

Awarding Organisation Review and Appeals Policy

January 2025



Introduction

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) is committed to providing an efficient and high standard of service and continually works to achieve this. We recognise though that there may be occasions where the Study Centre or a learner may wish to question a decision. This policy sets out our approach if that happens.

This policy has been written at a time when the methods of assessments for IOSH qualifications are:

- 1) centre-assessed portfolio and/or assignments
- 2) external examination.

Purpose

Everyone has the right to appeal if they believe a decision is incorrect. This policy describes the stages and procedures that will need to be followed if: -

- The Study Centre disagrees with the outcome(s) from our external quality assurance activities in relation to assessment sampling.
- The Study Centre disagrees with a decision, penalty or sanction following a malpractice or maladministration investigation.
- The Study Centre disagrees with a decision concerning applications for reasonable adjustment or special considerations.
- The Study Centre disagrees with a decision or sanction applied to a Study Centre in relation to adherence to the IOSH Study Centre Agreement.
- A learner disagrees with the outcome of the Study Centre's internal appeals procedure in relation to assessment outcomes.
- A learner wishes to make an enquiry about an examination result, if they believe the marking was inaccurate.
- A learner wishes to appeal against a decision to void an assessment.

This policy does not cover appeals against decisions about Centre approval applications and qualification approval applications.

The policy

Our review and appeals process will examine whether:

- The Study Centre's procedures are consistent with our requirements.
- The Study Centre's procedures were applied properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.
- Our external quality assurance activities were applied properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.
- Our external quality assurance activities were consistent with regulatory requirements.
- The IOSH 'Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy' was followed consistently and applied correctly and fairly in arriving at a judgement.
- Assessments were marked accurately and in accordance with our mark schemes.
- Incidences of suspected Malpractice where correctly investigated.

There are three stages of enquiry or appeal depending on the particular decision in question. These are:

- Stage 1 Review
- Stage 2 Appeals Investigation
- Stage 3 Independent Appeals Board

A Stage 1 Review is only available where:

- The Study Centre disagrees with the outcome(s) from our external quality assurance activities in relation to assessment sampling.
- A learner disagrees with the outcome of the Study Centre's internal appeals procedure in relation to assessment outcomes.
- A learner wishes to make an enquiry about an examination result, if they believe the marking was inaccurate.

IOSH requires all Study Centres to have an accessible appeals policy and procedure to enable expressions of dissatisfaction about results or decisions. It is important that all Study Centre staff and learners know about the policy and that it is followed. If a review or appeal is raised, we will ask to see evidence that the internal Study Centre appeals procedure has been fully exhausted.

Process for Stage 1 – Reviews

Any reviews about a decision affecting the Study Centre or their learners, including reviews about external quality assurance assessment sampling decisions or outcomes of a Study Centre's internal appeals procedure in relation to assessment outcomes, should be communicated within **14 working days** of receiving the decision. Usually, Study Centres will make an application on behalf of the learner with their consent. However, learners may also apply directly to us if they have exhausted the Study Centre's internal appeals procedure. The review should be submitted in accordance with the following steps:

- 1) The application should be made in writing and sent either via email to admin@ioshao.com or as a hard copy addressed to:

IOSH Awarding Organisation
The Grange
Highfield Drive
Wigston
Leicestershire
LE18 1NN
UK

- 2) The application must be submitted via the **IOSH AO Review and Appeals Form**
- 3) The application must be submitted along with the relevant fee, please refer to the **IOSH AO Statement of Fees** for details of the fee payable for reviews and appeals.
- 4) We will acknowledge the review within **3 working days**.
- 5) a. Where the Study Centre disagrees with the outcome(s) from our external quality assurance activities, the application and all supporting evidence will be reviewed by an IOSH EQA, in cases where the assessment evidence was sampled as part of an external quality assurance activity, a different EQA will conduct the review. The EQA will have the relevant competence to make a decision in relation to the review and will not have a personal interest in the decision being questioned. The assessment evidence presented for review must include the original work of the learner and the evidence and outcome of the initial assessment and internal quality assurance activity. The evidence may be reviewed remotely or during a visit to the Study Centre.

b. For multiple choice examinations a clerical check will be undertaken. The IOSH team will manually check the candidate's completed answers against the responses held in the system. This will ensure that the candidate's answers have been correctly recorded and the system has calculated the awarded grade correctly.

c. For written examinations, IOSH will first complete a clerical check as described above. The Principal Examiner will then review the marking of the script to ensure the original marking is accurate.

