

# Office of the Umpire

A User-Centric Approach  
to Online Services

mySocialSecurity

 public service



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# 01

## office of the umpire

The user experience of digital public services has significantly improved with the introduction of new and enhanced services that can be accessed anytime and anywhere. Online public services are now the norm rather than the exception and are expected to become even more prevalent as innovative technologies are adopted. To ensure a seamless experience, business processes are simplified when necessary, aiming to reduce unnecessary burdens on clients and enhance internal efficiency.

In recent years, the Department of Social Security (DSS) has implemented a range of online services, designed for ease of use. Digital platforms have become the default option for service delivery, and the department has made significant efforts to build trust and encourage wider adoption of these services. The Department of Social Security remains committed to providing an excellent service and will continue leveraging technology to deliver high-quality services in a timely manner. Users of these secure services greatly benefit from self-service capabilities.

The digitalisation of the Office of the Umpire has effectively addressed many challenges previously faced by stakeholders. In the past, stakeholders encountered difficulties due to the heavy reliance on paper-based methods for processes and communication. Manual processing of paperwork, filing and statistics reporting were laborious and time-consuming. However, through the implementation of digitalisation, the Office of the Umpire has streamlined processes, resulting in improved efficiency and enhanced convenience for all involved parties. Stakeholders now benefit from simplified procedures, reduced paperwork, faster access to information and efficient communication through email, leading to a more seamless and user-friendly experience.



# 02

## an appeal against a decision by the department of social security

### Overview

An appeal may be lodged by a Maltese or non-Maltese national against a decision by the Department of Social Security before the Social Security Umpire. One may lodge an appeal on a question of law or a principle of importance emerging from a decision by the Department of Social Security according to the Social Security Act (Cap. 318.). The appeal must be lodged within thirty (30) days from when one is informed of the decision. You can view the Social Security Act by clicking [here](#).

The online form provides an appellant with the option to choose their preferred mode of participation between attending an in-person hearing or opting for an online hearing, based on their convenience and comfort level. This flexibility allows appellants to have greater control over their hearing experience and ensures that their needs are accommodated. Whether attending in person or online, this online form aims to provide an accessible and efficient way to facilitate the hearing proceedings.

Once the details are vetted, a notification is sent to the appellant. Depending on what type of hearing the appellant chose, the email notification will include the date, time and venue of the sitting in front of the umpire. However, if the appellant requested to join as an online hearing, the email notification will include a date, time and link to join the online hearing.

### What you'll get

An applicant or beneficiary will receive a letter of explanation whenever the Department of Social Security makes a decision regarding their eligibility for social security benefits or for an overpayment resulting from a benefit which the beneficiary is no longer eligible for. If in disagreement with the decision, the person has the right to appeal against that decision.

## Eligibility

General eligibility criteria:

- An Appeal may be lodged against any decision except for decisions taken by a board of medical doctors.
- If an application for Invalidity Pension is rejected due to medical reasons, it can still be appealed.
- To submit an online appeal, the appellant or their trusted representative must authenticate using their own e-ID.

## Documentation required

General documentation:

- Letter issued by the Department of Social Security for which you are lodging an appeal.
- You may include additional relevant documentation to support your appeal through the online form.

## How to apply

Once you have carefully read the above overview, checked that you are eligible and have all supporting documentation available, you may wish to proceed to submit an appeal online by clicking [here](#).

A video tutorial is also available to guide you on how to submit an online appeal by clicking [here](#).


An online appeal may also be lodged on behalf of the appellant by a person of trust or by visiting one of the [servizz.gov](#) hubs. Click [here](#) to view a list of [servizz.gov](#) hubs.



# 03

## the appeal process

The Appeal Process offers a user-friendly online form for individuals to initiate appeals and track the progress effortlessly, ensuring a smooth experience.

- Maltese and non-Maltese nationals have the option to lodge an appeal either representing themselves or on behalf of another person, who can be a legal advisor or relative.
  - When an appellant submits an appeal using the e-ID authentication service provided by the Maltese government agency, Identità, their personal details will be automatically populated.
  - If a non-Maltese appellant is not in possession of a Maltese Identity Card but is a European Union citizen, there is the option to authenticate with eIDAS. However, if the appellant is not a European Union citizen, they can authenticate through Self-Registration mechanism.
  - The online form allows an appellant to attach relevant documentation and provide a justification for their appeal.
  - The online form is designed with a user-friendly interface that guides an appellant through the appeal process, including built-in validations.
  - An appellant can monitor the progress of the appeal submission through the Citizen Portal. Click [here](#) to access the Citizen Portal. They will also receive email notifications with important information, such as submission acknowledgements, hearing dates and appeal updates, providing guidance throughout the process.
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# 04

## the appeal back office process

The appeal back-office process adopts a paperless approach for the online form, except for the final appeal decision. As required by law, the appellant receives the final appeal decision via registered post.

