

Sanctions Policy

1. General

Skills and Education Group Awards has a responsibility to maintain the standard of our qualifications and protect the interests of learners completing our qualifications to ensure that Centres deliver qualifications in accordance with our requirements.

We monitor our Centres to ensure they continue to comply with the requirements of our Centre Agreement and its supportive policies and procedures.

Issues identified during External Quality Assurance activity are usually supported by a Centre action plan, detailing the issue to be addressed, by whom and when.

This policy outlines the sanctions that we may impose on Centres that fail to meet our requirements. It provides examples of circumstances and situations that may lead to a sanction and indicates the level of sanction that could be imposed. This is not an exhaustive list, and we will review each case on an individual basis.

Centres and learners should familiarise themselves with contents of this policy and the implications should there be a failure to comply with our requirements. This policy is used by Skills and Education Group Awards staff and External Quality Assurers to ensure the application of sanctions is consistent.

2. Approach to Sanctions

Skills and Education Group Awards aims to ensure that the application of sanctions is a last resort by working with Centres to prevent situations arising that would warrant a sanction being imposed.

However, we have a range of sanctions that can be imposed on a Centre and learners depending on the seriousness of the situation, the level of non-compliance, and the risk to the interests of learners and the integrity of the components and qualifications.

The aim of any sanction imposed will be to minimise the risk to the integrity of all aspects of our awarding functions, the standard of our qualifications and the risk to learner's interests.

In some cases, it may be necessary to impose a sanction on a Centre or a learner to protect the integrity of a qualification involved in an allegation of malpractice or maladministration. This action would be taken to enable us to investigate the allegation.

3. Sanctions relating to Centres

As part of our External Quality Assurance monitoring activities, an External Quality Assurer may determine that a Centre needs additional support and may identify actions that it needs to complete. In such cases, we will work with a Centre to prevent any situations arising that would warrant the application of further sanctions.

However, should a Centre fail to complete the actions or, if an External Quality Assurer identifies something further that would threaten the integrity of awards, this could result in an additional sanction being imposed.

When we impose sanctions, we do this by applying a level that relates to the type of sanction. The table in Appendix 1 outlines the level of sanction that may be applied, the reasons for it and the consequences / actions we may take. The list of sanctions is not exhaustive, and each case will be reviewed and dealt with on an individual basis.

4. Sanctions relating to learners

Although learner malpractice may be typically dealt with by a Centre within the assessment and Internal Quality Assurance processes, we may have cause to impose a sanction on an individual learner directly.

This may occur where independent / External Quality Assurance activities have discovered anomalies in the assessment evidence which are proved to be attributable to an individual learner.

The table in Appendix 2 outlines the sanction that may be applied, the reason for it and the consequences / actions we may take. The list of sanctions is not exhaustive, and each case will be reviewed and dealt with on an individual basis.

5. How we will notify you of the sanction

When a sanction is applied, we will inform the Centre / learner in writing providing an explanation of the type of sanction that has been applied or will be applied and the reason why.

If a sanction has been imposed because a Centre / learner are not responding to communications or correspondence from us, we will take reasonable steps to inform them of the sanction. All attempts to contact a Centre / learner will be retained as evidence to support the application of the sanction.

If we require a Centre / learner to take any action, we will outline what is required to resolve the matter and the deadline in which it must be completed. Any sanction imposed will remain in place until we are reassured that there has been satisfactory resolution and any potential or adverse effect has been mitigated.

Skills and Education Group Awards has a duty of care to protect the interests of its learners and, when imposing a sanction, we consider the impact of this action carefully and, where necessary, will take steps to ensure that learners are supported during the period a sanction is imposed.

Centres / learners have the right to appeal against a sanction that we impose and information on how to do this can be found in our published Enquiries and Appeals Policy.

6. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually, or earlier should any feedback or concern be brought to the attention of Skills and Education Group Awards, to ensure it remains fit for purpose and the process and its outcomes are deliverable.

It is also reviewed as part of Skills and Education Group Awards continuous improvement monitoring through its annual self-assessment arrangements.

