SafeQual AB

Awarding Body | Guidance. Standards. Support.

Policies & Procedures

Governance policies and procedures for learners, centres and stakeholders

This document sets out the SafeQual AB policy framework and summarises each policy: its purpose, who it applies to, the key requirements and the timescales.

All timescales are given in working days (Monday to Friday, excluding UK public holidays).

In this document

01	Policy Framework	07	P06 Conflict of Interest
02	P01 Enquiries about Results and Appeals	08	P07 Data Protection
03	P02 Complaints	09	P08 Safeguarding
04	P03 Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments	10	P09 Certification
05	P04 Malpractice	11	P10 Centre Approval and Sanctions
06	P05 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	12	P11 Whistleblowing

Policy Framework

SafeQual AB policies protect the integrity of our qualifications and make sure learners are treated fairly and consistently. Approved centres must follow every policy that applies to them and must have their own equivalent centre policies where required.

Ref	Policy	Applies to	Centre must hold its own version
P01	Enquiries about Results and Appeals Policy	Learners, centres	Yes
P02	Complaints Policy	All stakeholders	Yes
P03	Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy	Learners, centres	Yes
P04	Malpractice and Maladministration Policy	Learners, centres, staff	Yes
P05	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	All stakeholders	Yes
P06	Conflict of Interest Policy	Staff, centres, assessors	Yes
P07	Data Protection and Privacy Policy	All stakeholders	Yes
P08	Safeguarding Policy	Centres, staff	Yes
P09	Certification and Replacement Certificate Policy	Learners, centres	No
P10	Centre Approval, Sanctions and Withdrawal Policy	Centres	No
P11	Whistleblowing Policy	Staff, centres, third parties	No

P01 Enquiries about Results and Appeals Policy

Purpose	To give learners and centres a fair, transparent and timely route to query a result or challenge a decision made by a centre or by SafeQual AB.
Applies to	Learners, approved centres and applicant centres.

Key requirements

- **Stage 1 - Enquiry about Results (EAR):** a clerical re-check (confirming marks were added and recorded correctly) or a review of marking / review of moderation.
- **Stage 2 - Centre appeal:** learners appeal an internally assessed decision through the centre's own appeals procedure first.
- **Stage 3 - Appeal to SafeQual AB:** where the learner or centre is dissatisfied with the EAR or centre appeal outcome, or the decision was made by SafeQual AB (e.g. reasonable adjustment, special consideration, malpractice sanction or centre approval decision).
- **Stage 4 - Independent review:** a final review by a panel including at least one person independent of SafeQual AB, limited to whether procedures were followed correctly.
- Appeals are heard by competent persons with no personal interest in the decision. Marks or grades may go up, go down or stay the same.
- Where an appeal reveals a failure affecting other learners, SafeQual AB will take action to correct or mitigate the adverse effect for all affected learners.
- Use Form F04 (Enquiry about Results / Appeal Form).

Timescales

Stage	Timescale
Enquiry about Results (Stage 1)	Within 10 working days of results issue
EAR outcome issued	Within 15 working days
Centre appeal (Stage 2)	Lodged within 10 working days; decided within 10 working days
Appeal to SafeQual AB (Stage 3)	Lodged within 10 working days of previous outcome; acknowledged in 3, decided in 20 working days
Independent review (Stage 4)	Requested within 10 working days; decided within 30 working days

P02 Complaints Policy

Purpose	To resolve dissatisfaction with a SafeQual AB or centre service quickly and fairly, and to learn from complaints.
Applies to	Anyone who uses or is affected by SafeQual AB services.

Key requirements

- Complaints should first be raised informally with the person or centre concerned.
- Formal complaints are made in writing using Form F05 or by email.
- Complaints about results or assessment decisions are handled under the Enquiries about Results and Appeals Policy, not this policy.
- Complaints are handled confidentially and complainants will not be treated less favourably for raising a complaint.
- Complaint outcomes and trends are reviewed to improve services.

Timescales

Stage	Timescale
Acknowledgement	3 working days
Investigation and response	20 working days
Review request (if dissatisfied)	Within 10 working days of response

P03 Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Purpose	To remove unfair disadvantage for learners with a disability, medical condition or temporary circumstance without reducing the validity of assessment.
Applies to	Learners and approved centres.

Key requirements

- **Access arrangements** are pre-assessment arrangements that let learners with particular needs access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment, e.g. extra time, a reader, scribe, rest breaks, modified papers or assistive technology.
- **Reasonable adjustments** are made where a learner is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 and would otherwise be at a substantial disadvantage.
- **Special consideration** is applied after assessment where a learner was affected by illness, injury, bereavement or other circumstances at the time.
- Adjustments must not change what is being assessed or give an unfair advantage.
- Centres may approve standard (delegated) access arrangements and must keep evidence for EQA. Non-delegated requests require prior approval from SafeQual AB using Form F03.
- Special consideration may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to marks; it cannot be applied where the learner has not met the competence requirements of a unit.

Timescales

Stage	Timescale
Request for a non-delegated access arrangement	At least 15 working days before assessment
Special consideration request	Within 5 working days of assessment

P04 Malpractice and Maladministration

Purpose	To prevent, identify and deal with any act that compromises the integrity of assessment or certification.
Applies to	Learners, centre staff, assessors, invigilators and SafeQual AB staff.

