

APPEALS AND ENQUIRIES ABOUT RESULTS POLICY



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Section 1 – Overview of the policy

1.1 Scope of the policy

This policy is aimed at our customers, including candidates, who are using the products and services shown below and who submit appeals and enquiries about results:

- ◆ National Qualifications
- ◆ National Awards
- ◆ National Partnership Awards
- ◆ Centre-devised courses accredited under our customised award service and Investing in Quality licence.

1.2 Purpose of the policy

The purpose is to set out the steps you follow when submitting your appeals and enquiries about results to us and the steps we follow when reviewing the cases. It's also to review those processes which led to the decision against which the enquiry or appeal was made.

1.3 Location of the policy

You can download copies of the policy from our website: www.ncfe.org.uk or request copies from our Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing service@ncfe.org.uk. We've also signposted the policy in our *Candidate Learning Log*, which is available to use for each NCFE Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) qualification, in our *Candidate Information Pack* which can be used for our national awards and in our *NCFE Centre Support Guide*. These documents are available from our website or our Centre Support team.

1.4 Communication of the policy

It's important that both your personnel involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our programmes and your candidates studying our programmes are fully aware of the contents of the policy. Please ensure that you've made your colleagues and candidates aware of the policy. On their centre visits, our External Moderators, External Verifiers and Quality Verifiers may check that you've not only received the policy but also made your relevant colleagues and candidates aware of its contents and purpose.

1.5 Review of the policy

We'll review the policy annually and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and stakeholder feedback, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation. Our review of the policy will ensure that our procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory criteria and are applied properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

1.6 Definition of enquiries about results

Enquiries about results cover external assessment performance or internal assessment portfolio evidence.

1.7 A summary of what to do when submitting your appeals and enquiries about results

- ◆ You (and your candidates) have up to 30 working days from the date we informed you about the outcome in which to lodge an appeal against our decision or an enquiry about an assessment result or grade. If you think you need more time to notify us of an enquiry about a result or grade, or an appeal against a decision, please contact your Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000 to let them know when we can expect it
- ◆ Please advise your candidates to retain their portfolios until they receive their result
- ◆ If you appeal on behalf of your candidates please obtain the candidates' permission in the first instance
- ◆ Candidates who wish to appeal about their assessment results or grades, or about a decision affecting their learning should either be supported by their centre or should have exhausted their centre's own appeals process before appealing to us. In the latter case, candidates must provide us with evidence that they have first appealed to their centre. It's expected that candidates will only appeal directly to us in exceptional circumstances and in these cases they should contact our External Quality Assurance team on 0191 239 8000 to discuss the process
- ◆ If you'd like us to review an internal or external assessment result or grade please complete our 'Enquiry about a Result form', which is available from our website: www.ncfe.org.uk or on request from our Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing service@ncfe.org.uk. For other types of appeals set out in section 2.1 of this policy, please submit your own report together with any supporting evidence
- ◆ Send these details to our Centre Support team by email, post or fax.

For more detailed information about your role and responsibilities please refer to Section 3.

1.8 A summary of what we do when reviewing your appeals and enquiries about results

- ◆ If we're unable to review your request on the day we receive it, we'll acknowledge it within 1 working day of receipt to let you know what's happening
- ◆ We'll aim to action and resolve enquiries about results or grades within 10 working days of receipt of your form or report.
- ◆ We'll aim to action and resolve appeals within 20 working days of receipt of your form or report. If it's going to take longer we'll keep in touch to let you know what's happening, eg if a panel needs to be convened
- ◆ An independent person¹ will always be involved in reviewing appeals that are submitted
- ◆ We'll inform you of the outcome within 1 working day of making our decision

¹ The independent person will not be or will not have been a member of NCFE's Board or committees, an NCFE employee or an NCFE External Contractor, at any time.

For more detailed information about our role and responsibilities please refer to Section 4.

1.9 Complaints

We've a separate complaints process which covers our centres' or candidates' dissatisfaction with our products or services, other than those categories listed in Section 2 of this policy. For further information, please contact our Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing service@ncfe.org.uk.

