



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 info@ncfe.org.uk. We've also signposted the policy in both our *Candidate Information Pack*, which is available to use for each NCFE national qualification or national award, and in our *NCFE Centre Support Guide*. Both documents are available from our website or our Centre Support team.

1.4 Communication of the policy

It's important that both centre personnel involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our programmes and 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 Advisors 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 may 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 enquires 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 3 months from the date we notified you of the outcome in which to lodge an appeal against our decision or an enquiry about an assessment result
- ◆ 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 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
- ◆ Please complete the NCFE *Appeals and Enquiries about Results 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 info@ncfe.org.uk. Alternatively, you may submit your own report accompanied with documents and 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

- ◆ We'll acknowledge your enquiry/appeal within 3 working days of receipt
- ◆ We'll arrange for appropriate independent NCFE personnel to review your enquiry/appeal
- ◆ We'll aim to action and resolve all reviews within 30 working days of receipt of the report
- ◆ We'll inform you of the outcome within 10 working days of making our decision.

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 info@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 or external verification 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 info@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
- ◆ In the case of group appeals, for those candidates whose results do not change, ie they do not achieve
- ◆ In exceptional circumstances, we may charge a fee before an appeal or enquiry about a result is initiated; in these circumstances, we'll refund this fee if the appeal or enquiry about a result is upheld
- ◆ If a fee for a group appeal is charged before an appeal or enquiry about a result is initiated and the appeal or enquiry about a result is upheld for some or all of the candidates, we'll refund the fee for those candidates who achieve
- ◆ 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 info@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 or candidate records accordingly.

Section 3 – Notifying NCFE of Appeals and Enquiries about Results

- 3.1 Complete our *Appeals and Enquiries about Results 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 info@ncfe.org.uk. This form should document, or be accompanied by, supporting evidence. Alternatively, you can submit your own report accompanied with documents and supporting evidence.

Reports must include:

- ◆ centre name, address and number
- ◆ candidate's name and NCFE registration number ¹
- ◆ 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
- ◆ date of a resit if you've provisionally arranged a resit should the enquiry about a result or appeal not be upheld
- ◆ full nature of the appeal or enquiry about a result
- ◆ 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 Post, email or fax your completed form or report to our Centre Support team as soon as possible and at the latest within 3 months of being notified of our original decision.

Section 4 – Reviewing Appeals and Enquiries about Results

4.1 The review timescales at each stage for all types of appeals and enquiries about results

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.

- 4.1.1 We'll acknowledge your appeals or enquiries about results within 3 working days of receipt.
- 4.1.2 Upon receipt of your enquiry/appeal, we'll allocate appropriate NCFE personnel to review the cases and who've not had any previous involvement in the matter.

¹ A candidate registration number can be obtained from the centre's Examinations Officer or NCFE's Centre Support team.

4.1.3 We aim to action and resolve all stages of appeals and enquiries about results within 30 working days of receipt of your report. Please note that in some cases the review and appeals processes may take longer; for example, if a centre visit is required. In such instances, we'll contact all parties concerned to inform them of the likely revised timescale.

4.1.4 We'll advise you of the outcome of your appeal or enquiry about a result within 10 working days of making our decision.

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

4.2.1 Stage 1 (Internal Review)

We'll arrange for 2 NCFE Managers and either our Internal Quality Assurance Leader or External Quality Assurance Leader to review the case and inform you of the outcome of this 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.

4.2.2 Stage 2 (External Appeal)

If you or the candidate is dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, you may apply to our Appeals Panel, which will comprise the following personnel, as appropriate:

- ◆ an independent Chief Moderator, External Verifier, Chief Examiner, Approval Advisor or Quality Advisor
- ◆ an independent member ²
- ◆ either NCFE's Chief Executive or an NCFE Director.

The panel will review the case and accompanying evidence and we'll inform you of the outcome of this 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.

4.2.3 Independent Review

In the case of an unresolved appeal, we'll arrange for an independent review to be carried out³. The Independent Reviewer will review all the evidence from the enquiry and appeal which took place at Stages 1 and 2.

