

SLQ Sanctions policy

Introduction

This policy is aimed at Centre's delivering SLQ approved qualifications who have failed to meet aspects of our delivery requirements and/or the standards laid down by the regulatory authorities in respect of regulated qualifications and units. It sets out the sanctions SLQ may impose on Centre's in such situations.

SLQ imposes sanctions to ensure that quality provision of teaching, learning and assessment is carried out for all of our qualifications. If this quality is undermined through maladministration or malpractice and this may cause adverse effects to the learner(s)/delegate(s) SLQ may take action through the sanctions outlined in this policy.

Review arrangements

SLQ will review the policy as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it as and when necessary in response to customer and learner feedback or requests from, or through review and improvements identified or good practice guidance issued by, the regulatory authorities

If you would like to feedback any views, please contact us via the details provided at the end of this policy.

The Centre's responsibility

It is important that your staff involved in the delivery of our qualifications are fully aware of the contents of the policy and its possible implications on your Centre should you fail to comply with any requirements specified by SLQ in relation to the delivery of our qualifications (some of which are required of us by the regulators). In this context Centre's should recognise that the Terms and Conditions as set out the relationship between SLQ and the Centre acts as an enforceable agreement.

Please note that where the process to imposing a sanction and imposing the sanction itself involve extra engagements with the Centre, this will always be at the Centre's expense. Each engagement will be at a cost of £250.

Approach to sanctions

SLQ has a range of sanctions that will be imposed on a Centre depending on: -

- the seriousness of the situation
- the level and track-record of the Centre's non-compliance
- the risk to the interests of learners

- the level of risk to the integrity of the qualifications
- the level of risk to public confidence in SLQ qualifications

The sanction imposed will be deemed proportional to the seriousness of the situation.

The Terms and Conditions also refer to the suspension and/or termination of our relationship with a Centre (see Sections 6 and 7). The sanction that will be applied will therefore depend on a consideration of these factors at the time that the sanction is applied. It should be noted that these sanctions are not sequential. Normally the Centre will have been given an opportunity to address the area(s) of non-compliance (as outlined in the diagram Quality Assurance Processes for Qualification Centres) but on occasion SLQ may need to impose a sanction with immediate effect.

Some possible situations where a sanction may be imposed are:

- The Centre has outstanding actions
- There are poor records to confirm assessment decisions
- There is no internal verifier in place
- There has been proven collusion
- The Tutor/Assessor has made persistent poor decisions of marked assessments
- Suspected or proven cases of maladministration/malpractice this may lead to sanctions immediately being imposed before an investigation has been completed
- The Centre has made certification claims before learners have completed and been validly assessed for the unit(s)/qualification(s)
- An increased likelihood of an adverse effect occurring meaning that the standards set for a qualification have not been properly met
- Access has been refused to premises and/or records to the staff of SLQ or the regulatory authorities
- The Centre is non-responsive to the Awarding Organisations requests

Sanctions that may be imposed

Withholding Certificates

The sanction to **withhold certificates** (e.g. suspending certification status) can be imposed in relation to:

- A single qualification
- An entire qualification group
- All qualifications

The implementation of this sanction can be imposed by the Senior Quality Assurance Officer (SQA) when there is clear evidence of non-compliance by the Centre and/or a sufficient

rationale for the sanction to be imposed. This may follow an unsatisfactory quality assurance engagement. On some occasions withholding certificates will be imposed with immediate effect where there is clear evidence of maladministration or malpractice and this will be imposed by the Compliance Manager.

Prevention of further registrations of learners

The sanction to **prevent further learner registrations by the Centre** can be imposed in relation to:

- A single qualification
- An entire qualification group
- All qualifications

This sanction will be implemented by the Compliance Manager following the raising of a potential maladministration/malpractice investigation.

Both of the above sanctions will be reviewed by the Responsible Officer.

Removal of Centre Approval

In the situation of extremely serious non-compliance and/or the persistent failure of the Centre to address outstanding actions, and/or despite previous sanctions the failure to address the issue, SLQ can impose, via the Responsible Officer the ultimate sanction of **removal of Centre approval**. In this situation, there is likely to be evidence that the non-compliance and/or failure(s) poses a significant threat to the interest of learners or the integrity of the qualifications and units.

As stated above the Centre will normally have been given an opportunity to address the area(s) of non-compliance within a given timescale.

Should a Centre have its approval for qualifications removed or Centre Approval removed, we will take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of any learners currently registered on the qualification(s) in line with the details outlined in our "SLQ Sanctioned Centre Withdrawal Policy and procedure". For example, we will seek to transfer them – where possible and feasible – to another Centre to enable them to carry on with their learning.

Please note that any additional assessment costs or transferring of learners to other Centres will be at the cost of the sanctioned Centre.

Notice and process of sanctions

If SLQ decides to impose a sanction on a Centre, we will communicate the decision to the Centre and implement the sanction in accordance with the arrangements outlined in the 'SLQ Centre Withdrawal Policy and procedure'.



If an investigation into potential maladministration/malpractice is raised by SLQ this and the rationale for it will be communicated in writing to the Head of Centre and Centre Course Manager. This will be a written letter as well as in email form.

If a Centre disagrees with the decision the Centre should appeal in accordance with SLQ's Appeals Policy.

Contact us

If you've any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our Quality Assurance Manager, Telephone: 01908 689180 or via email: policies@slqskills.org or via post to: 24 Linford Forum, Rockingham Drive, Linford Wood, Milton Keynes, MK14 6LY.