

## Appeals and Grievance Procedures

### Introduction

PLASA Qualifications aims to ensure that all its assessments and assessment results are fair, consistent and based on valid judgements. In order to support a query or concern from a centre or candidate on whether this has been achieved we have developed a procedure on how the appeals process can be implemented.

### What is an Appeal?

An appeal is a formal request by a candidate or a named representative from an approved centre to the awarding body to undertake an investigation once the centre's own internal appeals procedure has been completed.

### Grounds for Appeal

An appeal can be made to the Awarding body by a candidate or centre only when the centre's systems and procedures have not resolved the appeal.

- Appeals can be lodged with regard to malpractice and misconduct
- Appeals can be lodged with regard to decisions around assessment
- Appeals can be lodged with regard to any aspect of external verification

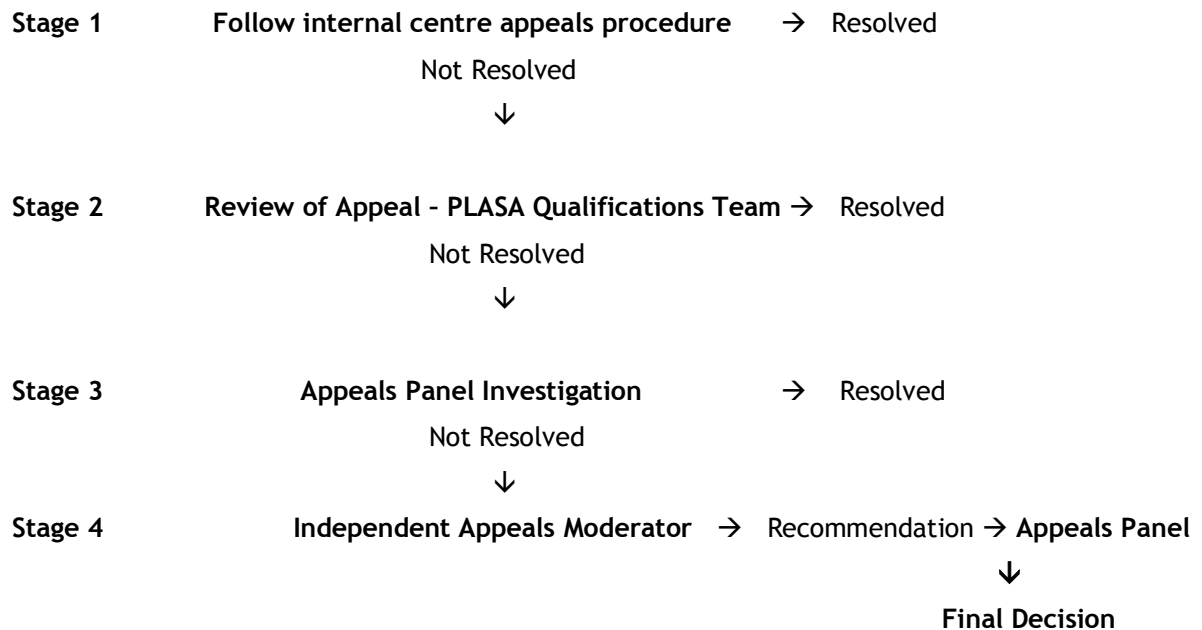
All appeals will be judged on the individual merits of the submission made

### Awareness of the Appeals Process

The full appeals procedure is issued to every candidate on registration and all centres will provide candidates with full details of the appeals process on commencement of their assessment programme. All centres and assessors are issued a copy of the appeals process in their respective procedure manuals.

## Stages in the Appeals Process

There are four stages in the appeals process:



## Procedures for Appeals

### Stage 1 - The Centre Appeals Process

Where practical, the candidate should discuss his/her objection regarding the assessment decision with the assessor prior to making a formal appeal. The assessor will be open-minded to the points raised by the candidate, discuss the matter with his/her internal verifier and seek a solution which makes an appeal unnecessary.

If this cannot be achieved, the candidate will be advised of his/her right to appeal.

- Appeals must be made in writing by the candidate, to the centre manager, within 14 days of the candidate being notified of the assessment decision against which the appeal is being made.
- The written appeal will be copied by the centre manager to the assessor who made the decision and to the IV responsible for the assessor.
- The centre manager will identify a member of the NRC assessment team to evaluate the evidence and give judgement (the 'appeals adjudicator').

- The adjudicator will hold units D32 and D33 or A1, be technically competent in the skill area being assessed and be fully knowledgeable of PLASA/EAL systems and procedures.
- The centre manager will ensure that the organisational structure of the centre is not a barrier to an objective judgement of the appeal. If necessary, the centre may access independent resource to achieve this.
- The appeals adjudicator will report back to the centre manager who will make a judgement on the appeal.

## Conclusion

- The adjudicator's judgement will be communicated to the candidate by the centre manager, in writing, within 21 days of the written appeal being received.
- This communication will be copied to the assessor against whom the appeal was raised, his/her IV and the appeal adjudicator.
- The centre manager will retain full details of the appeal within the centre file for a period not less than 5 years.
- If the appeal is resolved, the centre manager will identify the specific failure in the centre's assessment regime and implement corrective actions.
- If the appeal is not resolved the candidate must write to the awarding body within 10 working days of receiving the adjudicator's judgement and follow the next stage of the procedures.

## Note

- The centre manager must inform the Awarding body of any written appeals and grievances and they are at liberty to seek guidance from the External Verifier on any aspect of the appeals process.
- A successful appeal is not a reversal of the original assessment outcome: to establish this, the candidate may need to be re-assessed.
- The timescales quoted in these procedures are normal maximums. In extreme cases, the timescales may need to be longer, in which case the reasons for the longer timescales are to be documented.

## Stage 2 - Review of Appeal

If the appeal is not resolved at the centre or if anyone involved with the delivery of PLASA Qualifications wishes to appeal about an issue then this should be made in writing within 10 working days to the Professional Development Manager at PLASA Awards and contain the following:

- Name of person making the appeal.
- Name of candidates/centre involved.
- Name of Qualification and level.
- Clear description of grounds of appeal and who is involved.

The appeal will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receiving it and a report drawn up within 30 days of receiving the written appeal, following an investigation. This will be presented to the individual who made the appeal to see if the appeal is now resolved. If not resolved the individual will inform the PDM within 10 working days of receiving the report and the next stage of appeal is actioned.

## Stage 3 - Appeals Panel Investigation

An appeals panel is set up to review the report and all the evidence presented. The appeals panel consists of two members of PLASA's Quality Assurance Panel and one independent appeals member who has not had any involvement in the last 7 years with the PLASA Executive Committee, Quality Assurance Panel, employee, or any committee. They may ask to visit the centre or interview those involved if necessary.

They will present their findings and any actions to the individual, the timings depend on the nature and complexity of the appeal. If there is still no resolution then Stage 4 is implemented.

## Stage 4 - Independent Appeals Moderator

Another independent person is consulted with no involvement in the awarding body other than to provide independent recommendations on the Appeals Panel decision. This is based on a review of the appeals process and PLASA's procedures. The review will take no more than 20 working days. The final decision is made by the Appeals panel, this decision is final. The individual will be informed within 10 working days of this decision being made.

In the event of the appeals identifying situations where the potential exists for other candidates results to be questioned. A full investigation of a sample of those candidates implicated will be carried out to ensure the interests and integrity of the qualification is maintained.