² The independent member will be drawn from NCFE's Independent Members Appeal Bank and 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 during the past 7 years.

³ The independent review will be carried out by a reviewer who 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 during the past 7 years. The independent reviewer will not have been involved in previous stages of the appeal or the enquiry about a result which is under review.

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.

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

4.3.1 Stage 1 (Enquiry about a result)

Where a candidate's result 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 a decision concerning their internal assessment portfolio of evidence may take the form of any of the categories listed below.

- ◆ Clerical Check ⁴
- ◆ Re-assessment with report⁵
- ◆ Moderation/re-verification of internal assessment portfolio evidence with report.

The above categories may be applied to groups of candidates. If requested, we'll provide one report for the group.

In all instances, a member of NCFE staff, or an independent NCFE Examiner, External Moderator or External Verifier, who has not been involved in the original decision, will review the enquiry and we'll inform you of the outcome.

4.3.2 Stage 2 (Internal Appeal)

Where you or your candidates are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, you may apply to our Internal Appeals Panel. This Internal Appeals Panel will include, as appropriate:

- ◆ a member of our Management Team
- ◆ our Sector Leader for the qualification or award concerned or a member of our External Quality Assurance team
- ◆ the Chief Examiner or Examiner, Chief Moderator or Moderator or an External Verifier for the qualification or award concerned.

⁴ Clerical Check will involve checking that the marks have been correctly recorded and processed

⁵ Re-assessment will involve remarking the candidate's answers

The panel will review all the evidence from the enquiry which took place at Stage 1. 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.

4.3.3 Stage 3 (External Appeal)

Where you or your candidates are not satisfied with the outcome of the decision made at Stage 2 of the appeals process, you may apply to our External Appeals Panel. This External Appeals Panel comprises:

- ◆ an NCFE Board member
- ◆ NCFE's Chief Executive or an NCFE Director
- ◆ an independent member.⁶

The panel will review all the evidence from the enquiry and appeal which took place at Stages 1 and 2. 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.

The panel may request that the candidate attend a hearing. Hearings will be held at our Head Office during office hours and the candidate may be accompanied by a representative if they wish.

4.3.4. Independent Review

In the case of an unresolved appeal, we'll implement Stage 4 and arrange for an independent review to be carried out.⁷ The Independent Reviewer will review all the evidence from the enquiry and appeal which took place at Stages 1, 2 and 3. 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.

The Independent Reviewer's decision is final.

⁶ The independent member will be drawn from NCFE's Independent Members Appeal Bank and 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 during the past 7 years

⁷ The independent review will be carried out by a reviewer who will not be or will not have been a member of NCFE's Board or committee, an NCFE employee or an NCFE External Contractor, at any time during the past 7 years. The independent reviewer will not have been involved in previous stages of the appeal or enquiry about a result which is under 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 or component 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 may be implemented accordingly. We'll advise centre(s) of the outcome of the review.

Section 6 - Additional General Information for NCFE Entry Level Qualifications

- ◆ Entry Level Certificate in Adult Numeracy (100/1433/0)
- ◆ Entry Level Certificate in Adult Literacy (including Spoken Language) (100/1325/8)
- ◆ Entry Level Certificate in ICT (100/5637/3)
- ◆ Entry Level Certificate Making Progress (100/5211/2)
- ◆ Entry Level Certificate in Solving Problems (100/5212/4)
- ◆ Entry Level Certificate in Working Together (100/5210/0)

Please note that appeals concerning our Entry Level qualifications listed above may be heard by the Examinations Appeals Board (EAB) after all stages of our appeals processes have been exhausted. If our centres and candidates are dissatisfied with the outcome of the final stage of their appeal and wish to pursue the matter further, they may submit their appeal to the EAB within 3 weeks of receiving our decision. For further information, please contact the EAB Appeals Manager on 020 7509 5995 for an application form or visit the EAB website (<http://www.theeab.org.uk/appeals>).

Section 7 – Your NCFE contact for this policy

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

Email: info@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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