Key requirements

- **Malpractice** is deliberate wrongdoing, e.g. plagiarism, copying, impersonation, fabricated evidence or leaking assessment material.
- **Maladministration** is a failure to follow procedures, e.g. incorrect registration, poor record keeping or late claims.
- Suspected cases must be reported to SafeQual AB promptly using Form F06.
- Investigations are fair, confidential and evidence-based. Those involved are told of the allegation and may respond.
- During an investigation SafeQual AB may withhold results or certificates for the learners concerned.
- Learner sanctions range from a warning, to loss of marks, to disqualification from the unit or qualification, to a bar from future entries. Certificates may be revoked.

- Centre sanctions are applied under Policy P10. Where required, SafeQual AB will notify other awarding organisations and relevant bodies.

Timescales

Stage	Timescale
Report suspected case	Within 2 working days of discovery
Investigation completed	Normally within 30 working days

P05 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Purpose	To ensure our qualifications and services are accessible and free from unfair bias or discrimination.
Applies to	All stakeholders.

Key requirements

- No one will be treated less favourably because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- Qualifications and assessment materials are reviewed for bias and accessibility.
- Centres must have their own equality policy and recruit learners fairly.

P06 Conflict of Interest

Purpose	To identify and manage any interest that could affect, or appear to affect, the fairness of assessment or decisions.
Applies to	SafeQual AB staff, centre staff, assessors and quality assurers.

Key requirements

- Interests must be declared on Form F08, e.g. assessing a family member, colleague or own employee.
- Where a conflict exists, a different assessor or IQA should be used, or additional quality assurance applied.
- Declarations are reviewed every year and whenever circumstances change.

P07 Data Protection and Privacy

Purpose	To protect personal data in line with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
Applies to	All stakeholders whose data we process.

Key requirements

- We collect only the data needed to register, assess, certify and verify learners and to manage centres and members.
- Data is stored securely and kept only as long as necessary. Achievement records are retained so certificates can be verified and replaced.
- Individuals may request access to, correction of, or deletion of their data where the law allows.
- Certificate verification shows only the minimum details needed to confirm a certificate is genuine.

- Data protection requests should be emailed to info@safequalab.org.

P08 Safeguarding

Purpose	To protect learners, including young people and adults at risk, from harm.
Applies to	Approved centres and their staff.

Key requirements

- Centres must have a safeguarding policy and a named safeguarding lead.
- Staff working with young people or adults at risk must have appropriate background checks.
- Concerns must be reported to the centre safeguarding lead and, where required, to the relevant authorities.

P09 Certification and Replacement Certificates

Purpose	To make sure certificates are issued only to learners who have achieved, and to protect certificates from fraud.
Applies to	Learners and approved centres.

Key requirements

- Centres submit certification claims only after internal quality assurance is complete. Centres without Direct Claims Status (DCS) must have claims sampled by an EQA before release.
- Learners who complete some but not all units may receive a unit certificate / statement of achievement.
- Each certificate has a unique number that can be checked on the SafeQual AB Verify Credentials page.
- Replacement certificates are requested on Form F07. Proof of identity is required.
- Certificates obtained through malpractice will be revoked.

Timescales

Stage	Timescale
Certificate issue after valid claim	10 working days
Replacement certificate	10 working days after approval

P10 Centre Approval, Sanctions and Withdrawal

Purpose	To set out how centres are approved, monitored and, where necessary, sanctioned.
Applies to	Approved and applicant centres.

Key requirements

- **Centre approval** is granted after a documented application and an approval review or visit. **Qualification approval** is granted separately for each qualification a centre wishes to offer.
- Approved centres must sign the Centre Agreement, appoint a Head of Centre and a Quality Nominee, and notify SafeQual AB of any significant change (e.g. ownership, key staff, premises or delivery sites).

- Approved centres are monitored through external quality assurance (EQA). Each centre receives a risk rating, which determines the frequency of EQA activity and whether Direct Claims Status (DCS) is granted.
- Centres may voluntarily withdraw by giving written notice and must protect the interests of registered learners.

Sanction levels

Level	Sanction	Typical trigger
1	Action plan with agreed deadlines	Minor non-compliance identified at EQA
2	Removal of Direct Claims Status (DCS); all claims sampled before release	Repeated or more serious non-compliance; actions not met
3	Suspension of learner registrations and/or certification	Serious risk to the integrity of assessment or certification
4	Withdrawal of qualification approval or centre approval	Proven malpractice, or failure to address Level 3 sanctions

Centres may appeal a sanction under the Enquiries about Results and Appeals Policy.

P11 Whistleblowing

Purpose	To allow anyone to report serious concerns about SafeQual AB or a centre safely and confidentially.
Applies to	Staff, centres, learners and third parties.

Key requirements

- Concerns may be reported confidentially, and anonymously if preferred.
- People who report concerns in good faith will be protected from victimisation.
- Concerns are investigated independently of the area concerned.

> **Full policies:** each policy summary above is backed by a full policy document available from the Download Centre or on request. Centres must review their own policies every year and keep them aligned with SafeQual AB requirements.