

This policy sets out the process for appealing funding decisions made by the HRB. It is important to note that disagreement with peer reviewers or panel members' comments are not grounds for an appeal. However, applicants may appeal if they consider that the process for reviewing their application was not adhered to or that it was not conducted fairly.

How funding decisions are made

For most awards, the HRB uses a process of competition and international peer review to decide which grant applications to fund. Guidelines (including eligibility and assessment criteria) are provided as a matter of course when the call for applications is issued and for most grant schemes, applicants use the HRB's online system.

The process of reviewing applications for funding is broadly similar across schemes, although details vary. An outline of the process can be found at <http://www.hrb.ie/funding/funding-schemes/before-you-apply/how-we-assess-applications/>. Ultimately the funding decision is based on two factors: 1) the relative ranking of an application based on the specific assessment criteria for the scheme compared to all other applications to the scheme and 2) the budget available.

Grounds for appeal

The aim of the HRB's appeals procedure is to ensure that the grant review process was conducted fairly. The Board bases its funding decision on the independent judgement of a panel and this decision is not open to appeal. However, applicants may appeal if they consider that the process was not adhered to or that it was not conducted fairly.

Appeals Procedure

All appeals must be initiated within six weeks of notification of the outcome of an application process to fall under this policy. The appeals procedure at the HRB has three stages:

1. Contact with relevant Programme Manager or Head of Pre-Award

Applicants whose proposals have been turned down for funding, and who are concerned about any aspect of the process, are encouraged in the first instance to talk to the relevant Programme Manager or Head of Pre-Award in the HRB, who may be able to provide additional information.

2. Review of the appeal by the Director of Research Strategy and Funding

If the applicant is not satisfied with the response received from the Programme Manager or Head of Pre-Award, s/he should submit a written request for a review to the Director of Research Strategy and Funding. The request should state clearly the grounds for the appeal and must be endorsed by the Research Office of the Host Institution. The Director will review the steps taken in the review process and issue a report within 30 days. The report will be sent to the applicant and copied to the Research Office of the Host Institution.

3. Further review by the CEO

If still not satisfied, the Host Institution may request a further review by the CEO of the HRB. The request must be in writing and must be signed by the President/Provost/Chief Executive Officer of the Host Institution and by the applicant. The request should explain why the institution is not satisfied with the review of the process conducted by the Director. The CEO will review this request and provide a written response to the Host Institution within 30 days. A third party expert may be invited to examine the case and make a recommendation, at the discretion of the CEO.

The decision made by the CEO is final.

The HRB will keep this policy under review and may make changes from time to time. Policy updates will be posted on the HRB website.

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