

Param Qualifications Appeals Policy and Procedure

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Scope	3
3. Who May Submit an Appeal	3
4. Grounds for Appeal	4
5. Appeals Process and Timescales	4
5.1 Raising an Appeal.....	4
5.2 Stage 1 – Initial Review.....	4
5.3 Stage 2 – Formal Internal Appeal	5
5.4 Stage 3 – Independent Appeal Review	5
6. Appeal Fees	6
7. Appeal Outcomes	6
8. Record Keeping and Confidentiality	6
9. Continuous Improvement	6
10. Review of the Policy	6
11. Approval.....	6
12. Contact Information.....	7

1. Introduction

Param Qualifications Ltd is committed to ensuring that all decisions are fair, transparent, and consistently applied. This Appeals Policy sets out the process through which an individual or organisation may challenge certain decisions made by Param Qualifications where there is a belief that the decision was incorrect, unfair, or not applied in line with published requirements.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a structured, impartial, and timely mechanism for reviewing decisions while maintaining confidence in Param Qualifications' governance and decision-making arrangements. Appeals are handled objectively and without prejudice, and the process is designed to ensure that all parties are treated fairly.

2. Scope

This policy applies to appeals relating to decisions made by Param Qualifications that have a direct impact on centres, learners, or other relevant stakeholders.

Appeals may be submitted in relation to decisions including, but not limited to:

- Centre approval, rejection, or withdrawal decisions
- Conditions or restrictions imposed on approved centres
- Assessment or moderation-related decisions (where applicable)
- Decisions relating to reasonable adjustments or special considerations
- Outcomes of investigations into alleged malpractice or maladministration
- Any other formal decision where an appeal route is permitted

This policy does not apply to general complaints, which are managed under the Complaints Policy.

3. Who May Submit an Appeal

An appeal may be submitted by:

- Approved centres of Param Qualifications
- Prospective centres affected by an approval-related decision
- Learners, where permitted, normally via their centre
- Any other party directly affected by a decision of Param Qualifications

Appeals must be submitted by an authorised representative where the appeal is made on behalf of an organisation.

4. Grounds for Appeal

An appeal must be based on valid grounds. Disagreement with a decision alone does not constitute grounds for appeal.

Acceptable grounds for appeal include:

- Evidence that the decision-making process was not followed correctly
- Relevant evidence was not considered or was misunderstood
- The decision was inconsistent with published requirements or procedures
- Bias, conflict of interest, or unfair treatment affected the decision

New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time of the original decision may also be considered where appropriate.

5. Appeals Process and Timescales

Param Qualifications operates a structured three-stage appeals process to ensure that all appeals are handled fairly, consistently, and within clear timeframes. The process is designed to give appellants a clear opportunity to have decisions reviewed while maintaining transparency and independence at each stage.

5.1 Raising an Appeal

When a decision is issued by Param Qualifications, the affected party must submit an appeal within five (5) working days of receiving that decision. Appeals submitted outside this timeframe may not be accepted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Once an appeal is received, Param Qualifications will issue a written acknowledgement within five (5) working days. This acknowledgement confirms that the appeal has been logged and explains the next steps in the process.

5.2 Stage 1 – Initial Review

After the acknowledgement is issued, the appeal progresses to Stage 1 – Initial Review.

At this stage, the original decision is reviewed to confirm that it was made fairly, consistently, and in line with published requirements. The review considers whether the correct process was followed and whether the available evidence was properly taken into account. Wherever possible, the review is carried out by a person who was not directly involved in the original decision.

The outcome of the Stage 1 review is communicated in writing within ten (10) working days of the acknowledgement being issued. If the appeal is upheld at this stage, appropriate corrective action is taken and the appeals process concludes.

5.3 Stage 2 – Formal Internal Appeal

If the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, they may request that the appeal progresses to Stage 2 – Formal Internal Appeal.

Once a Stage 2 appeal request is received, Param Qualifications will issue a further acknowledgement within five (5) working days. Stage 2 involves a more detailed internal review conducted by a senior individual or panel within Param Qualifications who has had no involvement in the original decision or the Stage 1 review. All relevant documentation, evidence, and representations are considered before a decision is reached.

The outcome of the Stage 2 appeal is communicated in writing within fifteen (15) working days of the acknowledgement being issued.

5.4 Stage 3 – Independent Appeal Review

If the appellant remains dissatisfied following the Stage 2 outcome, they may request that the appeal progresses to the final stage.

Stage 3 is an independent appeal review. This stage is conducted by an independent person or panel who has had no prior involvement in the matter or in Param Qualifications' internal decision-making processes. The independent reviewer considers whether the appeal was handled correctly and whether the decision reached was reasonable and fair based on the evidence available.

The final outcome of the independent appeal review is communicated in writing within thirty (30) working days of confirmation that the appeal has progressed to Stage 3. The decision reached at Stage 3 is final, and no further internal appeal routes are available.

6. Appeal Fees

An appeal fee applies to formal appeals submitted at Stage 2 and Stage 3. Details of the applicable fee are provided at the time the appeal is accepted.

Where an appeal is upheld, the appeal fee will be refunded in full. Where an appeal is not upheld, the fee will be retained to cover administrative and review costs.

7. Appeal Outcomes

An appeal may result in one of the following outcomes:

- The appeal is upheld and the original decision is amended or overturned
- The appeal is partially upheld, resulting in a revised outcome
- The appeal is not upheld and the original decision is confirmed

The outcome will be communicated clearly, along with the reasons for the decision.

8. Record Keeping and Confidentiality

All appeals and related documentation are handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection requirements. Records of appeals, decisions, and outcomes are retained securely to provide an audit trail and support continuous improvement.

Access to appeal records is restricted to authorised individuals only.

9. Continuous Improvement

Param Qualifications uses information gained through appeals to review and improve its policies, procedures, and decision-making processes. Trends or recurring issues identified through appeals may lead to changes in practice or additional guidance.

10. Review of the Policy

This Appeals Policy is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective, fair, and aligned with organisational requirements. Updates are made where necessary to reflect changes in operations or governance arrangements.

11. Approval

This Appeals Policy is approved by the Director of Param Qualifications Ltd and is effective from the date of approval.

12. Contact Information

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Uncontrolled when printed				
Author	Approved by	Version Number	Issue Date	Review Date
<i>Param Qualifications Limited</i>	<i>Director – Param Qualifications Limited</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>30th Aug 2025</i>	<i>30th Aug 2026</i>
<i>Param Qualifications Limited</i>	<i>Director – Param Qualifications Limited</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>2nd Feb 2026</i>	<i>2nd Feb 2027</i>