



INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on being registered to take one or more of the qualifications offered by the IMI's awarding organisation. This means that when you complete your qualification successfully, the IMI will be the organisation that issues you with your certificate having checked that the centre (e.g. college or training provider) has carried out all of your assessments correctly.

Before you start on your programme there are some things you must know. These are:

- how you are registered
- how you will be assessed
- how you will get your certificate
- how to contact the IMI
- what to do if you need to complain or appeal against an assessment decision.
- how much your qualification costs.

Your centre should tell you all these things as part of your induction which should also include all the details of the qualification(s) you are taking, plus very important topics such as health and safety, equal opportunities, data protection and the centre's expectations of you while you attend there.

HOW YOU ARE REGISTERED:

The centre you are attending has been approved to offer IMI qualifications and will register you on the qualification you have chosen.

Once you have been registered, you will be given a unique registration number. The IMI's awarding organisation has a customer charter that means we will confirm your registration (i.e. issue this number) between 3 and 10 days depending on the way your centre gives us your details.

You will be given this number by your tutor or assessor. You should make a note of this number and keep it safe as you will need to quote this number should you wish to contact the IMI.

HOW YOU WILL BE ASSESSED:

This is difficult to summarise as the type and number of assessments you need to pass will depend upon the qualification you are taking.

If you are taking a Vocational Competence Qualification (VCQ), National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) a lot of your assessments will take place in your workplace. Your assessor will come and watch you carrying out certain tasks as part of your job and ask you to explain what you are doing. You will also have to collect evidence (e.g. job cards) to help show that you have completed jobs correctly when the assessor isn't there. Your boss and senior workmates may also have to confirm the standard of your work. You will also have to pass a number of online assessments which are usually multiple choice theory tests.



If you are taking a Vocationally Related Qualification (VRQ) – sometimes called technical certificates – your assessments will take place mainly in your college or training centre. You will have to complete a number of practical tasks, answer questions, complete some written tests and maybe an assignment. You will also have to pass a number of online tests which are multiple choice theory tests.

If you are taking motor vehicle qualifications as part of an apprenticeship, you are likely to have to take other qualifications relating to 'life skills'. Which qualifications you have to take varies from country to country. In England you will do Key Skills or Functional Skills, in Scotland Core Skills or if you live in Wales you will take Essential Skills Wales. Each of these qualifications have different requirements and your tutor or assessor will explain exactly what is needed. As an apprentice, you will also have to learn Employment Rights and Responsibilities.

This is just a brief outline of the main qualifications that the IMI's awarding organisation offers. You may also be registered for IMI Accreditation, the irtec Licensing Scheme or a Quality Assured Programme. These are not qualifications and will have specific assessment requirements.

Note: The IMI will arrange for assessment material to be provided in Welsh or Irish (Gaelige) at the request of your approved centre.

HOW YOU GET YOUR CERTIFICATE:

When you have completed your programme and your assessors are satisfied that you have met all the requirements of the qualification you are taking, your centre will contact the IMI to request your certificate.

The IMI will check that everything is in order and if we are satisfied that this is a valid claim we will issue your certificate and send it to your centre. The IMI's awarding organisation has a customer charter that means we will send out your certificate between 3 and 10 days depending on the way your centre makes the claim.

If you haven't received your certificate within a month of you completing your qualification, please ask your tutor or assessor to check that your certificate has been claimed and if necessary contact the IMI to find out what's happened to this claim.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

The person from the IMI you are most likely to meet is your centre's external quality assurer. External Quality Assurers visit centres to check that all IMI requirements are met and that the centre is carrying out assessments correctly. Occasionally, the external quality assurer may talk to you to find out what you think about your qualification and the processes you have to follow.

If you do meet an external quality assurer, don't hesitate to ask questions or discuss any queries you might have. They will be more than happy to help you. If you want to contact IMI direct at head office the details are:



The Institute of the Motor Industry, Fanshaws, Brickendon, Hertford, SG13 8PQ
Tel: 01992 511521

If you have a simple query for example about your registration or certificate it is probably easiest to telephone. If you need to contact us on a more serious matter, such as a complaint about your centre (see below), you will need to write to us or email awardingenquiries@theimi.org.uk

Note: All communications from the IMI will be in English.

