

External Enquiries and Appeals Policy



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VERSION CONTROL

Version number	Summary of change	Date changed
V1	Policy creation	December 2024
V2	New policy template, review and update to process	June 2025

INTRODUCTION

Fairness to all learners is central to this policy and we are committed to quality assurance processes that are based on impartial, evidence-based judgements. However, all centres and learners are entitled to enquire about, or appeal against, assessment or other decisions.

The purpose of this policy is to make sure that centres and/or individual learners know how they can enquire about assessment, or other decisions, or appeal against an outcome of an enquiry.

This document details the process that should be followed when submitting enquiries and appeals to CTQ and the process we will follow.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Registered learners
- Approved Centres

It covers the following:

- **Enquiries** from a learner and/or centre who is not satisfied with an assessment result that has been set and marked by CTQ, including online multiple-choice tests.
- **Appeals of results** where it is believed that CTQ did not apply its procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly or fairly.
- **Appeals from learners** who have completed their centre's internal appeals process and remain dissatisfied with the outcome.
- **Appeals from learners or centres** where there is evidence that CTQ did not follow its published procedures properly, fairly, or consistently.
- **Appeals from approved centres** in relation to a CTQ decision to approve or reject an application to deliver additional qualifications.

- **Appeals from centres** disagreeing with External Quality Assurance (EQA) decisions, particularly where outcomes affect assessment results.
- **Appeals relating to requests for reasonable adjustments or special considerations** that CTQ has declined.
- **Appeals concerning the outcome of malpractice or maladministration investigations**, including any sanctions imposed.

This policy does not cover:

- Initial complaints (see Complaints Policy)
- Allegations of malpractice or maladministration (see Malpractice and Maladministration Policy)
- Appeals against a decision for centre approval
- Appeals against centre assessment decisions that have not been through the centre's own process

ACTIVITY

Before engaging with CTQ's enquiries and appeals process, please consider the following:

If the assessment was marked by the centre, the learner must first follow the centre's own internal appeals process. CTQ will only accept an appeal once this process has been fully exhausted, unless there is clear evidence that the centre did not follow its own procedures properly or fairly.

If the assessment was set and marked by CTQ, the learner or centre must submit an enquiry about results before an appeal can be made.

Enquiries are only available for CTQ-marked assessments. Decisions relating to EQA outcomes, malpractice investigations, or reasonable adjustments must be addressed directly through the appeals process.

CTQ will not accept anonymous enquiries or appeals unless sufficient information is provided to investigate fairly and identify all relevant individuals, assessments, or centres.

Allegations of malpractice or maladministration must be reported through CTQ's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, not through the enquiries or appeals process.

CTQ handles all personal data in line with current UK data protection legislation, ensuring confidentiality and appropriate use at every stage.

ENQUIRIES ABOUT RESULTS AND ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

An enquiry is a formal request for a review of an assessment result that has been set and marked by CTQ, including online multiple-choice tests. It allows a learner or centre to question whether the result awarded reflects the learner's actual performance. Learners must submit an enquiry before an appeal can be made.

ENQUIRY ELIGIBILITY AND PROCESS

An enquiry can only be made for assessments that are set and marked by CTQ. It is not applicable to centre-marked assessments or where CTQ has not determined the result.

Learners must have been registered with CTQ and allocated a learner registration number prior to the assessment to be eligible to make an enquiry.

Enquiries must be submitted within 20 working days of receiving the assessment result. Requests submitted outside this timeframe will not be considered unless exceptional circumstances can be evidenced.

A centre may submit an enquiry on behalf of one or more learners, but learners must discuss their concerns with the centre before the request is made. A completed Enquiry and Learner Consent Form must be submitted, available on CTQ's website

<https://ctq.org.uk/>

CTQ will:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the enquiry and verify the request is in scope within 2 working days.
2. Complete assessment reviews and notify the centre or learner in writing of the outcome within 5 working days of receipt.
3. Update centre or learner records accordingly.
4. Notify third parties of a change to the result or grade (where applicable).
5. Implement any changes to CTQ systems or processes, if the outcome highlights an issue.

CTQ will review the assessment to check:

- The mark has been calculated correctly.
- All relevant sections have been marked.
- The final grade has been added to the system correctly.
- All questions and answer options were correct and functioning as intended.

- The review will be carried out by a competent individual who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF AN ENQUIRY

- The assessment result is confirmed (no change).
- The result is changed – this may be positive or negative, e.g. a pass is changed to a fail or vice versa, or the grade is amended.

Centres are responsible for making learners aware that assessment results may go up or down as a result of the enquiry.

APPEALS

An appeal is a formal request to CTQ for a review of a decision, based on the belief that CTQ has not applied its procedures correctly, consistently, or fairly. Appeals may only be made once any relevant enquiry or centre-level appeals process has been completed.

Appeals must be submitted within 20 working days of the original decision being issued.