- The appellant's appeal is received online at the Umpire's back office for processing.
- During the appeal back-office process, there may be interactions with the Department of Social Security Benefit Offices, Arbiters, and Department of Social Security Legal Office.
- The back office has the authority and capability to schedule or reschedule hearings for both the appellant and the Arbiters.
- The online form will be digitally archived in accordance with the Retention Policy, which can be accessed clicking [here](#).

# 05

## online appeal hearings by the office of the umpire

We provide online appeal hearings as an additional option alongside in-person hearing services at our offices.

### What are online appeal hearings?

An online hearing is a secure video-based proceeding conducted via Microsoft Teams over the internet. You can participate in these hearings safely from anywhere using a smartphone, tablet, or camera-enabled computer with a secure internet connection.

### What are the technology requirements to participate in an online appeal hearing?

To participate in an online hearing, you need access to an email address and a device equipped with a camera, microphone, speakers, and a secure internet connection.



## How to notify the department of social security for an online hearing

When applying for an appeal through e-ID authentication, you'll have the option to choose whether you want to attend the hearing in person or agree to appear at an online hearing.

- **Applying on your own behalf:** You can agree to appear at an online hearing by selecting the relevant option in the online eform when requesting an appeal.
- **Applying on behalf of someone else:** If an appellant agrees to appear at an online hearing, the appointed representative (if any) must also agree to participate in the same manner.

## What if you don't want to attend an online hearing?

If you initially agree to appear at an online hearing but later change your mind, you can contact the Office of the Umpire by either clicking [here](#) (and select Appeal against a Decision by the Department of Social Security from the drop-down menu) or calling us on +356 25903892 during office hours.

## What happens before my online appeal hearing?

If you chose to appear at an online hearing during the initial submission request, we will email you a link of the Microsoft Teams, which you will need to use for connecting with us.

To ensure a smooth participation in an online hearing using Microsoft Teams, we recommend the following steps before your hearing begins:

- **Invitation email** - When you receive the invitation email with the hearing link, select the link and test your connection.
- **Personal computer/laptop** - If you have a web browser that supports Microsoft Teams, it will open automatically. If you do not have the Microsoft Teams installed, you can choose to connect using the online version. If you have technical difficulties, contact the Office of the Umpire on +356 25903892.
- **Mobile device (Apple/Android)** - On a mobile device (tablet or smartphone), you can join using the 'Join online' version without installing the Microsoft Teams app.

Before the scheduled online hearing date, we may contact you for confirmation of your availability. We recommend connecting to the link at least 15 minutes prior the start of your scheduled hearing to ensure a smooth connection.

Disclaimer - Please be aware that Microsoft Teams is a non-government, third party application. When participating in an online hearing using Microsoft Teams, you may be requested to agree to Microsoft's terms of use and privacy policies. For further details, you can refer to our Internet Privacy Policy by clicking [here](#).

### What happens during the online appeal hearing?

During the online appeal hearing, the Arbiter, who is a lawyer with at least a seven-year warrant, will be present. The hearing will be conducted in the same manner as an in-person hearing. Additionally, there will be a representative from the Department of Social Security to present the case for the original decision. You or your representative will also need to attend this online hearing.

The Arbiter will ask you and any witness or witnesses to take an oath or affirm that your testimony is true. You will have a chance to testify and tell the Arbiter about your case. The Arbiter may ask you and any witness or witnesses questions to help make a decision in your case. You also will have the opportunity to ask questions during the hearing. You will be able to see and hear the Arbiter and your representative, if you have appointed one.

### How can I prepare for my online appeal hearing?

On the day of the online hearing, we may call you to confirm that you can access the online hearing using Microsoft Teams and provide technical assistance if necessary. In addition:

- Ensure your personal computer or mobile device remains connected to a secure wireless or wired internet connection from a private location (e.g. at your home or office).
- Have a nearby power source should you need to connect to charge your computer or mobile device, as needed.
- Notify the Arbiter if the camera, microphone or speakers are not working properly, or if you experience any other technical issues during the online hearing. In the event you become disconnected during your online hearing, please attempt to reconnect as quickly as possible. If the Arbiter is unable to continue the hearing, they may reschedule the hearing for a later date.

Click [here](#) to watch a short video on how to prepare for your online appeal hearing using Microsoft Teams.

# 06

## your privacy matters

During online hearings, all employees connect to the hearing using the Office of the Umpire's secure network and hardware. The Arbiter will conduct the online hearing from the Office of the Umpire using a secure internet connection in a private room. To further protect the privacy of online hearing participants, we ask that all hearing participants join the hearing from a private location.



**Excellence Guiding Your  
Social Security  
Journey**