

## Enquiries and Appeals Policy

### Purpose

iPET Network is committed to providing an efficient and high standard of service to all. We are continually working to achieve this high level of service by maintaining quality assurance standards which are compliant with regulatory requirements. It is our aim to ensure that all assessment outcomes are fair, consistent, and reliable based on the valid judgements of the Tutors using the assessment strategy for the qualification in question. However, occasions may arise where the Training Provider or Candidate may wish to question a decision.

### Policy

iPET Network will ensure that:

- Assessments are carried out by Tutors who have the appropriate qualifications, knowledge, understanding, and skills, and the assessments are valid for the subject or qualification in question.
- Assessment evidence is authentic, solely being produced by the Candidate in question.
- There is consistency of assessments decisions covering all Tutors over time.
- Appeals are heard by individuals that have the appropriate competence to make decisions in each individual case and have had no prior involvement, or a personal interest in the case.

Everyone has the right to appeal if they believe that their assessment decision, or a decision following a complaint or malpractice or maladministration investigation is incorrect.

This policy will define the stages and procedures you would need to follow, guidance is as follows:

- The process you need to follow to submit an enquiry or appeal
- The timescales for an enquiry or appeal
- How and when you will be notified of the outcome

iPET Network will accept an appeal in relation to the following:

- Appeals against results of assessment or quality assurance
- Appeals against a decision made relating to a reasonable adjustment or special considerations application
- Appeals against decisions relating to any action taken against a Candidate or Training Provider following an investigation into malpractice or maladministration
- Appeals against Training Provider or qualification approval decisions
- Appeals against the investigation and actions to resolve the complaint

iPET Network have this Enquiries and Appeals Policy available on our website so all Candidate and Training Providers can access this information or can request a copy by contacting us. We are committed to providing an equal opportunity for all within our Enquiries and Appeals Policy.

A Candidate or Training Provider who wishes to enquire or appeal against the criteria detailed above will have clear guidance on how to proceed.

Firstly, we advise all Candidates to discuss any concerns or enquiries relating to the result of the assessment with the Training Provider to resolve the issue. If Candidates are not satisfied with the outcome, then they are asked to contact us at iPET Network for further advice and guidance (or refer to the guide within this policy).

### **Stage 1: Enquiries Regarding Assessment Decisions**

If a Candidate wishes to question an assessment result they should initially discuss their concerns with the approved Training Provider's Tutor and follow and exhaust their complaints and appeal process. If the Candidate is not satisfied with the outcome, the Candidate should complete stage 1 of the Enquiries and Appeals Form which is available to complete via the iPET Website. This must be submitted to iPET Network within 5 working days of the final results being issued to the Candidates.

iPET Network will acknowledge receipt of the enquiry within 5 working days, this will be followed promptly by the adjudication process. iPET Network will appoint an appropriate person to act as an adjudicator who has not had any involvement with the case. The adjudicator will consider the written submission from the course Tutor and Candidate and will review the procedures that were followed to reach the decision, this may include contacting other parties who were included within the course at the relevant Training Provider.

The adjudicator may instruct that a further re-assessment should take place if they consider that the assessment procedures were not adequately followed.

The Tutor and Candidate will be notified of the adjudication outcome as soon as it is available, within a maximum of 30 days.

If the Tutor and Candidate are not satisfied with the enquiry outcome of stage 1, they may escalate the decision to stage 2 of this process and complete stage 2 of the Enquiries and Appeal Form.

### **Stage 2: Appeal**

A stage 2 appeal must be submitted within 14 days of the stage 1 enquiry decision being received, accompanied with an administration fee of £50. iPET Network will acknowledge receipt of this appeal within 5 working days. The appellant will be contacted within 10 days to outline the procedures that will be adopted.

iPET Network will make arrangements for the iPET Network appeals committee to promptly hear the appeal at our head office. The appellant may attend and have one representative present at the appeal hearing.

The appeals committee consisting of senior managers or other individuals deemed to be appropriately competent, who have no personal interest in the decision being appealed and an independent person who is not an employee, Tutor or otherwise connected to iPET Network and the Training Provider will evaluate the procedures used for consistency with iPET Network procedures to review if the previous decision was reached fairly.

The appeals committee are unable to re-mark or re-assess work but may instruct that a further re-mark or re-assessment should take place if they consider that the procedures were not adequately followed.

