



APPEALS POLICY

Document control

Audience	Internal colleagues, External colleagues, Customers, External Quality Assurance bodies and regulators
Application	This policy applies to all Achieve+Partners personnel and bodies that work with it
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Responsibility	The Operations Director is responsible for the implementation of the policy and maintenance of all controlled documents

Document change record

Changes to specific sections of the document are listed below:

Page	Section	Change
4	Stage 1 and 2	To include qualification related appeals
6	Type if enquiry	Amended to include details of qualification related enquiries
8	1.6	Amended to include outcomes of qualification related enquiries
9	Examples of enquiries	Examples of qualification related enquiries included
10	2.3	Amended to include details of qualification related appeals
12	Examples of appeals	Examples of qualification related appeals included



SECTION 1: POLICY

1.1 Introduction

Achieve+Partners is committed to fit for purpose provision and valid outcomes of assessment. The appeals policy is designed to ensure that the learner has an opportunity to appeal assessment decisions where any concern or doubt about the validity of assessment is raised. In addition, it allows the centre to appeal decisions made about the performance of the centre.

1.2 Purpose

This policy sets out the arrangements that a learner, or customer on their behalf need to go through where either wish to question a decision made in relation to their assessment result. Additionally, the policy sets out the arrangements that a centre need to follow where it wants to appeal the decision about its own performance. The policy sets out the steps Achieve+Partners will take when responding to appeals impartially and in line with current equality and diversity requirements to an agreed timescale.

1.3 Scope

This policy is relevant to centres, learners and employers engaged in Achieve+Partners end-point assessments and provision of qualifications.

This policy does not cover feedback on an assessment result. If a learner believes the outcome of their assessment is correct but would still like more information on the reasons why a specific grade was given, they can request feedback from Achieve+Partners in addition to the original feedback provided.

Additionally, this policy does not cover providing information to learners on the process of assessment that Achieve+Partners delivers. More information on how end-point assessment is conducted can be found in the assessment specifications and supporting policies. If a learner requires more information on these processes, they can contact Achieve+Partners.



1.4 Definitions

This policy covers appeals of the following nature;

- + Question the assessment decision made by Achieve+Partners
- + Decisions regarding qualification status
- + Question an assessment decision on the basis that Achieve+Partners did not apply procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly
- + Question the decision made by Achieve+Partners to decline a request to make reasonable adjustments or give special considerations for any part of an assessment where the learner had correctly followed Achieve+Partners procedures.
- + Question decisions concerning the withdrawal or suspension of centre or qualification approval
- + Decisions, penalties and sanctions resulting from a malpractice investigation

Achieve+Partners do not accept appeals that fail to meet any of the above criteria. Learners and centres wishing to make a complaint should refer to the Achieve+Partners Complaint Policy.

1.5 Fees

A fee to cover administration costs will be charged for all stages of an appeal.

For enquiries and appeals made by the learner, the learner must send a cheque, made payable to Achieve and Partners Limited or make a BACS transfer for the correct fee with their completed signed application form. Where the outcome of the enquiry or appeal is in favour of the learner, Achieve+Partners will return the cheque to the learner.

For enquiries and appeals made on behalf of the learner by the customer, the customer has the option of paying the fee on behalf of the learner. In this situation Achieve+Partners will invoice the customer the correct fee. Where the outcome of the enquiry or appeal is in favour of the learner or centre, Achieve+Partners will refund the fee or issue a credit note to the customer.



Stage		Type of appeal	Fee (per learner)
Stage 1	Enquiry	Administration check	£15
		Review of marking the assessment	£50
		Qualification status	£50
Stage 2	Appeal	Appeal of an assessment decision made by Achieve+Partners	£100
		Question decisions concerning the withdrawal or suspension of centre or qualification approval	£100
		Decisions, penalties and sanctions resulting from a malpractice investigation	£100
		Appeal of an assessment decision on the basis that Achieve+Partners did not apply procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly	£100
		Appeal of Achieve+Partners decision regarding an application for access arrangements or special consideration	£25
Stage 3	Independent	All other appeals	£125
	Panel	Appeal of Achieve+Partners decision regarding an application for access arrangements or special consideration	£25



SECTION 2: ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 Overview

There are three stages to an appeal:

Stage 1 – Enquiry

Stage 2 – Appeal

Stage 3 – Independent Appeal

Each of the stages are explained in this section. The stages are the same regardless of the type or nature of the appeal.

