

Internal assessment in vocational qualifications reviews and appeals policy

2023

Who and what is this policy for:

This policy is for centres who want to request a review or appeal against a Pearson decision relating to internal assessment of our vocational qualifications.

This policy is also for learners who have completed their centre's appeals process related to internal assessments. We support and encourage reviews and appeals from learners to be resolved within the centre, in line with the centre's policy. However, where the centre process has been completed and a learner has cause to believe the centre's process has not been followed, they can contact Pearson directly.

Pearson Education Ltd – Our Mission and Values

At Pearson, our purpose is simple: to add life to a lifetime of learning. We believe that every learning opportunity is a chance for a personal breakthrough. That’s why our c.20,000 Pearson employees are committed to creating vibrant and enriching learning experiences designed for real-life impact. We are the world’s leading learning company, serving customers in nearly 200 countries with digital content, assessments, qualifications, and data. For Pearson, learning isn’t just what we do. It’s who we are. Visit Pearson at www.pearsonplc.com

We are regulated by the UK qualifications regulators Ofqual (England), SQA Accreditation (Scotland), CCEA Regulation (Northern Ireland) and Qualifications Wales (Wales). Our regulatory policies are integral to our approach and articulate how we meet regulatory requirements. These policies are designed to support centres and students and set out clearly our approach to the design, delivery, and award of Pearson qualifications and services.

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1. Scope of policy

- 1.1 This policy applies to all Pearson vocational qualifications where centre marked assessments (internal assessment) takes place.
- 1.2 This policy relates to reviews and appeals from centres or private candidates against results, malpractice decisions or appeals against decisions made in respect of access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, and special considerations.
- 1.3 Where a internal candidate/ learner has exhausted their centre's internal procedures and has grounds for an appeal against results, malpractice decisions or decisions made in respect of access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, and special considerations, learners may appeal directly to Pearson. Grounds for appeal will be that the centre has not followed its appeals procedure.
- 1.4 For appeals related to General Qualifications (GCSE, GCE, Project and Principal Learning qualifications), external assessments within vocational qualifications (assessments which are set and marked or moderated by Pearson), access arrangements, special consideration or reasonable adjustment appeals and appeals against malpractice decisions/sanctions please see the [Post Results Services](#) information on our website and the JCQ booklet - A [Guide to the Awarding Bodies' Appeals Processes](#).
- 1.5 For appeals about end-point assessment for apprenticeships please refer to our [policy](#) relating to reviews and appeals for EPA.
- 1.6 Learners taking Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND) in England and Wales may have the option to present their appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for students in Higher Education (OIAHE). Centres can check if a provider that is covered by the OIAHE scheme [here](#). Following the OIAHE process does not prevent learners from pursuing a complaint or appeal with Pearson and they may choose whichever route(s) that they feel to be the most appropriate.
- 1.7 A centre cannot appeal against decisions about centre or qualification approval or removal (unless this is because of a malpractice sanction), including where Pearson's terms and conditions have been broken. For further information relating to the removal of centre or programme approval please read our [Policy on the removal of centre or programme approval](#).

About the reviews and appeals process

- 1.8 Centres must have their own policy and procedure on enquiries, reviews and appeals for Pearson qualifications. It is important that staff and learners are informed of the policy and that it is followed. **To support a review or appeal we will ask to see evidence that Centres internal procedure has first been fully completed.**

- 1.9** Our reviews and appeals procedure will review whether:
- The centre's procedures are consistent with our requirements.
 - The centre's procedures were applied properly and fairly in arriving at judgments.
 - Our external quality assurance activities were consistent with regulatory requirements (centre appeal only).
- 1.10** The reviews and appeals process focus on procedure and is not concerned with making judgments about learner's internally assessed work. The process does not normally involve the re-assessment of learner work, but a review may be needed if the outcome of the review or appeal requires it.

2. Types of appeals in scope

The 'appellant'

- 2.1** A head of centre or private candidate can appeal against the outcome(s) of our external quality assurance activities, or a qualification decision made by Pearson. Note, a private candidate is defined as a learner who is entered for a qualification by the centre and has not received any tuition at the centre for the qualification during the academic year.
- 2.2** Where an internal candidate/learner has exhausted their centre's internal review and appeals procedure and continues to have grounds for an appeal against results, malpractice decisions or decisions made in respect of access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, and special considerations, an internal candidate may appeal directly to Pearson.
- 2.3** The appellant can therefore be a centre, a private candidate, or an internal candidate/learner.

When to appeal

- 2.4** An appeal may be submitted if the appellant considers that:
- The outcome of Pearson's external quality assurance activities resulted in the award of grade(s) which could not have been reasonably awarded given the evidence generated by the learner(s). An example of where this may happen is where the Standards Verification (SV) or External Examiner (EE) determined marking was too generous and requested grade amends to the cohort.
 - Where decisions on a qualification made by Pearson have impacted on results and Pearson did not apply its procedures consistently, properly, or fairly.

