

SOLAS Craft Apprentice Exam Procedures

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1. Purpose

To outline the procedure for ATU Sligo Craft apprentices to:

1. Register to complete a repeat examination or assessment.
2. Receive communication regarding the repeat exam schedule.
3. Apply for a deferral of a Craft examination(s)/Assessment(s) at the ATU Sligo
4. Apply for special consideration by the Craft apprentices Examinations Board at the ATU Sligo
5. Facilitate an apprentice who believes they were not treated in compliance with the university's regulations to seek a recheck and/or of their examination materials in whole or in part and an appeal mechanism where they are not satisfied with the outcome of the recheck and review.
6. Send and receive communications to and from ATU.

2. Scope

This document relates to all Craft examinations and assessments conducted at ATU Sligo and is relevant to all registered apprentices and staff. Where there is a difference between the ATU Marks and Standards Policy and this document, this procedure takes precedence.

This procedure applies to Craft apprentices with failed or deferred elements who are required to register to repeat a Craft examination/assessment to complete their apprenticeship. The procedures are set out below.

- Craft apprentices repeating examinations/assessments previously failed.
- Craft apprentices sitting examinations/assessments that have previously been deferred.
- Communication of repeat examinations/assessments timetable to apprentices

This procedure applies to all repeating and 'on-block' Craft apprentices attending ATU Sligo where they have been automatically registered for an exam sitting or they have requested a registration for an exam sitting. Craft apprentices can have three attempts at any one exam.

Apprentices may appeal to the SOLAS Apprenticeship Appeal Committee to request a 4th attempt. Please see the Craft Apprenticeship Quality Assurance Manual / Apprenticeship Guideline 104 for more detail.

NOTE: It is important if an apprentice cannot attend the exam that they apply to the examination office for a deferral in advance of the exam. SOLAS do not remove an attempt for non-attendance.

3. Reference Documents

AQAE005 ATU Marks and Standards Policy

AQAE033 Procedure for Recheck, Review and Appeal

Office of the Ombudsman, Ombudsman Act 1980; Ombudsman (Amendment) Act 2012
[www.ombudsman.gov.ie/en/]

Craft Apprenticeship Quality Assurance Manual / Apprenticeship Guideline 104, 2023

4. Procedure

4.1 Registering to Repeat an Exam or Practical

Craft apprentices repeating Craft Examination/Assessment or sitting a previously deferred examination/assessment are contacted directly by SOLAS to repeat an examination/assessment. They must register to repeat the examination/assessment by sending an email to the examination's office in ATU Sligo, examinations.sligo@atu.ie.

Note: SOLAS will stop sending notification letters after 5 calls to repeat an exam. The apprentice then must contact SOLAS and the ATU exam office via email to be registered to repeat an exam.

The email must attach a recent (Approx 6 months) copy of the results letter issued by SOLAS.

The examinations officer will:

- Enter the details of each repeating apprentice into an excel document which is located on SharePoint. This document is accessed by administration and co-ordinator lecturing staff over the Apprentice programmes in the Faculty of Engineering.
- Each Craft apprentice is registered on to Banner to repeat their exam.

A charge of €100 is added to their student account. The apprentice can log in to self-service banner and pay fees online. Craft apprentices will also have access to Moodle once they are registered on to Banner. Should the repeat fee remain outstanding/unpaid, results will not be released to apprentices from SOLAS.

If an apprentice has paid the fee after the results release date has passed, they must email examinations.sligo@atu.ie so they can inform the relevant administrator to release the results.

4.2 Communication of repeat examinations/assessments timetable

SOLAS issue all examination/assessment timetables to colleges around the country. The ATU Sligo examinations officer responsible for timetabling of Craft examinations/assessments uses the timetable received from SOLAS to book rooms, invigilators, examination materials and compile an exam schedule relevant to ATU.

This completed schedule is sent to all repeating Craft apprentices registered to repeat.

4.3 Request for deferral.

An apprentice may request a deferral of a Craft examination(s)/assessment(s) sitting due to bereavement, accident, illness, work commitments, or other personal disruption.

A request for a deferral must be submitted by email to the ATU Sligo examination's office examinations.sligo@atu.ie. The request for a deferral can be submitted at any time before the exam is due to begin. The examinations office will confirm to the apprentice that a deferral has been received and will inform the relevant administrator in the faculty. These are recorded at the Craft Examination Board Meeting and on the Craft Apprentice Broadsheets.

There is no charge to Craft Apprentices for a deferral however there is the standard €100 registration fee for when they register for the next sitting.

4.4 Application for Special Consideration

An apprentice may request Special Consideration of an examination result by the Examination Board due to an unavoidable event that prevented a Craft Apprentice from performing to their best ability during an examination/assessment. This event may include for example, recent bereavement of a close family or friend, accident, or illness.

