

NOCN Enquiries, Appeals and Complaints Policy



Procedures for Dealing with Enquiries about Results for NOCN Qualifications

The Awarding Body is required to have in place a system whereby learners and Centres can enquire about their results.

1. Enquiries about availability of results

In most instances learner and Centre enquiries will relate to when results and/or certificates will become available. In this case OCNs must respond to learners with accurate information for example:

1. If recommendations for credit awards for internally assessed units have not yet been received from the centre.
2. If Verification to verify results has not yet taken place.
3. If the verified results are in the OCN, but have not yet been checked for accuracy and processed.
4. If external assessment results have not yet been received from the Lead OCN.

In all cases above, the OCN should:

1. Record the enquiry, including the learner's name, learner number and the nature of the enquiry, logging contact details for responding to the learner.
2. Within **two** working days of the enquiry, assess the status of the results. This will include internal investigation, but also may include contacting the Centre, Verifier or Lead OCN.
3. Once the status of the results has been established the learner should be contacted with the outcomes and a clear response given with respect to:
 - The explanation of the reasons for the delay.
 - A timescale within which results will be issued.

In all cases regardless of the mode of enquiry (e.g. telephone, e-mail, letter) a written record of the response will be forwarded to the learner. If the learner requests that a written response is not required a file note of the response must be made.

If a full response cannot be given within **two** days of the enquiry, the learner must be contacted within the **two**-day period with:

- Confirmation that the enquiry is being dealt with.
- A timescale when a full response will be provided to the learner.

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In all cases:

- The learner will receive communication within two working days.
- The full response to the enquiry will be within ten working days.

2. Enquiries about Results

Learners and centres may enquire about actual results. For learners, these enquiries may relate to the results for unit credits and external assessment. For centres the enquiries will normally only relate to the results of external assessment, as the centre will already have unit results records. In most instances both sets of enquiries are likely to relate to non-achievement of credit or external assessment.

Learners' enquiries about the results of the unit achievement, which are assessed through internally, set tasks.

Where a learner is enquiring about the non-achievement of internally assessed unit credit, the following procedure must be followed.

1. Record the enquiry, including the learner's name, learner number, centre name and the nature of the enquiry, logging contact details for responses.
2. Where the learner has not already requested information from the centre, the learner should be advised to make the enquiry directly to the centre. The learner should also be advised that if the centre fails to respond to the enquiry, they should contact the OCN again. A file note to this affect should be made.
3. Where the learner has already enquired with the centre, but feels further information is necessary, the OCN will respond to the enquiry.
4. Within two working days of the enquiry, the OCN will assess the position of the results with respect to the enquiry. This will include:
 - a. Contacting the assessor for factual information.
 - b. Contacting the External Moderator for factual information.
 - c. The learner or centre will be informed of any information or action with a timescale for receipt of the outcomes of the enquiry.
5. The factual outcomes of the OCN investigation will be conveyed to the learner in writing. If the factual information conveyed confirms non-achievement of the credit awards, the learner will be forwarded a copy of the appeals procedure.

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6. If the factual investigation shows that an error was made and the learner should have been awarded credit the learner will be informed. The following is the minimum information to be conveyed:
 - That an error had been made in their results.
 - The actual results obtained with unit titles credit value and level.
 - An apology for the error and an explanation as to how the error occurred.
 - A copy of the OCN complaints procedure.
7. In all cases the learner will receive communication including details of when the outcomes of the enquiry will be available. The full outcomes of the enquiry will be available to the learner within twenty working days from the date of the original enquiry.

3. Enquiries about Results of External Assessments

Role of the OCNs

Where an OCN gets an enquiry by telephone from a centre about a learner's results of external assessment, the OCN is required to ask the centre to put its enquiry in writing (email or letter) providing centre contact details.

On receipt of the written enquiry, the OCN will forward within two working days, the enquiry to the Lead OCN (it would be helpful if the OCN could alert the Lead OCN by telephone that an enquiry is being forwarded).

Under no circumstances should the OCN enquire directly to the lead OCN/NOCN on behalf of the centre and/or learners. The enquiry must come directly from the party seeking the information.

Lead OCNs Response to Enquiries

On receipt of the written enquiry, the Lead OCN will assess the nature of the enquiry. Enquiries are likely to fall into two categories:

- Category 1. Enquiries about a cohort results (failure to achieve)
- Category 2. Enquiries about a named individual learner's results

For each category above, the Lead OCN will supply to the Centre:

Category 1 – Enquiries about cohort results (failure to achieve)

A report detailing general issues relating to the performance across the cohort as a whole. This report cannot be used as the basis for individual appeals. The report will be made available to all centres.

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Category 2 – Enquiries about a named individual learner’s results

A report detailing the assessment criterion/a that were not demonstrated through the learner’s submitted evidence. This may be used as the basis for an individual’s appeal, and will only be available to the party seeking the information.

When an enquiry results in the Lead OCN producing a report in either category above, the NOCN Director of Quality must be informed and copied into all correspondence.

4. Other Enquiries

Any enquiries that fall outside these procedures, especially any enquiries which may indicate a failure in quality assurance, must be notified immediately to the NOCN Director of Quality in writing. In particular, but not exclusively, this includes results incorrectly awarded to learners for either internally assessed units or for external assessment.