- 2.5 If an application to appeal is accepted, a review or investigation into Pearson's procedures will follow.
- 2.6 The reviews and appeals process focus 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 conducted if the outcome of the review or appeal requires it.
- 2.7 Grounds for incorrect grades or results include:
- The grade or result achieved could not have reasonably been awarded given the evidence generated by the learner.
 - Pearson exercised unreasonable assessment judgement (where the grade or result is one that no reasonable standards verifier or external examiner could have appropriately agreed upon).
 - Pearson failed to apply appropriate criteria and procedures to the evidence generated by the learner(s).

3. Appeals against decisions made in respect of access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, and special considerations

- 3.1 Pearson recognises that there are learners who may be prevented from demonstrating their achievement because of:
- A permanent or long-term disability, learning difficulty or medical condition.
 - A temporary disability, illness, or indisposition immediate to or at the time of the assessment.
 - Circumstances at the time of or during the assessment.
- 3.2 Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are pre-assessment adjustments approved *before* an assessment. They allow learners with special educational needs, disabilities, or temporary injuries to access the assessment.
- 3.3 **Special consideration** is an adjustment to a learner's achievement, to reflect temporary illness, injury, or other indisposition at the **time of the assessment**.
- 3.4 Applications for appeals can be accepted from a head of centre (on behalf of a learner or group of learners).

- 3.5** Learners and/or their parents/carers can appeal directly to Pearson only when the centre's appeals procedures have been exhausted.
- 3.6** Before undertaking an appeal, it may be helpful if the appellant (Head of centre) discusses the situation with Pearson. Such discussions will sometimes resolve the matter without recourse to appeal.

4. Appeals against decisions made in respect of malpractice or maladministration

- 4.1** A centre may appeal the outcome of a malpractice or maladministration decision and the process for this is provided in the JCQ booklet - A Guide to the Awarding Bodies' Appeals Processes.
- 4.2** A learner should complete the centre's internal review and appeals process for malpractice decisions related to internal assessments. Where the learner has completed the centre's appeals process and has reason to believe the centre has not followed its review and appeals procedure properly, they may appeal directly to Pearson.

5. How to request a review or appeal

- 5.1** There are three stages of reviews or appeal: First stage, review; Second stage, preliminary appeal and Third stage, independent appeals hearing.
- 5.2** A review or appeal application can be made where:
- A centre disagrees with the outcome(s) from our external quality assurance activities, for example a Standards Verifier or External Examiner report.
 - A centre disagrees with a qualification decision made by Pearson.
 - A centre disagrees with decisions made (or not made) in respect of access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, and special considerations.
 - A learner has reason to believe the centre has not followed its internal appeals procedure (for example, a stage in the process has not been conducted).
- 5.3** While a review or appeal is underway, it is important that Centres keep all evidence relating to the case. If the review or appeal involves the work of a learner, Centres will need to keep the work of the whole cohort.

6. Overview of the review and appeals process

First Stage - Reviews

- 6.1** Any request for a review about a decision made by Pearson affecting a centre or learners, including reviews about Standards Verification or External Examiner outcomes, should be communicated to Pearson via the [Pearson Support Portal](#) within 14 calendar days of receiving our decision or results.
- 6.2** All cases are reviewed by an appropriate member of our staff, including, where relevant, our assessment experts who have responsibility for the qualification subject.

When to apply: within 14 calendar days of receiving the Pearson decision (centres) or the outcome of the centres appeal process (learners).

How to apply: [Pearson Support Portal](#) (for centres) or via the Pearson [Contact Pearson](#) page (for learners)

Acknowledgment: We will acknowledge the receipt of the request for a review within three working days.

Outcome of the application: We will respond to a request for a review within 30 calendar days of receiving it.

Next step: If Centres or learners are not happy with the outcome of the review, they have 14 calendar days in which to request a Preliminary Appeal.

Second Stage – Preliminary Appeal

- 6.3** Usually, centres will make an application on behalf of a learner with their consent. However, learners may also apply directly to Pearson if they have completed the centre's internal appeals process. Learners who want to submit an appeal because the centre has not followed its processes, should contact Pearson via the appeals webform which can be found on the appeals tab on our Post-results services webpage [here](#). A preliminary appeal must be submitted within 14 calendar days of the learner being informed of the outcome of the first stage review (above).
- 6.4** Centres should make an appeal based only on whether we used procedures that were consistent with the regulatory authorities' requirements and applied our own procedures properly and fairly in arriving at judgments. The appeals office may refuse to accept Centre appeals if no procedural ground is given.
- 6.5** A learner may appeal directly to Pearson, but only following the completion of the centre's internal appeals process and following the completion of a stage one review (see above).

A learner may appeal to Pearson on the basis that the centre has not followed its internal appeals process.

- 6.6** An appeals case officer, with no previous involvement with the case, will consider the appeal. The case officer will check all the information against policies and procedures to confirm if correct procedures have been followed.