HOW TO COMPLAIN OR APPEAL AGAINST AN ASSESSMENT DECISION:

If you have cause to complain about an assessment decision or any other aspect about the qualification you are taking, you should first discuss the problems with your centre representatives (e.g. your assessor). They will have a procedure which both you and they must follow. The centre should have given you a copy of this procedure at the start of your programme. If not, ask to see a copy before you make your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the centre's response, you may complain directly to IMI or the relevant regulatory authority for that qualification. The process for doing this is contained at the end of these notes (Appendix 1). Even then, if you are not satisfied with the outcome of this process, you can make an appeal. The way to do this is also explained in Appendix 2.

Note: Users of public bodies in Scotland may also have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

HOW MUCH DOES YOUR QUALIFICATION COST?

The cost of gaining a qualification varies considerably depending upon the qualification you are taking. Costs can be divided into two areas, the fees paid to the IMI for registering and certificating candidates and the amount paid to the centre for any training you may need and all the assessments you have to take. Your centre will be able to provide you with these details and they are also likely to pay the fees to the IMI. However, for your information, these costs are listed on the IMI's awarding organisation website (www.theimi.org.uk/awarding).



INTRODUCTION

This document sets out our complaints policy and procedure and is aimed at our centres, candidates and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from the IMI in relation to qualifications, accreditations and Quality Assured Programmes.

We value all the centres delivering our qualifications, accreditations and Quality Assured Programmes and the candidates who undertake them. We are confident that we provide a high quality service and our aim every day is to exceed the expectations of all our customers.

Therefore it is important that, should you feel that you have encountered a level of service that is below both yours and our expectations, you raise any concerns you may have with us immediately. This will enable us to address any issues you may have and learn lessons accordingly.

SCOPE

This policy covers complaints candidates, centre personnel or members of the public may wish to make in relation to the qualifications, accreditations, Quality Assured Programmes and associated services offered by the IMI's awarding organisation.

It does not cover complaints relating to other areas of the IMI's operation, such as membership, professional registration or sector skills. Although these complaints will be handled with equal efficiency and effectiveness, the process may vary slightly depending on the requirements of the department concerned.

It is not to be used for complaints relating to decisions made by the IMI's awarding organisation as these are covered by our Appeals Policy. Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal, we will advise the relevant party that the issue is being considered, where appropriate, in accordance with the approach outlined in our Customer Service Statement (Section 1.3) or Appeals policy (Section 1.8).

If you are unhappy about the way an assessment was conducted and you suspect malpractice or maladministration may have occurred, you should send your concern to us in accordance with the arrangements in our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy (Section 1.10).

CENTRE'S RESPONSIBILITY

All IMI approved centres must have their own complaints and appeals procedure which should state clearly how complaints relating to the delivery, including assessment, of IMI qualifications etc. can be made. Having such a policy in place is part of the IMI's approved centre criteria and this will be checked by your external quality assurer during monitoring visits.

Centres should also ensure that their staff involved in the management, assessment and internal quality assurance of our qualifications, accreditations and/or Quality Assured Programmes are aware of the contents of this policy.



Candidates must also be given an outline of this policy along with an explanation that if they are unhappy about a service or activity being delivered by the centre, they must first of all go through the centre's own complaints process before bringing the matter to the attention of the IMI.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Should any centre, or prospective centre, personnel identify any areas of concern, they should try to sort out the problem at the earliest opportunity by speaking to a member of the Qualifications Services team. All of our staff have been trained to support our customers and they will be happy to help. If they cannot resolve the issue, or you wish to speak to someone else, please ask to speak to the Business Operations Manager.

If this is not possible, or if you are not satisfied with the help provided by the manager, please send a written complaint, ideally within 14 days of the event you are complaining about, and address it to us at the contact details outlined at the end of policy.