A request for special consideration must be submitted by email to the ATU Sligo examination's office examinations.sligo@atu.ie. The request should include an explanation supporting the request and supporting evidence e.g. medical certificate; bereavement notice etc.

The request for special consideration can be submitted after the exam up to one working day before the examination board is due to begin. Special consideration requests are forwarded by email to the relevant administrator in the faculty. These are recorded at the Craft Examination Board Meeting and on SOLAS apprentice Broadsheets.

There is no charge to Craft Apprentices to apply for a special consideration.

4.5 Recheck, Review and Appeal Process

Following the release of results by SOLAS to apprentices, ATU Sligo provides an opportunity for a consultation process for any apprentice to discuss their results with the internal examiners (lecturers).

It is the policy of ATU to:

(a) provide arrangements in relation to examination script viewing, examination mark reviewing, and appeals concerning examination matters which ensure that they are dealt with transparently and in a timely way and which may involve, as necessary, wholly independent persons of appropriate knowledge and experience in the process.

(b) recognise the rights of an apprentice to seek an appeal of examination results if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the recheck process.

(c) consider all requests in relation to examination matters in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

4.5.1 Stage 1: Consultation and recheck process.

An apprentice can request a recheck if they believe their results were recorded inaccurately.

A recheck is the administrative procedure of checking and ensuring that all parts of all assessments have been marked and that no error occurred in the recording, collating, or calculation of the final module mark and that they were treated in compliance with the University's regulations. This should provide sufficient clarity that the apprentice understands why they received the specific mark(s). The Head of department (HOD) is copied on all correspondence on consultation with student and lecturer(s).

Following the issuing of an exam result from SOLAS, an apprentice who has a query relating to their results or who is unclear as to the make-up of the final mark should meet, or make contact, with the lecturer (internal examiner(s)) within 5 working days of receiving their result.

As part of the recheck the apprentice has the right to an opportunity to view the script (in-person only) .

4.5.2 Outcome of consultation and recheck.

Recheck provides apprentice with:

1. A recheck to confirm that the mark is accurate, especially where an apprentice believes that there may have been an error in grading/adding up the mark.
2. A breakdown and basis of the grade/mark from the consultation process
3. Formative feedback or advice, especially if an apprentice needs to repeat.

There is no fee for Stage 1 Consultation and Recheck.

If, following the consultation, an apprentice wishes to request a **review** of the result(s) they may do so through Stage 2 below.

An apprentice can progress to Stage 3 below if they believe that they have other grounds for an appeal.

4.5.3 Stage 2: Review process

A Review involves the remarking of all relevant assessment material (as determined by the nature of the review request) by a second internal examiner(s) or other suitably qualified person if not done so already. This will be organised by the Head of the Department. The review will also require the Remarking of the script by a second internal examiner(s) or other suitably qualified person(s).

An apprentice can request a review if they believe their assessment was marked inappropriately based on the following grounds for review:

1. The evaluation of assessed material was erroneous and did not comply with the approved grading criteria.

The apprentice must complete EXAM040_001 Application for Apprentice Review OR Appeal of Grade(s) Form and email to appealresults.sligo@atu.ie.

The quality office refers the application to the Head of Department.

The Head of Department provides a written email response to the Quality office by providing the following information within a target of 7 working days.

- Apprentice Name, ATU Student Number and class group.
- Student grade for assessment in question
- Details of consultation with apprentice.
- Details of feedback to apprentice.
- Outcome of remarking by second internal examiner
- Department recommendation

4.5.4 Outcome of Review

The review process can result in one of the following, based on the recommendation of the independent internal examiner who carried out the remarking:

1. Recommend the Grade(s) remains unchanged.

If the recommendation is that the grade is unchanged, the review is closed, the grade is unchanged, and the decision will be communicated to the apprentice by the Quality Office.

2. Recommend Grade(s) is increased or decreased.

If the recommendation is that the grade is increased or decreased a *Change of Status form* will be completed and submitted by administration in the Faculty to SOLAS. The decision will be communicated to the apprentice by the Quality Office.

The review outcome cannot be appealed by the student as this is a matter of academic judgment.

4.5.5 Stage 3: Appeal process and circumstances for appeal

If the candidate believes the result was determined in a manner not in compliance with the University's regulations (see circumstances of appeal below), they may proceed to apply for an appeal.

An apprentice can request an appeal if they believe there was circumstances which meet the following grounds for appeal:

1. The assessment rules were not properly implemented.
2. Assessment conditions did not comply with the approved requirements for apprentice exams. An appeal on these grounds will be considered if the apprentice has reported the situation to the Invigilator/Examiner (lecturer) during or immediately after the test. This will be documented in the Invigilator report.
3. The assessment rules did not adequately cover the apprentice's circumstances.

