

Dealing with Enquiries Policy

Introduction

1. FDQ is committed to provide the highest levels of service to its customers. FDQ aims to answer accurately and within published timescales any reasonable enquiries received from users of its assessment products.
2. FDQ will establish and maintain robust procedures for handling enquiries. These procedures will ensure that:
 - a) Enquiries are handled in a fair and timely manner
 - b) Enquirers are kept informed of progress
 - c) Enquirers are notified of the outcome reached and, where appropriate, any further action that is to be taken
 - d) Enquiries are monitored to identify trends and to ensure continuous improvement
 - e) The specific needs and interests of learners/apprentices are considered and protected at all times
 - f) Every endeavour is made to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and in particular the handling of sensitive data in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018).
 - g) Customer facing versions of this policy and the associated procedures are available through appropriate media.
3. FDQ also requires centres to have their own enquiries policies and procedures and to use these where assessments, or elements of the assessment process, are conducted by them. These policies and procedures must be clearly defined, managed and monitored in accordance with FDQ requirements.
4. Where an enquiry relates to assessment carried out by a centre the enquiry should, in the first instance, be made to the centre. If having exhausted the centre's procedures (including the centre appeals or complaints procedure) the issue remains unresolved, learners will have recourse to FDQ's appeals or complaints procedure.

Types of enquiry

5. Enquiries may be made by individual learners/apprentices or by centres and may relate to a wide range of issues, including:
 - a) The fairness of the content of assessment materials set by FDQ (e.g. examination questions)
 - b) Examination conditions
 - c) The marking of an assessment by FDQ
 - d) The process or outcomes of the centre and/or qualifications approval process
 - e) External quality assurance and action planning with centres
 - f) Learner/ Apprentice registrations, results and certificates (including replacement qualification certificates)
 - g) Updates on centre details
 - h) Fees, invoicing and payment
 - i) General enquiries regarding FDQ's products.

FDQ's approach to handling enquiries

6. Enquiries may be verbal or written and should be directed to the most appropriate FDQ contact. Where the contact is unknown, enquiries should be directed to the general FDQ telephone number, e-mail address, or postal address.
7. FDQ will acknowledge receipt of an enquiry within 2 working days and details will be logged. Where additional information is required to deal with the enquiry then this will be sought from the enquirer at this stage.
8. Enquiries are handled by the most appropriate person in FDQ. In dealing with enquiries, FDQ will consult and draw upon all appropriate data and information sources including other FDQ colleagues, External Quality Assurance Consultants (EQACs), Independent Examiners and Moderators. If appropriate, centres may also be asked to provide information.

9. FDQ's service standards for dealing with general enquiries, specify the following response times:
 - a. Verbal enquiries will be responded to within 2 working days
 - b. Email enquiries will be responded to within 2 working days
 - c. Letter enquiries will be responded to within 5 working days
 - d. FDQ aims to resolve all enquiries within 5 working days.
10. If, having exhausted these procedures, the centre or learner/apprentice remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the enquiry, they have recourse to either the complaints or appeals procedure.

Dealing with specific types of enquiries

Enquiries relating to the fairness of the content of assessment materials

11. These enquiries are referred initially to the most appropriate FDQ staff member, who will review the enquiry and provide a response. If the enquirer is unhappy with the outcome of the review, they may request further scrutiny from the Standards & Quality Group (S&QG).

Enquiries relating to examination conditions

12. These enquiries are referred to the Quality Team who will review all paperwork, including the invigilator report for the examination event under question. If this initial review is inconclusive, the Moderator will be asked to review scripts and feedback sheets and provide a report. An appropriate response is sent to the enquirer. If the enquirer is unhappy with the outcome of the review, they may request further scrutiny from the S&QG.

Enquiries relating to the marking of an assessment

13. Where a learner/apprentice has failed an assessment such as an examination or end-point assessment component they may request a re-mark.

The learner's/apprentice's script is sent to a re-marker/moderator (who is not the person who originally marked the script). The re-marker/moderator marks the script and returns it to FDQ. The learner/apprentice is notified of the decision two weeks from application. Learner/apprentice records amended, if appropriate.

Enquiries relating to the outcomes of centre approval

14. Enquiries relating to the outcomes of centre approval will be referred to the Chief Executive who will review the decision and feedback provided, in consultation with FDQ.

Enquiries relating to the outcomes of qualifications approval

15. Enquiries relating to the outcomes of centre and/or qualifications approval will be referred to the Chief Executive who will review the decision and feedback provided.

16. Qualification approval applications for FDQ centres which provide the necessary supporting documentary evidence will be processed within 10 working days.

Enquiries relating to external quality assurance decisions

17. These enquiries will be referred to the FDQ Quality Team, who will review the decision and the feedback provided, in consultation with the relevant External Quality Assurance Consultant. If the enquirer is unhappy with the outcome, they have recourse to the appeals or complaints policy.

Dealing with the outcomes of enquiries

18. The outcomes of all enquiries, including details of responses provided and actions taken are communicated to all parties and recorded for future reference.

19. It is possible that the outcome of an enquiry may have wider implications, for example it may suggest some inconsistencies in marking or a need to scrutinise more closely the writing of questions that could lead to adverse effects. In these circumstances, FDQ will take all necessary steps to refine its processes. If the matter has implications for centres and other individual learners/apprentices, FDQ will inform these organisations and individuals about the impact it could have on them and the corrective action that is to be taken. In all cases, FDQ will seek to protect the interest of learners/apprentices.
20. In the event that the outcome of an enquiry requires a review and revision of other policies and procedures, such as those for Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations, FDQ will undertake this work, making recommendations to the appropriate committees where necessary, as quickly as possible. Revisions will be communicated to centres, learners/apprentices and FDQ colleagues at the earliest opportunity.