2.2 Making the application

Learners and centres should follow Achieve+Partners procedure when making Appeals of any stage as follows:

1. Learner and customer to determine the nature of the appeal and identify which type of appeal they are making by reviewing the Appeal definitions in 1.4 of this policy
2. Appellant to complete the application form. The application form is available on the Achieve+Partners website (www.achievetpartners.co.uk) or directly from Achieve+Partners
3. Appellant should ensure that the form is completed in full, signed and submitted with payment or invoice details for the fee
4. The Appellant should ensure that they submit as much evidence as possible

All applications should be marked for the attention of the Quality Director and sent to Achieve+Partners at:

By post

Quality Director

Achieve+Partners

50 Holdings Road

Sheffield

S2 2RE

By email

info@achievetpartners.co.uk

2.3 Questions

Please contact Achieve+Partners should you wish to enquire about the appeals process, nature of appeals or the progress of an application.



Stage 1 – Enquiry

Purpose

Enquiries give a learner and the customer the opportunity to question the outcome of the learner's assessments if they believe the marking was inaccurate. It is a desk-based process which involves someone not involved in the original decision reviewing the assessment decisions and correcting any errors that are identified.

Restrictions

Each apprenticeship standard has its own assessment plan which determines the range of assessment methods and grading. There may be grades for individual assessment components or the learner may only receive one overall grade. An Enquiry can be made for any assessment component where the learner receives a specific result for that component, or the overall grade awarded.

Type of Enquiry

There are three types of Enquiry available depending on the end-point assessment component or type of assessment being appealed:

+ Administration check

Is undertaken for multiple-choice question examinations. Achieve+Partners will manually check the learner's completed answers against the responses made to ensure that the learners answers have been marked correctly either by the online testing platform or by the marker. Achieve+Partners will then check that the correct score and grade was issued to the learner.

+ Review of marking

Is undertaken for short-answer, extended-answer examinations, written, practical or oral assessments. Achieve+Partners will complete an administration check as described above. An examiner, independent to the original assessment will then re-mark the script.

+ Qualification status

Achieve+Partners will review the decision made to change the qualification status. Where there is a clear error the decision will be changed, and the enquiry will be closed. Where Achieve+Partners cannot make a decision based on the evidence a different External Quality Assurer will be appointed to repeat the original centre monitoring on an agreed date with the centre. The EQA will make recommendations to Achieve+Partners as to the appropriate status.



No special consideration can be applied as part of the Enquiry, even if the learner experienced a disruption during the assessment that was beyond their control. More information on access arrangements and special consideration is available on the Achieve+Partners website.

1.4 How to apply to Achieve+Partners

The learner should request that the customer makes an Enquiry on their behalf to Achieve+Partners. The customer must:

- + obtain the consent of the learner before making an application on their behalf
- + make the learner aware that their grade(s) could be lowered or increased as a result of the enquiry.

In exceptional circumstances a learner may also apply directly to Achieve+Partners. The learner must follow the process set out in this policy. The Enquiry application form is available in this policy, from the Achieve+Partners website or from Achieve+Partners directly.

Enquiries should be submitted **within 30 working days** after the result date. This is the date the result is confirmed by Achieve+Partners. It is not the date the assessment took place.

1.5 Timelines

Achieve+Partners will acknowledge receipt of a fully completed application form, including signatures from all parties, and will include when to expect the outcome of the Enquiry.

Every effort will be made to resolve enquiries quickly and efficiently in accordance with the timelines listed below. However, these may be subject to change where the enquiry may be complex, and/or an independent person is not available. When this occurs, Achieve+Partners will advise of the reason(s) why and the new timescale.

Deadline for applications:	30 working days after the issue of the result
Acknowledgment:	Within 3 working days after receipt of application
Written outcome:	Within 30 working days from the date of the acknowledgement



1.6 Outcomes

There are three possible outcomes to an Enquiry:

Results

1	The result is upgraded.	Achieve+Partners will amend its records and, if applicable, Achieve+Partners will also inform the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education and re-apply for a new apprenticeship certificate.
2	The result is confirmed.	Achieve+Partners will also provide feedback on the learner's performance.
3	The result is downgraded.	e.g. the grade is changed from 'pass' to 'fail'.

Qualification status

1	The status is amended.	Achieve+Partners will amend the status with immediate effect.
2	The status is confirmed.	Achieve+Partners will confirm the original status to the centre.
3	A repeat of the EQA activity.	Achieve+Partners will appoint a different EQA to carry out additional centre monitoring to establish the qualification status.

