

Candidate Enquiries and Appeals Policy

Overview

Wiltshire Exam Centre (WEC) is committed to providing a high quality service and ensuring access to fair assessment for all candidates. We aim to be as transparent as possible in our policies, procedures, interactions and decisions.

This policy is for use by both candidates and WEC staff and associates. It should be read in conjunction with that of the awarding body, Open Awards, which is available here: [Microsoft Word - Enquiries-Complaints-and-Appeals-Policy-and-Procedures v12.July2020 \(openawards.org.uk\)](https://openawards.org.uk) . Also relevant is WEC's Complaints Policy, and Access to Fair Assessment Policy, both of which contain further supporting information.

Enquiries

We understand that candidates, our associates, the team at Open Awards and other stakeholders will often need to contact us with queries. Examples of queries from candidates include:

- Questions about Functional Skills qualifications
- Exam entry fees
- Technical issues such as system requirements
- Questions for the assessor

We aim to respond to all queries within 3 working days, and if we are unable to provide an immediate answer or signpost the querent, we will try to give an accurate timeframe for resolution.

Enquiries will as far as possible, be dealt with by the person most suited to respond – for instance, the safeguarding lead for a query about access arrangements (see also, our separate policy on Access to Fair Assessment).

We will take enquiries via telephone (01985 511474), email (enquiries@wiltshireexamcentre.com) or via the form on our website. You can also write to us at:

Wiltshire Exam Centre, White Horse Enterprise Centre, Ascot Court, White Horse Business Park, Trowbridge, BA14 0XA.

If you require a written response (not email), please allow 7 working days for us to respond.

Appeals

Our appeals procedure is for candidates who are appealing internal decisions and this currently applies only to English SLC assessments – all other assessments are externally set and externally marked.

We expect anyone dealing with enquiries and appeals are to be honest and transparent, and to treat appellants with respect and sensitivity. The procedure is set out below.

Candidate Appeals

Candidates wishing to appeal an assessment decision should do so within 14 days of receipt of that decision and *must do so directly to WEC, and **not** to Open Awards*. All appeals must be made in writing (this includes email) with the following format:

- Include your name, contact details, ULN and/or candidate number, and date of assessment
- Give us as much information as you can about the basis for your appeal
- Appeals will be dealt with by the relevant assessor at Stage One of the process
- You can expect a response within 7 working days, though the enquiry could take a little longer – you will be kept informed.

The assessor must look carefully at the appellant's basis for appeal, and consider this alongside the original notes, record of learner achievement and the session recording. The assessor may speak to the centre consultant – with permission from the Centre Manager - if they need assistance or a second opinion. After due consideration, the assessor should correspond with the appellant and explain the outcome of the appeal. Following this:

- If the outcome is that the assessor upholds their original decision, sensitive and constructive feedback should be given in the preferred method of communication, to the appellant. The assessor should prepare a report which will be kept on file by the centre in line with the Privacy and Data Protection Policy, and a copy sent to the appellant within 7 working days of the decision.
- If the outcome is that alteration to the grade given is possible, this will be discussed with the Internal Verifier and in relevant cases, with the EQA at Open Awards. If the Internal Verifier agrees with the alteration, WEC will arrange a request with the AO and will bear the cost of this. A meeting will be held between the Centre Manager, the IV, and the Assessor to ascertain if the mistake can be avoided in future, and how.

Stage Two of the Appeals process begins if the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of an appeal after Stage One (outlined above). Stage 2 appeals must be received within 14 days of the outcome of the Stage 1 appeal and should be made in the same manner as before.

Stage Two appeals are dealt with by the IV/IQA, with support from the Centre Manager if required. The IV will look at all the material related to the assessment in question – assessor notes/obs, LAC, video recording and the report from stage one. If the IV agrees with the decision from stage one, the matter will be closed – the IV will prepare a stage two report and send this to the appellant within 7 working days of the decision. This report will be retained by the centre as described above.

If, following a stage two appeal the Internal Verifier finds in favour of the appellant, the Centre will follow the appropriate procedure for a re-mark request with the Awarding Organisation, and will bear the cost. A written apology and explanation will be provided to the appellant. The Centre Manager will review the whole case and discuss with the IV what actions have been identified to improve the assessment procedure within the centre. Depending on the circumstances, actions may include:

- Standardisation Meeting/Activities

- Informal meeting between IV/Assessor
- Further training for the Assessor

Note: Appeals cannot be made directly to Open Awards without first following the procedure outlined above. We expect to be able to deal with all appeals without the need for escalation. If a candidate wishes to take their appeal to the AO, they should inform us first so we can confirm in writing that we will release records to them.

Important: An appeal may cause a grade/result to be altered – it may stay the same, go up (positive change) or down (negative change).

Appeals to Awarding Organisation from WEC

Where an assessor or internal verifier disagrees with an EQA decision, this should always be discussed with the Centre Manager in the first instance. Have regard for the Open Awards Policy found at [Microsoft Word - Enquiries-Complaints-and-Appeals-Policy-and-Procedures v12.July2020 \(openawards.org.uk\)](https://openawards.org.uk) and in particular note the timescales:

“Where the appeal relates to the outcome of External Quality Assurance/Quality Review Compliance Monitoring, this must be within 20 working days of receipt of the EQA/LQR report. Where the appeal relates to any other matter, it must be received within 30 working days.” (from Open Awards policy linked above, accessed 19/02/2021).

Documentation and Reporting

WEC will keep copies of appeals and associated paperwork received in line with our Privacy and Data Protection Policy, and the Privacy Notice issued to candidates upon registration. Assessors and Internal Verifiers must use the appropriate forms for reporting purposes, in most cases these will be those supplied by the AO.

Our records relating to appeals will be shared with the AO if requested and where we have consent from the appellant – note that this will almost always be necessary in order to resolve the appeal.

We do not routinely keep records of general enquiries unless requested to (for example, if the enquirer intends to register as a candidate in the near future).

Where there is a conflict between this policy and that of the Awarding Organisation or with other regulatory bodies, in most cases the latter will supersede our own.

Date of completion	20/02/2021
Completed by	Carly Brown
Read and accepted by	
Read and accepted on	
Review date	19/02/2022*

*Review date moved forward if instructed by AO, or if internal reviews or appeals necessitate changes.