Section 2 - Scope of the Policy

2.1 Categories covered by the policy

Our policy covers the following categories of appeals or enquiries about results:

1. NCFE's decision concerning a centre's application to offer an NCFE national programme or centre-devised award or to become an Investing in Quality licensed centre
2. The contents of a centre approval, moderation, verification, external assessment monitoring or Investing in Quality visit report
3. NCFE's decision to decline a centre's request to make reasonable adjustments or give special considerations
4. NCFE's sanction as a result of malpractice or maladministration
5. The outcome of an NCFE investigation into a complaint raised by the centre
6. External assessment results, external moderation, external verification or grading decisions (internal assessment portfolio evidence). This category may also cover centres enquiring or appealing on behalf of a candidate or group of candidates (please refer to Section 4.3, page 7, of this policy).

If you or the candidates wish to appeal against other decisions not listed above, please contact our Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing service@ncfe.org.uk and we'll discuss your concerns with you and agree the most appropriate way forward.

2.2 Fees and records

2.2.1 Fees

We charge you or your candidates a fee to cover the administrative and personnel costs in the following instances:

- ◆ If the appeal or enquiry about a result is not upheld
- ◆ If we need to carry out a centre visit.

Our fees are contained in our current *Fees and Pricing Document* which is available to download from our website (www.ncfe.org.uk) or on request from our Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing service@ncfe.org.uk.

2.2.2 Records

Remember that an appeal or enquiry about a result can give you a positive, static or negative result change. Following an enquiry or appeal, we'll action changes as appropriate, notify you or the candidates and amend our centre and/or candidate records accordingly.

Section 3 – Notifying NCFE of Appeals and Enquiries

3.1 For enquiries about internal and external assessment results or grades please complete our 'Enquiry about a Result form', which is available from our website: www.ncfe.org.uk or on request from our Centre Support team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing service@ncfe.org.uk.

For appeals as set out in section 2.1 of this policy, please submit your own report together with any supporting evidence. Please include the following:

- ◆ centre name, address and number
- ◆ candidate's name and NCFE registration number ²
- ◆ date(s) you or the candidate received notification of NCFE's decision
- ◆ title and number of the NCFE programme affected or nature of service affected
- ◆ full nature of the appeal
- ◆ contents and outcome of any investigation carried out by you or the candidate relating to the issue
- ◆ date of the report and the appellant's name, position and signature.

3.2 Email, post or fax your completed form or report and any supporting evidence to our Centre Support team as soon as possible and at the latest within 30 working from the date we informed you about our original decision.

Section 4 – Reviewing Appeals and Enquiries

4.1 The review timescales at each stage for all types of appeals

We'll aim to follow the timescales below at each stage of the process and keep

² A candidate registration number can be obtained from your Centre's Examinations Officer or your NCFE Centre Support Assistant.

you informed if any stage will take longer than expected.

4.1.1 Upon receipt of your appeal or enquiry about a result or grade, we'll allocate appropriate NCFE personnel and an independent person to review the case.

4.1.2 We aim to action and resolve all stages of appeals within 20 working days of receipt of your form or report

4.1.3 We'll advise you of the outcome of your appeal within 1 working day of making our decision.

4.2 The review timescales at each stage for all types of enquiries

We'll aim to follow the timescales below at each stage of the process and keep you informed if any stage will take longer than expected.

4.2.1 Upon receipt of your enquiry about a result or grade, we'll allocate appropriate NCFE personnel to review the case.

4.2.2 We aim to action and resolve all stages of enquiries about results within 10 working days of receipt of your form.

4.2.3 We'll advise you of the outcome of your enquiry within 1 working day of making our decision.

4.3 The review process for appeals which fall into categories 1 to 5 listed under Section 2.1, page 4, of this policy

4.3.1 Stage 1 Review Panel

We'll arrange for 1 NCFE Manager and either our Internal Quality Assurance Leader or External Quality Assurance Leader and an independent person to review the case and let you know the outcome of the review. The review process may involve:

- ◆ a discussion with you or the candidate and NCFE personnel
- ◆ a request for further information from you, the candidate or NCFE personnel
- ◆ a centre visit by authorised NCFE personnel.