Achieve+Partners will send a notification with details of the outcome to the customer and/or learner. If the result is confirmed or downgraded, the notification will include information on how to appeal (Stage 2).

Examples of stage 1 enquiries

A learner feels strongly that they should have passed or achieved a higher grade in one or more components of their end-point assessment. The customer makes an enquiry on behalf of the learner. Achieve+Partners finds an error in the marking of the assessment and awards a higher result. The learner/customer is not charged for the enquiry and a new certificate is claimed via the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.



A learner feels strongly that they should have received a higher grade and given an opportunity to discuss evidence submitted as part of one of the end-point assessment components. The customer makes an enquiry on behalf of the learner. Achieve+Partners finds no error in the marking of the assessment nor in the conduct of the assessment process. However, Achieve+Partners finds that the learner was poorly briefed on the process of the end-point assessment and was expecting to present more evidence during one of the components. The learner/customer is charged for the enquiry and the result is confirmed.

A customer is surprised when a learner fails the knowledge test as the learner is a consistently high performer in their role at work and during the apprenticeship programme. An enquiry is applicable in these circumstances. The application is not successful however the report provides further feedback to help the learner prepare for their re-sit. The customer/learner is charged for the enquiry.

A customer requests an enquiry about a knowledge test result because the learner was not given extra time for their examination, even though a request for extra time was made to Achieve+Partners. An enquiry is applicable in these circumstances as a reasonable adjustment had been permitted for the learner. The application is successful as Achieve+Partners find that the application for extra time has been approved but not applied. The learner is permitted to re-take the assessment and the customer/learner is not charged for the enquiry.

A centre has its qualification status raised to medium for one qualification as a result of an external quality assurance visit. The centre feels the decision is wrong so requests an enquiry. There is no obvious error so a different EQA is appointed and carries out another visit on a date agreed with the centre. The EQA concludes the qualification status should be low risk. Achieve+Partners change the status to low permitting certification activity to resume.



Stage 2 – Appeal

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of an Appeal is to identify if Achieve+Partners followed the correct processes, procedures and policies for the end-point assessment. It is a desk-based process which involves someone not involved in the original decision. Individuals involved in an appeal, although not typically subject experts have experience in the application of processes, procedures and policies.

2.2 Restrictions

An Appeal does not involve the re-marking of an learners work or review the enquiry that has been carried out previously.

2.3 Type of Appeal

The types of appeal available are:

- + the outcome of an enquiry
- + the withdrawal or suspension of centre or qualification approval
- + the outcome of a malpractice investigation

2.4 How to apply to Achieve+Partners

The individual making the Appeal must:

- + clearly state the reasons for the Appeal
- + provide details of specific instances where the appellant believes that correct procedures were not followed in reaching the original decision and during the enquiry stage
- + submit the Appeal to Achieve+Partners within the timeframe stated
- + sign and date the application form to declare that all information provided is accurate.

If the application does not include the required information it will be returned, with details of what information is missing. A deadline will be given for this information to be included. The appellant must respond fully within this deadline or the appeal will not be heard.

Appeals should be submitted **within 20 working days** after the date of the notification of the enquiry decision.



2.5 Timelines

Achieve+Partners will acknowledge receipt of a fully completed Appeal application form, including signatures from all parties, and will include when to expect the outcome of the Appeal.

Every effort will be made to resolve appeals quickly and efficiently in accordance with the timelines listed below. However, these may be subject to change where the enquiry may be complex. When this occurs, Achieve+Partners will advise of the reason(s) why and the new timescale.

Deadline for applications:	20 working days after the date of the notification of the decision
Acknowledgment:	Within 3 working days after receipt of application
Written outcome:	Within 30 working days from the date of the acknowledgement

2.6 Outcomes

There are two possible outcomes to an Appeal:

1	The Appeal is upheld.	<p>The Appeal is upheld because one or more processes, procedures or policies were not followed.</p> <p>Achieve+Partners will send a letter of notification to the appellant which will include proposed remedial action of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible clarification of procedures Remarking of a learner's work Reinstatement of centre and/or qualification approval The outcome of a malpractice investigation will be reviewed
2	The Appeal is rejected.	<p>The Appeal is rejected because all the correct processes, procedures and policies were followed.</p> <p>Achieve+Partners will send a letter of notification to the appellant which will include information about appealing to the Independent Panel (Stage 3) should they wish to.</p>

Achieve+Partners will send a notification with details of the outcome to the customer and/or learner as detailed above.



