

Sanctions Policy

V24.1

Sanctions Policy	
Policy Ref	C.P.5 v24.1
Date of Issue	01/09/2024
Next Scheduled Review	01/08/2025
Policy/Document Owner	Compliance Manager
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Approved By	Leadership Team
Policy/Document Relates to	Awarding Provision, Endorsed Provision
Policy/Document is for the use of	Recognised Centres, VQA Employees, Third Parties
Should be read in conjunction with	Appeals Policy, Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

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Introduction

This policy is provided for Recognised Centres delivering VQA qualifications or units, who have failed to meet aspects of our delivery requirements and/or the standards identified by the regulatory authorities, in respect of regulated qualifications and units. It explains the sanctions VQA may impose on centres in such situations.

This policy is also for use by VQA staff members to ensure they apply any sanctions in a consistent manner.

VQA Internal Responsibility

The Regulatory Compliance Pillar is responsible for the maintenance and compliance of this policy. If the Head of Regulatory Compliance is absent, the Responsible Officer will appoint another appropriate colleague to ensure all VQA actions and activities are in line with the content of this policy.

Review arrangements

We will review the policy annually as part of our self-evaluation process and revise it as and when necessary, in response to feedback from Recognised Centres, trends from our internal monitoring arrangements, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation.

The annual review of this policy will be undertaken by the Regulatory Compliance Pillar approximately four weeks prior to the submission of VQA's Statement of Compliance to our regulators. Any amendments or updates to this policy will be approved by VQA's Leadership Team.

If you have any points or feedback regarding this policy, please contact us via the details provided at the start of this policy.

Centre's responsibility

It is important that Recognised Centre staff members involved in the delivery of VQA qualifications are fully aware of the contents of this policy and its possible implications on a centre. Recognised Centres should be aware of the consequences of a centre failing to comply with the requirements specified by VQA, in relation to the delivery of our qualifications.

Ensuring the standards of VQA qualifications and units

VQA has a responsibility to Learners undertaking our qualifications and the UK qualifications' regulatory authorities to ensure that centres deliver our qualifications and units in accordance with relevant conditions of recognition.

Approach to sanctions

VQA has a range of sanctions that can be imposed on a Recognised Centre depending on severity, the level and track record of the centre's quality standards, the risk to the interests of Learners, and the integrity of the qualifications and units.

VQA will always support Centres through our approach to centre management, we will work with Recognised Centres to prevent situations arising that would warrant a sanction being imposed. However, in certain instances sanctions will be required. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Outstanding Centre actions
- Poor records to confirm assessment decisions
- Lack of appropriate staff to deliver VQA qualifications

- Proven collusion or persistent bad marking of centre marked assessments
- Suspected or proven cases of maladministration/malpractice
- Incorrect certification claims
- Refused access to premises and/or records to the staff of VQA or the regulatory authorities
- Operating an un-approved subcontracting arrangement.

It is important to note that VQA may make a business decision at any stage to remove centre recognition in line with our Centre Agreement, this would not be in relation to a sanction.

Sanctions that may be imposed

Sanctions that may be imposed include, but are not limited to:

- Removal of Direct Claims Status for some or all qualifications
- Removal of approval to register Learners for a qualification(s)
- Removal of approval to request learner certificates for a qualification(s)
- Removal of Qualification Approval
- Removal of Centre Recognition.

These sanctions could be applied in relation to:

- A single qualification
- An entire qualification sector
- An entire qualification type
- All qualifications.

Such recommendations may be made following EQA activities undertaken at the centre and/or following an investigation into a complaint or malpractice/maladministration investigation involving the Recognised Centre.

These recommendations will be reviewed by the Quality team, who are responsible for overseeing the work of VQA External Quality Assurers and for ensuring the appropriateness and consistency of their work. If there is clear evidence of non-compliance by the centre and/or a sufficient rationale, then a sanction will be imposed.

In all instances, the nature of the sanction and the rationale for its application will be communicated in writing to the centre.

Should a centre have its approval for a qualification/suite of qualifications removed, VQA will take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of any learners currently registered on the qualification(s). For example, we will either certificate them for any achievements achieved to date and/or seek to transfer them – where possible and feasible – to another centre to enable them to carry on with their learning.

If a centre believes VQA has not followed its procedures and processes correctly and therefore has not made its decisions and judgements fairly, they should refer to VQA's Appeals Process.

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