

# Access to HE Diploma Learner Appeals Policy

## Purpose

This Policy sets out Gateway Qualifications' process for managing and considering appeals from Learners following assessment decisions relating to Access to HE Diplomas.

Learners who wish to appeal about their assessment results, or any decision affecting their learning, must have exhausted their Centre's own appeals process before appealing to Gateway Qualifications. Learners must provide Gateway Qualifications with evidence that they have first appealed to their Centre. It is expected that Learners will only appeal directly to Gateway Qualifications in exceptional circumstances.

## Scope

This policy covers appeals from Learners regarding Access to HE Diplomas.

This policy does not cover:

- appeals from Centres, these are covered by the Gateway Qualifications' Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Learner appeals for qualifications awarded by Gateway Qualifications other than Access to HE Diplomas; these are covered by the Gateway Qualifications' Appeals Policy and Procedure
- complaints

Complaints are distinct from appeals and are considered separately within the Feedback and Complaints Policy.

## Audience

This Policy is intended for the following audience:

- Recognised Centres ("Centres") offering Access to HE Diplomas, including all Centre staff, associates, freelance staff and contractors
- Learners undertaking an Access to HE Diploma
- Gateway Qualifications' Board of Trustees and Committee members
- Gateway Qualifications' staff
- Gateway Qualifications' wider workforce – including consultants, qualification developers, assessment associates

## Definitions

- **Awarding Organisation (AO)** - An organisation recognised by a Regulator in respect of the developing, delivering, and awarding qualifications
- **Appeal** - A formal request made by a Learner or Centre to review a decision made by Gateway Qualifications. This could relate to assessment results, administrative errors, or other decisions affecting a Learner's outcomes
- **Assessment** - The process of evaluating a Learner's or apprentice's knowledge, skills and understanding against a predefined criteria. This involves evidence through various assessment methods, such as written exams, practical demonstrations, projects, or portfolios, to determine whether the Learner has met the required learning outcomes
- **Centre** - An organisation undertaking the delivery of an assessment (and potentially other activities) to Learners on behalf of an awarding organisation. Centres are typically educational institutions, training providers, or employers
- **Learner** - An individual who is pursuing a qualification offered by Gateway Qualifications. A Learner is actively engaged in the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies through educational or training activities.

## Responsibilities

### Centre Responsibilities

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Gateway Qualifications' Centres must also operate an effective and appropriate appeals process for the benefit of Learners.

Centres must have an appeals process that includes having a named contact at the Centre. These arrangements must be transparent and accessible in order that appeals from Learners can be received, considered, and decided upon.

Where a qualification is assessed through Centre-devised assessments, Centres must have exhausted their own appeals policy and procedure before submitting an appeal to Gateway Qualifications.

All Centre staff and contractors must be fully informed of the contents of both Gateway Qualifications' and the Centre's Policy and procedures in relation to appeals.

Centres must make Learners aware of the Centre's own appeals process. Learners should also have the content of Gateway Qualifications' Appeals Policy and Procedure explained to them in terms of what an appeal is and what they should do if they wish to make an appeal.

Centres must retain Learner assessment evidence according to the requirements set out in the Centre Agreement Terms and Conditions in order to support any appeal request from its Learners.

### Gateway Qualifications Responsibilities

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Gateway Qualifications will operate in accordance with this Policy.

Gateway Qualifications will ensure that appeal decisions are taken by individuals who have no personal interest in the decision being appealed and who have the appropriate competence to make decisions on such matters.

Decisions on appeals will be provided within the timescales specified below.

Should Gateway Qualifications identify any failure in its assessment process, steps will be taken to:

- identify any learner who has been affected by the failure
- correct or, where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of any failure; and
- ensure that the failure does not recur in the future.

## Related Policies and Documents

This Policy should be read alongside the following:

- Access Policy and Procedure
- Centre Agreement Terms and Conditions
- Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedure
- Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure
- Sanctions Policy

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Whilst developing the policies and processes referenced in this document, we have given due consideration to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) and those who do not.

## Learner concerns about assessment decisions: Formal representations

Once an assignment has been assessed and all assessment criteria have been met, a Learner is not permitted to resubmit all or part of the assessed work in order to improve the final unit grade.

If a Learner has concerns about assessment decisions relating to the achievement of credits or grades, they should discuss these with the relevant member of the course team when the assessed work is first returned to them.

Learners may ask for unconfirmed grades to be reviewed. Such cases should be managed through the formal representation process. Unconfirmed grades are assessment grades that have not been submitted for external moderation and the Final Awards Board.

The procedure for **representations** at the Centre applies when a Learner asks for unconfirmed grade indicators to be reviewed and reconsidered after work has been graded but prior to moderation.