Examples of Appeals

A learner appeals the outcome of an Enquiry as they believe that Achieve+Partners did not follow the correct procedures during the assessment. Achieve+Partners cannot evidence that the correct procedures were followed. The appeal is upheld and clarification on procedures is provided by Achieve+Partners. No re-mark is granted as Achieve+Partners determined the procedures would not have influenced the outcome. The learner/customer is not charged for the Appeal.

A customer appeals the outcome of an Enquiry about an examination result. The application form is not complete as it does not provide information about which processes it claims that Achieve+Partners did not follow during the Enquiry. Achieve+Partners returns the application form requesting more information to be provided within 5 working days. The customer re-submits the application with specific evidence where Achieve+Partners did not follow procedures during the Enquiry.

An organisation applies to become an Achieve+Partners centre. On review their application is rejected and they wish to appeal the decision. The organisation cannot appeal the decision.

Achieve+Partners removes centre approval from a centre following a series of serious issues related to assessment and quality assurance. These are highlighted by several EQA visits. The centre can appeal this decision.

An Achieve+Partners investigation finds that a member of staff has committed malpractice and a number of certificates are invalidated as a result. One of the learners asks to appeal this decision. The learner cannot appeal this decision and an appeal cannot be made against the invalidation of the individual's certificate. The centre, however, could choose to appeal the decision to invalidate the certificates.

Achieve+Partners asks a centre to complete a malpractice investigation and report its findings. Achieve+Partners accepts the findings and decides to suspend the centre's ability to certificate learners for a qualification for a period of time. The centre feels that Achieve+Partners has not followed the correct processes and appeals the decision. The centre produces clear evidence in its application of this. Achieve+Partners hears the appeal.



Stage 3 - Independent Appeal

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Independent Appeal is to identify whether Achieve+Partners followed the correct processes, procedures and policies for an Appeal. The Independent Appeal will include at least one person who is independent of Achieve+Partners.

The Independent Appeal exists to ensure that there is an independent avenue of Appeal for instances where the appellant is not satisfied with the outcome following the stage 2 Appeal. It is comprised of two members from the Achieve+Partners Senior Management Team, and an additional independent representative.

The Independent Appeal is the final avenue of appeal and its decision is final.

3.2 Type of Appeal

The only Independent Appeal available is the outcome of an Appeal.

3.3 How to apply to Achieve+Partners

The individual making the stage 3 Independent Appeal must:

- + clearly state their rationale for escalating to this stage of Appeal
- + provide details for which the appellant considers Achieve+Partners did not follow the required procedures during an Enquiry or Appeal
- + provide evidence that supports their rationale and where Achieve+Partners did not follow required procedures
- + submit the Appeal to Achieve+Partners within the timeframe stated
- + sign and date the application form to declare that all information provided is accurate.

If the application does not include the required information it will be returned, with details of what information is missing. A deadline will be given for this information to be included. The appellant must respond fully within this deadline or the appeal will not be heard.

Appeals should be submitted **within 10 working days** after the date of the notification of the stage 2 Appeal decision.



3.4 Timelines

Achieve+Partners will acknowledge receipt of a fully completed Appeal application form, including signatures from all parties, and will include when to expect the outcome of the Appeal.

Every effort will be made to resolve appeals quickly and efficiently in accordance with the timelines listed below. However, these may be subject to change where the enquiry may be complex, and/or an independent person is not available. When this occurs, Achieve+Partners will advise of the reason(s) why and the new timescale.

Deadline for applications:	10 working days after the date of the notification of the decision
Acknowledgment:	Within 3 working days after receipt of application
Written outcome:	Within 40 working days from the date of the acknowledgement

3.5 Process

The Quality Director will review the application and ascertain whether there is enough information for the appeal to move ahead. The appellant will be notified in writing if further information is required.

If the appeal is approved to be heard by the Independent Appeals panel, Achieve+Partners will send an acknowledgement letter upon receipt of the appeal and make arrangements for payment of the appropriate fee (by invoice or cheque). Achieve+Partners will request full documentation of any actions taken in the case and any additional evidence from both parties. Once the confirmation of the appeal is received, there must be no further communication or correspondence between the appellant and Achieve+Partners regarding the appeal.

