

Withholding results and certificates from learners policy

Document summary

This policy is for centre staff who are delivering Pearson qualifications and will also be helpful to learners who are taking our qualifications.

It explains when we may withhold results or certificates from centres, or request that centres withhold them from their learners.

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Pearson Education Ltd – our mission and values

Our purpose is simple: to help people realize the life they imagine through learning. We believe that every learning opportunity is a chance for a personal breakthrough. That's why our c. 18,000 Pearson employees are committed to creating vibrant and enriching learning experiences designed for real-life impact. We are the world's lifelong 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 [pearsonplc.com](https://www.pearsonplc.com).

We are regulated by the UK qualifications regulators Ofqual (England), 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.

1. Policy scope

1.1 This policy applies to all Pearson approved centres in the UK and internationally.

2. Policy purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to clarify when Pearson or our centres may withhold results or certificates from learners.

2.2 We are committed to:

- Making sure our qualifications are fit for purpose and delivered with integrity in a way which best promotes and protects the interests of learners.
- Ensuring that all learners who have successfully demonstrated the required level of achievement will receive their results and certificates in a timely manner.

3. Policy statement

3.1 **Pearson will not withhold learner results or certificates on financial grounds.** This includes the prevention of learners being transferred to a smaller programme or another centre.

3.2 Any learner who is entered for an examination or registered for a qualification should expect to be awarded a certificate on successful completion of the relevant assessments. **Except in cases described in 3.3 below, centres cannot withhold results or certificates from learners under any circumstances**, including non-payment of fees. For qualifications where certificates need to be claimed, centres also cannot delay the claiming of certificates for any reason except for those described in 3.3 below. For Academic qualifications, Pearson recommends that centres should aim to have secured payment of course fees by the time they enter a learner for an examination. For Vocational qualifications, Pearson recommends that centres have secured payment for assessments, prior to these being accepted. Once an assessment has been accepted, centres are obliged to issue results for these. Unauthorised withholding of certificates or results and unauthorised delays in claiming certificates may constitute malpractice, which can result in sanctions being imposed on centre staff and/or centres.

- 3.3 There are very few cases where Pearson would withhold results or certificates from learners. This may be necessary where:
- There are cases of alleged centre or learner malpractice.
 - A result is issued in error, including correcting incorrect results that have been issued.
 - There is reasonable evidence that there is a risk to the integrity of the results.
 - A qualifications regulator or industry regulator (for example the Security Industry Authority) has issued a written notice requiring us to refrain from issuing results for a qualification or qualifications.
- 3.4 Where the situation requires, Pearson will ask you to hold or return results or certificates until any investigation is completed and any issues are resolved.
- 3.5 In some cases, Pearson may need to request the return of certificates that have been given to learners. In those cases, Pearson will require centres to work with us to contact learners, request the return of certificates and forward the certificates onto us. We will re-issue certificates where appropriate once all necessary action has been completed.
- 3.6 If you would like to report suspected malpractice relating to the issuing of certificates, guidance can be found on the [JCQ website at Malpractice - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#). You can also report an incident or discuss any malpractice concerns with us by emailing our Investigations team at pqsmalpractice@pearson.com.

4. Policy review date

- 4.1 This policy will be reviewed in September 2026.

5. Regulatory references

- 5.1 UK regulators require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies and guides that relate to Pearson's status as an awarding organisation will reference any conditions and criteria that they address.
- 5.2 This policy addresses the following regulatory criteria and conditions:

Qualification regulator or relevant governing body	Regulatory rule or guidance document	Regulatory condition or criteria
Ofqual	General Conditions of Recognition	C2.3; H6.1; H6.2
Qualifications Wales	Standard Conditions of Recognition	C2.3; H6.1; H6.2
CCEA Regulation	General Conditions of Recognition	C2.3; H6.1; H6.2
Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ ¹)	General Regulations for approved centres	5.12 – 5.14

6. Useful contacts

6.1 To discuss your concerns with us about withholding results and certificates, please contact our Regulation Team using [Pearson's online support portal](#).

7. Version control

Version	Changes	Date
3.6	Dates and footers updated	31/10/2025

¹ The Joint Council for Qualifications is a membership organisation comprising the eight largest providers of qualifications in the UK.