The appeals committee will make the final decision and notify the appellant of the outcome by letter as soon as it is available, within 10 working days. If the appeal is upheld the appeal administration fees will be reimbursed to the Candidate.

If the outcome of an appeal at any stage leads to iPET Network discovering a failure in the assessment process an investigation shall be conducted to determine if there are any other Candidates affected, and if there are any adverse effects arising from the failure. If this is the case, iPET Network will follow the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedure (including Sanctions) and iPET Network shall take decisive action to correct the failure, or if this is not possible to reduce the impact of the failure on any Candidates.

### **Referral to Regulatory Authority**

If the Candidate is not satisfied with the appeal committee's decision they may refer their complaint to the Regulators once all the Training Providers and Awarding Organisations procedures have been exhausted. Please note that the regulators are unable to overturn an assessment decision.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Following an appeal decision that is upheld due to a failure in the iPET Network assessment process, or notification of failure in the assessment processes of other Awarding Organisations, policies and procedures shall be reviewed to ensure that the failure does not reoccur. This policy and its procedures will be reviewed annually as part of our quality assurance requirements to ensure it is fit for purpose, reflects the type of appeals that we may receive and ensure the process is managed in accordance with regulatory requirements.

### **Stage 1: Enquiries Regarding Complaints and Investigation outcomes (Malpractice and Maladministration)**

If a Stakeholder such as a Candidate wishes to question the result of a complaint and investigation they should initially discuss their concerns with the approved Training Provider's Tutor and follow/exhaust their complaints and appeal process. If the Stakeholder is not satisfied with the outcome they should complete stage 1 of the Enquiries and Appeals Form which is available to complete via the iPET Website. This must be submitted to iPET Network within 5 working days of the final results being issued to the Stakeholder.

iPET Network will acknowledge receipt of the enquiry within 5 working days, this will be followed promptly by the adjudication process. iPET Network will appoint the appropriate person to act as an adjudicator who has not had any involvement with the case. The adjudicator will consider the written submission from the course and will review the procedures that were followed to reach the decision.

The Stakeholder will be notified of the adjudication outcome as soon as it is available, within a maximum of 30 days.

If the Stakeholder is not satisfied with the enquiry outcome of stage 1, they may escalate the decision to stage 2 of this process and complete stage 2 of the Enquiries and Appeal Form.

### **Stage 2: Appeal**

A stage 2 appeal must be submitted within 14 days of the stage 1 enquiry decision being received, accompanied with an administration fee of £50. iPET Network will acknowledge receipt of this appeal within 5 working days. The appellant will be contacted within 10 days to outline the procedures that will be adopted.

iPET Network will make arrangements for the iPET Network appeals committee to promptly hear the appeal at our head office. The appellant may attend and have one representative present at the appeal hearing.

The appeals committee consisting of senior managers or other individuals deemed to be appropriately competent, who have no personal interest in the decision being appealed and an independent person who is not an employee, Tutor or otherwise connected to iPET Network and the Training Provider will evaluate the procedures used for consistency with iPET Network procedures to review if the previous decision was reached fairly.

The appeals committee will make the final decision and notify the appellant of the outcome by letter as soon as it is available, within 10 working days. If the appeal is upheld the appeal administration fees will be reimbursed to the Stakeholder.

If the outcome of an appeal at any stage leads to iPET Network discovering a failure in the assessment process an investigation shall be conducted to determine if there are any other Candidates affected, and if there are any adverse effects arising from the failure. If this is the case, iPET Network will follow the Malpractice and

Maladministration Policy and Procedure (including Sanctions) and iPET Network shall take decisive action to correct the failure, or if this is not possible to reduce the impact of the failure on any Candidates.

**Referral to Regulatory Authority**

If the Stakeholder is not satisfied with the appeal committee’s decision they may refer their complaint to the Regulators however once all the Training Providers and Awarding Organisations procedures have been exhausted. Please note that the regulators are unable to overturn an assessment decision.

**Monitoring and Review**

Following an appeal decision that is upheld due to a failure in the iPET Network assessment process, or notification of failure in the assessment processes of other awarding organisations, policies and procedures shall be reviewed to ensure that the failure does not reoccur. This policy and its procedures will be reviewed annually as part of our quality assurance requirements to ensure it is fit for purpose, reflects the type of appeals that we may receive and ensure the process is managed in accordance with regulatory requirements.

