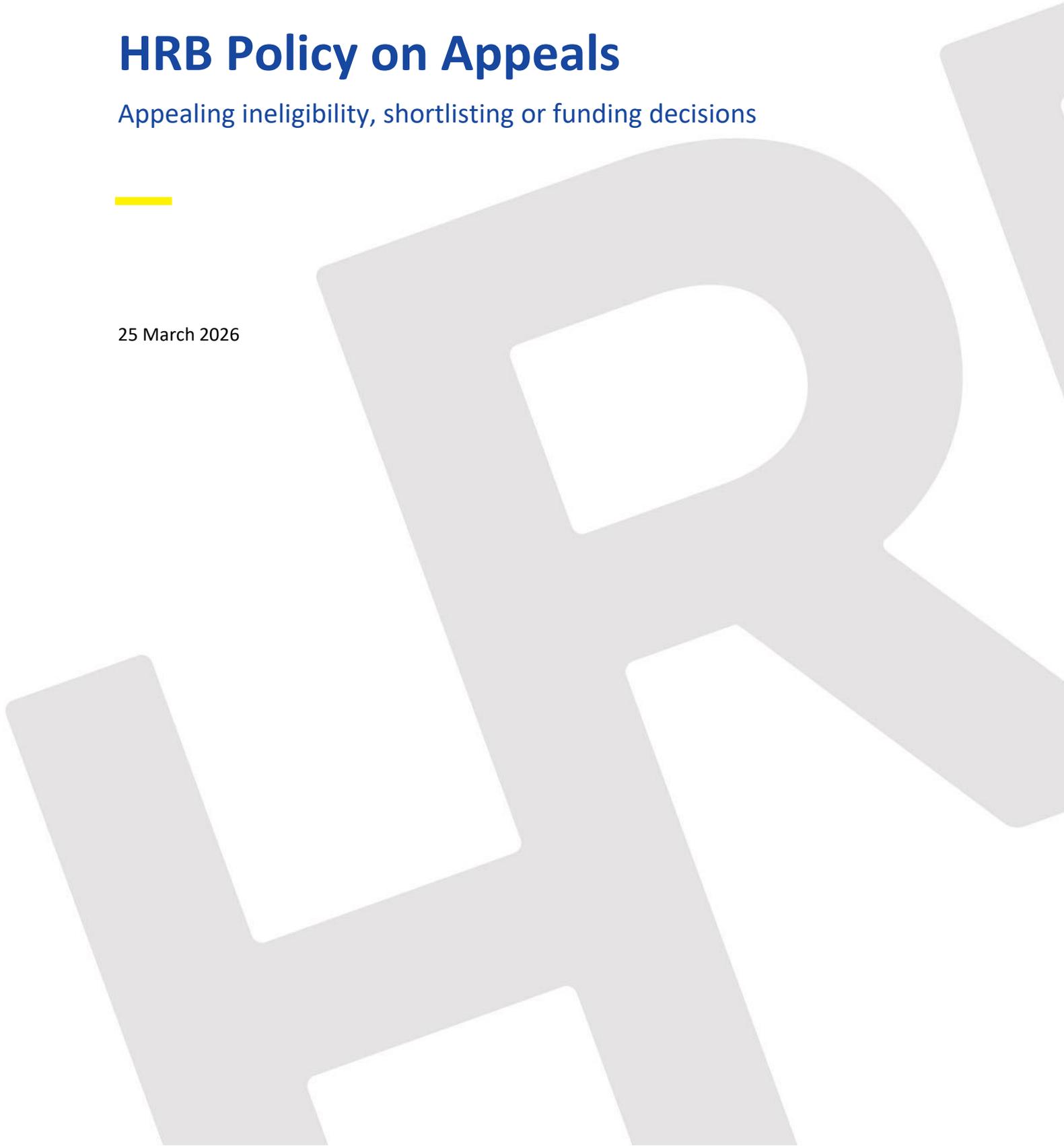


HRB Policy on Appeals

Appealing ineligibility, shortlisting or funding decisions



25 March 2026



1 Policy statement

This policy sets out the HRB's policy for handling appeals related to ineligibility, shortlisting and/or funding decisions in funding schemes where the HRB is the sole funder. The aim is to ensure that all decisions at these stages are determined fairly and consistently.

