

Withholding results and certificates from candidates and learners policy

For internal and external use

June 2014

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Quality, Standards and Research

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Withholding results and certificates from candidates and learners policy

Author/Owner: Head of Regulation Regulation

Authorised by Responsible Officer

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 information on the withholding of results and certificates from candidates or learners by Pearson centres. It replaces the *'Withholding results and certificates from candidates and learners policy, 2013'*.

Scope of policy

This policy applies to all centres approved to offer Pearson qualifications, including UK and international centres.

Policy statement

Results

Centres are **not** permitted to withhold results from candidates or learners under any circumstances.

Certificates

Centres may be permitted to withhold certificates from candidates or learners in very exceptional circumstances, but only with the prior consent of Pearson.

If centres wish to apply to Pearson for permission to withhold a candidate or learner's certificate, they should:

- submit to businessassurance@pearson.com evidence of a dispute with the candidate, for example over unpaid fees, showing that it has taken all reasonable endeavours to resolve the dispute by alternative means;
- demonstrate that the dispute is sufficiently serious so as to warrant withholding the certificate;
- consider and comment on the effect on the candidate or learner of withholding the certificate and whether it is potentially so harmful as to be disproportionate in its punitive effect.

This application must be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the intended certification date.

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Guidance

Centres are advised to adopt effective debt management with regard to candidates' fees to avoid reaching the stage where they need to consider withholding a certificate. Centres should aim to have secured payment of course fees by the time of registration of a candidate for an examination, with the expectation that, upon entering a candidate for an examination, the candidate will be awarded a certificate.

JCQ General Regulations

The General Regulations published by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) require centres to 'distribute provisional statements of results to all candidates, either electronically or in hard copy, without delay and regardless of any disputes (such as non-payment of fees)' (2013-14 , paragraph 5.12 and 2014-15 Regulations, paragraph 5.13).

Under paragraph 5.14 2013-14 regulations and paragraph 5.15 2014-15 Regulations, centres agree to 'distribute certificates to all candidates without delay and regardless of any disputes (such as non-payment of fees). Certificates must not be withheld without prior permission from an awarding body which will only be given in very exceptional circumstances'.

Regulatory references

Ofqual and SQA 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	
Issuing certificates and replacement certificates	I4.1 and I4.2
SQA Accreditation Regulatory Principles (2014)	
Certification	Principle 15

Policy review date

June 2015

Useful contacts

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

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