4.3.2 Stage 2 Review Panel

If you or your candidates are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, you may apply to our Appeals Panel, which will comprise, as appropriate:

- ◆ a member of our bank of External Contractors³
- ◆ an independent member⁴
- ◆ an NCFE Manager not involved in Stage 1.

³ External Contractors include Chief Moderators, Chief Verifiers, Chief Examiners, External Moderators, External Verifiers, Examiners and Quality Advisors

⁴ The independent person will not be or will not have been a member of NCFE's Board or committees, an NCFE employee or an NCFE External Contractor, at any time.

We'll arrange for the panel to review the case and we'll let you know the outcome of the review. The review process may involve:

- ◆ a discussion with you or the candidate and NCFE personnel
- ◆ a request for further information from you, the candidate or NCFE personnel
- ◆ a centre visit by authorised NCFE personnel.

In cases where panel decisions are required, the majority vote will apply.

4.3.3 Stage 3 Review

If your case is unresolved, we'll arrange for an independent review to be carried out⁵. The Independent Reviewer will review all the evidence which took place at Stages 1 and 2. The reviewer will decide recommendations and will review if we've applied our procedures fairly, appropriately and consistently in line with our policy.

The independent review process may involve:

- ◆ a discussion with you or the candidate and NCFE personnel
- ◆ a request for further information from you, the candidate or NCFE personnel
- ◆ a centre visit by authorised NCFE personnel.

The Independent Reviewer's decision is final and we'll let you know the outcome of the review.

4.4 The review process for enquiries about external assessment results or grades, or about decisions concerning internal assessment portfolio of evidence or grading (category 6 listed under Section 2.1, page 4 of this policy)

4.4.1 Stage 1 (Enquiry about a result)

Where a candidate's result or grade is seriously at variance with the reasonable expectations of their Assessor, you may request us to re-check all parts of the candidate's external assessment performance or parts of a candidate's portfolio of evidence. Please note that we do not return external assessments to our centres or candidates.

An enquiry in connection with a candidate's result or grade, or a decision concerning their internal assessment portfolio of evidence or grading, may take the form of any of the categories listed below.

- ◆ Clerical Check ⁶
- ◆ Re-assessment with report⁷
- ◆ Re-moderation/re-verification of internal assessment portfolio evidence with report.

The above categories may be applied to groups of candidates.

⁵ The independent reviewer will not be or will not have been a member of NCFE's Board or committees, an NCFE employee or an NCFE External Contractor, at any time. The independent reviewer will not have been involved in previous stages of the appeal or the enquiry about a result which is under review.

⁶ Clerical Check will involve checking that the marks have been correctly recorded and processed

⁷ Re-assessment will involve remarking the candidate's answers

We'll arrange for a member of our staff, or an appropriate External Contractor, who has not been involved in the original decision, to review your enquiry and we'll let you know the outcome of the review.

If you or your candidates are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, you may submit an appeal and the process as outlined in **Section 4.3** of this document will be followed.
review

Section 5 - Factors affecting the accuracy of results for other candidates

In cases where the outcome of an appeal or enquiry against an internal or external assessment decision, component or grade affects the accuracy of results for other candidates in the same cohort, the personnel involved in the review of the appeal or enquiry about a result will decide whether or not the outcome warrants remarking or reassessment of all portfolios or external assessments affected.

An extraordinary standardisation or awarding meeting may be convened and our standardisation and awarding procedures can be implemented as appropriate. We'll advise centre(s) of the outcome of the review.

Section 6 – Your NCFE contact for this policy

If you've any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our Centre Support team:

Email: service@ncfe.org.uk
Telephone: 0191 239 8000
Fax: 0191 239 8001
Post: NCFE
Citygate
St James Boulevard
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4JE

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