STAGE 1: APPEAL SUBMISSION

Appeals must be submitted using the CTQ Appeal Form, available from our website. The form must include:

- Appellant's name and contact details
- Centre details (if applicable)
- Clear description of the decision being appealed
- Specific grounds for appeal, outlining where CTQ did not follow procedures
- Any supporting documentation, clearly referenced
- Confirmation that the internal centre appeals process has been exhausted (if relevant)

If a centre is submitting on behalf of a learner, a completed Learner Consent Form must also be included.

Learners and centres must be made aware that assessment outcomes may be changed as a result of an appeal, including results being downgraded from pass to fail or vice versa.

STAGE 2: REVIEW AND VALIDATION

CTQ will conduct an initial review of the submission to determine whether:

- The appeal is within the scope of this policy
- The internal or enquiry stage has been completed, where applicable
- The grounds and supporting evidence are sufficient to proceed

If the appeal is not accepted, the appellant will be informed in writing with an explanation.

If it is accepted, the appeal will move to the appeal panel.

As part of the review, CTQ will assess whether the issue raised may have caused, or has the potential to cause, an adverse effect. Where an adverse effect is identified or suspected, appropriate steps will be taken to correct or mitigate the issue and prevent recurrence, in line with Conditions A6.2 and A7.1.

If the matter meets the threshold for notification, CTQ will report it to Ofqual promptly based on the information available at the time, and will follow up with any additional details or planned mitigation actions, in accordance with Conditions B3.5 and B3.6.

STAGE 3: APPEAL PANEL

Accepted appeals are considered by a CTQ Appeals Panel, which includes:

- The CTQ Responsible Officer (as Chair)
- A subject specialist External Quality Assurer (EQA) who was not involved in the original decision
- An independent external representative with no current or prior connection to CTQ

A note taker will be present to record proceedings but will not participate in the decision-making.

The panel will consider:

- Whether CTQ applied its policies and procedures properly and fairly
- Any guidance from regulators or sector precedents
- All relevant documentation and submissions
- Any further information required from the centre, learner, or CTQ staff

The panel aims to complete its review within 20 working days of accepting the appeal.

Should the panel take longer than this to conclude the decision the appellant will be notified of this in writing.

STAGE 4: PANEL DECISION AND OUTCOME

The panel may reach one of two outcomes:

- Appeal rejected – CTQ's procedures were applied correctly
- Appeal upheld – CTQ did not apply its procedures correctly or fairly

Panel decisions are final and conclude CTQ's internal appeals process.

Where an appeal is upheld, CTQ will:

- Amend the learner or centre record
- Notify relevant parties of the outcome
- Take corrective action, which may include:
 - Reassessment opportunities
 - Convening standardisation activity
 - Process or policy changes
 - Staff training and development
- Identify and address any wider impact on other learners or centres
- Notify the regulator where an Adverse Effect has occurred or could occur

We acknowledge that appeals may highlight issues with the potential to cause adverse effects. In line with Condition D3.3, CTQ will consider whether any adverse effects have occurred and will take all reasonable steps to prevent them from recurring.

Where an appeal identifies that a result or certificate is invalid, CTQ will take all reasonable steps to revoke the affected certificate(s) in line with regulatory requirements.

Affected learners will be notified in writing, explaining:

- The reason for the revocation
- Their right to appeal the decision
- Any opportunity for re-assessment or re-certification

CTQ will maintain records of all revoked certificates and ensure that third parties who rely on our certification can verify accurate and current learner outcomes.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following RACI matrix outlines the roles and responsibilities for key activities within this policy, ensuring clarity on who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed.

Activity	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
Enquiry				
Receive and log enquiry	Quality team	Head of Quality and Operations	—	Learner / Centre
Check eligibility (CTQ-marked, timeframe, learner registered)	Quality team	Head of Quality and Operations	—	Learner / Centre
Appoint independent reviewer	Quality team	Head of Quality and Operations	—	—
Conduct assessment review	Assigned Reviewer	Head of Quality and Operations	Subject Expert (if required)	Learner / Centre
Record outcome and update systems	Quality team	Head of Quality and Operations	—	Internal teams
Notify centre/learner of outcome	Quality team	Head of Quality and Operations	—	Learner / Centre
Notify third parties (if applicable)	Quality team	Head of Quality and Operations	—	Third Parties (e.g. employers)
Implement improvements if required	Head of Quality and Operations	Responsible Officer	Relevant teams	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
Stage 1: Appeal Submission and Initial Review				
Log and acknowledge appeal	Quality team	Head of Quality and Operations	—	Appellant
Confirm appeal is within scope and there is valid evidence	Quality team	Head of Quality and Operations	Relevant CTQ teams	Appellant
Confirm whether CTQ	Quality team	Head of	—	Appellant