When to apply: Within 14 calendar days of receiving the outcome of the first stage review.

How to apply: Applications for preliminary appeal should be made using the appeals webform which can be found on our post-results services webpage [here](#). The application to appeal should include a clear explanation of the procedural basis for the appeal.

Acknowledgment: We will acknowledge receipt of the appeal application automatically once the webform has been successfully submitted. We will contact the appellant as soon as possible, following receipt, if we require further information to allow Pearson to process the appeal.

Outcome of the appeal: We will write to the appellant with the outcome of the appeal within 42 calendar days of the date of receipt of a valid application (including all information required to process the appeal).

Next step: If the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of the preliminary appeal, they may submit a request for an appeal hearing, as outlined below.

Third Stage – Pearson Appeal Hearings

- 6.7** An application for an appeal hearing should be made using the appeals webform which can be found on the appeals tab on our Post-results services webpage [here](#).
- 6.8** An application for an appeal hearing can only be made once the preliminary appeal has been completed and the outcome has been sent to the appellant.
- 6.9** An application for an appeal hearing must be made within 14 calendar days of the date of the communication of the outcome of the preliminary appeal to the appellant.
- 6.10** An application for an appeal hearing can be made by the head of center, the head of center on behalf of a learner or by a learner who has completed the center's internal review/appeals process, and the Pearson review process, and the preliminary stage of Pearson's appeals process.
- 6.11** The appeal hearing will review evidence to determine whether we followed our policies and processes correctly and fairly in conducting the review and the preliminary appeal.
- 6.12** The appeal hearing will follow the procedure in the [JCQ Guide to the Awarding Bodies Appeals Processes](#).
- 6.13** The Head of Centre, learner or delegated representative may be asked to attend the hearing. For international centres, the hearing will be held remotely. Other hearings may also be held remotely, and we will contact the head of centre or learner (as appropriate) to make arrangements for the hearing.

When to apply: 14 calendar days of when we sent the outcome of the preliminary appeal.

How to apply: Using the appeals webform which can be found on the appeals tab on our Post-results services webpage [here](#).

Acknowledgment: We will acknowledge the application for a hearing automatically upon successful submission of the webform application. We have up to 70 calendar days to hold an appeal hearing.

Outcome of the application: We will write to the appellant explaining the outcome of the appeal hearing within five calendar days of the hearing. A summary report or transcript of the hearing will be provided within 28 calendar days of the hearing. This report or transcript will be confidential to parties to the appeal.

Next step: This is the last stage of the review and appeals process. A final decision will be made and there is no further route of appeal for vocational qualifications.

7. Feedback and complaints

- 7.1 There is no further stage of appeal. A centre may submit a complaint to the regulators if the centre believes Pearson has not followed its process in dealing with the appeal.
- 7.2 Following the completion of the review and appeals process, if Centres want to submit a complaint to the regulators, Centres should contact the relevant regulator. These are:

Country	Regulator	Contact
England	Ofqual	complaints@ofqual.gov.uk
Northern Ireland	CCEA Regulation	ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk
Wales	Qualifications Wales	enquiries@qualificationswales.org
Scotland	SQA Accreditation	Online complaint form

8. Fees

- 8.1 For information on fees for reviews or appeals, please visit our website. The fees can be found under the Appeals tab and appeals related to internal assessments are charges at the published rates that apply to appeal related to external assessments. The latest fees for Reviews of marking and moderation (RoMM) are published [here](#). We reserve the right not to enter discussions on the repayment of any expenses incurred by the centre or third parties related to the appeal hearing.

8.2 If the review or appeal finds that Pearson made the wrong decision, there will be no charge for the appeal.

9. Regulatory references

9.1 UK regulators 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 any conditions and criteria that they address.

9.2 This policy addresses the following regulatory criteria and conditions:

Qualification regulator or relevant governing body	Regulatory rule or guidance document	Regulatory condition, criteria, or principle
Ofqual	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	C2
Ofqual	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	C2.3
Ofqual	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	I1
CCEA Regulation	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	C2
CCEA Regulation	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	C2.3
CCEA Regulation	<u>General Conditions of Recognition</u>	I1
Qualifications Wales	<u>Qualification Wales Standard Conditions of recognition</u>	C2
Qualifications Wales	<u>Qualification Wales Standard Conditions of recognition</u>	C2.3
Qualifications Wales	<u>Qualification Wales Standard Conditions of recognition</u>	I1
SQA Accreditation	<u>Regulatory Principles (2021)</u>	17

10. Policy review date

10.1 This policy will be reviewed in December 2024.

11. Useful information

11.1 For more information on Pearson qualifications and services please visit the following webpages:

- [Delivering BTEC Qualifications](#)
- [the Pearson Support Portal](#)
- [Quality Assurance Hub](#)
- [Post results services: info for students](#)
- [BTEC Quality Assurance](#)