- a. If a Learner wishes to request reconsideration of one or more of the grade indicators given by a tutor for any individual unit, they must do so at the earliest opportunity. This will normally be within one week of receiving the graded work.
- b. In the first instance, the tutor will discuss the assessed work with the Learner to explain the grading decisions made.
- c. If the Learner is not satisfied with the explanation and wishes to pursue a representation, the relevant Learner work will be considered by the internal moderator or considered through such other alternative mechanisms as have been approved for the purpose by Gateway Qualifications. A formal record of the Learner's representation will be made.
- d. The formal records of all representations will be considered by the external moderator, who will:
  - i) confirm that the representations process has been properly operated and,
  - ii) may sample and review individual cases.
- e. A Learner may appeal the grading decision that results as a consequence of a representation to their Centre. The circumstances under which a request for an appeal can be made are limited and detailed further below.
- f. Under no circumstances may a tutor make any change to grade indicators or unit grades without the involvement of the internal moderator and without a formal record (as prescribed) being made.

If the internal consideration concludes that an error of judgement has been made, the relevant assignment(s) will be reassessed and new feedback, relating to any revised unit grade indicators, will be provided.

## Appeals that can be taken to the Final Awards Board

The grounds for appeal about the award of credits or grades on the Access to HE Diploma are restricted to:

- evidence of administrative or procedural error
- extenuating circumstances that, for good reason, could not be notified prior to the Final Awards Board.

Extenuating circumstances are defined as any event or situation, usually personal or health-related (but not limited to these), that is unforeseen and outside a Learner's control but has negatively impacted a Learner's ability to lodge an appeal prior to the Final Awards Board.

The Final Awards Board cannot receive or consider new representations about academic judgements. If a Learner has concerns about assessment decisions affecting the achievement of credits or grades, they should discuss these with the relevant member of the course team when the assessed work is first returned to them. They may subsequently make a representation through the formal representation procedure described above. However, a Learner may appeal the grading decision that results as a consequence of a representation, but only on the grounds detailed above.

Where judgements made by the Final Awards Board lead to a Learner being allowed further time for the submission of work, the final assessment decisions about that work and the resulting Learner record must be signed off by either a representative from Gateway Qualifications with appropriate authority, such as the lead moderator, or chair of the Final Awards Board.

## Appeals arising from decisions made by Final Awards Boards

In these circumstances, the grounds for appeal are still limited to:

- evidence of an administrative or procedural error in the assessment process
- extenuating circumstances which, for good reason, could not be notified prior to the Final Awards Board.

## Appeals Process

If a Learner is dissatisfied with the decisions of the Final Awards Board and wishes to appeal their grades or has identified administrative or procedural error(s), they must, in the first instance, contact their Centre. Gateway Qualifications will only consider an appeal directly from a Learner if they have first appealed to their Centre. If the Centre does not support the appeal, the Learner may still appeal directly to Gateway Qualifications.

The Gateway Qualifications' [Appeals Form](#) must be used to submit an appeal. Relevant reports, documentation and supporting evidence must be provided. Information submitted must include:

- Centre name, address and Centre reference number
- contact details
- details of the cohort ID or Learner registration number (name not required)
- access to HE Diploma title and unit(s) of the qualification to which the appeal relates and/or nature of the decision against which an appeal is being lodged.
- a detailed outline and reasons for the appeal
- where the appeal is on behalf of a Learner regarding an assessment result made by the Centre, evidence that the Learner has first appealed to their Centre
- contents and outcome of any relevant investigation carried out by the Centre relating to the issue.
- date of any report and the name, position and signature of the appellant.

The table below outlines the timescales associated with the Appeals Process.

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## Timescales

Appeals must be received within two calendar months from the date of the Final Awards Board. However, to best support the Learner's interests, it is advisable to submit appeals as soon as possible after the date of the Final Awards Board.

Stage	Timescales
Appeal submitted	Within two calendar months from the date of the Final Awards Board*
Gateway Qualifications acknowledges receipt of appeal	Within 2 working days of receipt of the appeal
Gateway Qualifications notifies outcome of Stage 1 review	Within 20 working days of appeal receipt
Appellant writes to confirm request to proceed to Stage 2 of the appeals process following Stage 1 outcome	Within 15 working days from the date of Stage 1 outcome*
Gateway Qualifications Stage 2 outcome notification	Within 20 working days of confirmation from appellant to proceed to Stage 2.**

\*Gateway Qualifications will not accept an appeal outside of this timeframe.

\*\* There may be circumstances where timescales need to differ, such as for more complex cases, where they may need to be longer. In these cases, Gateway Qualifications will notify the appellant of any changes to the timescale.

Gateway Qualifications will undertake an initial review of the appeal submission to ensure that there are reasonable grounds and sufficient supporting information for the basis of the appeal within the scope of this Policy.

Where this is not the case, Gateway Qualifications may:

- Request further information;
- Notify that there are no grounds for appeal; or
- Advise the appellant of alternative courses of action.

### Stage 1: Independent review

Gateway Qualifications will appoint an individual to review the appeal. The reviewer will:

- not have been involved in the original decision
- will have no personal interest in the decision and be competent to review the appeal
- review all relevant information considered as part of the original decision, the written submission, and any new information presented

The Stage 1 process may also involve:

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- a discussion with the appellant or the affected Learner(s) and any Gateway Qualifications' representatives
- a request for further information from the appellant, the Learner(s) or Gateway Qualifications
- a Centre visit by authorised Gateway Qualifications staff.