Appendix 1

Sanction Level	Reasons for applying Sanction	Possible consequences of Sanction
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre’s aims, policies and assessment practices, and responsibilities of personnel are not clear or well understood by assessment team • Internal verification procedures and activities not clearly documented • Communication within the assessment team and with the awarding body is ineffective • Equipment and accommodation do not comply with Health and Safety Acts • Insufficient qualified assessors • Assessors/IQAs do not have adequate development plans • Learners are not aware of their rights and responsibilities, e.g., no appeals procedure for learners • There is inadequate assessment planning with learners • Queries are not resolved or recorded • Range of assessment methods are insufficient to encourage access • Changes to personnel of the assessment and verification team are not notified to the Awarding Organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action point(s) raised in Centre action plan
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessors have insufficient time, resources, or authority to perform their role • Decisions of unqualified assessors have not been countersigned by qualified assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of direct claims status • Removal of remote External Quality Assurance • Scrutiny of the integrity of assessment decisions required • Additional External Quality Assurance / Compliance visit (at cost to the Centre)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment decisions are not consistent / poor assessment practices • Insufficient qualified Assessors or IQAs • Decisions of unqualified IQAs have not been countersigned by qualified IQA • Records are insufficient to allow audit of assessment • Internal assessment methods / tasks insufficient to allow achievement • Not responding in a timely manner to requests for further information • Previously agreed corrective actions relating to a level 1 Sanction are not implemented / actioned within specified timescales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Quality Assurance of whole cohort (at cost to the Centre) • Advisory Visit (at cost to Centre) • Review / revalidation of internal assessment tasks (at cost to the Centre)
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment process advantages / disadvantages learners • No Internal Quality Assurance undertaken • Assessment decisions are unfair • No qualified internal verifier • Assessment does not meet national standards • Centre fails to provide access to requested records, information, learners and staff • Assessed evidence is not the authentic work of learners • Assessment records show serious anomalies • Certification claims made before all the requirements of assessment are satisfied • Potential / alleged Malpractice • Failure to respond to requests for payment • Persistent non-compliance with Awarding Organisation Policies / Procedures • Continued failure to meet assessment standards • Inadequate invigilation procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of registration • Suspension of certification • Suspension of External Quality Assurance • Suspension of marking activity • Suspension of Onscreen Tests / Independent Assessments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously agreed corrective measures relating to a level 2 non-compliance are not implemented / actioned within specified timescales 	
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant faults in the quality assurance of the qualification programme which result in an ongoing failure to meet the core requirements for the conduct of assessment Permanent loss of integrity of assessment decisions leading to learner advantage / disadvantage Persistent failure to comply with actions / respond to communications Irretrievable breakdown in management and quality assurance of specific qualifications Previously agreed corrective measures relating to a level 3 non-compliance have not been implemented / actioned within specified timescales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of Qualification approval Removal of Sub-sector approval Inform the Regulators Inform other Awarding Organisations
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant faults in the management and quality assurance of all qualification programmes Irretrievable breakdown in management and quality Total breakdown in communications with Centre Significant failure of management to address issues Persistent failure to pay for service / respond to outstanding debts Proven fraudulent activity Previously agreed corrective measures relating to a level 4 non-compliance have not been implemented / actioned within specified timescales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removal of Centre Recognition and termination of Centre Agreement Inform the Regulators Inform other Awarding Organisations Inform any other Stakeholders

Appendix 2

Reasons for applying Sanction	Possible consequences of Sanction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the broad classification of cheating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Plagiarism of any nature – Collusion – Falsification or fabrication of assessment evidence – Any form of impersonation – Any form of cheating to gain an advantage • Failure to obey an invigilator or assessor instructions during an assessment or test. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barring a learner from registering on a qualification at any Centre for a set period of time • Temporary and/or permanent disqualification from the qualification(s) involved or wider disqualification • Disallowing all or part of a learner’s marks for a specific test or assessment • We may require the learner to be re-entered for an assessment that would be invigilated by an invigilator appointed by us at a cost to the Centre.