

Appeals Policy

Introduction

This policy is for anyone who may wish to make an appeal about an aspect of Crossfields Institute's activities or the activities of one of our centres. It can be used by:

- learners who are enrolled on or have taken a Crossfields Institute approved qualification
- potential learners/member of the public
- named representatives from an approved centre who are delivering qualifications
- other stakeholders

It sets out the process you should follow when submitting appeals to us and the process we will follow when responding to appeals.

It is also for use by our staff to ensure they deal with all appeals in a consistent manner.

Scope

An appeal is a formal request by a learner or a named representative from an approved centre or any other interested party to undertake an investigation and to arrive at a decision.

Areas covered by the policy

This policy covers:

- appeals from learners and/or centres in relation to an assessment decision on the basis that we did not apply procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly
- appeals from centres in relation to a Crossfields Institute decision concerning a centre's application to offer a Crossfields Institute Qualification, the imposition by Crossfields Institute of a sanction/action on a centre resulting from a quality visit or an investigation into malpractice or maladministration or a decision to amend a learner/set of learners results following a malpractice or malpractice investigation
- appeals from centres, learners or members of the public relating to a decision made by Crossfields Institute following an investigation into a complaint
- appeals if you believe we have not applied our procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly, consistently and fairly
- any non-academic matters that may arise and cannot be resolved through our complaints procedure

If you request an appeal you will be kept notified at each stage of the appeal process. The duration of the appeal process is dependent on the nature and complexity of the appeal and the availability of associated documentation. However an appeal will normally be decided within a three month period.

Centre Responsibility

Centres should ensure that all staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of Crossfields Institute qualifications are aware of the contents of this policy.

As a learner, you should be advised of the centre's Appeals Policy during your induction. The centre's Appeals Policy should be included in the Learner Handbook or on the centre's website. The centre will have a procedure in place to deal with appeals regarding decisions

taken by your centre. If you wish to appeal against a decision taken by your centre you must first go through that centre's appeals process before bringing the matter to Crossfields Institute.

Fees

We will **not** charge any fees to cover the administrative and staff costs involved in dealing with appeals.

Process for raising an appeal

You have 20 working days from the date we notified you of the decision you are appealing against in which to lodge an appeal against our decision. This includes assessment results so please remember to retain the course evidence until you receive your results.

Centre appeal

An appeal on behalf of a learner can be for an academic or non-academic matter. If you appeal on behalf of your learners you must ensure that you have obtained the written permission of the learner(s) concerned as grades/results can go down as well as up as a result of an investigation.

Centres should complete the Appeals form found in the Crossfields Institute Mercury system or at www.crossfieldsinstitute.com/resources in order to submit an Appeal on behalf of a learner and/or the centre. Please supply relevant supporting information as listed below:

- learner's name and Crossfields Institute registration number
- date(s) you or the learner received notification of Crossfields Institute's decision
- title and number of the Crossfields Institute qualification affected or nature of service affected (if appropriate)
- full nature of the appeal
- contents and outcome of any investigation carried out by you relating to the issue

Our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice, which can be seen on our website, explain how we use and protect this information.

Learner appeal

Appeals can be made by anyone who is unsatisfied about an aspect of our operation or who is dissatisfied with the handling or outcome of a complaint. Appeals can be for either academic or non-academic matters.

If you are a learner and wish to appeal about your assessment results or about a related decision you should have exhausted your centre's own appeals process and used the Crossfields Institute Enquiry on Results process before appealing to Crossfields Institute. . The Policy and Form for this can be found on www.crossfieldsinstitute.com/resources. You must provide us with evidence that you have first appealed to the centre. It is expected that you will only appeal directly to us in exceptional circumstances. Please use the Appeals form found on www.crossfieldsinstitute.com/resources. This can be emailed to info@crossfieldsinstitute.com.

Please give us your full name, contact details including a daytime telephone number along with:

- a full description of your complaint (including the key issues, dates and times if known)
- the name of the centre
- the qualification you are studying (if appropriate)

- any names of the people you have dealt with so far
- the response made by the centre to your complaint
- copies of any papers or letters to do with the complaint

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What will happen to the appeal?

The Academic Administration Team will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 2 working days. The appeal will then be passed to the Chair of the Quality Committee who will conduct an initial review. We aim to complete the initial review within 20 working days. Please note that in some cases the review processes may take longer, for example, if a centre visit is required. In such instances, we will contact everyone concerned to inform them of the likely revised timescale.

Initial assessment of the appeal

The first stage will be for the Chair of the Quality Committee to undertake an initial assessment of the situation to ensure the appeal application is complete and to ascertain if the issue can be resolved before it goes to an Independent Review.

Following the initial review the Chair of our Quality Committee will write to you with details of a decision to either:

1. amend our original decision in light of the new rationale/evidence being put forward and which has now been reviewed
or
2. confirm we stand by our original decision and the rationale for this decision

We will request that you confirm, within 15 days, whether you now accept this decision or if you wish to proceed to our independent appeals review process which will be carried out by an independent reviewer.

Independent Review of the Appeal

If you wish to proceed to the next stage in our appeal process and ask for an independent review, please send your request to the Responsible Officer, marked for the attention of the Chair of the Quality Committee at alison@crossfieldsinstitute.com Chair of our Quality Committee. The Chair of the Quality Committee will arrange for an independent review to be carried out. The purpose of the review is not to revisit any decision but to investigate failings in the complaints and appeals process. All previous stages of the complaints and appeals process must be concluded before an application for independent review is made.

The Chair of the Quality Committee will appoint someone who is not a Crossfields Institute employee, nor a contractor working for Crossfields Institute or otherwise connected to our organisation to conduct the independent review. The Independent Reviewer will also be someone with the relevant competence to make a decision in relation to the appeal and will not have a personal interest in the decision being appealed.

The Independent Reviewer will review all the evidence from the above stages and determine if procedures have been applied fairly, appropriately and consistently in line with our policy.

The independent review process may involve:

- a discussion with the learner, centre and Crossfields Institute staff
- a request for further information from the learner, centre or Crossfields Institute staff
- a centre visit by the reviewer

The Independent Reviewer's decision is final in relation to the Crossfields Institute appeals process. The Chair of the Quality Committee will write or email to inform you of the outcome of the review within 30 working days of the request for an independent review.

What if I am not happy with the reply?

If you are still unhappy with the outcome at this stage you are entitled to raise the matter with the relevant qualification regulator e.g. Ofqual in England.

Successful complaints and/or issues brought to our attention by Ofqual

In situations where your appeal has been successful the Chair of our Quality Committee will give due consideration to how we can improve our service in future. This may include reviewing our procedures or arranging for extra staff training.

Where an appeal has been successful, or where an investigation following notification from the regulators indicates a failure in Crossfields Institute's processes, or those of another awarding organisation, we will take appropriate actions such as:

- (a) identifying any other learner and/or centre who has been affected by that failure
- (b) correcting or mitigating as far as possible the effect of the failure
- (c) reviewing and amending our arrangements to reduce the likelihood that the failure will occur again

All Crossfields Institute staff will cooperate with any follow-up investigations required by the regulators and agree any remedial action with them.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our Head of Quality on 01453 808118 or email qualityassurance@crossfieldsinstitute.com

Review Arrangements

Crossfields Institute will review the policy and associated procedures annually as part of our self-assessment arrangements. It will be revised as necessary in response to feedback from our learners, centres, affiliates and regulators and the outcomes of any appeals.

Policy Last Reviewed September 2018

Next revision date September 2019

Reviewed by: Responsible Officer, Alison Richards