

Enquiries and Appeals about Pearson Vocational Qualifications policy

For internal and external use

September 2014

Version 1.1

Quality, Standards and Research

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Enquiries and appeals about Pearson vocational Qualifications policy

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The key role of Pearson Education Ltd (Pearson) is to secure standards for those qualifications we certificate. As part of our commitment to quality assuring standards and therefore protecting learners, Pearson provides guidance and support to help centres and their learners achieve their learning and development goals. Pearson also ensures that any regulatory requirements our regulators impose on us are met, and that we support centres to meet those requirements.

Pearson regulatory policies are integral to our approach and articulate in a consistent way how we meet our regulatory requirements. They are reviewed annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. These regulatory policies apply to Pearson business units where UK regulated qualifications are developed, implemented or delivered.

This policy provides guidance on Enquiries and Appeals about Pearson Vocational Qualifications and replaces the previous version dated September 2013.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to all Pearson vocational qualifications, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) and Pearson Self Regulated Framework qualifications.

For information on enquiries and appeals relating to GCSE, GCE, Project and Principal Learning qualifications see the JCQ documents *Post Results Services* and *A Guide to the Awarding Bodies' Appeals Processes* available from the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk).

For information on enquiries and appeals relating to external assessment or external moderation within vocational qualifications see the JCQ documents *Post Results Services* and *A Guide to the Awarding Bodies' Appeals Processes* available from the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk). Further information can also be found in the Pearson Information Manual available from www.edexcel.com.

This policy does not apply to appeals against malpractice sanctions. In all cases of appeal against malpractice sanctions, Pearson will follow the procedures set out in the JCQ *Guide to the Awarding Bodies' Appeals Processes*.

This policy also does not apply to appeals against decisions regarding centre approval applications and qualification approval applications. Centres may follow the Pearson complaints route should they feel their application has been handled incorrectly.

Policy statement

This policy applies to enquiries or appeals made where:

- the centre disagrees with the outcome(s) from Pearson's external quality assurance activities (e.g. Standards Verifier report)
- the centre disagrees with a qualification decision made by Pearson (e.g. rejection of a late certification or registration request)
- a learner considers that a centre decision continues to disadvantage them even after the outcome of the centre's internal appeals procedure (e.g. a decision concerning assessment outcomes or reasonable adjustments).

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Pearson expects most enquiries or appeals from individual learners to be resolved within the centre and will only consider an individual learner's enquiry or appeal after the centre's internal enquiries or appeals procedures have been fully utilised.

Where a learner considers the centre's internal enquiries or appeals policy to have failed to produce a satisfactory outcome, learners are advised to make an enquiry or appeal, in writing, to the Pearson Vocational Quality Standards team. The team can be contacted on vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com. Evidence of the centre's appeal procedure having been utilised must be provided.

Where centre decisions are concerned, the enquiries and appeals procedure will consider whether the centre:

- used procedures that were consistent with Pearson requirements
- applied the procedures properly and fairly in arriving at judgments.

The enquiries and appeals process focuses on procedure and is not concerned with making judgments about learner work. The process does not normally involve the re-assessment of learner work but a review may be ordered if the outcome of the enquiry or appeal requires it.

Centres are required to have a centre policy on enquiries and appeals for Pearson qualifications and procedures in place to support the centre policy. It is essential that the policy is communicated to staff and learners.

This Enquiries and Appeals policy must be read in conjunction with the *Centre Guide to Managing Quality* (www.edexcel.com) which includes guidance for centres on internal centre appeals policies.

Amplification

The enquiry and appeals process is made up of the:

- Enquiry
- Quality Review
- Pearson Appeals Panel

There is no further route of appeal to the relevant regulatory authorities (except for qualifications taken in Scotland where learners may take up their case with SQA Accreditation).

While an enquiry or appeal is ongoing, the centre must retain all evidence relating to the case. If the enquiry or appeal involves the work of a learner, the centre must retain the work of the complete cohort.

