

Lincolnshire ITT Application and Academic Appeals Policy

Policy Code:	ITT2
Policy Start Date:	April 2026
Policy Review Date:	March 2029

Please read this policy in conjunction with the policies listed below:

- ITT3 Lincolnshire ITT Recruitment & Selection Policy
- ITT4 Lincolnshire ITT Assessment Policy
- HR33 Records Management Policy

1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 All applicants and ITT trainees at Lincolnshire ITT have the right to submit an appeal in relation to decisions affecting their application, assessment, progression, or outcome in relation to an ITT programme.
- 1.2 References within this policy to Lincolnshire ITT include all accredited ITT provision delivered directly by Lincolnshire ITT (as part of The Priory Federation of Academies Trust) and through its approved Training Partner Schools.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any member of staff's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.
- 1.4 References to 'working' days within this policy refer to working days for Lincolnshire ITT. As such, weekends and holiday periods are not included within any stated timeframe, for example, five working days.

2 Roles, Responsibilities and Implementation

- 2.1 The Education & Standards Committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework. This committee delegates day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Director of Professional Learning.
- 2.2 Leaders and Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.

3 Aims

- 3.1 This policy sets out the process by which applicants or ITT trainees may appeal decisions relating to:
 - admission or rejection at application stage;
 - assessment or moderation decisions;
 - progression or completion of an ITT programme;
 - professional practice judgements; or
 - recommendations relating to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
- 3.2 The policy ensures that appeals are handled transparently, consistently, and within published timescales, in line with the expectations of accredited ITT providers.

4 Appeals

4.1 An appeal may be considered where the appellant can demonstrate that:

- published criteria, policies, or procedures were not correctly applied;
- a decision was based on inaccurate or incomplete information;
- there was a procedural irregularity in the decision-making process; and/or
- relevant evidence or agreed mitigating circumstances were not taken into account.

4.2 A difference of opinion with academic or professional judgement alone does not constitute valid grounds for appeal.

4.3 Lincolnshire ITT hopes that through working together and effective communication, any problems can be resolved at an early stage and prevent any need for an appeal. However, in the event that individuals feel that communication has not resolved the issue, then they should follow the relevant appeals procedure, making it clear from the outset that this is the course they now wish to take.

4.4 This procedure has been developed in accordance with sector best practice for Initial Teacher Training, reflecting the principles set out by the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) for fair, transparent, and robust appeals processes. It aligns with nationally recognised expectations for accessibility, impartiality, and thoroughness in the handling of appeals within ITT programmes.

4.5 The guiding principles behind our appeals procedure include:

- **simplicity** – simple, well publicised stages;
- **access** – appellants knowing exactly where, how and to whom they should appeal;
- **speed and clarity** - appeals being dealt with promptly, effectively and professionally within stated time limits and at as early a stage as possible;
- **action** – action being agreed and reviewed, with appellants kept informed of progress throughout each stage of the procedure;
- **objectivity** – To maintain objectivity during the appeal process, once the initial informal investigation has been completed, the individual who is the subject of the appeal will take no further role in handling it.
- **development** – opportunities for the Trust to consider changes to current practice on the basis of what appellants have said; and
- **fair** - treating the appellant impartially, and without unlawful discrimination or prejudice.

-
- 4.6 All appeals will be treated as confidential. Only those members of staff concerned with investigating the appeal will have access to the file. No confidential information regarding the investigation will be made available publicly.
- 4.7 In line with the Trust's HR33 Records Management Policy, documentation relating to appeals will be kept for 6 years from the date the appeal is closed.
- 4.8 Unless exceptional circumstances apply Lincolnshire ITT will not accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without informed consent of all parties being recorded.
- 4.9 If a recording device is used as part of the appeals process, e.g., to record a meeting where an individual might have communication difficulties, all parties should agree (informed consent) in advance to being recorded.
- 4.10 Trainees are expected to raise an appeal as soon as reasonably practicable and normally within ten working days of the issue arising or the decision being communicated. While appeals raised outside this timeframe may still be considered at the discretion of Lincolnshire ITT, this may limit the ability to resolve the matter and may result in the appeal being deemed out of time.
- 4.11 A trainee can raise an appeal relating to their ITT application or an academic outcome:

Section	Type of Appeal
5	<u>Application</u>
6	<u>Academic</u>

5 The Applications Appeals Procedure

5.1 The definition of an appeal for the purpose of this policy is as follows:

"....a request made by an applicant to review and reconsider a decision about their application as there is a belief that the original decision was affected by error, unfairness, or a failure to follow proper procedure".

5.2 The application appeals procedure is summarised below:

Stage	Raised to:	Acknowledged within:	Response within:	Next step:
<i>Prior to the appeals procedure being initiated applicants are encouraged to seek early resolution by discussing any issues directly with the ITT administration team. If the issue cannot be resolved through this discussion, the applicant may proceed to Stage 1 of the appeals procedure.</i>				
1 Informal	ITT Recruitment Lead	2 working days	5 working days	Resolved Or If unresolved, escalate to Stage 2
2 Formal	Lincolnshire ITT Lead or Director of Professional Learning	5 working days	10 working days	Resolved Or If unresolved, escalate to Stage 3
3 Formal Trust Review	Director of Professional Learning or Trust representative	5 working days	10 working days	Resolved/Closed

Stage 1 – Informal

5.3 Appeals relating to ITT decisions will normally be managed by the Director of Professional Learning or an appropriate senior nominee not previously involved in the matter.

Setting	Telephone
Lincolnshire ITT	01522 889297
	scittenquiries@prioryacademies.co.uk

- 5.4 Where appropriate, informal resolution should be sought in the first instance through discussion with the Professional Tutor or Programme Lead.
- 5.5 If informal resolution is unsuccessful, the appeal must be submitted in writing, clearly setting out the grounds for appeal and any supporting evidence.
- 5.6 For a Stage 1 informal appeal, Lincolnshire ITT will provide an acknowledgement within 2 working days, and will endeavour to provide a response (verbal or written) within 5 working days. If it is not possible to meet these deadlines, then the appellant will be informed when they will receive a response.

Stage 2 – A formal Appeal

- 5.7 In the event that an appellant considers that an informal appeal raised at Stage 1 has not been resolved, they may pursue the issue by means of a written letter of appeal addressed to the ITT Lead. This is designed to provide a fair, equitable and consistent arrangement for the investigation of any appeal.
- 5.8 If the appeal concerns the ITT Lead this should be directed to the Director of Professional Learning.
- 5.9 For the purpose of this policy, moving forward, the term 'Appeal Recipient' will be used to refer to either the ITT Lead or Director of Professional Learning as appropriate.
- 5.10 The Appeal Recipient will decide whether to delegate the investigation of the appeal to another member of staff or whether to undertake the investigation themselves. At the recipient's discretion, they can request that a member of staff from the Trust investigates the appeal on their behalf, or acts in an advisory capacity whilst the investigation is ongoing.
- 5.11 Another body may be commissioned to offer assistance to find a resolution to the appeal where required. This could include the provision of a mediation service, including facilitating meetings between the appellant and Lincolnshire ITT.
- 5.12 The person investigating the appeal will ensure that a written acknowledgement is provided to the appellant within 5 working days of Stage 2 commencing. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the next steps to be taken and will give a target date for providing a response to the appellant, which should normally be within 10 working days. If this target cannot be met, a communication will be sent within 10 working days explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised target date.

