Internal assessment in vocational qualifications: reviews and appeals policy

2022

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. 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 continues to have reason to request a review or appeal, they can contact us 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 us, learning isn’t just what we do. It’s who we are. Visit us 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 based (internal) assessment takes place.

1.2 This policy relates to reviews and appeals from centres as well as from learners who have completed the internal centre review and appeals process for internal assessments.

1.3 For appeals related to General Qualifications (GCSE, GCE, Project and Principal Learning qualifications), external assessments within vocational qualifications (assessments which are set and marked 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.

1.4 For appeals about end-point assessment for apprenticeships please refer to our policy relating to reviews and appeals for EPA.

1.5 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). You can check if your centre is 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 us and they may choose whichever route(s) that they feel to be the most appropriate.

1.6 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

1.7 Centres must have their own policy and procedure on enquiries 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 your internal procedure has first been fully used and completed.

1.8 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.

1.9 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 needed if the outcome of the review or appeal requires it.

2. Types of appeals in scope

2.1 Pearson will accept appeals in relation to three areas. These are:

- Appeals against results, where internal assessment grades/results have been impacted by:
  - the outcome(s) of Pearson’s external quality assurance activities for example an SV report or EE report or
  - a qualification decision made by us.
- Learner appeals against the outcome of the centre’s internal appeals procedure (for example, a decision about assessment outcomes).
- Appeals against decisions made in respect of access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special considerations.

Appeals against results

2.2 A head of centre can appeal against the outcome(s) of our external quality assurance activities, or a qualification decision made by Pearson.

2.3 Learners and/or their parents/carers are not entitled to appeal directly to Pearson. The Head of Centre’s decision as to whether to proceed with an appeal is subject to the centre’s internal appeals arrangements.

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 a grade(s) which could not have been reasonably have been awarded given the evidence generated by the learner(s). An example of where this may happen is where the SV or EE determined marking was too generous and requested grade amends to the cohort.
- Where decisions on a qualification made by Pearson, Pearson did not apply its procedures consistently, properly, or fairly.

2.5 If an application of appeal is accepted, an investigation into the learner’s or centre’s results and/or 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.
Learner appeals

2.7 A learner can appeal against the outcome of the centre’s internal appeals procedure (for example, a decision about assessment outcomes).

2.8 A learner must complete the centre’s internal appeals processes before submitting a request to appeal. A learner should only submit a request if they have exhausted their centre’s internal appeals processes and considers that they have been disadvantaged by their centre.

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

2.9 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.

2.10 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.

2.11 Special consideration is an adjustment to a learners’ achievement, to reflect temporary illness, injury, or other indisposition at the time of the assessment.

2.12 Applications for appeals may only be accepted from a head of centre (on behalf of a learner or group of learners).

2.13 Learners and/or their parents/carers are not entitled to appeal directly to Pearson. The Head of Centre’s decision as to whether to proceed with an appeal is subject to the centre’s internal appeals arrangements.

2.14 Before undertaking an appeal, it may be helpful if the appellant discusses the situation with Pearson. Such discussions will sometimes resolve the matter without recourse to appeal.

3. When to request a review or appeal

3.1 There are three stages of reviews or appeal: First stage, review; Second stage, preliminary appeal and Third stage, independent appeals hearing.
3.2 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 us.
- A learner disagrees with the outcome of the centres internal appeals procedure (for example, a decision about assessment outcomes or reasonable adjustments).
- A centre disagrees with decisions made in respect of access arrangements, reasonable adjustments, and special considerations.

3.3 While a review or appeal is happening, it is important that you keep all evidence relating to the case. If the review or appeal involves the work of a learner, you will need to keep the work of the whole cohort.

4. Overview of the review and appeals process

First Stage - Reviews

4.1 Any request for a review about a decision made by us affecting a centre or learners, including reviews about Standards Verification or External Examiner outcomes, should be communicated to us via the Pearson Support Portal within 14 calendar days of receiving our decision or results.

4.2 Usually, centres will make an application on behalf of a learner with their consent. However, learners may also apply directly to us if they completed the centre’s internal appeals process. Learners who want to enquire about a centre's decision which they feel has disadvantaged them, should be communicated to us via email at edexcelappeals@pearson.com within 14 calendar days of being told the outcome of the centre’s appeals process.

4.3 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 outcome of the centres appeal process.

**How to apply:** Pearson Support Portal (for centres) or via the Pearson Contact Us 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 your request for a review within 30 calendar days of receiving it.
**Next step:** If you are not happy with the outcome of the review you have 14 calendar days in which to request a Preliminary Appeal.

## Second Stage – Preliminary Appeal

4.4 You 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 your appeal if no procedural ground is given.

4.5 A learner may appeal directly to us, 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 us on the basis that the centre has not followed its internal appeals process fairly or properly.

4.6 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:
14 calendar days of receiving the outcome of the first stage review.

### How to apply:
Email edexcelappeals@pearson.com with a clear explanation of the appeal.

### Acknowledgment:
We will acknowledge receipt of the appeal application within three working days. We will contact the appellant as soon as possible, following receipt, if we require further information to allow us 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

4.7 An application for an appeal hearing should be made using form JCQ/APP1 which can be found in the JCQ Guide to the Awarding Bodies Appeals Processes.

4.8 Applications for an appeals hearing should be sent to edexcelappeals@pearson.com

4.9 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.

4.10 An application for an appeal hearing must be made within 14 calendar days of the date we sent the outcome of the preliminary appeal to the appellant.
4.11 An application for an appeal hearing can be made by the head of centre, the head of centre on behalf of a learner or by a learner who has completed the centre’s internal review/appeals process and the preliminary stage of the awarding organisation appeals process.

4.12 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.

4.13 The hearing is conducted by a panel, normally consisting of three panellists who are independent of Pearson.

4.14 The hearing will be conducted by a panel, normally consisting of three panellists who are independent of Pearson.

4.15 The appeal hearing will follow the procedure in the JCQ Guide to the Awarding Bodies Appeals Processes.

4.16 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: Email edexcelappeals@pearson.com using form JCQ/APP1 to make your application.

Acknowledgment: We will acknowledge the application for a hearing within three working days. 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.

5. Feedback and complaints

5.1 There is no further stage of appeal to the qualification’s regulators, but a centre may submit a complaint to the regulators if the centre believes we have not followed our process in dealing with the appeal.

5.2 Following the completion of the review and appeals process, if you want to submit a complaint to the regulators, you should contact the relevant regulator. These are:
6. Fees

6.1 For information on fees for reviews or appeals, please visit our website. The fees can be found under the Appeals tab. 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 about the appeal hearing.

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

7. Regulatory references

7.1 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.

7.2 This policy addresses the following regulatory criteria and conditions:

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8. Policy review date

8.1 This policy will be reviewed in December 2023.

9. Useful information

9.1 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