Policy on the removal of programme and centre approval

Who and what is this policy for:

This policy is for Pearson approved centres and learners who are affected by a centre closing. There are many reasons why a centre may lose its Pearson centre or programme approval. This policy sets out those reasons and what would need to occur for us to withdraw approval. It also explains how we will support learners when a centre closes or goes into administration.

If you have questions on this process, please contact ukapproval@pearson.com.
Pearson Education Ltd – Our Mission and Values

Welcome to Pearson, the world's learning company. We have a simple mission: to help people make more of their lives through learning. Whether it's at home, in the classroom or in the workplace, learning is the key to improving our life chances. We are the UK’s largest awarding body and we are regulated by Ofqual (England), SQA Accreditation (Scotland), CCEA Regulation (Northern Ireland) and Qualifications Wales (Wales). We offer academic and vocational qualifications that are globally recognised and benchmarked, with educational excellence rooted in names like Edexcel, BTEC, and LCCI.

Our regulatory policies are integral to our approach and articulate in a consistent way how we meet regulatory requirements. These policies are designed to support centres and learners with the design, delivery and award of Pearson qualifications and services.

Contents

Pearson Education Ltd – Our Mission and Values ...........................................................2

Contents .........................................................................................................................2

1. Scope of policy ........................................................................................................4

2. Related documents .................................................................................................4

3. Malpractice and maladministration investigations ............................................4

4. Breaches of terms and conditions .........................................................................5

5. Quality Assurance..................................................................................................6

   Removal of programme approval for vocational qualifications .........................6

© Policy for removal of centre and programme approval
Owner Head of Centre Management
Authorised by Responsible Officer
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Removal of centre approval (for any Pearson qualification) .......................................................... 6

6. Suspension of service .............................................................................................................. 7

7. Loss of confidence in centre senior management teams ....................................................... 7

8. Supporting learners ................................................................................................................ 8

   If a centre closes permanently due to administration .............................................................. 8

9. Regulatory references ........................................................................................................... 9

10. Policy review date ............................................................................................................... 9
1. Scope of policy

1.1 This policy is about the removal of centre and/or programme approval and how we will support learners in cases where centre approval has been removed or where a centre has gone into administration. It applies to all UK and International centres offering our qualifications.

2. Related documents

2.1 The decision to remove centre or programme approval will generally be taken by our Head of Centre Management or the Director of Business Improvement and Regulation.

2.2 This might happen because:

- The Pearson Malpractice Committee agrees this is an appropriate sanction to impose, following a malpractice or maladministration investigation (see Section 3).
- You have breached the terms and conditions of our centre or programme approval (see Section 4).
- There are significant and/or repeated quality issues identified through the Quality Assurance programme (see Section 5).
- There are long-standing financial issues which you have not resolved (see Section 6).
- You have approval for programmes but are no longer active.
- We no longer have confidence in your centre’s senior management team (see Section 7).

3. Malpractice and maladministration investigations

3.1 In the event of potential malpractice/maladministration, we will investigate in accordance with the process set out in the JCQ General and Vocational Qualifications Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments Policies and Procedures. Once complete, a Malpractice Committee will review the case to determine if malpractice has occurred and the appropriate sanction(s) to be imposed on those who have committed it.

3.2 In serious cases of malpractice or maladministration, the Malpractice Committee can remove centre or programme approval. The JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies and Procedures.
Procedures provide indicative scenarios of when removal of qualification/centre approval is likely to be appropriate:

- Repeated breach of the regulations relating to a qualification.
- Loss of confidence in the head of centre or senior management of the centre.
- Breakdown in management and quality assurance arrangements for some or all accredited qualifications offered by the centre.
- Failure to co-operate with awarding body requests to thoroughly investigate suspected malpractice.
- Failure to implement a specified action plan.

3.3 As with all malpractice sanctions, you those subject to sanction can appeal. Please refer to the [JCQ Appeals booklet](#).

### 4. Breaches of terms and conditions

4.1 In some cases, centre or programme approval is suspended or removed on the grounds that **Pearson’s terms and conditions** have been broken. This decision is taken by our Centre Management team, in consultation with our Legal team and our Responsible Officer. You cannot appeal against these decisions.

4.2 This route is normally used only where there is a clear breach of terms and conditions and we must take immediate action. For example, when:

- There has been a lack of cooperation, you have not responded to communications from us, or have refused access to premises, learner work or assessment records.
- You are marketing a qualification which has not been approved, or actively enrolling learners on such a programme.
- You have sold fraudulent certificates to learners, claiming to be genuine Pearson certificates.
- You have misrepresented our relationship in a way which could mislead or cause serious disadvantage to learners.
- You have submitted false documentation to us, for example fraudulent qualification approval applications.
- You have submitted false information about Pearson qualifications to other agencies, such as funding agencies or UKBA.
- There has been a threat of or actual verbal or physical abuse towards Pearson staff.

4.3 We may also suspend or remove centre or programme approval where there is a pattern of repeated breaches of terms and conditions of a less serious nature.
4.4 In all cases, we will write to you about the nature of the breach(es) and you will have an opportunity to respond before approval is suspended or removed. However, in serious cases such as those described in 4.2, approval may be suspended before receipt of your response to protect the learners and/or the integrity of our qualifications.

