

## Appeals Policy – Candidate/Learner

### 1. Policy Statement

Skills Office Network supports the right of candidates/learners to appeal against any assessment or malpractice decision made by Skills Office Network or our employees.

Skills Office Network is committed to ensuring that whenever its assessment employees assess a learners' work for any qualification this will be done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned, in order that all learner work is produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the appropriate awarding body.

Assessments will be conducted by staff with appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and consistency will be assured through processes of internal quality assurance and standardisation. If a learner has reason to believe that this may not have happened in relation to his/her work, he/she may make use of the assessment appeals procedure.

### 2. Purpose

- To enable the learner to enquire, question or appeal against an assessment or malpractice decision.
- To attempt to reach agreement between the learner and the assessor/centre at the earliest opportunity.
- To standardise and record any appeal to ensure openness and fairness.
- To facilitate a learner's ultimate right of appeal to the awarding body, where appropriate.
- To protect the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification.

### 3. Scope

All Skills Office Network employees and candidates/learners enrolled on a qualification programme or certified training course.

To process final appeals for assessment and malpractice decisions made against candidates/learners.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 4.1 Centre Manager

The Centre Manager will lead the investigation and manage the appeals process, ensuring the candidate/learner is kept informed of progress at all stages of the appeal.

#### 4.2 The Assessor/trainer

The assessor/trainer will fully support the appeals process and provide necessary paperwork to enable the appeals board to make a fair decision.

#### 4.2 Candidate/Learner:

The candidate/learner making the appeal will provide necessary information to enable the appeals panel to make a fair decision.

## 5. Policy Implementation – Procedures

Skills Office Network will inform the learner at induction, of the Appeals Policy and Procedure and the Assessment Malpractice Policy and Procedure.

### 5.1 Informal appeal

The candidate/learner should make an attempt to resolve the concern with the tutor who delivered the course, or the assessor that made the assessment decision to come to a mutually agreed outcome. In the case of a summative assessment decision, i.e. end of course decision, the student can approach the Quality Manager or the assessors IQA.

No formal appeal will be considered until this informal attempt at resolution has been made. The informal resolution should be made within 1 year of completion of course and assessment decision.

### 5.2 Reasons for appeal

An appeal may be made against an assessment decision relating to:

- The mark for an individual item of coursework such as a worksheet or case study if the qualification is graded.
- The final result of any element of assessment, such as an observation or workbook.
- An external assessment, such as an online test or Functional Skills Assessment.
- The final overall assessment decision for a qualification.

An appeal can be made if the candidate/learner believes that:

- The assessment was not conducted in accordance with the centre's regulations and/or the awarding bodies assessment guidance, such as in the access to or process of assessment.
- An administration error occurred at some stage during the assessment process.
- Medical or other extenuating circumstances arose during the assessment process which affected the learner's performance and of which the assessor was not aware when making the assessment decision.
- There was inappropriate or irregular behaviour on the part of the assessor.

Please also see the Malpractice and plagiarism policy

### 5.3 Formal Appeal – Stage One

In the first instance the learner should discuss the reason for the appeal with the assessor or internal quality assurer (if one is present at the assessment) on the day of the assessment (or as soon as possible thereafter).

### 5.4 Formal Appeal – Stage Two

If no satisfactory outcome is reached in stage one, then a written appeal should be made to the assessor's internal quality assurer within 7 days of the date of the assessment via the submission of a completed learner appeal form and the inclusion of any relevant supporting evidence.

A formal investigation will be conducted by the centre's internal quality assurer to determine whether the processes used during the assessment were compliant with the requirements of the awarding body and if the outcome is justified. The appointed internal quality assurer will then provide the Centre Manager/lead IV with the findings of their investigation to enable them to make an informed decision.

A written response will then be sent to the learner within 5 working days of the date of receipt of the written appeal. The result of the appeal will be made known in writing to all parties concerned, together with a notification of any changes made to the outcome of the assessment for the work in question. The learner will also be provided with details of any changes that have been or will be implemented within Skills Office Network assessment procedures as a result of the findings of the appeal if applicable.

A written record of the appeal will be kept and made available to the awarding organisation/EPAO at its request. If the situation should arise that the internal quality assurer was directly involved in the assessment in question, or is unable to conduct the investigation for any other reason, the centre manager/Lead IV will appoint another IQA of equal or greater seniority to conduct the investigation. Skills Office Network will forward the appeal to the awarding organisation/EPAO when a learner considers that a decision continues to disadvantage her/him after the internal appeals process has been exhausted. Also, should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding organisation/EPAO will be informed.

### **5.5 Formal Appeal – Stage 3**

If, upon completion of stage 2 of the appeals process, the learner feels that a satisfactory outcome has still not been reached, then a written appeal should be submitted to external quality assurer allocated to the centre. Contact details for the external quality assurer will be made available to the learner by the centre.

The external quality assurer will investigate the matter thoroughly and respond in writing. Evidence may be requested in writing, in person or by telephone from the learner during the course of the investigation. Should the external quality assurer, allocated to the centre, be unable to resolve the matter he/she will refer it to the awarding body's lead verifier.


### **5.6 Additional Information**

Learners are required to notify the centre where the assessment is taking place of any medical problem which may adversely affect performance in the assessment process, so that a decision can be made for deferral prior to the assessment date. Any request for deferral of practical assessments due to medical reasons must be accompanied by a doctor's note (as per the terms and conditions of enrolment).

Online Functional Skills Tests are assessed in accordance with the AO regulations. Skills Office Network will assist Candidates/Learners through the awarding organisations appeals procedure should they wish to appeal against assessment decisions made on externally assessed exams and tests.

After work has been assessed and undergone internal verification (internal quality assurance) it is externally verified (externally quality assured) by the awarding organisation/EPAO to ensure consistency between approved centres. External verification may change the assessment decision made internally although this is outside the control of Skills Office Network and is not covered by this procedure. Any appeal regarding an external verification decision needs to be made directly to the awarding organisation/EPAO in line with its own appeals procedure.

Skills Office Network will keep appeals records for inspection by the awarding organisation/EPAO for a minimum of 18 months and will monitor appeals to inform quality improvement.

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Director Signature	
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