

3003-01 ENQUIRIES AND APPEALS

1 General

- 1.1 The scope of this policy covers all decisions made and actions taken by ABC Awards (ABC) with regard to its relationships with its approved centres and their learners and to its compliance with the regulator's appeals and complaints process.
- 1.2 ABC requires all its approved centres to have an enquiries and appeals procedure available to learners, so that if learners wish to enquire or appeal against internal or external assessment decisions, they have clear guidelines on how to proceed. The centre procedure should:
- 1.2.1 identify the person with whom the learner should lodge an enquiry or appeal;
 - 1.2.2 state the method by which an enquiry or appeal is to be made to the centre or to ABC;
 - 1.2.3 incorporate an appeals panel, or equivalent, which includes a member who is independent and objective;
 - 1.2.4 stipulate a clear time limit for dealing with an enquiry or appeal, which takes into account the timescales published by ABC for its own Enquiries and Appeals procedures.
- 1.3 ABC endeavours at all times to ensure that all enquiries are resolved to the satisfaction of ABC, the centre and the learner before any appeals process is invoked.
- 1.4 Where an enquiry or appeal against ABC actions or decisions is upheld, any charges made will be refunded or rescinded. Where the original ABC decision is upheld, any cost of the enquiry or appeal will be charged to the centre / learner.

NB If centres or learners wish to have further advice on any matters concerning the centre's or ABC's policy, they should contact ABC's Quality Manager.

2 Enquiries about Results

- 2.1 A learner must follow the centre's procedures before the centre submits any enquiry about results to ABC. Unless they are external candidates, learners enquiring directly to ABC will be referred in the first instance to their centres.
- 2.2 In making an enquiry to ABC about an external assessment or moderation decision the centre must provide the following information in writing as applicable:
- centre name and UKPRN (where applicable);
 - learner name and ABC course ID;
 - title and QAN¹ of the qualification / units;
 - date of examination;
 - date of external moderation visit **or** date work despatched for postal moderation;
 - original copies of internally assessed evidence.

¹ Qualification Accreditation Number or ABC Qualification Code for customised provision.

2.3 External Assessment Decisions

Where learners' results are seriously at variance with those expected by the centre, one of the following may be requested:

- 2.3.1 a simple clerical check on accurate reporting of figures. This must be in writing within 28 working days of the notification of results to the centre and a fee of £10 per script will be charged. Any errors affecting changes to a grade will be fed back to the centre and, if applicable, certificates re-issued.
- 2.3.2 a re-mark of an examination script. This must be in writing within 28 working days of the notification of results to the centre, and a fee of £100 per script will be charged. This fee will include an examiner's report on re-mark findings and whether the original grade is to be upheld or not.

2.4 External Moderation Decisions

Where an external moderator notifies a centre that its assessments or assessment decisions have not met the qualification standard and require a change to the grade, the centre may, if contesting the decision, request a re-moderation.

- 2.4.1 All requests must be made in writing within 28 working days of the external moderation and before claiming certification. A senior external moderator will then review all relevant evidence. Either party may request a meeting if it is appropriate to do so.

3 Enquiries about Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Decisions

Centres may request a review of any ABC decision or actions taken regarding learner requests for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration if they can provide further evidence in support of their request. If the centre or learner remains dissatisfied following further discussions with ABC they may appeal against the decision.

4 Enquiries about Malpractice and Maladministration Decisions

Actions taken by ABC as a result of investigations into instances of malpractice or maladministration may be questioned by the centre. If the centre or learner remains dissatisfied following further discussions with ABC they may appeal against the decision.

5 Appeals

- 5.1 Centres or learners appealing against any of the above will be notified of the procedures and steps to be taken at the start of the appeals process.
- 5.2 Prior to convening an Appeals Panel ABC will notify the centre or learner of the cost and the timescales for reviewing the evidence.
- 5.3 Each panel will include individuals who have no personal interest in the decision being appealed and will include at least one decision maker who is not an employee of ABC, a sub-contractor working for ABC or otherwise connected to ABC.

5.4 The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final.

6 Timescales

ABC aims to keep the centre / learner informed at all stages of the enquiries and appeals processes and will endeavour to:

- acknowledge written enquiries and appeals within 5 working days of receipt;
- appoint an investigating officer, if necessary, within a further 10 working days of acknowledgement;
- communicate a report from the investigating officer within 15 working days of appointment;
- act without undue delay when an Appeals Panels needs to be convened.

7 Adjudication of Internal Assessment Decisions

7.1 ABC may act as independent adjudicator. This procedure usually applies where a learner has appealed to the centre against an internal assessment decision which cannot be resolved by the centre.

7.2 Centres must put requests in writing, outlining the results of their own appeals process.

7.3 Where ABC agrees to review learners' internal assessment evidence, the evidence should be included with other evidence to be presented for external moderation.

8 Appeals against other ABC Decisions

8.1 All such appeals must be made in writing 28 working days from receipt of an ABC notification and will be reviewed by ABC's Executive Team. Centres may wish to appeal against the following decisions:

- refusal by ABC to recognise a centre or give qualification approval;
- ABC removal of centre recognition or qualification approval as a result of an imposed sanction. (See paragraphs 4 and 5 above regarding Malpractice and Maladministration.)

8.2 Centres which choose to appeal against a decision must do so by including evidence to show that the issues that forced ABC's initial decision have been resolved. If any fees for reviewing additional evidence received are applicable, ABC will notify centres before proceeding.

9 Compliance with Ofqual's Appeals and Complaints Process

- 9.1 Where the outcome of an appeal is seen to have a wider impact on other centres or learners, ABC will endeavour to ensure that:
- the error is corrected or if it cannot be corrected for any reason, the effect of such an outcome is mitigated, and;
 - the failure does not recur in the future.
- 9.2 ABC will also ensure that if it is notified by Ofqual of any failure by another awarding organisation, it will risk assess its own procedures to ensure that a similar failure does not affect its own processes. In doing so ABC will review any procedures as deemed appropriate.