

Appeals Policy and Procedure

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Meridian Trust Initial Teacher Training (Meridian ITT) is the umbrella organisation for both The Cambridge Partnership and The Pilgrim Partnership.

(MERIDIAN ITT UKPRN 10053421)

MERIDIAN ITT will ensure that all admission processes and training programmes are designed and implemented so that everyone is treated in accordance with the MERIDIAN TRUST Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. MERIDIAN ITT understands that at times trainees and applicants may disagree with a decision made by SCITT staff or school mentors and may wish to appeal a decision. Therefore, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Complaints policy. MERIDIAN ITT reserves the right to reject a formal appeal that it considers to be unsubstantiated or frivolous. For MERIDIAN ITT to be able to investigate an appeal, it needs to be made within 15 working days of the incident in question.

If an appeal is older than 15 working days, MERIDIAN ITT has the right to not investigate the appeal.

Scope

The scope of this policy covers the following appeals.

1. Applicants who wish to appeal against decisions made during the recruitment and procedure.
These include, for example.
 - Appeals against being rejected prior to interview
 - Appeals against being rejected following an assessment centre
 - Appeals against conditions in a conditional offer
2. Appeals against assessment decisions made by MERIDIAN ITT staff.
3. Appeals against formal dismissal from the course.

Appeals against recruitment decisions

Applicants will be able to appeal against recruitment decisions. There are three stages to any appeal. It should be noted that the dispute of academic or professional judgements is not possible under the appeal system. However, applicants may appeal on the grounds that

- a) There has been a procedural irregularity. A situation where the applicant believes that MERIDIAN ITT has not adhered to its own stated policy and procedures.
- b) The emergence of new material which may have affected the decision. It must be made clear by the applicant as to why this information was not made available at the time of application. It should be noted that if this information was available at the time of application but not included, for any reason, it will not be considered as new information.
- c) Evidence of bias or prejudice

Any formal appeal must be submitted, in writing, by the applicant or by someone to whom the applicant has given written consent to appeal on their behalf within 15 working days of the decision.

The process

Informal appeals

Unsuccessful candidates will have received feedback on their application. For those candidates unsuccessful at the point of application, this information will be put onto the DfE Apply system. Further feedback can be given to clarify the reasoning. This feedback may be given in person, by telephone or by email. For applicants who are unsuccessful after interview, written feedback will be provided through the DfE Apply system, detailing the candidate's strengths and areas for improvement for future applications.

Formal appeals

Any applicant who wishes to lodge an official complaint or appeal against a decision is asked to do so, in writing, within 15 working days of the application decision. MERIDIAN ITT Director will respond and an appeals panel comprising experienced interviewers not involved in the original selection process will be convened to look over the trainee documentation and review the decision. MERIDIAN ITT Director and the independent appeals panel will normally respond within 20 working days from receipt of the appeal.

Should the applicant be able to clearly demonstrate that the independent appeals panel has not addressed the grounds of the appeal or has not fully understood the appeal, the applicant must contact MERIDIAN ITT Director, in writing, within 15 working days of their decision. MERIDIAN ITT Director will pass the complaint on to the Chair of the Strategic Board who will assess the argument and pass decision on the grounds for the appeal. At completion of this decision the applicant will be issued with a Complaints of Procedures letter making the decision final. If the appeal is successful, the applicant will be allowed entry on to the course

Appeals against assessment decisions

Trainees can appeal against assessment decisions at any point during their training year. There are three stages to any appeal. It should be noted that the dispute of QTS or EYTS judgements is not possible under the appeal system. However, trainees may appeal on the grounds that:

- Their performance as assessed was affected by exceptional factors which they were unable to submit to MERIDIAN ITT Director (and team) during the training year.
- Their performance was affected by administrative or material error in such a way that there may be reasonable doubt regarding the accuracy of an assessment decision

Trainees are also able to appeal against formal dismissal from the course.

The process Informal appeals

Stage 1: Written feedback. Before submitting a formal appeal, trainees are recommended to request written feedback on any assessment decisions. This will come from MERIDIAN ITT Director and be based on the evidence collected and quality assured throughout the year. Although this will be based on discussion with subject mentors, programme managers, and subject tutors it will be a confirmation of those decisions rather than a specific appeal against those same decisions

Formal appeals

Stage 2: Written appeal by trainee. Any trainee who wishes to lodge an official complaint or appeal against a decision is asked to do so, in writing, within 15 working days of the assessment decision. MERIDIAN ITT Director will respond within 15 working days and an independent appeals panel comprising professional tutors of schools where the trainee was not assigned, along with subject tutors from courses different to that of the trainee will be convened to look over the trainee documentation and make an assessment decision. If the appeal is rejected, a written response will be given to the trainee.

If the appeal is upheld the trainee will be allowed to

- resume the course if the appeal is during the training year,
- complete a final placement if the appeal is at the end of the training year.

Stage 3: Should the trainee be able to clearly demonstrate that the independent appeals panel has not addressed the grounds of the complaint or has not fully understood the complaint, the trainee must contact MERIDIAN ITT Director, in writing, within 15 working days of the stage 1 decision. MERIDIAN ITT Director will pass the complaint on to the external QA assessor who will assess the argument and pass decision on the grounds for the complaint. At completion of this decision the trainee will be issued with a completion of procedures letter making the decision final. If the appeal is successful, the trainee will be allowed to resume the course or 'resit' a school teaching placement should it be required.

Unsuccessful appeals Trainees have the right to make a formal complaint following an unsuccessful appeal and are directed to the complaints policy.

Office of Independent Adjudicators

If an appeal cannot be resolved, the trainee has the right to make a formal complaint to the OIA however, before a student can complain to the OIA, they must have first completed their provider's internal complaints or appeals procedures. Once they have done so, the provider should issue a Completion of Procedures Letter. This letter should set out clearly the issues that have been considered, the provider's final decision and the deadline for bringing a complaint to the OIA.

<http://www.oiahe.org.uk>