Where the outcome of a review brings into question the accuracy of other results for other learners, the IOSH will ensure that the interests of learners are protected, and that the integrity of the qualification is maintained. This may involve remarking or reassessment for a whole cohort, convening an extraordinary meeting of the IOSH Assessment Panel and notification to the IOSH Committee.

- 6) We will respond to the review within **30 working days** of receiving it.
- 7) If the review or appeal is upheld at any stage, appeals fees paid will be refunded, records will be adjusted and if applicable, replacement documentation will be issued without further charge.
- 8) If you are not happy with the outcome of the review, you have **14 working days** in which to request that a Stage 2 Appeal investigation is undertaken.

Process for Stage 2 – Appeals Investigation

An appeal application should be made based only on whether IOSH used procedures that were consistent with the regulatory requirements and applied our own procedures properly and fairly in arriving at judgements. IOSH may refuse to accept the appeal if no procedural ground is given.

The appeal should be submitted in accordance with the following steps:

- 1) The application should be made in writing and sent either via email to admin@ioshao.com or as a hard copy addressed as per Stage 1 – Reviews.
- 2) The application must be submitted via the **IOSH AO Review and Appeals Form**
- 3) The application must be submitted along with the relevant fee, please refer to the **IOSH AO Statement of Fees** for details of the fee payable for reviews and appeals.
- 4) We will acknowledge the appeal within three working days and within **14 working days** we will confirm whether the case has been accepted or not.
- 5) The application and all supporting evidence will be reviewed by an independent IOSH governance team member, with no previous involvement with the case. The team member will have the relevant competence to make a decision in relation to the review and will not have a personal interest in the decision being questioned. The team member will check all the information against policies and procedures to confirm if correct procedures have been followed.
- 6) We will write to you with the outcome of the appeal investigation within **30 working days** of confirming our acceptance of the case.
- 7) If the review or appeal is upheld at any stage, appeals fees paid will be refunded, records will be adjusted and is applicable, replacement documentation will be issued without further charge.
- 8) If you are not happy with the outcome of the review the Head of Study Centre has **14 working days** in which to request that a Stage 3 Independent Appeals Board is undertaken.

Process for Stage 3 – Independent Appeals Board

The Independent Appeals Board is to identify if IOSH followed and used procedures that were consistent with the regulatory requirements and applied our own procedures properly and fairly in arriving at judgements. The Board evaluates the evidence to see whether IOSH followed the correct procedures and processes.

The Board exists to ensure that there is an independent avenue of appeal for when a Study Centre or Learner is not satisfied with the outcome following the Stage 2 Appeals Investigation. It is comprised of the Chair of the Awarding Organisation Committee (AOC) and two external representatives from the IOSH AOC (who have had no previous involvement in the original decision or subsequent investigation). The Independent Appeals Board is the final stage of appeals for a Study Centre and/or Learner and its decisions are final.

The appeal should be submitted by the Head of Study Centre in accordance with the following steps:

- 1) The application should be made in writing and sent either via email to admin@ioshao.com or as a hard copy addressed as per Stage 1 – Reviews.
- 2) The application must be submitted via the **IOSH AO Review and Appeals Form** and must contain clear reasoning as to:
 - The reasons for which the Head of Study Centre considers that IOSH did not follow the required procedures, and their rationale for escalating to this stage of appeal.