Alternatively, centre personnel can raise and submit a complaint form found in our Centres Hub system.

Candidates and/or members of the public who wish to complain about a level of service provided by an IMI approved centre should have exhausted the centre's own complaints process before bringing the complaint to us. However, candidates can make the complaint directly to us in exceptional circumstances where they feel there was a significant breach by the centre of any of our procedures.

Again, the best person to speak to in the first instance is a member of the Qualifications Services team. If you feel that the complaint is of a serious nature, it is best to put it in writing (email or letter) addressed to the Business Operations Manager.

When you contact us, please give us your full name and contact details including a daytime telephone number and/or email address. You should also provide:

- a full description of your complaint (including dates and times if known)
- the names of the people you have dealt with so far
- copies of any documents to do with the complaint
- any other details you consider to be relevant.

HOW WE RESPOND TO COMPLAINTS

Most of the complaints the IMI receive relating to awarding organisation activities tend to be telephone enquiries which can be dealt with during the conversation. If this is not the case, we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 48 hours, letting you know who is dealing with it.

The Business Operations Manager will be responsible for ensuring the complaint is handled in a prompt and effective manner and that a relevant member of staff is allocated to investigate the issues raised.

At all times we will ensure that IMI awarding organisation personnel assigned to the investigation have the appropriate level of training and competence and they have had no previous involvement or

personal interest in the matter. If the Business Operations Manager has an involvement in the complaint matter they will not be responsible for allocating a member of staff to carry out the investigation or for overseeing and managing the investigation.

We aim to investigate the complaint within five working days. If your complaint is more complex, or involves people who are not available at the time, we may extend this to 10 working days. We may contact you within this period to seek further information or clarification (in some instances we may recommend a meeting). At the end of the investigation we shall write/email to inform you of our decision.

TAKING A COMPLAINT FURTHER

If you disagree with the decision taken by the IMI or are unhappy by the way in which your complaint was handled, you can take the matter further and instigate an appeal in line with the arrangements outlined in our appeals policy.

If your complaint relates to a qualification and, after you have exhausted our appeals arrangements, you are still not satisfied with the outcomes, you can complain/appeal directly to the relevant regulatory authority for that qualification (e.g. Ofqual in England or SQA Accreditation in Scotland). Each of these organisations will have a formal procedure in place to handle complaints and appeals.

Users of public bodies¹ in Scotland have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) as the final arbiter. Users have to exhaust the public body's own complaints procedure before the SPSO will consider their complaint, and it must usually have been raised within the previous 12 months. The complaint cannot be under consideration in a court of law.

The SPSO defines a complaint as “an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more customers about [the college's] action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by [the college²] or on its behalf”.

The SPSO will not consider complaints about academic decisions, such as the outcome of an assessment. These types of complaints should be treated as an appeal and should follow awarding bodies' appeals processes.

The SPSO's Further Education Colleges Model Complaints Handling Procedure can be found at <http://\VI\VIII.valuingcomplaints.org.uk\wp-content\media\The-Further-Education-Model-Complaints-Handling-Procedure.pdf>

SUCCESSFUL COMPLAINTS AND/OR ISSUES BOUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION BY A REGULATOR

¹ The SPSO's rules apply only to public bodies (e.g. FE colleges and local authority centres). Learners at centres that are not public bodies will not be able to escalate their complaints to the SPSO.

² For some complaints, there will be no requirement for the college to escalate the complaint to awarding bodies, e.g. if the Complaint concerns the behaviour of a centre staff member (in this case, once the student has exhausted the college's complaints process, they would go direct to the SPSO if dissatisfied).



If any part of a complaint is upheld, as part of our review process, we will give due regard to the outcome and ascertain how best we can improve our service and/or processes. In particular, we will review our procedures to assess the impact on our product development, delivery or awarding arrangements and assessment process as appropriate.

