

Enquiries and Appeals Procedures

A The Enquiry Procedure

1 Types of enquiries covered by the procedure

Centres and candidates can check with the BCU Awarding Body any assessment decisions affecting candidates' results and other decisions affecting centres and/or candidates, such as a decision to withhold certificates or to suspend an approved centre status.

Centres and candidates should note that this procedure is concerned with specific enquiries related to our decisions affecting them rather than with general enquiries, such as those related to our products and services and the associated costs. This is why the enquiry procedure is closely linked with the appeals procedure, outlined in section B below.

2 Enquiry arrangements

Enquiries about assessment and other related decisions should be directed to the Qualifications Coordinator. If the Coordinator is unable to assist the enquirer, the enquiry will be passed onto other appropriate personnel.

If a centre or a candidate enquires about an assessment decision in relation to the candidate's written work, we are prepared to arrange for an External Verifier to reassess this work so as to ascertain whether the original assessment decision was correct. If, however, it is a practical assessment decision that is being questioned, we would require centres to submit a formal appeal on their candidates' behalf, following the procedure outlined in section 2 below.

3 Timescales for dealing with enquiries

Enquiries on results and related decisions will be dealt with within five working days – unless a reassessment of written work is involved, in which case the result of such reassessment will be notified to the enquirer in writing within 15 working days.

4 Monitoring the enquiry service

We will monitor the operation of our enquiry service and, as part of this monitoring, welcome both centres' and candidates' views, which can be conveyed to us informally and/or formally. Formal feedback from centres is gathered through our annual customer satisfaction surveys, while candidates' views are captured via the Candidate Feedback Form, which we would encourage all candidates to complete.

B The Appeals Procedure

1 Appeals arrangements

Whenever centres or candidates do not agree with our assessment decisions or other decisions affecting them, they may lodge a formal appeal. Whether it is the centre or the candidate wishing to appeal, an appeal must always be submitted in writing by the centre and clearly outline the reason why it is being submitted.

Appeals should be made within one month of the decision having been made and should be directed to the Qualifications Coordinator.

Appeals will be heard by the Appeals Panel, which will comprise at least three members: the Quality Assurance & Control Co-ordinator, the Senior External Verifier and at least one

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independent person who is not, and has not been at any time during the past seven years, an employee of the awarding body or a member of its committees.

2 Appeals principles

In case of appeals against assessment decisions, the appeals procedure will focus on whether the BCU Awarding Body used procedures that were consistent with the regulators' criteria and applied those procedures properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

3 Timescales for dealing with appeals

Appeals will be acknowledged within five working days of their receipt by the BCU Awarding Body and considered within 20 working days of receipt.

The outcome of the appeal will be notified to the appellant in writing within three days of the decision of the Appeals Panel having been reached. This notification will include the reason for the decision.

4 Appeal fees

We have set reasonable appeal fees so as to avoid deterring appellants on financial grounds. The fees are given in the Fees Booklet, which can be obtained from the Qualifications Coordinator at the head office and downloaded from our website and which is sent to each new centre as a part of the registration pack.

We also have an equitable system of refunds for individual and group appeals. Whenever an appeal is upheld – be it for an individual candidate or a group of candidates – the appeal fee will be refunded in full. In cases of group appeals which uphold the original assessment decisions for some candidates but not for others, a proportionate refund will be made.

5 Independent review of unresolved appeals

If the first stage of the appeal process, outlined above, ends in a stalemate, such unresolved appeals will be referred to independent review carried out by a small committee totally independent of the BCU Awarding Body – the Independent Appeals Review Panel. The decision of the Independent Appeals Review Panel will be final.

6 Protecting the interests of all candidates

If the validity and/or accuracy of assessment results have been brought into question by an appeal, the Appeals Panel will evaluate, in light of the outcome of the appeal, the accuracy of assessment results for all other candidates who have taken the same assessment and/or have been assessed by the same Assessor. If the Panel concludes that these results should also be changed, the BCU Awarding Body will authorise those changes to protect the interests of all affected candidates, the integrity of the qualifications and, ultimately, the integrity of the National Qualifications Framework.

7 Monitoring the appeals service

As part of our monitoring arrangements, we will monitor the operation not only of our enquiry service but also of our appeals service. This is why we welcome both centres' and candidates' views, which can be conveyed to us informally and/or formally. As is outlined in section A, formal feedback from centres is gathered through our annual customer satisfaction surveys, while candidates' views are captured via the Candidate Feedback Form, which we would encourage all candidates to complete.