If the application form does not include the required information, it will be returned to the Head of Study Centre, with details of what information is missing. The Head of Study Centre must respond with the required information within **5 working days**, or the appeal will not be heard.

- 3) The application must be submitted along with the relevant fee, please refer to the **IOSH AO Statement of Fees** document for details of the fee payable for reviews and appeals.
- 4) The Secretary of the AOC will acknowledge the application for an Independent Appeals Board within **3 working days**. We have up to **50 working days** to hold the Independent Appeals Board hearing.
- 5) The Secretary of the AOC will request full documentation of any actions taken in the case and any additional evidence from both parties. The Independent Appeals Board will draw upon the evidence from the Stage 2 Appeal Investigation and will request any further information from the Study Centre, Learner or IOSH staff as required. Once the confirmation of the appeal is received, there must be no further communication or correspondence between the Head of Study Centre and IOSH regarding the appeal.
- 6) The Independent Appeals Board may, dependent upon the nature of the appeal, require personal representation from both parties in order to hear the appeal. In such circumstances it will require the name, status and/or the interest of the representatives and witnesses, who will attend the hearing. This is normally not more than three in all, per party. No additional information or evidence may be submitted at such a hearing.
- 7) There are two possible outcomes of the hearing:
 - a. The Independent Appeals Board confirms the decision of the appeal; the appeal will be rejected and IOSH will notify the Head of Study Centre.
 - b. The Independent Appeals Board upholds the appeal. The Independent Appeals Board will recommend appropriate actions, for example regarding policies or processes, to IOSH for its consideration where this may be relevant. IOSH will notify the Head of Study Centre.
- 8) If the review or appeal is upheld at any stage, appeals fees paid will be refunded, records will be adjusted and is applicable, replacement documentation will be issued without further charge.
- 9) The decision of the Independent Appeals Board is the final stage of the IOSH appeals process. If the Head of Study Centre is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, he/ she should contact the relevant regulator, information on how to do this will be included in the outcome letter.

Monitoring

Following an appeal decision that is upheld due to a failure in the IOSH assessment processes, or notification of failure in the assessment processes of other awarding organisations, assessment policies and procedures will be reviewed and amended as necessary to ensure the failure does not recur in the future.

The Head of Awarding Organisation, as Responsible Officer, will review the implementation of this policy as part of self-assessment arrangements, considering its suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness.

Review

IOSH will review this policy and its content annually or on revision as necessary.

The Head of Awarding Organisation will continuously review and revise this policy, as necessary to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and continues to be compliant with all relevant legislation and accepted best practice. Any feedback from stakeholders or guidance from the regulators will be also considered as part of that process (e.g. to align with any complaints process established by the regulator such as Ofqual).

Version Control

V	Last amended	Author	Reason for amendment	Review date
0.1	12/11/2021	R Wilson	First Draft	06/12/2021
0.2	06/12/2021	R Wilson	Second Draft	08/12/2021
1.0	24/01/2022	K Bevan	Final version	24/01/2023
1.1	07/10/2022	R Wilson	Reviewed for self-assessment. Changes made to Monitoring and Review sections to align with I2.	07/10/2023
2.0	17/11/2022	K Bevan	Branding update	17/11/2023
2.1	21/06/2023	K Bevan	Update following AOC comments re Stage 3	21/06/2024
3.0	05/10/2023	R Wilson	Updated to include external examination review process	05/10/2024
3.1	08/01/2025	A Feneley-Lamb	Annual Update, minor changes	08/01/2026

Policy document information

Policy owner	Head of Awarding Organisation	Policy contact	Operations and Quality Manager
Related operational policies/business rules	Approved Study Centre Handbook		
Relevant legislation and standards	D2 Accessibility of qualifications D4 Responding to enquiries and complaints E5 Assurance that qualifications comply with the conditions G7 Arrangements for Special Considerations H6 Issuing Results I1 Appeals Process I2 Compliance with Ofqual's appeals and complaints process		

For more information

Contact IOSH via admin@ioshao.com