



Defence Awarding
Organisation



DAO Appeals Policy

Ver 6.1 May 24

Recognising Quality and Competence:

Supporting Defence with accreditation and specialist bespoke qualification opportunities

Contents

Introduction.....	2
Centre’s Responsibility	2
Review Arrangements	2
Fees	2
Areas covered by the Policy	2
Process for raising an Appeal.....	3
Situations brought to DAO attention by the Regulatory Authorities	4
Initial review of the Appeal.....	4
Seeking Independent Review	4
Successful appeals and/or issues brought to DAO attention by Ofqual.....	5
Centre Support.....	6

Introduction

1. This policy is aimed at DAO customers, including Learners, who are delivering/enrolled on or have taken an approved qualification or unit. It sets out the process you should follow when submitting appeals to us and the process we will follow when responding to enquiries and appeals.¹ It is also for use by DAO staff to ensure they deal with all appeals in a consistent manner.

Centre's Responsibility

2. It's important that Awarding Centre staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of DAO qualifications and DAO Learners are aware of the contents of this policy.
3. In addition, the Awarding Centre must have internal appeal arrangements which Learners can access if they wish to appeal against a decision taken by the Awarding Centre.² If an individual wishes to appeal against a decision taken by an Awarding Centre it must first of all go through the Awarding Centre's appeals process before bringing the matter to DAO.

Review Arrangements

4. DAO will review the policy annually as part of DAOs self-evaluation arrangements.³ DAO will revise it as and when necessary, in response to customer and Learner feedback or requests from, or good practice guidance issued by, the regulatory authorities (eg to align with any appeals and complaints process established by the regulatory authorities such as Ofqual).⁴
5. If Awarding Centres or Learners would like to feedback any views, please contact DAO via the details provided at the end of this policy.

Fees

6. DAO will **not** charge Awarding Centres or DAO Learners a fee to cover the administrative and personnel costs involved in dealing with appeals.

Areas covered by the Policy

7. This policy covers:
 - a. Appeals from Learners and/or Awarding Centres in relation to an assessment decision on the basis that DAO did not apply procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly.^{5 6}
 - b. Appeals from Awarding Centres in relation to a decision concerning an Awarding Centre's application to offer DAO qualification(s).

¹ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.1](#)

² This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition C2.3\(i\)](#)

³ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.1](#)

⁴ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I2.1](#)

⁵ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.1\(a\)](#)

⁶ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.1\(a\) & I1.2\(a\)](#)

- c. Appeals from Awarding Centres concerning the contents of a External Quality Assurance report.
- d. Appeals from Awarding Centres and/or DAO Learners relating to a decision to decline an Awarding Centre's request to make Reasonable Adjustments or give Special Considerations.⁷
- e. Appeals from Awarding Centres or DAO Learners in relation to the application by DAO, of a Sanction/Action on an Awarding Centre resulting from an External 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.⁸
- f. Appeals from Awarding Centres relating to a decision made by DAO following an investigation into a complaint about an Awarding Centre.
- g. Appeals if an Awarding Centre believe DAO have not applied DAO procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly, consistently and fairly.⁹

Process for raising an Appeal

- 8. Awarding Centres (and DAO Learners) have **10 working days** from the date we notified you of the decision the said party are appealing against in which to lodge an appeal against the DAO decision - this includes assessment results; hence please advise Awarding Centre staff / DAO Learners to retain their course evidence until they receive their result.
- 9. If an Awarding Centre appeal on behalf of a DAO Learner(s), the Awarding Centre must ensure that they 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.
- 10. Learners who wish to appeal about their assessment results or about a related decision should be supported by their Awarding Centre and should have exhausted the Awarding Centre's own appeals process before appealing to DAO. In the latter case, Learners must provide DAO with evidence that they have first appealed to their Awarding Centre. It's expected that Learners will only appeal directly to DAO in exceptional circumstances.
- 11. Awarding Centres should complete the DAO11 Appeals Form on the DAO Qualification Management System (QMS) in order to submit an Appeal on behalf of a Learner and/or the Awarding Centre and in doing so supply relevant supporting information such as the following where relevant:
 - a. Learner's name and Unique Learner Number (Service Number)
 - b. date(s) Awarding Centre or the Learner(s) received notification of a decision
 - c. title and number of the qualification affected, or nature of service affected (if appropriate)
 - d. full nature of the appeal

⁷ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.1\(b\)](#)

⁸ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.1\(c\)](#)

⁹ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.2\(a\)](#)

- e. contents and outcome of any investigation carried out by the Awarding Centre relating to the issue