Following the review of the appeal at Stage 1, Gateway Qualifications will write to the appellant with details of, and summarised reasons for, the decision, within 20 working days, to either:

1. amend the original decision; or
2. uphold the original decision.

Where the Stage 1 review outcome allows a Learner further time for the submission of work, the final assessment decisions about that work and the resulting Learner record must be signed off by someone with appropriate authority, such as the lead moderator, Gateway Qualifications Access to HE Quality Manager or chair of the Final Awards Board.

If the original decision is upheld following the Stage 1 review, the appellant may proceed to Stage 2 by writing to Gateway Qualifications. The request must clearly set out the grounds of appeal along with all supporting documentation. The appellant must make this request within 15 working days of the notification date of the Stage 1 outcome.

## Stage 2 Appeals Panel

At Stage 2, Gateway Qualifications will convene an Appeals Panel.

The panel will review:

- all the evidence considered in Stage 1;
- any additional evidence that has since emerged; and
- whether Gateway Qualifications has applied procedures fairly, appropriately and consistently in line with the Policy.

The panel will include:

- a Chair
- a minimum of three individuals
- at least one individual who is not an employee of Gateway Qualifications
- individuals with relevant competence to make a decision in relation to the appeal

Panel members involved in making a decision regarding the appeal panel will not have a personal interest in the outcome of the appeal and will not have been involved in the original decision. The panel may also call any representatives relevant to the case to attend the panel.

Where the outcomes of the Stage 2 appeals panel lead to a Learner being allowed further time for the submission of work, the final assessment decisions about that work and the resulting learner record must be signed off by the Gateway Qualifications Access to HE Quality Manager or chair of the appeals panel.

The Stage 2 decision is final. The outcome of the review will be communicated within the appropriate timescale (as detailed above).

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## Where an appeal is upheld

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In situations where an appeal has been upheld, Gateway Qualifications will give due consideration to the outcome and will, as appropriate, take actions such as:

- amend the record of the Learner(s)/Centre concerned.
- identify any other Learners who may have been affected and correct or, where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of any finding.

The details of any appeals and their outcomes will help inform Gateway Qualifications' risk rating of providers and the delivery of each diploma at each provider. This information must be included in the provider's annual Self-Assessment Review, including actions to address any issues identified, where appropriate.

## What to do if you are not satisfied with the outcome

If Gateway Qualifications' appeals procedure has been exhausted and you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may escalate the matter through the complaints process of the relevant regulatory body:

<b>In England</b>	QAA – Access to HE Diplomas: <a href="mailto:ahe@qaa.ac.uk">ahe@qaa.ac.uk</a>
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## Fees

Gateway Qualifications reserves the right to charge Learners a fee to cover the administration costs where an appeal about a result is not upheld. This fee may be applied at **any stage of the appeals process**.

Fees are invoiced as follows:

- Stage 1 £150
- Stage 2 £300

## Situations brought to our attention by the regulators

Where a regulator or others notify us of failures that have been discovered in the assessment process of another awarding organisation(s), we will review whether or not a similar failure could affect our own assessment processes and arrangements, consider whether any remedial action is necessary in relation to assessments that have been undertaken, and consider appropriate amendments to those processes for the future.

## Review Arrangements and Monitoring

Gateway Qualifications will periodically review this Policy and the associated procedures and revise as necessary. As part of the review, consideration will be given to feedback received and regulatory/legislative requirements.

If you would like to provide feedback on any views on this Policy, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this document.

Gateway Qualifications' Access to HE Committee is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the application of this Policy. An annual summary is provided to the Board of Trustees for monitoring and ratification.

## Legal and Regulatory References

UK regulators require all awarding organisations to establish and maintain their compliance with regulatory conditions and criteria. As part of this process, policies that relate to Gateway Qualifications' status as an awarding organisation will reference any conditions and criteria that they address.

This Policy addresses the following legislation and/or regulatory requirements:

Regulator or Relevant Governing Body	Reference Details	Legislation/Regulatory Reference
Qualification Assurance Agency	QAA Licensing Criteria (until 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2026)	Criteria: 30, 31 Operations  50 (n), Criteria 54 (d and e): Provider and Course Recognition
	QAA Access to HE Conditions (from 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2026)	Condition A5: Complaints and appeals

## Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact:

Telephone: 01206 911211  
 Email: [enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk)  
 Post: Gateway Qualifications, Gateway House, 6 Tollgate Business Park, COLCHESTER, CO3 8AB

## Document Controls

<b>Document Name</b>	Access to HE Diploma Learner Appeals Policy
<b>Version</b>	3.2
<b>Approval Date</b>	May 2026
<b>Review Date</b>	May 2028
<b>Owner</b>	Director of Awarding

## Revision History

Revision Date	Version	Updated By	Summary of Changes
May 2026	3.2	Director of Awarding	QAA Regulatory reference update to show the Conditions effective from 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2026 and Licence Criteria effect to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2026.
August 2025	3.1	Director of Awarding	Policy transferred to the new policy document template.