

Appeals Policy and Procedure

Introduction

This Policy and Procedure sets out Gateway Qualifications' approach to handling and considering appeals.

The Policy applies to appeals relating to qualifications assessed by Gateway Qualifications' Recognised Centres ("Centres"), including Access to HE Diplomas, and assessments set and marked by Gateway Qualifications.

For Learners who wish to appeal about their Access to HE assessment results or decisions affecting their learning, they should refer to the separate Access to HE Diploma Learner Appeals Policy.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Gateway Qualifications' Centres who are delivering regulated qualifications, including Access to HE Diplomas. This policy covers appeals from:

- Learners in relation to an assessment decision made by the Centre where procedures have not been applied consistently, or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly, and as a result, the Learner disagrees with the decision made by the Centre and wishes to challenge the outcome
- a Centre where evidence suggests Gateway Qualifications did not apply procedures consistently, or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly in relation to the results of assessments.
- Learners in relation to an assessment decision made by Gateway Qualifications where procedures have not been applied consistently, or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly, and as a result, the Learner disagrees with the decision made by Gateway Qualifications and wishes to challenge the outcome
- a Centre or Learner regarding decisions relating to Gateway Qualifications' decision to decline a request to make reasonable adjustments or give special considerations
- a Centre regarding decisions relating to any action to be taken against a Learner or a Centre following the outcome of an investigation into malpractice or maladministration
- a Centre in relation to an application of a Gateway Qualifications' sanction.

Centre Responsibility

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.

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' Responsibility

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 have the appropriate competence to make decisions on such matters.

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

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

- identify any Learner(s) who have 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.

Appeal process

Where a Learner has been assessed by a Gateway Qualifications' Centre, they must first appeal to the Centre, using the Centre appeals policy. Only once that process is complete may they appeal to Gateway Qualifications. Learners must provide Gateway Qualifications with evidence that they have first appealed to their Centre. An appeal must be made within 20 working days of the date of the publication of the decision which is being appealed – this includes the publication of assessment results.

As a Centre, if the appeal is being made on behalf of Learners, written permission must be obtained from the Learner/s concerned, as grades/results can go down as well as up (where applicable) as a result of an investigation.

The Gateway Qualifications' appeals form must be used to submit an appeal which is available from <https://www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk/advice-guidance/policies/appeals-form/>, or upon request from Gateway Qualifications. Relevant reports, documentation and supporting evidence must be provided. Information submitted must include:

- Centre name, address and Centre reference number, where the Learner has been assessed by a Centre
- Contact details

- Details of the cohort ID or Learner registration number(s) (names not required)
- Relevant date(s) the Centre or the Learner received notification of Gateway Qualifications' decision.
- Title and number of the qualification, and assessment activity, to which the appeal relates and/or nature of the decision against which an appeal is being lodged.
- 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
- Where the Learner has been assessed by a centre, the contents and outcome of any relevant investigation carried out by the Centre relating to the issue.
- Copies of any Centre reports into the appeal (if applicable) and
- the name, position and signature of the appellant.

Gateway Qualifications will review the appeal submission to establish that reasonable grounds for the appeal have been provided and whether the appeal is in scope of this Policy. Where this is not the case Gateway Qualifications may request further information or notify the appellant of alternative courses of action.

Timescales

Stage	Timescales
Appeal submitted	Within 20 working days of decision being appealed*
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 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.

** Whilst Gateway Qualifications will aim to complete the review within 20 working days but this may take longer, in which case the appellant will be notified.

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.

Initial review

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

Formal appeals process

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 and the written submission along with any new information presented

The Stage 1 process may also involve:

- 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.

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 a panel.

The panel will review all the evidence considered in Stage 1, any additional evidence that might have emerged and whether Gateway Qualifications has applied procedures fairly, appropriately and consistently in line with the Policy.

The panel will include:

- 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.

The Stage 2 decision is final. The outcome of the review will be advised within 20 working days of the panel.

Where an appeal is upheld

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 the any finding.

What to do if you are not satisfied with the outcome

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

In England	Ofqual: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual/about/complaints-procedure QAA – Access to HE Diplomas: ahe@qaa.ac.uk
In Wales	Qualifications Wales: enquiries@qualificationswales.org

Fees

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

Fees are invoiced as follows:

Centre Fee: £100 per cohort

Learner Fee: £50 per appeal

Review arrangements and monitoring

Gateway Qualifications will review this policy annually and as part of its self-evaluation arrangements, and revise it when necessary in response to customer feedback, findings from internal and external monitoring arrangements, changes in internal practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or other external agencies, or where there may be changes in legislation.

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

Gateway Qualifications' Quality and Standards and Access to HE Committees are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the application of this policy. An annual summary is also submitted to the Board of Trustees for monitoring and ratification.

Contact details

If you wish to discuss any aspect of this policy and/or have a related query please contact the support team by:

Telephone: 01206 911211
Email: enquiries@gatewayqualifications.org.uk
Post: Gateway Qualifications, Gateway House, 6 Tollgate Business Park, COLCHESTER, CO6 8AB

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Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition
Condition I1: Appeals process
Qualifications Wales Standard Conditions of Recognition
Condition I1: Appeals process
QAA licensing criteria
Criteria 30 Criteria 31 Criteria 50n Criteria 54e