will proceed or signpost elsewhere		Quality and Operations		
Stage 2: Review and validation				
Gather and review evidence	Quality team	Head of Quality and Operations	Relevant CTQ staff / EQA	Appellant
Request further evidence if required	Quality team/ Appellant	Head of Quality and Operations	Relevant CTQ staff / EQA	Appellant
If appeal does not meet scope inform appellant in writing	Head of Quality and Operations	–	–	Appellant
Stage 3: Appeal Panel				
Appoint and arrange appeal panel	Quality team	Head of Quality and Operations	Centre / EQA / Other parties	Appellant
Conduct panel hearing	Appeals Panel	Responsible Officer	–	Appellant
Record panel notes	Note Taker	–	–	–
Make decision on appeal	Appeals Panel	Responsible Officer	–	Appellant
Stage 4: Outcome and Closure				
Draft outcome report	Appeal panel	Head of Quality and Operations	Relevant CTQ personnel	Appellant
Communicate outcome and rationale	Head of Quality and Operations	Head of Quality and Operations	Appeal panel	Appellant
Update learner/centre records if needed	Quality Team	Head of Quality and Operations	–	Responsible Officer
Notify third parties if needed	Quality Team	Head of Quality and Operations	–	Third parties
Implement corrective actions	Head of Quality and Operations	Responsible Officer	Relevant teams	SLT / Board
Close appeal formally	Quality team	Head of Quality and	–	Internal record

		Operations		
Stage 5: Escalation to Board				
Board reviews appeal process	Board	Board	Responsible Officer	Appellant
Board outcome	Board	Board	-	Appellant
Stage 6: Escalation to Regulator (Ofqual)				
If appellant is not happy with final outcome they can escalate to Regulator (Ofqual)	Appellant	—	CTQ (for record-keeping)	Ofqual

ESCALATION AND REPORTING

If you are dissatisfied with how CTQ has handled your appeal, you may request a formal review. This must relate to how the process was followed, not the outcome itself. CTQ will not reconsider the appeal decision unless there is clear evidence the process was not correctly applied.

CTQ complies with Ofqual's appeals and complaints requirements and takes due account of their outcomes. Where an appeal process uncovers a failure in assessment, CTQ will take all reasonable steps to identify affected learners, correct or mitigate the issue, and prevent recurrence, in line with Conditions I2.1, I2.2, and I2.3.

STAGE 5: REVIEW OF APPEAL HANDLING

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your appeal following Stage 4, you may request a formal review of how the appeal was managed by CTQ's Responsible Officer (RO).

Requests for review must:

- Be submitted within 10 working days of the date of the appeal outcome letter.
- Clearly state the grounds for review – these must relate only to the way the appeal was handled, not the result itself.
- Not include any new evidence or information that was not available at the time of the original appeal.

The board will review the handling of the appeal and confirm whether CTQ's processes were followed appropriately. This is not a re-investigation of the original appeal.

You will receive a written response within 10 working days, unless the matter is complex — in which case you will be notified of the revised timeframe.

The outcome of this review concludes CTQ's internal enquiries and appeals process.

STAGE 6: ESCALATION TO OFQUAL

If, after completing all internal stages, you remain dissatisfied with how CTQ has handled your appeal, you may raise your concern with Ofqual, the qualifications regulator in England.

Ofqual will not re-consider the appeal decision but may investigate whether CTQ followed the process in line with regulatory expectations.

Before contacting Ofqual, please ensure:

- All internal CTQ stages, including the review, have been completed.
- You can provide a clear rationale and any supporting evidence for your referral.

You can submit your complaint to Ofqual via:

Online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual/about/complaints-procedure>

Email: complaints@ofqual.gov.uk

Post:

Ofqual
2nd Floor
1 Friargate
Station Square
Coventry
CV1 2GN

Please note that Ofqual will not normally intervene in appeals unless all internal routes have been exhausted and a regulatory concern exists.

ENQUIRY AND APPEAL REVIEW AND REPORTING

All enquiries and appeals received by CTQ are logged systematically and reviewed on a regular basis to identify recurring themes, risks to assessment validity, and opportunities for continuous improvement. As part of our commitment to regulatory compliance and organisational learning, we evaluate the nature and outcomes of appeals to determine whether they highlight issues, process gaps, or potential adverse effects, in line with Condition D3.2.

Where appropriate, the outcomes of appeals may lead to changes in our assessment practices, policies, procedures, or staff training. We are committed to taking proportionate and preventative action to reduce the likelihood of recurrence and to maintain the integrity of our qualifications.

Summary data is reported to the Senior Leadership Team and reviewed alongside other quality assurance indicators. Insights from appeals inform our internal review processes and strategic planning. Where issues are serious or recurring, they may be escalated to the Board for governance oversight.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy is subject to a three-year review cycle, or earlier if feedback or concerns are raised with CTQ, to ensure it remains fit for purpose and its processes and outcomes are deliverable.

It will also be reviewed as part of CTQ's continuous improvement monitoring through its annual self-assessment arrangements.

REGULATORY CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

CTQ is committed to meeting the requirements set out by Ofqual's Conditions of Recognition.

CTQ will ensure:

- Policies and procedures align with regulatory conditions.
- All staff understand their obligations in relation to compliance.
- A robust system is in place to identify, manage, and mitigate risks to regulatory compliance.

The table below lists the conditions to which this policy applies.

Condition reference							
A6.1	A6.2	A7.1	B3.1	B3.5	B3.6	C2.3	D4.1
D4.2	I2.1	I2.2	I2.3				