

APPEALS POLICY

- Reasonable Adjustments
 - Access Arrangements
 - Special Considerations
- Enquiries about Results
 - Exemptions (RPA)

PMQ Regulated Qualifications

Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to set out the key principles PMQ will follow to ensure that PMQ is consistent and fair when considering appeals, ensuring valid and reliable decisions are made taking account of the available evidence.
2. This policy should be read in conjunction with the relevant Appeals Procedure for the decision being appealed.

Scope

3. This policy applies to PMQ learners, Heads of Training Providers, other accredited training provider staff and associated contractors, PMQ staff and assessors and other PMQ contractors involved in qualification and/or assessment delivery for PMQ Regulated Qualifications (Appendix 1) and individuals involved in deciding the outcomes of appeals.

Definitions

4. Regulated qualification in the context of this policy means a PMQ qualification which is regulated by Ofqual and/or Qualifications Wales and/or CCEA. The list of qualifications appears in Appendix 1.
5. The term 'learners' in the context of this policy includes all individuals studying for the regulated qualifications listed in Appendix 1.
6. The term 'assessment' in the context of this policy includes assessments taken towards PMQ regulated qualifications, for example, external examinations.
7. An appeal is a formal request for the review of a decision. An appeal considers whether PMQ followed the correct policies and procedures and applied these policies and procedures fairly.
8. Subject to the principles set out in this policy and the associated procedures PMQ allows appeals of:
 - enquiries about assessment results (EARs);
 - decisions regarding reasonable adjustments, access arrangements and special consideration;
 - decisions relating to sanctions imposed on a learner, PMQ accredited training provider or an accredited training provider member of staff, following an investigation into malpractice or maladministration;
 - other administrative decisions, for example, exemption application decisions or decisions taken in cases of missing scripts¹.

PMQ will determine whether a decision an appellant is seeking to appeal is within the scope of this policy and the associated procedure.

¹ A missing script in this context may include a learner's response to an assessment which is lost, damaged or similar whether produced electronically or in hardcopy

Grounds for appeal

9. In all cases, an appellant must set out clearly their grounds for appeal.
10. An appellant must have genuine cause to believe, as applicable, that:
 - the case/application/decision was not dealt with in accordance with the relevant published PMQ policy and procedure/s; and/or
 - the decision for a malpractice/maladministration case was unreasonable in light of the evidence; and/or
 - the sanction imposed for a malpractice/maladministration case was disproportionate to the seriousness of the malpractice and/or inconsistent with the Sanctions Policy.

Appeals of Enquiries about Results outcomes

11. An appellant appealing an enquiry about an assessment result must have genuine cause to believe that PMQ has not applied its procedures fairly and consistently. An appeal cannot be brought against the academic judgement of a PMQ assessor or against the policies, rules and regulations governing the qualification.
12. PMQ will consider each appeal application to determine whether the grounds for appeal are sufficient and valid.

Appeals of enquiries about assessment results, reasonable adjustments, access arrangements and special consideration decisions

13. PMQ operates a 2-stage appeals process for appeals relating to assessment result enquiries, reasonable adjustments, access arrangements or special consideration decisions.
14. The first stage (Stage 1 Appeal) requires an investigation to be conducted by a person with the requisite competence who has no personal interest in the decision being appealed. The investigation examines the grounds for appeal presented by the appellant and considers whether PMQ followed the correct policies and procedures and applied these policies and procedures fairly in making the decision which is being appealed.
15. The second stage (Stage 2 Appeal) is the final stage of the appeals process. This stage involves a review of the Stage 1 Appeal to determine whether the outcome was fair, valid and informed by the evidence.
16. An independent person must be involved in deciding the outcome of a Stage 2 Appeal.
17. The decision in relation to a Stage 2 Appeal is final. No further appeal is permitted.
18. The procedure for requesting a Stage 1 and Stage 2 Appeal is set out in the PMQ Appeals Procedure – PMQ Regulated Qualifications.

Appeals about malpractice/maladministration cases and associated sanctions

19. PMQ permits individuals or entities (i.e. Training Providers) to appeal the finding of a malpractice or maladministration case and/or the sanction imposed by PMQ.
20. Appeals must be made on reasonable grounds (see Grounds for appeal above).
21. Subject to the grounds for appeal being valid, the appellant will be provided with the opportunity to present their grounds for appeal and evidence at a hearing. Appellants are permitted to choose not to attend the hearing.
22. In cases where an appellant decides not to attend the hearing, the evidence presented by the appellant in support of their appeal will be considered in deciding the outcome of the appeal.
23. The appeal will consider whether the original finding was reasonable in light of the evidence and whether the sanction was fair and consistent with the relevant Sanctions Policy.
24. An independent person must be involved in deciding the outcome of the appeal.
25. The procedure for appealing a decision relating to a sanction imposed following a malpractice/maladministration investigation is set out in the PMQ Malpractice and Maladministration Appeals Procedure – PMQ Regulated Qualifications.

