



Vtct

Enquiries and Appeals Procedure

Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Introduction | 3 |
| 2. Enquiries procedure | 3 |
| 3. Appeals procedure..... | 4 |
| 4. Centre appeal against a decision to change a centre's approval status | 5 |
| 5. For centres applying to VTCT for approval..... | 5 |
| 6. How to appeal against centre approval decisions | 6 |
| 7. Appealing against an External Quality Assurer decision..... | 6 |
| 8. Scotland centre appeals requirements | 6 |



1. Introduction

The VTCT Quality Assurance Department is responsible for ensuring that the procedures for enquiries and appeals are followed at all times. These procedures have been put in place to protect the interests of learners and centres. The Quality Assurance and Assessment Departments will maintain records of all enquiries and appeals received, recording outcomes. This information will be shared with the regulatory authorities on request.

The Enquiries and Appeals Procedure does not cover Enquires about Results, Access to Scripts and Appeals against decisions for examined qualifications. For information on these areas please consult the Post Results Services and Guide to the Appeals Process documents available on the VTCT website.

2. Enquiries procedure

Enquiries about results – external assessment

The main example of when a centre may wish to make an enquiry on behalf of the learner is when external assessment forms part of the qualification. This procedure provides the opportunity for centres to seek a check on decisions affecting a learner's external assessment results. Where the outcome of an enquiry brings into question the accuracy of other results, VTCT will take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of all learners who are affected.

Stage 1

- Centres should seek to resolve smaller problems by contacting VTCT's Assessment Department by letter or e-mail, within 14 working days following receipt of the results by the centre's examinations officer. An example will be when a centre seeks a simple clerical check on the accuracy and reporting of a learner's results;
- If it is necessary for the Assessment Department to conduct further investigations before they are able to confirm the learner's results, a response will normally be provided within 7 working days;
- If the centre and/or learner are dissatisfied with the outcome of stage 1, it will be necessary to proceed to stage 2.

Stage 2

A centre wishing to seek a re-mark check on results must write to VTCT within 14 working days following receipt of the results by the centre's examinations office.

VTCT will,

- acknowledge receipt of all written enquiries about results within 7 working days;
- conduct a remarking of the paper, which will be checked by someone other than the original marker;
- produce and send a written report to the centre providing details of any recommendations and/or decisions that have been taken, within 14 working days by recorded delivery.

Learners and centres must be aware that any adjustment to the original mark may be up or down. If the learner is not satisfied with the Stage 2 enquiry response, the centre should initiate the Appeals Procedure.

3. Appeals procedure

General

All VTCT approved centres are required to publish their appeals procedures which must ensure that the centre operates a system for reviewing the quality and fairness of the assessment procedure for the learners. The procedure will outline how the appeals process is made known to learners and how an appeal is to be recorded and processed, including the provision of a quality assurance committee to hear the appeal.

For new centre applications a final decision for centre approval may not be taken for those centres that have not provided a copy of their appeals procedures for the VTCT EQA approval visit.

The Quality Assurance Department maintains records of all appeals received, recording outcomes, and details will be reported annually to the Chief Executive Officer, who will in turn report to the board of trustees.

Learner appeal against an internal assessment decision

In the first instance, appeals must be made to the centre, following the centre's appeals procedures, which must be fully exhausted before VTCT may become further involved.

A learner appeal may be placed against:

- assessment decisions affecting learners' results;
- other decisions affecting centres and learners where appropriate.

Where a learner is not satisfied with the outcome of an internal appeal, VTCT must be notified by the centre.

Centre action

If a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved the centre must notify VTCT that the learner may seek resolution from VTCT by appealing in writing or by e-mail. The centre must also confirm that the learner has exhausted the centre appeals procedure without reaching a satisfactory conclusion.

Learner action

Learners who choose to appeal to VTCT following the outcome of the centre's investigation must provide written confirmation, of their intent, within 14 working days following the centre's decision.

In all such cases the centre must provide: name of centre; the learner name; learner registration number; title of qualification undertaken; and details relating to the learner's appeal.

The VTCT External Quality Assurer will liaise with the centre contact, who will provide a copy of the centre's initial report following the learner's appeal. The External Quality Assurer will make recommendations to VTCT within 7 working days. It may be necessary for further enquiries to be carried out before VTCT is able to provide a written report to the learner and the centre. The report will include recommendations and details of any decision taken and will be completed within 4 weeks.