4. Compassionate or medical circumstances existed which were not considered. (Evidence required e.g. medical certs, RIP notification etc)
5. Circumstances existed that may not have been covered by the assessment rules.
6. The apprentice believes that significant performance-related information was not considered by the assessor.
7. New information becomes available that was not available to the original examiner or Head of department.
8. There is evidence of irregularity in the conduct of the assessment, which might have affected its outcome.

Important Note: Where the recheck, review or appeal involves a failed module(s), the candidate is advised to apply to re-sit the module(s) through the examination office via email pending the outcome of the process.

4.5.6 Appeal Process

The apprentice is responsible for applying for an appeal within 15 working days of the release of results.

The apprentice must complete EXAM040_001 Application for Apprentice Review OR Appeal of Grade(s) Form and email to appealresults.sligo@atu.ie.

The quality office refers the application to the Head of Department.

Only a completed form with all required evidence submitted, within the deadline, will be considered. (See academic calendar for dates). If the circumstances for appeal are not met / not legitimate and the apprentice should have followed other procedures, the appeal will be rejected.

The Head of the Department is responsible for considering the application in full and consulting with the internal examiner(s) and any other relevant ATU Staff.

The Head of Department provides a written email response to the Quality office by providing the following information within a target of 7 working days.

- Apprentice Name, ATU Student Number and class group.
- Student grade for assessment in question
- Details of consultation with apprentice (If applicable)
- Details of feedback to apprentice. (If applicable)
- Outcome of a review (if completed)
- Any other details relevant to the appeal
- Department recommendation

All appeals meeting the grounds for appeal will be brought to an Appeal board. The Appeal Committee shall meet within a target timeline of 30 working days from the release of final results and make a decision. This may not be possible over the period of summer academic leave and the decision may be deferred to the beginning of the new academic year. See AQAE033 for composition of the Appeal committee.

4.5.7 Outcome of Appeal

The permissible outcomes of the appeals committee decision are:

1. The original mark/grade stands
2. The original mark may be increased/decreased in accordance with the recommendation of the department.
3. A retrospective deferral shall be awarded. In this case a *Change of Status form* will be completed and submitted by administration in the Faculty to SOLAS.

The decision of the Appeal board will be communicated to the apprentice by the Quality Office.

The decision of the Appeal Committee is final and cannot be appealed to any further function or by any further process within the university.

4.5.8 Fee for a Review or for an Appeal

A fee per application will be charged for a Review (€50) or for an Appeal (€50) or whatever amount is indicated in the current ATU fees schedule.

If the Review outcome is to increase or decrease the mark a fee will not be charged. If the Review outcome is the mark remains unchanged a fee will be charged.

If the Appeal is upheld by the Appeal Committee, no fee will be charged. The Appeal committee will make the final determination in relation to fees.

The fee will be added to the apprentice account after the outcome of the review, or the appeal committee has been communicated to the apprentice.

4.6 Communication to apprentices

All communication to apprentice will be to their ATU email address, unless for reasons beyond their control they have no access to this email.

All communication from the Quality office will be from the following email address:

appealresults.sligo@atu.ie.

5. Right to review by Ombudsman

If a student feels that they have been unfairly treated or are not satisfied with the decision/outcome, it is open to them to contact the Office of the Ombudsman. By law, the Ombudsman can

investigate complaints about any of the administrative actions or procedures of the university as well as delays or inactions in the candidate's dealings with the university. The Ombudsman is fair, independent, and free to use. The ombudsman does not consider matters of academic judgment.

The Ombudsman will ask the student for details of the student complaint and a copy of the ATU appeal response. Contact the Ombudsman by:

- Clicking on the 'Make A Complaint' link at www.ombudsman.ie
- Or writing to Office of the Ombudsman, 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773
- Or calling the Ombudsman on 01 639 5600 if the student has any queries or if the student need help making the student complaint.

6. Associated Documents Generated by this Procedure.

EXAM040_001 Application for Apprentice Review OR Appeal of Grade(s) Form

7. Measurement of Effectiveness of this Procedure

An anonymised summary report of data relating to this procedure will be provided to the Standards and Policy committee of Academic Council for consideration annually.

8. Revision History

Revision No	Description of Change	Approval Date
N/A	SOLAS001, SOLAS002, SOLAS003 and SOLAS004	27/09/2021
001	Rewrite of the procedure to combined previous 4 documents into one, incorporate information from EXAM027 and make more user friendly (EXAM040)	14/05/2024