Appeals of other administrative decisions

26. In its role as an awarding organisation, PMQ may make other decisions which impact on a learner's results or their completion of a qualification. Such decisions, which involve an element of judgement, may be subject to a review within the parameters of this policy and the associated procedure.
27. PMQ operates a 1-stage appeals process for appeals of other administrative decisions.
28. PMQ will determine whether the decision the appellant is seeking to appeal is within the scope of this policy and the associated procedure.
29. A Stage 1 Appeal requires an investigation to be conducted by a person with the requisite competence who has no personal interest in the decision being appealed. The investigation examines the grounds for appeal presented by the appellant and considers whether PMQ followed the correct policies and procedures and applied these policies and procedures fairly.
30. The procedure for requesting a Stage 1 Appeal is set out in the PMQ Appeals Procedure – PMQ Regulated Qualifications.

Decision making

31. PMQ will appoint individuals to decide the outcome of appeals on a case-by-case basis.
32. PMQ will ensure that all individuals appointed to make decisions shall have the requisite competence and no personal interest in the decision being appealed. Individuals involved in deciding the outcome of an appeal (Stage 1, Stage 2, or Malpractice/Maladministration hearing) cannot have been involved in the decision which is being appealed or the investigation of the appeal. For example, an examiner who carried out a review of marking for an examination in accordance with the Enquiries about Results Policy cannot consider an appeal of the same examination result.
33. Where PMQ requires an independent person to be involved in deciding an appeal outcome, the independent person must not be a member of PMQ staff, a PMQ assessor or an individual working for PMQ or otherwise connected to PMQ (including being a member of other PMQ boards, committees, and panels) for a minimum of 5 years.
34. The standard of proof as to whether an appeal is upheld or not shall be on the balance of probabilities (i.e. that it is more likely than not).

Fees

35. PMQ will charge a fee for appeals. The current fees are available on the PMQ website.
36. The fee will be refunded if the appeal is upheld in full or in part.

PMQ certificates

37. PMQ ensures that any certificate/result issued to a learner which is subsequently found to be invalid following an appeal is revoked.

Protecting the integrity of PMQ qualifications

38. In the event that the consideration of an appeal identifies failings in PMQ assessment procedures, PMQ will take all reasonable steps to identify other learners who have been affected, to address the failings identified. Where it is not possible to correct the failings PMQ will mitigate as far as possible the impact of the failings whilst seeking to protect the interests of learners and the integrity of the qualification.
39. PMQ reserves the right to carry out further investigations including reviews of the work/assessments of learners without consulting training providers or seeking the learners' permission.
40. PMQ will take steps to prevent a recurrence of any failings identified in the future.

Compliance with Regulators' appeals process

41. PMQ will comply with the requirements of any appeals or complaints process established by Ofqual, Qualifications Wales and/or CCEA, as appropriate.
42. PMQ will give due regard to the outcomes of any appeals or complaints process operated by the regulators in relation to a PMQ regulated qualification, as appropriate.

Governance

43. The Awarding Body Operations Committee has oversight of appeals and their subsequent outcomes. The Awarding Body Operations Committee reports accordingly to the PMQ Qualifications Committee. The governance arrangements enable the effective monitoring of appeals and ensure outcomes inform PMQ self-assessment activities, feeding into review processes where necessary.

Complaints

44. PMQ has a separate complaints policy. Learners or training providers who are dissatisfied with any other PMQ awarding organisation service other than those addressed by this policy are referred to the Complaints Policy.

Policy review arrangements

45. This policy is subject to a three-year review cycle. However, the policy may be reviewed more frequently to address regulatory changes, operational feedback or concerns brought to the attention of PMQ to ensure the policy remains fit for purpose.
46. This policy is also reviewed as part of PMQ ongoing quality improvement monitoring.

PMQ Regulated Qualifications:

1. PMQ Level 2 Award in Introduction to Residential Property Management Practice
2. PMQ Level 2 Award in Introduction to Sale of Residential Property
3. PMQ Level 3 (SCQF Level 6) Certificate in Property Agency
4. PMQ Level 3 Award in Chattels Auctioneering
5. PMQ Level 3 Award in Real Property Auctioneering
6. PMQ Level 3 Award in Residential Inventory Management and Practice
7. PMQ Level 3 Award in Residential Tenancy Deposit Protection and Management
8. PMQ Level 4 Certificate in Property Agency Management