

Arrangements for internal appeals about internal assessment decisions and enquiries about results*

1. Principles

- 1.1 “The awarding body must require centres offering its examinations to ensure that they have in place:
- 9.12i a procedure for candidates or their carers to request access to the enquiry and appeals system
 - 9.12ii a procedure for lodging enquiries about results in cases where the centre supports an enquiry lodged by a candidate or carer
 - 9.12iii a formal, codified procedure for handling disputes when a candidate or carer disagrees with a decision by the centre not to support an enquiry.’ (Code of Practice 2005/06, p45)
 - 9.12 Centres must be required to ensure that the procedures are published, and are made widely available and accessible to all candidates or their carers.”
- 1.2 The Code of Practice also places a responsibility on Awarding Bodies to ensure that centres offering their examinations meet these requirements. The Awarding Bodies will, therefore, during their routine inspection of centres, check to ensure that centres have appropriate procedures in place. Centres should make relevant documentation available during the course of an inspection.
- 1.3 These arrangements have been introduced in the interests of natural justice. Centres should provide a formal appeals mechanism that candidates and their carer/s may use. Such procedures ensure that centres are accountable and allow disputes to be resolved openly and effectively. They are of benefit to candidates and their carer/s because any remaining concerns they have can be explored through a formal and independent process. The procedures are of benefit to centres through defining a formal process to allow them to set out their position.
- 1.4 Many centres will have an internal appeals or complaints procedure in place already. Some do not and others may want to review existing procedures.
- 1.5 The JCQ, with the support of the Regulatory Authorities, has drawn up the guidance for centres on appeals arrangements which follows. Centres are not required to adopt this guidance. Local circumstances might make a different approach preferable. This guidance is, however, designed to illustrate the key principles that underpin a rigorous and transparent appeals process. **Such a process will normally be required when all other mechanisms within the centre (for example, discussion between candidates/carer/s and the Head of the centre) have failed to resolve the matter. It will be the final stage in the normal process of considering and resolving disputes. It is expected that it will be used only in exceptional circumstances.**
- 1.6 The Awarding Bodies will monitor the process in the following ways:
- As part of the Awarding Bodies’ Centre inspection arrangements, centres will be required to produce documentation relating to their procedures for hearing appeals against internal assessment decisions or enquiries about results. The written records of any appeals will also be required. An Awarding Body inspection would be ascertaining that an internal appeals procedure is in place and that records of any appeals are being kept but would not be judging either the appeals process or the decisions reached.
 - Relevant details of any appeal must be made available to the Awarding Body on request.

2. Guidance for Centres on establishing an appeals procedure

- 2.1 The following suggestions for implementing the requirement to have in place a published appeals procedure relating to internal assessment decisions is offered to centres to help ensure that their appeals procedure contains the essential elements of transparency, right of hearing, independence in the hearing, and a written record of outcomes.
- 2.1.1 The Head of centre should nominate a senior member of staff to manage appeals. This person should also be responsible for disseminating information to all candidates and their carer/s about the appeals procedures and for informing the Head of centre about the existence and outcome of all such appeals.
- 2.1.2 The appeals procedure should make clear how an appeal should be initiated, for example, should the appeal be made in writing stating the details of the complaint and the reasons for the appeal, or through a different arrangement? And what are the time limits for lodging an appeal (see also 2.1.7 below).
- 2.1.3 There should be an opportunity for the teacher(s) concerned in making the assessment, which is the subject of the appeal, to see a copy of the appeal and to respond to this in writing, with a copy sent to the candidate.
- 2.1.4 The appeals procedure should allow the candidate bringing the appeal to have an opportunity to have a personal hearing if they are not happy with the written response they have received. A candidate should be given reasonable notice of the hearing date; they should have sight of all relevant documents (e.g. the marks given, the assessments made) to the case in advance of the hearing. Where a candidate is presenting their own case they should be allowed to be accompanied by a (single) carer/ friend. The teacher(s) and candidate should have the opportunity to hear each other's submission to the panel at the hearing.
- 2.1.5 The appeals procedure should include guidance as to who should hear the appeal. The panel should comprise at least two individuals who had not previously dealt with the particular case. One of the individuals should be a senior member of staff and the second another independent person, whether another member of staff, or, for example, a governor.
- 2.1.6 The centre should maintain a written record of all appeals. This record should include the outcome of an appeal and reasons for that outcome. The centre should send a copy to the candidate and, where appropriate, to their carer/s within a specified time limit.
- 2.1.7 The centre should inform the Awarding Body if there is any change to an internally assessed mark as a result of an appeal. Any internal dispute or appeal against an internal assessment decision must be resolved speedily, since Awarding Bodies' cannot change the dates on which certificates are printed and issued. Centres will need to give careful consideration to the dates between which appeals could be heard, taking into account the results date for the relevant examination series.

The Code of Practice can be found on the Regulatory Authorities' websites as follows:

QCA - www.qca.org.uk ACCAC - www.accac.org.uk CCEA – www.ccea.org.uk

***This document replaces the JCGQ Circular, Internal Appeals Procedure Guidance for Centres issued in May 2003.**