1 If the appeal is upheld then the record of the original decision will be amended to reflect that. In some cases this will be the end of the process, and no further action will be required by any party.

6.2 In some cases an upheld appeal will require the Association to work with the appellant to arrange, for example, a new interview, exam or assessment. This will typically be at the Association's cost.

7. Fees

7.1 Depending on the nature of the appeal, fees might apply. For example, in situations where the Association is required to engage the services of an external assessor, interviewer or examiner there will be a cost to the Association for doing so.

7.2 Any fees involved will be communicated to the appellant at the time the appeal is made, and all fees will be refunded in the event of a successful appeal.

8. Document control

8.1 This Appeals Procedure is owned by the CEO.

8.2 It was validated by the Board of Trustees on 07/07/2025 and will be reviewed annually.

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