In situations where an investigation into a complaint or a notification from the regulators indicates a failure in our processes, we will give due consideration to the outcome and we will take all reasonable steps to:

- identify any other candidate and/or centre that may have been affected by that failure,
- correct or, where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure, and
- ensure that the failure does not recur in the future.

Where the regulators notify us about failures that have been discovered in the assessment process or other activities of another awarding organisation, these will be reviewed in the same manner as any other external complaints in accordance with the procedures below to ascertain if the same issue could affect IMI qualifications, accreditations and Quality Assured Programmes.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND WHISTLEBLOWING

Sometimes a complainant will wish to remain anonymous, although it is always preferable to reveal your identity and provide us with your contact details. However, if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences that may occur should your identity be revealed to another party, then please inform us that you do not wish for us to divulge your identity. We will work to ensure your details are not disclosed in accordance with our whistleblowing policy.

REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

We will review this policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it, as and when necessary, in response to external feedback, trends from our internal monitoring arrangements, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation. In particular, we will ensure this policy aligns with any complaints and appeals processes published by the regulators.

CONTACT US

If you wish to make a complaint in accordance with this policy, or if you have a query in relation to our complaints or appeals arrangements, please contact the Business Operations Manager at:

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Tel: 01992 511521
Email: awardingenquiries@theimi.org.uk

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out our appeals policy and procedure and is aimed at our customers, including approved centres and candidates, who are delivering / enrolled on or have taken an IMI approved qualification (including units), accreditation or Quality Assured Programme. It sets out the process you should follow when submitting appeals to us and the process we will follow when responding to enquiries and appeals.

It is also for use by our staff to ensure they deal with all appeals in a consistent manner.

SCOPE

This policy covers appeals from:

- candidates and/or centres in relation to an assessment decision on the basis that we did not apply procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly
- centres in relation to an IMI decision concerning a centre's application to offer an IMI qualification, accreditation or Quality Assured Programme
- centres concerning the contents of a centre monitoring report
- centres and/or candidates relating to an IMI decision to decline a centre's request to make reasonable adjustments or give special considerations
- centres in relation to the application by the IMI of a sanction/action on a centre resulting from a monitoring visit or an investigation into malpractice or maladministration
- centres and/or candidates about a decision to amend a candidate/set of candidates results following a malpractice or malpractice investigation
- centres relating to a decision made by IMI following an investigation into a complaint about a centre.
- any person who believes that we have not applied our procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly, consistently and fairly.

CENTRE'S RESPONSIBILITY

It's important that centre staff involved in the management, assessment and internal quality assurance of our qualifications, accreditations and/or Quality Assured Programme and your candidates are aware of the contents of this policy. In addition, centres must have internal appeal arrangements which candidates can access if they wish to appeal against a decision taken by the centre. If an individual wishes to appeal against a decision taken by a centre it must first of all go through the centre's appeals process before bringing the matter to the attention of the IMI.

FEES

We will not charge centres or candidates a fee to cover the administrative and personnel costs involved in dealing with appeals. However, if the appeal is taken to independent review (see below) we will make a charge to cover the costs of the review. The appellant will be advised of these costs before the independent review is instigated and they will be refunded in full should the appeal be successful.



HOW TO APPEAL

Centres and/or candidates have 20 working days from the date we notified you of the decision you are appealing against in which to lodge an appeal against that decision. All appeals must be submitted in writing to the Quality & Compliance Manager (contact details outlined at the end of this policy). Alternatively, centre personnel can raise and submit an appeals form found in Centres Hub.

Appeals should include the following information:

- centre details including contact, address and IMI centre number
- date(s) the centre or the candidate received notification of the IMI's decision
- full nature of the appeal (including supporting documents)
- the candidate's name and IMI registration number (if appropriate)
- title and number of the IMI qualification, accreditation or Quality Assured Programme affected (if appropriate)
- contents and outcome of any investigation carried out by the centre relating to the issue

Candidates who wish to appeal about their assessment results or about a related decision should either be supported by their centre and should have exhausted their centre's own appeals process before appealing to us. In the latter case, candidates must provide us with evidence that they have first appealed to their centre. It is expected that candidates will only appeal directly to us in exceptional circumstances.