Situations brought to DAO attention by the Regulatory Authorities

12. Where the regulators notify DAO of failures that have been discovered in the assessment process of another Awarding Organisation (AO), DAO will review whether or not a similar failure could affect DAOs own assessment processes and arrangements.¹⁰

Initial Review of the Appeal

13. Upon receipt of all appeals the DAO Compliance Team will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within **10 working days**. Where a full response cannot be provided within **10 working days**, the enquirer will be notified of the reason for the delay, the actions that are taking place in order to respond to the Appeal and the timescales involved through the DAO QMS and aim to respond fully to the initial review of the potential appeal within a further **10 working days**. Please note that in some cases the review processes may take longer, for example, if an Awarding Centre visit is required. In such instances, DAO will contact all parties concerned to inform them of the likely revised timescale.¹¹
14. At all times DAO will ensure DAO staff assigned to the appeal investigation have the appropriate level of training and competence and they have had no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter.¹² If the DAO Compliance Manager has an involvement in the appeal matter, they will not be responsible for allocating a member of staff to carry out the investigation or for overseeing and managing the investigation. This will be escalated to the DAO Responsible Officer (RO).
15. The first stage will be for DAO to undertake an initial, informal assessment of all potential appeals to ensure the application is complete and to ascertain if the issue can be resolved before it goes to a formal appeal. In all instances DAO will ensure that the person carrying out this initial check will not have a personal interest in the decision being appealed.
16. Following the initial review of the potential appeal DAO will write to the appellant (if it is from an Awarding Centre this will be done via DAO QMS) with details of DAOs decision to either:
 - a. amend DAOs original decision in light of the new rationale/evidence being put forward and which has now been reviewed
 - b. to confirm DAO stand by the original decision and in doing so the rationale for this decision and request that you confirm, within **10 working days**, whether the Awarding Centre / DAO Learner now accept this decision or if they wish to formally proceed to DAO formal appeals process which will be carried out by an independent party.

Seeking Independent Review

17. If an Awarding Centre or DAO Learner decided to proceed to the independent appeal stage, DAO will arrange for an independent review to be carried out.

¹⁰ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I2.4](#)

¹¹ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.2\(e\)](#)

¹² This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition A8.3\(b\)](#)

18. This will be carried out by someone who is not an employee of DAO, a third party working for DAO, or otherwise connected to DAO governance structure. They 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.¹³
19. The Independent Reviewer(s) will review all the evidence which took place in the above stages and review if DAO applied procedures fairly, appropriately and consistently in line with DAO policy.¹⁴
20. The independent review process may involve:
 - a. a discussion with the appellant or the DAO Learner(s) and Awarding Centre staff
 - b. a request for further information from the appellant, the DAO Learner or Awarding Centre staff
 - c. an Awarding Centre visit by authorised DAO staff.
21. The Independent Reviewer's decision is final in relation to how we will consider such appeals and DAO will let you know the outcome of the review within **10 working days** of receipt of the third appeal via the DAO QMS or via email/letter if you have appealed to us direct. If the Awarding Centre / DAO Learner is still unhappy with the outcome at this stage they are entitled to raise the matter with the relevant qualification regulator (eg Ofqual in England).

Successful appeals and/or issues brought to DAO attention by Ofqual

22. In situations where an appeal has been successful, or where an investigation following notification from Ofqual¹⁵ indicates a failure in DAO processes, DAO will give due consideration to the outcome¹⁶ and will as appropriate¹⁷ take actions such as:
 - a. amend the profile of the Awarding Centre concerned in the DAO QMS
 - b. identify any other Learners who have been affected and correct or, where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure (eg and amend the results for the Learner(s) affected following an appropriate investigation¹⁸)
 - c. review DAO associated processes and policies to ensure that the 'failure' does not occur again or mitigate the situation as far as possible if the failure that occurred cannot be corrected¹⁹
23. DAO will also cooperate with any follow-up investigations required by the Qualifications Regulators and if appropriate agree any remedial action with them.

¹³ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.2\(b\)\(c\)\(d\)](#)

¹⁴ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.2\(a\)](#)

¹⁵ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I2.5](#)

¹⁶ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I2.2](#)

¹⁷ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.4, I2.3, I2.5](#)

¹⁸ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.4\(a\)\(b\) & I2.3\(a\)\(b\)](#)

¹⁹ This meets the requirement for [Ofqual GCoR Condition I1.4\(c\) & I2.3\(c\)](#)

Centre Support

1. Policies for handling Enquiries, Appeals, Malpractice and Maladministration are available on the DAO website and the DAO Qualification Management System (QMS)
2. The DAO will work with Awarding Centres to deliver a customer-focused and professional service to DAO Learners. DAO policies are reviewed annually. Any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact the DAO Compliance Team via:

DAO Website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/defence-awarding-organisation>

Post

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