- 5.13 The person investigating the appeal will seek to speak, or meet, with all appropriate people in order to establish all facts relating to the appeal. This includes the appellant, staff and any other person.
- 5.14 Once all the relevant facts have been established, the person investigating the appeal will produce a written response to the appeal, or may wish to meet the appellant to discuss/resolve the matter directly.
- 5.15 A written response, if produced, will contain an outline of the appeal and a summary of the response to the appeal, including the decision reached and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, this will also include what action will be taken to resolve the appeal. If Stage 2 highlights any recommendations of changes in working practice the appellant must allow 60 working days for these recommendations to be embedded.
- 5.16 If the appellant is not satisfied by the results of Stage 2, then they can request to move to Stage 3 of this procedure. Should this be the case, the appellant must send a written request stating this to the Appeal Recipient, within 10 working days of receiving the response, or if Stage 2 highlighted any recommendations of changes to working practices, within 70 working days of receiving the response.
- 5.17 If no further communication is received from the appellant within 10 working days (or 70 working days where appropriate), it will be assumed that the appeal has been satisfactorily resolved and it will be closed.

Stage 3 – A formal appeal escalated to the Director of Professional Learning

- 5.18 If an appellant is not satisfied with the response received at Stage 2, they can request for their appeal to be escalated to the Director of Professional Learning. The appellant should notify the Appeal Recipient of this, who will inform the Director of Professional Learning.
- 5.19 If the Director of Professional Learning has managed the appeal at Stage 2, they will nominate a Trust member of staff to manage the appeal at Stage 3.
- 5.20 If the appeal relates to the Director of Professional Learning, then the Appeal Recipient will notify the CEO, who will appoint an appropriate member of staff to manage the Stage 3 appeal process in place of the Director of Professional Learning.
- 5.21 The Stage 3 Appeal Recipient will ensure that a written acknowledgement is provided to the appellant within 5 working days of Stage 3 commencing. The acknowledgement will give a brief explanation of the next steps to be taken and

will give a target date for providing a response to the appellant, which should normally be within 10 working days. If this target cannot be met, a letter will be sent within 10 working days explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised target date.

- 5.22 Where appropriate, the Appeal Recipient may seek to speak to, or meet with, individuals connected to the appeal.
- 5.23 A written response will contain an outline of the review undertaken by the Appeal Recipient and a summary of their response to the appeal, including the decision reached and the reasons for it. Where appropriate, this will also include what action Lincolnshire ITT will take to resolve the appeal. If Stage 3 highlights any recommendations of changes in working practice the appellant must allow 60 working days for these recommendations to be embedded. In addition to the written response, a face-to-face may occur with the appellant to discuss the outcome of the review.
- 5.24 Once Stage 3 has been concluded and the written outcome issued, the appeal is considered closed. No further stages are available under this procedure.

6 The Academic Appeals Procedure

6.1 The definition of an appeal for the purpose of this policy is as follows:

"....a request for review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on trainee progress, assessment and awards".

6.2 The academic appeals procedure is summarised below:

Stage:	Raised to:	Timeframe for acknowledgement:	Timeframe for response:	Next step:
<i>Prior to the appeals procedure being initiated trainees are encouraged to seek early resolution by discussing any issues directly with their Mentor/ Lead Mentor (ideally within 10 days of the application or academic outcome).</i>				
1 Informal Resolution	ITT Mentoring Lead	Immediate or 2 working days	Response within: 5 working days	Resolved Or If unresolved, escalate to Stage 2
2 Formal Appeal	Lincolnshire ITT Lead	(Submitted by appellant within 10 working days, of stage 1 outcome)	N/A	
3 Review, consideration and Investigation	Lincolnshire ITT Lead and/or Trust representative/ External Moderator/ ITT Partnership board	Acknowledged, 5 working days	10 working days from acknowledgement	Outcome
Investigation Outcome				
Escalation by complainant to OIA, if required.				

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

- 6.3 In the first instance, trainees should seek to resolve an appeal informally through discussion with their ITT Programme Mentor. The trainee should outline the nature of their issue and the grounds on which they believe the matter requires review. Contact may be made by telephone, email, or during a scheduled meeting.
- 6.4 The ITT Programme Mentor will consider the issue and, where appropriate, consult with relevant staff in order to seek a timely and proportionate resolution. Where the Programme Mentor has been previously involved in the matter, the appeal will be referred to an alternative appropriate member of staff.
- 6.5 Where an informal resolution has not been achieved, the appellant may elect to progress the matter to Stage 2 of the formal appeals process. This escalation should be initiated in accordance with the established procedures and within the required timeframes.

