

## **Appeals Procedures**

The Appeals process consists of the final stage open to Centres on behalf of candidates after having used the Enquiry on Results service. Centres should bear in mind that there is a charge made for this service should the Appeal not be upheld. Details of current fees can be found in the fees section of the Graded Qualifications Alliance website.

The final stage of the appeals process allows for a formal hearing of issues raised on behalf of candidates by the Centre, in cases where candidates remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the Enquiry upon Results service. The focus of the appeal stage is to establish whether or not GQAL, in making awards, has used procedures that were fit for the purpose and whether it applied them properly and fairly, in arriving at judgements of candidate performance.

The procedures open to investigation include the full range of processes involved in and leading to the award of a final score and the result obtained in a GQAL Examination, including marking, standardisation, moderation and any subsequent enquiries upon results. The completion of this appeals stage represents the final point in the internal consideration of appeals against decisions of GQAL in respect of the conduct of its examinations. The procedures followed are in line with those used by other awarding bodies in England and Wales.

### **Appeals Process Summary**

Appeal under this stage of the internal arrangements will not involve a re-evaluation of the examination scores as that will have already been completed at the earlier stage of the Enquiries on Results Service.

The Appeals Process will be in two stages.

#### **Stage One**

Stage One will involve a review of the case by a member of the GQAL Governing Council staff who has had no previous involvement in the case. The outcome of the review will be reported in writing to the Centre. If the Centre or candidate remains dissatisfied, the case may, on written request by the Centre within 14 calendar days of the outcome being notified, progress to Stage Two.

#### **Stage Two**

Stage Two involves the hearing of the case by a specially convened Appeals Committee of the GQAL Governing Council and at least one person independent of GQAL. The appeal will be considered at a formal hearing during which the issues will be fully reviewed and considered.

The Appeals Committee will make a decision, on behalf of GQAL, at the end of the hearing and the outcome, together with reasons for its findings, will be sent to the Centre within five working days.

## **Further detail:**

### **Stage One**

Appeals must be submitted, in writing, by the Centre to the General Secretary of GQAL within 14 calendar days of the date on which notification of the final outcome of the Enquiry upon Results is received by the Centre. Written communication in the form of FAX transmission or e-mail is acceptable provided proof of validation of the communication by the Principal is provided, eg by the use of headed paper.

Formal notification of the intention to appeal should include the following information:

- (a) Name(s) and PIN number(s) of candidate(s);
- (b) Grades;
- (c) Date of Independent Assessment;
- (d) Simple statement of the reason(s) for making the appeal; and
- (e) Full description of the reason for appeal.

Where the Centre considers that a common issue applies to a number of candidates from the centre, a joint application for those candidates should be made.

Receipt of this notification will be acknowledged in writing.

At Stage One a review of the case by a member of GQAL Governing Council staff who has had no previous involvement will be made. The outcome of the review will be reported in writing to the Centre. The review may confirm the award made by the GQAL or may require the GQAL staff (including the assessment team) to take appropriate remedial action and/or may involve broader recommendations being made to GQAL as a whole.

### **Stage Two**

If the Centre remains dissatisfied following the outcome of Stage One of the Appeal Procedure, a written request to proceed to Stage Two should be made within 14 calendar days to the General Secretary of GQAL. At this time the Centre should indicate the names of those who will represent the Centre and Candidate(s) and provide such information and evidence as the Appeals Committee may require. At the same time, relevant officers of the Council (including members of the assessment teams, if appropriate) will be asked to provide documents in support of their view.

Normally the Centre will be asked to provide not more than two representatives whose role will be to set out the basis of the appeal on behalf of the candidate(s) and not more than two witnesses to give supporting statements or other evidence in relation to the case being made. GQAL will also be asked to nominate not more than two officers to present its views and may also nominate up to two witnesses. The General Secretary of GQAL will collate all of this information and make it available to the centre, to GQAL officers and to panel members in advance of the date of the hearing.

### **At the Hearing**

The hearing will be conducted by a Vice-Chair of the Governing Council, who will be a member of the Appeals Committee panel and will have a casting vote. The

Vice-Chair will rule on any matters of relevance or procedure during the hearing. The case on behalf of the appellant(s) will be presented by their nominee and on behalf of GQAL by a nominated officer.

The order of business will normally proceed as follows:

- (i) The Centre shall set out their case in the presence of GQAL representatives and witnesses, calling upon the notified witnesses as appropriate.
- (ii) GQAL representatives shall have the opportunity through the Chair of the Appeals Committee to ask questions of the appellants(s) and witnesses.
- (iii) The members of the Appeals Committee shall have the opportunity to ask questions of the appellant(s) and witnesses.
- (iv) GQAL representatives shall set out their case in the presence of the appellant(s) and witnesses and may call upon notified witnesses on their behalf.
- (v) The appellant shall have the opportunity, through the Chair of the Appeals Committee, to ask questions of GQAL representatives and witnesses.
- (vi) Appeals Committee members shall have the opportunity to ask questions of the GQAL representatives and witnesses.
- (vii) GQAL representatives shall have the opportunity to sum up their case.
- (viii) The appellant shall have the opportunity to sum up her/his case.
- (ix) All representatives and witnesses shall withdraw and the Appeals Committee will deliberate in private. In the event that the Appeals Committee members require clarification on any matter, all parties will return to allow relevant points to be addressed.
- (x) A record of the proceedings will be made by the General Secretary.

The members of the Appeals Committee will come to a decision, taking a vote if necessary. The General Secretary shall note the decision and the reasons given. The Appeals Committee will either refuse the appeal (thus confirming the original award) or uphold it and require the officers (including the assessment team) to take appropriate action. When appropriate, the panel may make broader recommendations to GQAL as a whole.

#### **After the Hearing**

The decision of the Appeals Committee and the underlying reasons will be conveyed to both parties within five working days of the hearing and reported to GQAL Governing Council at its next meeting.