Centres that appeal on behalf of their candidates must ensure that they have obtained the written permission of the candidate(s) concerned as grades/results can go down as well as up as a result of an investigation.

HOW WE RESPOND TO APPEALS

Upon receipt of all appeals our Quality & Compliance Manager will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 48 hours. We aim to carry out the first stage of the appeals process (i.e. an initial review of the potential appeal) and respond in full within 20 working days. However, in some cases the review processes may take longer, for example, if a centre visit is required. In such instances, we'll contact all parties concerned to inform them of the likely revised timescale.

At all times we will ensure that IMI personnel assigned to deal with the appeal have the appropriate level of training and competence and they have had no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter. If any IMI personnel have an involvement in the appeal matter they will not participate in any part of the appeals process. If the Quality & Compliance Manager has an involvement in the appeal matter he will not be responsible for overseeing and managing the appeals process.

The first stage of the process will be for us to undertake an initial review of the potential appeal to ensure that we have all the details needed and to ascertain if the issue can be resolved before it goes to a formal appeal. In all instances we will ensure that the person carrying out this initial review will not have a personal interest in the decision being appealed.

Following the initial review of the appeal we will write to the appellant with details of our decision to either:

- amend our original decision in light of the new rationale/evidence being put forward, or
- confirm that we stand by our original decision and stating the rationale for this decision.

In instances where we advise the appellant that we stand by our original decision, we will ask them to respond, within 15 working days, whether they now accept this decision or if they wish to proceed to the next stage of our appeals process which will be carried out by an independent party.

SEEKING AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW

If a centre and/or candidate is not satisfied with the decision following the initial review and want to proceed to the next appeal stage, we will arrange for an independent review to be carried out.

This will be carried out by someone who is not an employee of ours, a sub-contractor working for us, or otherwise connected to the IMI. They will be a person with the relevant competence to make a decision in relation to the appeal and will have no personal interest in the decision being appealed.

The person appointed to carry out the independent review will consider all the evidence presented and the investigations and decisions made at the previous stages of the appeals process. He/she will also determine whether we applied our procedures fairly, appropriately and consistently in line with our policies and procedures.

The independent review process may involve:

- a discussion with the appellant, candidate(s), centre and IMI personnel
- a request for further information from the appellant, candidate(s), centre or IMI personnel
- a centre visit.

The decision of the person appointed to carry out the independent review is final and we will let you know the outcome of this review within 20 days of receipt of the formal appeal. However, in some cases the review processes may take longer, for example, if a centre visit is required. In such instances, we'll contact all parties concerned to inform them of the likely revised timescale.

If the centre and/or candidate is still unhappy with the outcome following this stage of the process, they are entitled to raise the matter with the relevant qualification regulator (e.g. Ofqual in England or SQA Accreditation in Scotland or Qualification Wales). Each of these organisations will have a formal procedure in place to handle appeals.

SUCCESSFUL APPEALS AND/OR ISSUES BOUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION BY A REGULATOR

If any part of an appeal is upheld, as part of our review process, we will give due regard to the outcome and ascertain how best we can improve our service and/or processes. In particular, we will review our procedures to assess the impact on our product development, delivery or awarding arrangements and assessment process as appropriate.

In situations where the outcome of an appeal or a notification from the regulators indicates a failure in our processes, we will give due consideration to the outcome and we will take all reasonable steps to:

- identify any other candidate and/or centre that may have been affected by that failure,
- correct or, where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure, and
- ensure that the failure does not recur in the future.

REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

We will review this policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it, as and when necessary, in response to external feedback, trends from our internal monitoring arrangements, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation. In particular, we will ensure this policy aligns with any complaints and appeals processes published by the regulators.

CONTACT US

If you wish to make an appeal in accordance with this policy, or if you have a query in relation to our complaints or appeals arrangements, please contact the Quality & Compliance Manager at:

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