

Enquiries and Appeals on Edexcel Vocational Qualifications

For internal and external use

May 2011

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As part of our commitment to quality assurance Edexcel seeks to provide learners with guidance and support to help them achieve their learning and development goals while meeting any regulatory requirements. Our policies are reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. This policy is about enquiries and appeals for vocational qualifications. This document replaces the previous policy on enquiries and appeals (issue code Appeals 07-09).

Scope

This policy applies to all Edexcel vocational qualifications including BTEC, NVQ, SQV, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy and ESOL.

For information on enquiries and appeals relating to GCSE, GCE, Project and Principal Learning qualifications, see the JCQ documents *Post Results Services* and *A Guide to the Awarding Bodies' Appeals Processes* available from the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk).

This policy does not apply to appeals against malpractice sanctions. In all cases of appeal against malpractice sanctions, Edexcel will follow the procedures set out in the *JCQ Guide to the Awarding Bodies' Appeals Processes*.

Introduction

This policy applies to enquiries or appeals made where:

- the centre disagrees with the outcome(s) from Edexcel's external quality assurance activities (e.g. Standards Verifier report);
- the centre disagrees with a qualification decision made by Edexcel (eg rejection of a late certification or registration request);
- a learner considers that a centre decision continues to disadvantage her/him even after the outcome of the centre's internal appeals procedure (e.g. a decision concerning assessment outcomes or reasonable adjustments).

An enquiry or appeal concerning an individual learner must be made through the learner's centre and submitted by the Head of Centre/Principal. The learner's Head of Centre/Principal is required to submit the appeal on the behalf of the learner to Edexcel.

Edexcel expects most enquiries or appeals from individual learners to be resolved within the centre, and will only consider an individual learner's enquiry or appeal after the centre's internal enquiries or appeals procedures have been fully utilised.

Centres are required to have a centre policy on enquiries and appeals for Edexcel qualifications, and procedures in place to support the centre policy. It is essential that the policy is communicated to staff and learners.

This Enquiries and Appeals policy must be read in conjunction with *Centre Guide to Managing Quality* (www.edexcel.com) which includes guidance for centres on internal centre appeals policies.

Overview of the Enquiry and Appeals Process

There are three stages to the enquiry and appeals process:

- Stage 0: Enquiry
- Stage 1: Quality Review
- Stage 2: Edexcel Appeals Panel

Should the matter not be resolved following stage 2, the appellant is entitled to take the matter up with the relevant regulatory authority (i.e. Ofqual, SQA, CCEA, DCELLS).

For decisions made by Edexcel, the enquiries and appeals procedure will focus on whether Edexcel:

- used procedures that were consistent with the requirements of the regulators; and
- applied the procedures properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

Where centre decisions are concerned, the enquiries and appeals procedure will consider whether the centre:

- used procedures that were consistent with Edexcel requirements; and
- applied the procedures properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

The enquiries and appeals process focuses on procedure and is not concerned with making judgements about the learner's work. The process does not normally involve the re-assessment of the learner's work but a review may be ordered if the outcome of the enquiry or appeal requires it.

While an enquiry or appeal is ongoing, the centre must retain all evidence relating to the case. If the enquiry or appeal involves the work of a learner, the centre must retain the work of the complete cohort. Edexcel will keep all documentation regarding an enquiry or appeal for a minimum of 18 months from the date. Centres must also keep documentation relating to a centre appeal or an enquiry or appeal to Edexcel for a minimum of 18 months.

Stage 0: Enquiry

The enquiry stage involves a review of the case by the Edexcel Vocational Quality Standards team. The team can be contacted on qualitystandards@edexcel.com.

An enquiry about an Edexcel decision affecting the centre or its learners should be submitted by the centre within 14 calendar days of receipt of notification of Edexcel's original decision. An enquiry concerning a centre decision which has affected an individual learner should, if the learner requests it, be submitted by the centre within 14 calendar days of receipt by the learner of the outcome of the centre's internal appeals process.

Edexcel will acknowledge receipt of the enquiry within three calendar days and respond in full within 30 calendar days of receiving the enquiry.

If the centre is dissatisfied with the outcome of the enquiry, it may proceed to the next stage of the process.

Stage 1: Quality Review

The Quality Review stage involves a further review of the case involving senior managers within Vocational Assessment. For the majority of cases, the matter can be resolved by this stage.

A request for a Quality Review should be submitted by the centre within 14 calendar days of receipt of the outcome of the enquiry stage.

Edexcel will acknowledge receipt of the request within three calendar days and will communicate the outcome of the Quality Review in writing to the Head of Centre within 30 calendar days of receipt of the request.

If the centre is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Quality Review, it may proceed to the next stage of the appeals process.

Stage 2: Edexcel Appeals Panel

Stage 2 of the appeals process involves a hearing before an Edexcel Appeals Panel, normally consisting of three panellists who are not employees of Edexcel. The Head of Centre, or a delegated representative, will be expected to attend the hearing.

The chair of the Appeals Panel will consider an appeal provided that:

- the appeal is submitted in writing by the Head of Centre/Principal;
- Edexcel's stage 1 Quality Review process has been exhausted;
- the appeal is submitted within 14 calendar days of receipt of the outcome of stage 1, or any further work resulting from stage 1, whichever is the later.

Receipt of an application for a stage 2 appeal hearing will be acknowledged within three days. The chair of the Edexcel Appeals Panel will decide if there is an appeal case to be heard. The centre will be notified within 14 calendar days if the case has been accepted or not. If it has been accepted, a hearing of the Appeals Panel will be arranged and the case will be heard.

At this stage of the appeals process, the Edexcel Appeals Panel follows the procedures set out in paragraphs 29-52 of the *JCQ Guide to the Awarding Bodies' Appeals Processes*, available on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk).

Stage 2 is the final step in the appeals process. At stage 2 a final decision will be made regarding the outcome of the appeal. The Edexcel Appeals Panel will communicate the outcome of the hearing to the Head of Centre within seven calendar days of the hearing.

Fees

For details on fees for enquiries or appeals, please contact:

qualitystandards@edexcel.com

If Edexcel decides to uphold an enquiry or appeal the fee will be returned to the appellant.

Edexcel reserves the right not to enter into discussions on the repayment of any expenses incurred by the centre or third parties in connection with the appeal hearing.

Extended Review

Where the outcome of an enquiry or appeal brings the validity of other results at the centre into question, Edexcel will take action to protect the interests of other learners and the integrity of the qualification. This may include further review of learners' work. This extended review by Edexcel may, if necessary, be undertaken without consulting the centre or obtaining the learners' consent.

Policy Review Date

May 2012

Useful Contacts

For more information on Edexcel's enquiries and appeals policy and to make an enquiry or appeal, email: qualitystandards@edexcel.com

For more information on Edexcel vocational qualifications please contact Edexcel Customer Services: Tel: 0844 576 0026.

You can also visit the Edexcel website: www.edexcel.com