

Complaints Policy



Purpose/Scope

To support centres with their responsibility to:-

- have a clear written procedure in place for learners to raise concerns and complaints about examinations or assessment and have these addressed
- ensure learners are aware of the procedure and know where to find a written copy
- ensure complaints and all related correspondence are recorded and documented for an appropriate time period. This should be based on a centre's document retention policy.

Definitions/Terminology

- **Complaint:** An expression of concern or dissatisfaction from a learner which needs to be investigated and addressed by the centre via a formal complaints channel.
- **Complaints procedure:** a standard, time-limited, sequenced and documented process for the centre and learner to follow when a complaint is made

Responsibilities

- **Learner:** responsible for invoking the complaints procedure, via the appropriate channel, when s/he has a complaint.
- **Centre:** to address the learner's concerns in accordance with its published complaints procedure, which should include timescales for acknowledgement and resolution of the complaint and at least one point of escalation for the learner if they are not happy with the first review of their complaint. The centre should update the learner if it is not able to meet the timescales published in its complaints procedure, and set a new expectation on the time frame for a response

Procedures

- **Learner induction:** the learner should be informed of the centre's complaint procedure and where it is available.
- **Learner complaints procedure:** The procedure which will allow a centre to address its learners' concerns or complaints. The centre should have the opportunity to investigate and respond to a learner's concerns before Pearson becomes involved (with the exception of malpractice cases).

Possible complaints procedure stages:

- **Stage 1 - Informal:** learner lets an appropriate member of centre staff (e.g. teacher or exams officer) know about their concerns and the member of staff attempts to satisfactorily resolve any issues. The outcome should be documented and if unresolved, move to Stage 2.
- **Stage 2 - Formal review:** learner submits their complaint through the formal centre complaints channel and appropriate manager at the centre investigates and addresses their concerns. Learner notified of findings and outcome in writing. If remain dissatisfied, move to Stage 3.
- **Stage 3 - Formal review at a point of escalation:** learner escalates their complaint through the formal complaints channel and appropriate senior manager at the centre investigates and addresses their ongoing concerns. Learner notified of findings and outcome in writing. If remain dissatisfied, move to Stage 4.
- **Stage 4 - Formal review at final point of escalation:** learner escalates their complaint through the formal complaints channel and Board of Governors reviews the case to address the learner's ongoing concerns. Learner notified of findings and outcome in writing. If remain dissatisfied, move to Stage
- **Stage 5 - Escalation to Pearson for information on next steps*.** Information on the Pearson complaints procedure can be found at qualifications.pearson.com/complaints and feedback
- *Please note that once a learner has exhausted a centre's complaints procedure, there will only be certain matters Pearson can then assist with. We cannot assist with matters which are between the centre and learner, for example, fee disputes or complaints about the delivery of a qualification.
- **Recording complaints:** all complaints correspondence should be recorded in writing and dated. Letters of complaint and their responses should be kept for the appropriate time period based on the centre's own document retention policy.
- **Monitoring of complaints and outcomes:** undertaken by senior management at the centre to inform development and quality improvement.
- **Support with the resolution of complaints:** At any point during the investigation of a complaint, a centre can make contact with Pearson for information, support or advice. We would not normally get involved with a complaint until the centre complaints procedure has been fully exhausted, and there are some centre matters which we are not able to support with, for example, fees. A centre

should also forward Pearson a copy of all complaints received related to Pearson qualifications, which are not resolved within 28 days of receipt, and co-operate with Pearson in respect of any action Pearson needs to take to resolve such matters.

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Aim

- To give learners the opportunity to raise matters of concern about their examinations or assessment via a formal and documented process.
- To protect the interests of all learners.
- To facilitate a learner's ultimate right of complaint to Pearson, where it is appropriate.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- inform all learners of the complaints procedure at induction and make it accessible to all learners
- have a staged complaints procedure
- record, track and respond to all complaints in line with the complaints procedure
- take appropriate action to try and resolve learner concerns
- monitor complaints to inform quality improvement
- forward the complaint to Pearson, should it not be resolved within 28 days of receipt
- keep complaints records for the appropriate document retention period.

Procedure*

Please refer to the 'possible complaints procedure stages' outlined above for an example of what your procedure may look like.

This policy will be reviewed every 24 months by The Exams Officer.