All evidence regarding the case will be shared with the Independent Appeals panel made up of 2 members of the Achieve+Partners Senior Management Team and an independent expert. A date will be set for the panel to meet (either in person or virtually) to consider the information provided by both parties and establish whether all processes, procedures and policy documents have been correctly followed. The Independent Appeal panel will draw upon the evidence from the Stage 2 Appeal and any evidence submitted as part of the stage 3 appeal.



The Independent Appeals panel will consider whether Achieve+Partners has followed the relevant processes, procedures and policy documents correctly and whether it has applied them properly and fairly in arriving at judgements. It will not reassess a learner's work.

There is no requirement for the appellant to attend the meeting. However, in exceptional circumstances the Independent Appeals panel may request to speak to the appellant. If this is required a date and time will be agreed with the appellant. However, this is not usually required.

3.6 Outcomes

There are two possible outcomes to an Independent Appeal:

1	The Appeal is upheld.	<p>The Appeal is upheld because one or more processes, procedures or policies were not followed.</p> <p>Achieve+Partners will send a letter of notification to the appellant which will include proposed remedial action of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Possible clarification of procedures+ Remarking of a learner's work. <p>The appellant will be refunded any charge.</p>
2	The Appeal is rejected.	<p>The Appeal is rejected because all the correct processes, procedures and policies were followed.</p> <p>Achieve+Partners will send a letter of notification to the appellant which will include information about appealing to the Independent Panel (Stage 3) should they wish to.</p> <p>No refund will be made to the appellant.</p>

Achieve+Partners will send a notification with details of the outcome to the customer and/or learner as detailed above.

The decision of the Independent Appeals panel is the final stage of the Achieve+Partners appeals process. For some apprenticeships it may be possible to complain or appeal to another organisation, for more information refer to the relevant apprenticeship assessment plan.



3.7 Successful appeals

Where an appeal has been successful, or where a review following notification from an External Quality Assurance body, or the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education indicates a failure in Achieve+Partners processes, we will give due consideration to the outcome and will as appropriate take actions such as:

- + notify the External Quality Assurance body, and/or the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education if an adverse effect has occurred, or could have occurred
- + amend the record of the Learner concerned
- + identify any other learners who have been affected and amend the results for those learner(s) affected following an appropriate investigation
- + correct or, where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure
- + review and amend its relevant processes and policies to ensure that the failure does not occur again.

We will also co-operate with any follow-up investigations required by the External Quality Assurance body, and if appropriate, agree any remedial action with them.



4. Glossary

Assessment	An assessment is any one component of the end-point assessment the learner is registered for or has taken. An assessment could be <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ a knowledge test/examination+ a practical observation+ a professional discussion or interview+ a portfolio of evidence+ a presentation+ a project.
Appellant	An appellant is the learner appealing against Achieve+Partner's decision.
Applicant	An applicant is the person or organisation who send in the application form for an Enquiry. The applicant could be the customer acting on behalf of the learner or the learner.
Apprentice	An apprentice is an individual who is registered and taken their end-point assessment with Achieve+Partners.
Customer	A customer is an organisation who has selected Achieve+Partners to carry out the end-point assessment for the learner. A customer could be the learner's employer or training provider.
Working day	A working day is any day other than Saturday or Sunday or a statutory holiday in the United Kingdom.



APPEAL APPLICATION FORM

Stage of appeal	Stage 1: Enquiry about a result or qualification status	
	Stage 2: Appeal of an enquiry	
	Stage 3: Independent Appeal	
Person making the appeal	Learner	
	Employer on behalf of the learner	
	Training provider on behalf of the learner	
Reference number from Enquiry or Appeal		
Date of Enquiry or Appeal outcome		
You have completed the fee section of this form		

Learner and assessment detail

Full name
Address
Telephone number
Email address
Employer name
Training provider name
Achieve+Partners learner enrolment number OR date of birth
Apprenticeship Standard title and number
Assessment/result you are appealing
Date of assessment
Date Achieve+Partners issued the result

Fees

Please complete one of the declarations and the corresponding box below	I enclose a cheque for the fee	
	I have made a bacs transfer for the fee	
	Please invoice the training provider	
BACS transfer	Reference number	Date
Invoice		
Name authorising the invoice at the centre		
Position		
Telephone number	Email address	

Declaration

I understand that the final grade awarded to me following the enquiry may be lower than, higher than or the same as the grade originally awarded.	
Signature	
Date	



Appeal evidence

Please clearly detail the specific reason for the enquiry/appeal. Please provide as much information as possible and clearly reference any supporting documentation being submitted as evidence.