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NOCN Arrangements for Considering Appeals and Complaints concerning NOCN Qualifications and Units of NOCN Qualifications

Introduction

This document sets out NOCN's procedures for considering appeals and complaints about NOCN Qualifications and units of NOCN Qualifications. Issues of malpractice are addressed in the document titled 'Guidelines and Arrangements for dealing with Suspected Malpractice with reference to NOCN Qualifications and Units of NOCN Qualifications'.

Appeals and Complaints

This procedure is intended to ensure that any appeals or complaints received by NOCN are dealt with quickly, fairly and effectively. NOCN aims to resolve appeals and complaints promptly. However, these matters can be complex and may require scrutiny of extensive documentation. NOCN will aim to reach its final conclusion within three months of receiving the written appeal or complaint.

The Appeals/Complaints procedure may be used to:

- Appeal against a decision concerning a Centre's application to offer an NOCN Qualification or units of a Qualification.
- Appeal by a learner against an internal assessment decision, once the Centre's own appeals process has been exhausted.
- Appeal and/or complaint by a Centre against the contents of a Quality Reviewer report or conduct during a Quality Reviewer visit.
- Appeals against the outcome of an investigation into suspected malpractice.
- Appeal by a Centre against the decision to decline its request for reasonable adjustment arrangements.
- Enquiry or Appeal by a Centre and/or learner concerning external assessment results.
- Appeal by a Centre concerning removal of its approved status to deliver NOCN Qualifications.

Applications to appeal against results of external assessment should be made as soon as possible after the assessment concerned and, at the latest, within *four* weeks of the learner receiving notification of results.

Appeals on the outcomes of Internal Assessment should be made as soon as possible to the Centre following the assessment decision. Once the Centre's own process is exhausted, any appeal to NOCN should then be made within *four* weeks of the learner receiving the outcomes of the Centre's Appeal Process.

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NOCN will consider appeals or complaints from individual learners or their advocates, groups of students or their representatives, or from a Centre or a group of Centres.

Procedure

The following procedure will be used when an appeal or complaint is made to NOCN concerning NOCN Qualifications and Units of NOCN Qualifications. An appeal or complaint will normally be made in writing although, where this presents difficulty, other means of communicating will be accepted.

Stage 1

The Chief Executive or Representative of NOCN will acknowledge the appeal or complaint within five working days of receipt. S/he will also determine whether the matter falls within the scope of NOCN's remit as outlined above. Where the appeal or complaint is not within its scope, the Chief Executive or Representative will write to the appellant/complainant giving the reasons why the appeal or complaint cannot be acted upon. If the appellant/complainant should follow an alternative complaints/appeals procedure, the matter will be referred as appropriate.

Stage 2

Within 15 working days the Chief Executive or Representative will seek:

- Relevant information and documentation from both the appellant/complainant and any other parties, for example, OCN, Moderator, External Assessor.

Within 10 working days of receiving the full documentation, the Chief Executive or Representative will consider whether the evidence presented is sufficient to reach a decision. If it is not, further documentation may be requested from relevant parties, or further clarification from the complainant/appellant.

Once the Chief Executive or Representative is satisfied that all relevant documentation is present, s/he shall reach an initial conclusion on the matter and write to the complainant/appellant, providing a judgement on each point raised and referencing this judgement with relevant evidence. The initial conclusions will, if appropriate, identify any recommendation or implications of the outcome.

The appellant/complainant will be invited to comment on the factual accuracy of NOCN's initial conclusion within 10 working days.

The Chief Executive or Representative will consider any additional information provided before reaching a final conclusion. A final conclusion will be confirmed to the appellant/complainant within 10 working days.

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Independent review

If the appeal is unresolved or if the appellant/complainant is dissatisfied with the decision s/he may request that the appeal or complaint be referred to the Chair of NOCN Board of Trustees for review. The NOCN chair will undertake the review with *two* independent¹ members. The NOCN Chair will respond within *ten* working days. The decision of the NOCN Chair is final but centres or candidates are entitled to complain to the qualifications regulators.

Outcomes of an Appeal

- Where the outcome of an appeal against an assessment decision is such as to bring into question the accuracy or results of other learners in the same assessment, NOCN will take appropriate steps to protect the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification.
- NOCN will report annually to the NOCN Board of Trustees on the operation of its appeals and complaints arrangements (including enquiries related to appeals or complaints). This Report will cover the number and nature of enquiries and appeals submitted and their outcomes. Relevant records and data will be shared with the Qualification authorities on request.

Fees

1. Centre Enquiry

An enquiry by a centre, on the results of a cohort of learners, will be charged as follows:

£50 flat fee, plus £1 per learner in the cohort.

NOCN will produce a centre report for the centre.

2. Individual Learner Enquiry

An enquiry about an individual learner's results (from the learner or the centre) will be charged as follows:

£25 flat fee.

NOCN will provide a report for the learner.

3. Refunds

If the assessment decision is reversed a full refund will be made to the centre / learner.

¹ Independent in this context means that the independent member is not and has not been a member of NOCN board or committee, or an employee, moderator or assessor, at any time during the past seven years. In addition, the independent members will have had no interest or involvement in the complaint/appeal.