5. Quality Assurance

Removal of programme approval for vocational qualifications

5.1. If you have already been subject to a non-release for a first or second standards verification sample but have not made adequate progress towards resolving quality issues, programme approval may be removed. In this situation, your centre may also be subject to additional monitoring during the following two years.

5.2. The following handbooks provide details of how we check appropriate quality assurance and maintain national standards:

- UK HN Guide to Quality Assurance & Assessment
- UK Guide to HN External Examination
- BTEC Centre Guide to Standards Verification (Levels 1 to 3)
- BTEC Centre Guide to External Examination (Levels 4 to 7)
- Centre Guide to Quality Assurance for NVQs/SVQs and Competence-based qualifications

Removal of centre approval (for any Pearson qualification)

5.3. We may suspend or remove centre approval in the following situations:

- Where quality issues continue during the monitoring period described in section 5.1 above.
- Where quality issues occur across multiple programmes.
- Where quality issues are sufficiently serious (for example, submitting false information about learner grades, or submitting grades for non-completed units).

5.4. Issues which may lead to us considering removing or suspending a centre include:

- Significant failings in centre management.
- Consistently failing to register learners on time.
- Failure to recruit staff with integrity.
- Continuous quality blocks for more than one academic year.
- Quality blocks across more than one programme.
- Failing to ensure authenticity of learner work.
5.5. These decisions are taken by our Centre Management team, in consultation with our Responsible Officer. You can appeal against these decisions. You can raise an appeal through the Pearson support portal.

6. Suspension of service

6.1 We will carry out financial checks as part of our commitment to ensuring you have sufficient financial resources and facilities to be able to deliver and assess our qualifications and for learners to have the opportunity to complete them.

6.2 We may take appropriate action, because of these checks, if there is a risk to learners. A suspension of service will prevent new registrations from being made, however, we will not prevent certification for existing learners.

7. Loss of confidence in centre senior management teams

7.1 In some instances, centre approval will be removed because we have lost confidence in the senior management of your centre. This may apply where there is evidence which brings into doubt the personal or professional integrity of a member of the senior management team, for example, where they have been found guilty of a criminal offence, or where we see evidence of a culture reflected in patterns of behaviour in the centre, which is damaging to the reputation of the centre or is against the wider interests of learners.

7.2 We expect all centres to reflect a culture of integrity in their delivery of our qualifications. This includes:

- Working with learners, partners, and staff in an open and transparent manner.
- Seeking continual improvement in the quality of your processes.
- Dealing with any issues promptly and thoroughly.

7.3 Where these attributes are not evident, this will also be taken into account when we are considering removal of centre or programme approval.

7.4 These decisions are taken by our Centre Management team, in consultation with the Legal team and our Responsible Officer. You cannot appeal against these decisions.

7.5 Where appropriate, these cases will involve discussion with the head of your centre or other governing body about other possible options, including replacement of members of the senior management team.
8. Supporting learners

8.1 In all cases where centre or programme approval is suspended or removed, we will do everything possible to help affected learners. This is likely to include:

- Retrieval of portfolios and assessment records.
- Retrieval of certificates.
- Standards verification of existing portfolios.
- Certification at a unit or qualification level wherever appropriate.
- Support in locating a suitable alternative provider.
- Reviewing existing quality assurance information to determine which certificates may be invalid.
- Undertaking further verification of learner work.
- Taking additional steps to verify the authenticity of learner work.
- Obtaining contact details for affected learners from the centre.
- Contacting affected learners.
- Arranging the re-assessment of learners.

If a centre closes permanently due to administration

8.2 In cases where a centre goes into administration, we will do everything possible to support affected learners. This may include:

- Certification (free of charge) for learners who were released by Pearson but never received a certificate.
- Arranging the reassessment of learners who have completed but certificates had not been released by Pearson.
- Supporting learners who have not yet completed the programme to transfer to another Pearson centre or awarding organisation to complete the programme (this will involve transferring credit).
- Supporting learners who need to achieve further components of an apprenticeship to transfer to another Pearson centre or another awarding organisation.
- Certification (free of charge) for learners who need evidence for completed components of an apprenticeship to claim funding.
• Replacement certificates (free of charge) for learners who had not received a certificate while the centre was still open and had made reasonable attempts to get a certificate before the centre closed (we may ask to see evidence that attempts were made to obtain a certificate).

• Cases where centres have been bought out by another organisation.

8.3 If you are a centre receiving learners from a centre that has gone into administration, please contact us via the Pearson Support Portal.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification regulator or relevant governing body</th>
<th>Regulatory rule or guidance document</th>
<th>Regulatory condition, criteria, or principle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ofqual</td>
<td>General Conditions of Recognition</td>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ofqual</td>
<td>General Conditions of Recognition</td>
<td>C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ofqual</td>
<td>General Conditions of Recognition</td>
<td>C2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQA</td>
<td>Regulatory Principles (2014)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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10. Policy review date

10.1 This policy will be reviewed in March 2022.