Pearson will keep all documentation regarding an enquiry or appeal for a minimum of three years from the date of the appeal decision. Centres must also keep documentation relating to a centre appeal or an enquiry or appeal to Pearson for a minimum of three years.

Enquiry

The enquiry stage involves a review of the case by the Pearson Vocational Quality Standards team. The team can be contacted on vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com.

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If you are a centre and want to enquire about or appeal against a Pearson decision affecting the centre or its learners you should submit your email to vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com within 14 calendar days of receipt of Pearson's original decision.

If you are an individual learner and want to enquire about or appeal against a centre decision which you feel has disadvantaged you, then you should send your email to vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com within 14 calendar days of being notified of the outcome of your centre's internal appeals process. You cannot appeal to Pearson without first going through the appeals process of your centre.

Pearson will acknowledge receipt of the enquiry within three calendar days and respond with the outcome of the enquiry within 30 calendar days of receiving the enquiry.

If the centre or individual learner is dissatisfied with the outcome of the enquiry, you may request a Quality Review is undertaken.

Quality review

The Quality Review involves a further review of the case involving senior managers within Pearson's Vocational Assessment Team. For the majority of cases, the matter can be resolved by this quality review taking place.

A request for a Quality Review should be submitted by the centre or individual learner within 14 calendar days of receipt of the outcome of the enquiry request.

Pearson will acknowledge receipt of the request within three calendar days and will communicate the outcome of the Quality Review in writing to the Head of Centre or individual learner within 30 calendar days of receipt of the request.

If the centre or learner is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Quality Review, they may appeal by contacting vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com.

Pearson appeals panel

Receipt of an application for an appeal hearing will be acknowledged within three days. The chair of the Pearson Appeals Panel will decide if there is an appeal case to be heard. The centre or learner will be notified within 14 calendar days if the case has been accepted or not. If it has been accepted, a hearing of the Appeals Panel will be arranged and the case will be heard.

The appeals process involves a hearing before the Pearson Appeals Panel, normally consisting of three panellists. The panellists are independent of Pearson. The Head of Centre, learner or a delegated representative, may be expected to attend the hearing. For international centres, the hearing may be conducted electronically.

The chair of the Appeals Panel will consider an appeal provided that:

- the appeal is submitted in writing by the Head of Centre/Principal/ Learner
- Pearson's Quality Review process has been exhausted
- the appeal is submitted within 14 calendar days of receipt of the outcome of the quality review, or any further work resulting from the quality review, whichever is the later.

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At this point of the appeals process, the Pearson Appeals Panel follows the procedures set out in paragraphs 29-52 of the *JCQ Guide to the Awarding Bodies' Appeals Processes*, available on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk).

The Pearson Appeals Panel is the final step in the appeals process. A final decision will be made regarding the outcome of the appeal. The Appeals Panel will communicate the outcome of the hearing to the Head of Centre or individual learner within seven calendar days of the hearing.

Fees

For details on fees for enquiries or appeals, please contact: vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com

If Pearson decides to uphold an enquiry or appeal the fee will be returned to the appellant.

Pearson reserves the right not to enter into discussions on the repayment of any expenses incurred by the centre or third parties in connection with the appeal hearing.

Extended review

Where the outcome of an enquiry or appeal brings the validity of other results at the centre into question, Pearson will take action to protect the interests of other learners and the integrity of the qualification. This may include further review of learners' work. This extended review by Pearson may, if necessary, be undertaken without consulting the centre or obtaining the learners' consent.

Regulatory references

Ofqual and SQA Accreditation require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies that relate to Pearson's status as an awarding organisation will reference the particular conditions and criteria that they address.

This policy addresses the following regulatory criteria and conditions:

Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition
<i>Condition C2 Arrangements with Centres</i>
C2.3 That agreement must in particular include provisions which: require the Centre to operate a complaints handling procedure or appeals process for the benefit of Learners
SQA Accreditation Regulatory Principles (2014)
Principle 13 – The awarding body and its providers shall have clear, fair and equitable procedures to manage appeals.

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Useful contacts

For more information on Pearson qualifications and services please visit the website: qualifications.pearson.com

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