Stage 2 – A formal Appeal

- 6.6 Where a trainee considers that an appeal raised through Stage 1 (Informal Resolution) has not been resolved satisfactorily, they may submit a formal academic appeal. Appeals must be made in writing and addressed to the ITT Lead. The appeal must clearly set out the permitted grounds for appeal and be supported by relevant evidence. This process is intended to ensure that all academic appeals are considered fairly, consistently and transparently.
- 6.7 Appeals against an assessment or academic decision within Lincolnshire ITT may only be made on one or more of the following grounds:

a. Extenuating Circumstances

That the trainee's assessment performance was adversely affected by illness or other significant factors which, for good and substantiated reasons, the trainee was unable or unwilling to disclose to an appropriate responsible person prior to the assessment decision being made. Appeals submitted on this ground must be supported by a medical certificate or other appropriate independent documentary evidence.

b. Administrative Error

That an administrative error occurred which materially affected the outcome of the assessment or academic decision.

c. Irregularity in Assessment

That the conduct, content or outcome of the assessment was not carried out in accordance with the published regulations, policies or requirements of the ITT programme followed by the trainee.

d. Procedural Irregularity/Natural Justice

That the procedures followed by Lincolnshire ITT, or by staff acting on its behalf for the purposes of assessment, were not conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice, fairness and procedural propriety, and that this materially affected the outcome.

- 6.8 Dissatisfaction with academic judgement alone does not constitute valid grounds for appeal.
- 6.9 Upon receipt of the appeal, the Appeal Recipient will review the details of the appeal, including the stated grounds and all supporting evidence provided.

Stage 3 – Review, Consideration and Investigation

- 6.10 Where an appeal is deemed admissible, the Appeal Recipient will determine whether to investigate the appeal personally and or consult with the External Moderator. At the Appeal Recipient's discretion, a Trust or Partner School representative may be asked to undertake the investigation or to act in an advisory capacity.
- 6.11 Where appropriate, Lincolnshire ITT may commission an independent body to support resolution of the appeal. This may include mediation services or the facilitation of meetings between the appellant and relevant representatives of Lincolnshire ITT.
- 6.12 The person appointed to investigate the appeal will provide written acknowledgement within five working days of Stage 2. This acknowledgement will outline the next steps in the process and confirm a target date for issuing a formal response, which will normally be within ten working days. Where this timescale cannot be met, the appellant will be informed of the reason for the delay and provided with a revised target date.
- 6.13 Following consideration and investigation, the external moderator will determine either that the appeal is upheld in favour of the appellant, or that the original decision is upheld. Where the original decision is upheld and the appellant remains dissatisfied, an Assessment Review Board meeting will be convened, chaired by the Director of Professional Learning. The appellant will be invited to attend the meeting and present their case in accordance with this procedure.

Investigation Outcome

- 6.14 Where the Assessment Review Board determines that the appeal is upheld in favour of the appellant, the original assessment outcome will be amended accordingly and the appellant will be notified in writing.
- 6.15 Where the Assessment Review Board upholds the original assessment decision, the appellant will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter confirming the conclusion of the internal academic appeals process.

Escalation to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

- 6.16 If the appellant is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 3, they can make an appeal to the OIA.

The procedure for complaints can be found at: [How to Complain to Us – Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#)

7 Policy Change

- 7.1 This policy may only be amended or withdrawn by the Priory Federation of Academies Trust.



The Priory Federation of Academies Trust

Application and Academic Appeals Policy

This Policy has been approved by the Education & Standards Committee:

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Trustee

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Chief Executive Officer

Signed..... Name..... Date:

Designated Member of Staff

Please note that a signed copy of this agreement is available via Human Resources.