2 Grounds for appeal

Applicants may appeal if they think their application was not treated fairly at key stages of the application and review process, eligibility, shortlisting or funding decisions. There is a defined timeframe for each type of appeal to allow the application continuing as part of the overall process should the appeal be upheld, or to conclude the final funding decision for a call in a timely manner. It is important to note that disagreement with peer reviewers or panel members' comments are not grounds for an appeal.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to make contact in first instance with the research office in the relevant host institution, as they may be able to address the concern(s).

2.1 How ineligibility decisions are made

The guidance notes for all HRB funding schemes clearly set out eligibility criteria, typically requirements for the lead applicant or co-leadership team, the research team, scope of the research, etc. Immediately after the submission of applications to a scheme, designated HRB staff in the Research Strategy and Funding Directorate assess eligibility of all applications against the criteria and requirements publicly set out in the scheme documentation.

In some instances, the HRB may direct specific queries to the lead applicant before deciding on eligibility. In such cases, the query will be directed from the HRB to the lead applicant and nominated host institution, and a specific timeline will be noted (e.g. up to five working days) for receipt of a response. Extensions may be granted in exceptional cases, e.g. where the lead applicant is on leave or away on business. If the response to the HRB does not provide sufficient information or the applicant fails to respond within that set time frame, the HRB decides based on the information provided. Additional information provided after this timeframe will not be accepted by the HRB.

HRB staff consult with the assigned external Chair of the review panel for input and endorsement where the scope of any research proposal is considered ineligible.

Once the HRB determines that an application is ineligible, a letter is issued to the lead applicant and the relevant host institution stating the reason for the ineligibility.

2.2 How shortlisting or funding decisions are made

Guidelines on the HRB review process and the assessment criteria for each scheme are provided as a matter of course when the call for applications is issued. An outline of the process can be found at <https://www.hrb.ie/funding/funding-opportunities/how-we-assess-applications/>

Ultimately any decision at shortlisting stage or funding decision is based on two factors:

- 1) the rating of an individual application based on the specific assessment criteria for the scheme and
- 2) in competitive calls, the ranking of that application compared to all other applications to the scheme and the budget available.

3 Appeals process

Clear time limitations apply depending on the stage of the review process (see section 4). Appeals brought outside these timelines will not be considered.

Overall, the process for appeals of ineligibility and shortlisting decisions will take no longer than 20 working days, and the process for appeals of funding decisions no longer than 50 working days.

3.1 Informal engagement with HRB

Before formalising any type of appeal, applicants should make informal contact with the HRB staff responsible for that scheme to seek clarifications or further details.

Applicants should contact the relevant Programme Manager, who together with the Head of Unit may be able to address the query.

3.2 Formal appeal

If the applicant is not satisfied with the response received from the Programme Manager and Head of Unit, they may want to start a formal appeal process.

The HRB appeals procedure has two stages.

Stage 1: Submission of an appeal to be reviewed by the Director of Research Strategy and Funding

An applicant may submit a written request for an appeal with the support of their HI. The appeal should be addressed to Dr Teresa Maguire, Director of Research Strategy and Funding, to the Appeals@hrb.ie mailbox. The Programme Manager and Head of Unit should be copied in this correspondence. The request must clearly state the grounds for the appeal and must be endorsed by the research office of the host institution.

The Director of Research Strategy and Funding will review the steps taken and issue the outcome of their assessment in writing. The response will be sent to the applicant and copied to the research office of the host institution.

Stage 2: 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 Programme Manager should be copied in this correspondence. 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 the outcome of the further assessment, in writing, to the Host Institution.

In the case of the funding decisions, at the discretion of the CEO, a third-party expert may be invited to examine the case and make a recommendation.

The decision made by the CEO is final.

During the appeals process, there are two possible outcomes:

- The original HRB decision (on eligibility, shortlisting, or funding) remains unchanged.
- The decision is overturned, and a new outcome letter is issued to the lead applicant and host institution.

4 Timelines

Key steps	Ineligible and shortlisting decisions – time limitations	Funding decisions – time limitations
Informal engagement		
Ineligible outcome letter sent by HRB to lead applicant and host institution	Day 0	Day 0
Informal engagement with programme manager and Head of Unit	3 working days	15 working days
Programme manager or Head of Unit response	3 working days	5 working days
Formal appeal		
Formal appeal from lead applicant and research office to HRB RSF Director	3 working days	5 working days
Director response	3 working days	5 working days
Lead applicant and President/Provost/Chief Executive Officer request to CEO	3 working days	5 working days
CEO response	5 working days	15 working days

This policy comes into effect on 25 March 2026