

## Enquiries and Appeals relating to Teacher Assessed Grades awarded through the 'VCRF'

### 1 General

- 1.1 This policy outlines how Centres and learners may make an Appeal in relation to a Teacher Assessed Grade ('TAG') Awarding in Summer 2021 under the Vocational and Technical Qualifications Contingency Regulatory Framework ('VCRF').
- 1.2 For all other Enquiries and Appeals, please use [Skills and Education Group Awards' Enquiries and Appeals policy](#).
- 1.3 In relation to TAGs, Centres may make an Enquiry and subsequently Appeal based on the following:
  - Skills and Education Group Awards did not apply procedures consistently, or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly;
  - An Administrative error took place, or;
  - Academic judgement used in the awarding of the TAG.
- 1.4 Where an Enquiry or Appeal against our actions or decisions is upheld, any charges will be refunded or rescinded. Where the original awarding decision is upheld, the cost of the Enquiry or Appeal will be charged to the organisation Appealing on behalf of the learner.
- 1.5 If Centres or learners wish to have further advice on any matters concerning this policy, they should contact [complianceandregulation@skillsedugroup.co.uk](mailto:complianceandregulation@skillsedugroup.co.uk)
- 1.6 In turn, we require all Centres which have a duty of care for learners to have an accessible Appeals policy and procedure to enable expressions of dissatisfaction about results or any decisions affecting the outcomes of assessment.
  - 1.6.1 For internal assessment decisions (not yet Quality Assured by Skills and Education Group Awards) the Centre's procedure should:
    - identify the person with whom the learner should lodge an initial Enquiry or Appeal: this would usually be the learner's tutor or assessor;
    - state the method by which an Enquiry should be made;
    - state what the next steps should be if unresolved: this should include submission to the person responsible for internal quality assurance;

- state what the next steps should be if still unresolved: this may include submission to the Head of Department/Quality, or to other persons who are independent of the internal assessment decision making process;
- include procedures for a referral if the learner is still unhappy with the outcome: see paragraph 10 below;
- stipulate clear timelines for dealing with each step and retention of evidence.

1.6.2 For TAGs that have already been subject to Skills and Education Group Awards Quality Assurance processes ('External Moderation') the intention of an Enquiry must be to change the outcome(s) of the assessment decision.

The Centre must:

- stipulate clear timelines to learners for making an Enquiry which takes into account the timescales and guidelines in this document;
- must provide the following information in writing:
  - Centre name;
  - learner name and Registration ID;
  - title and number<sup>1</sup> of the qualification/units;
  - date of the assessment decision (as applicable);
  - date of external moderation (as applicable).

## **2 Centre Enquiries about Skills and Education Group Awards Quality Assurance Decisions related to TAGs**

- 2.1 Skills and Education Group Awards will use its existing External Moderation processes in order to Quality Assure TAGs.
- 2.2 Where an external moderator notifies a Centre that there is not enough evidence to justify the award of a TAG and the Centre disagrees with the decision, the Centre may request a re-moderation.
- 2.1.1 All requests must be made in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the external moderation report and before claiming certification.
- 2.1.2 The assessment evidence presented for re-moderation must include the original work of the learner and the evidence and outcome of the initial

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<sup>1</sup> As referenced in the Qualification Guide.

assessment and internal moderation activity. The evidence may be reviewed remotely or during a visit to the Centre.

2.1.3 Following a review of the evidence the Lead or Deputy Lead External Moderator files a report which is submitted to the Centre. The report confirms if the original assessment decision is to be upheld or not.

2.2 If the Centre or learner remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the report the Centre may request a formal Appeal.

### **3 Learner Enquiries**

3.1 Centre TAG Decisions – prior to Skills and Education Group Awards undertaking Quality Assurance ('External Moderation') activity:

3.1.1 A learner must follow the Centre's procedures when disputing any TAG decisions.

3.1.2 If the dispute remains unresolved the Centre should notify Skills and Education Group Awards who will liaise with the relevant External Moderator. The disputed TAG will then be included in the Moderation sample.

3.2 External Moderation Decisions

Learners who disagree with the TAG decisions agreed by the Centre and the External Moderator may enquire about that decision directly to [complianceandregulation@skillsedugroup.co.uk](mailto:complianceandregulation@skillsedugroup.co.uk)

3.2.1 Learners must confirm that they:

- have discussed the rationale for the assessment decision in line with the external moderator's feedback with their assessor;
- will put in writing the reasons why they feel the decision is unsound;
- will provide all the original evidence for moderation to the Centre;
- will be responsible for any fees in order to undertake the Enquiry.

3.2.2 The Centre must confirm that it:

- has discussed the rationale for the original decision with the learner;
- will facilitate the re-moderation of the work at the Centre if this is appropriate;

- has made the learner aware that fees will be payable.

3.2.3 Learners over the age of 18 may nominate an appropriate representative to act on their behalf **only** if they are unable to represent themselves, for example by reason of disability, or on medical grounds. Learners wishing to nominate a representative must do so at the beginning of the process, giving a clear reason why they cannot represent themselves. If this is not done, we will be unable to communicate with that nominated representative.

## 4 Appeals

- 4.1 An Appeal must be made by the Centre's nominated contact within 10 working days of receiving our decision following the outcome of an initial Enquiry. At this stage, the focus will be on the procedures followed and the evidence initially provided. No new evidence will be admitted at this stage.
- 4.2 Once an Appeal has been received, we will notify the Centre/learner of the procedures and steps to be taken at the start of the Appeals process. This will include:
- 4.2.1 Convening an Appeals Panel which will include individuals who have no personal interest in the decision being Appealed and at least one decision maker who is not an employee, a sub-contractor or otherwise connected to Skills and Education Group Awards.
- 4.2.2 Gathering all appropriate evidence which will include:
- original learner evidence;
  - initial Enquiry reports;
  - relevant Group policy and procedure;
  - timelines throughout the process.
- 4.2.3 The cost and the timescales for the panel review.
- 4.3 Minutes of the meeting will be taken and will be approved by the Chair of the Panel.
- 4.3 The decision of the Appeals Panel will be final and the outcome communicated to the appellant within 5 working days of the panel meeting.

## 5 Outcomes of Enquiries and Appeals

- 5.1 Where an Enquiry has the potential to have an adverse effect we will inform the Regulators as per their requirements.
- 5.2 Where an Enquiry or an Appeal is upheld and the outcome is seen to have a wider impact on other Centres or learners, we will ensure that:
  - the error is corrected, or if it cannot be corrected for any reason, the effect of such an outcome is mitigated;
  - policies and procedures are reviewed to prevent any future recurrence;
  - additional training of staff/sub-contractors is undertaken.

## 6 Timescales

We aim to keep the Centre informed at all stages of the enquiries and Appeals processes and will:

- acknowledge written enquiries and Appeals within 5 working days of receipt;
- complete all actions within the timescales specified;
- act without undue delay when an Appeals Panels needs to be convened;
- retain all evidence pertaining to an Enquiry/Appeal for a minimum period of six months.

## 7 Quality Assurance

This policy will be reviewed regularly during the period the VCRF is active, to ensure it continues to meet the requirements of our Regulators. We advise that you do not save a copy of this policy locally, we will ensure the latest version is available at [skillsandeducationgroupawards.co.uk](https://skillsandeducationgroupawards.co.uk).