This may result in the learner returning to the centre within a further 8 weeks to be reassessed by the VTCT External Quality Assurer.

If necessary a further appeal may be made to VTCT's Chief Executive and an independent appeals panel. The Chief Executive and appeals panel will review the appeal and determine VTCT's final response, which will be communicated to the learner in writing within 8 weeks from the date that the further appeal was received. The decision of the appeals panel will be final.

Once the appeal is completed, VTCT will provide a written report of their recommendations to the centre and the learner. Where the outcome of an appeal brings into question the accuracy of other results, VTCT will take all necessary steps to protect the interests of other learners.

4. Centre appeal against a decision to change a centre's approval status

The VTCT Quality Assurance Department is responsible for monitoring all VTCT centres to ensure that the centre approval criteria are met. When it is made known to VTCT that a centre is in breach of its compliance with VTCT centre approval criteria, an investigation is initiated. This may result in temporary suspension and removal from the VTCT website. In the case of a serious breach, the centre may have their approval status withdrawn permanently.

If centre approval is withdrawn, the reasons for withdrawal will be given in writing by the Quality Assurance Manager acting on the recommendation provided within the External Quality Assurer's report. There may be other circumstances where information received results in the withdrawal of centre approval and records will be maintained in all such cases.

The centre will be informed in writing of the reasons for any change to the centre's approved status.

Including: misleading advertising, failure to register learners, complaints, VTCT reputation

5. For centres applying to VTCT for approval

The Quality Assurance Manager deals with all centre approval enquiries and decides whether the centre should be granted VTCT centre approval. The recommendation is made on receipt of the centre recognition report and other documentation essential to the approval process. In the event that approval is not granted, the Quality Assurance Manager will provide the centre with a written account of the outcome.

To be of maximum support to the centre, VTCT will offer advice as to what action must be taken before the application for approval as a centre may be reconsidered.

Providing the resubmission is made within 6 months from the time that the refusal letter was sent, there will be no charge for this service, unless a further External Quality Assurer visit is required.

6. How to appeal against centre approval decisions

Any centre that is not approved may appeal, in writing to the Chief Executive within 8 weeks of receipt of the letter from the Quality Assurance Manager rejecting the centre's initial application. The Chief Executive will review the appeal and advise the centre of the decision.

Centres have the right to appeal against VTCT's decision by following these procedures.

- appeals must be made in writing to the Chief Executive;
- the Chief Executive will acknowledge receipt within 7 working days, by registered post;
- the Chief Executive will provide a written response, by registered post, to the centre within 8 weeks from the date that the appeal was received by VTCT;
- any further appeal against the decision can be made to the qualification regulator: Ofqual; Welsh Government; SQA (Scotland); CCEA (Northern Ireland)

7. Appealing against an External Quality Assurer decision

Where an External Quality Assurer informs the centre that they have not provided sufficient evidence across specified areas appropriate for VTCT to accept their claims for certification, the centre may appeal against this decision.

- the centre must appeal in writing to VTCT's Quality Assurance Department who will provide a written response, by recorded delivery, within 7 working days;
- normally a different External Quality Assurer will review all relevant evidence and will inform the centre in writing of his or her decision within a further 28 days;
- the centre may request a meeting of all interested parties to clarify the issues;
- the costs will be agreed prior to the meeting and will be payable in full by the centre. If the appeal is upheld all costs will be refunded.

8. Scotland centre appeals requirements

Centres delivering SQA-accredited qualifications are advised that all appeals policies and procedures within centres must ensure that the appropriate references are in place.

Centres delivering SQA-accredited qualifications are advised that once the awarding organisation's process has been exhausted, an appeal could be progressed to SQA's accrediting body if the learner or centre is unsatisfied. The circumstances where SQA's accrediting body may review an appeal on behalf of a learner or centre, are:

- the appeal or complaint should be made in connection with an SQA-accredited qualification or in connection with the SQA Accreditation Regulatory Principles;
- the appellant feels the appeal has been inadequately or unfairly investigated by the awarding organisation;
- the awarding organisation was the subject of the appeal.