

Assessment Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the arrangements for how Candidates (Apprentices and Qualification Learners), Approved Centres, and Training Providers may challenge an assessment decision made under the authority of iPET Network.
- 1.2 It provides a clear and transparent process for resolving concerns about assessment outcomes, whether those assessments are carried out directly by iPET Network or delegated to an Approved Centre or Apprenticeship Assessment Centre.
- 1.3 iPET Network is committed to ensuring that all assessment decisions are fair, consistent, and based on valid and reliable evidence.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any Candidate who believes that an assessment decision is inaccurate or has been reached unfairly has access to a structured, impartial, and timely mechanism to request review.
- 2.2 This policy also supports Approved Centres and Training Providers in understanding their responsibilities and the route for escalation where resolution cannot be achieved at Approved Centre/ Apprenticeship Assessment Centre level.
- 2.3 The appeals process ensures that assessment outcomes remain trustworthy and that all parties involved understand the steps available when disagreement about an assessment decision occurs.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This Assessment Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedure applies to the review of decisions that relate directly to assessment outcomes issued under the authority of iPET Network. This includes:

- Qualification assessments delivered by iPET Network or by Approved Centres under delegated assessment arrangements
- Apprenticeship assessments delivered directly by iPET Network or by Apprenticeship Assessment Centres approved to conduct assessment under the apprenticeship assessment plan
- Assessment decisions impacted by internal or external quality assurance activities where the outcome affects a Candidate's result
- Administrative or procedural errors that may have affected an assessment decision
- Decisions relating to the marking, moderation, verification or grading of assessment evidence

3.2 This policy is concerned solely with determining whether the assessment decision was reached fairly, consistently, and in accordance with iPET Network requirements, applicable assessment plans, and regulatory expectations.

3.3 The following matters do not fall within the Assessment Enquiries and Appeals Policy. Separate policies and procedures exist for matters, appeals or reviews relating to:

- Reasonable adjustments or special considerations decisions
- Complaints not related to assessment decisions
- Formal complaint outcomes
- Malpractice or maladministration outcomes
- Sanctions applied to an approved centre, apprenticeship assessment centre or candidate
- Certification issues not linked to an assessment decision
- Withdrawal of approval status for approved centres and apprenticeship assessment centres
- Concerns about teaching, training or programme delivery

3.4 An Appeal relates to how a decision was reached, not to circumstances affecting the Candidate's performance during an assessment. Where a Candidate raises an appeal where circumstances suggest Special Consideration is more appropriate, iPET Network will redirect the case to the appropriate policy.

3.5 Decisions made by external regulators (e.g. Ofqual) cannot be appealed through iPET Network.

4. Definitions

4.1 For the purposes of this policy, **Candidates** refers to Apprentices and Qualification Learners who are registered with iPET Network for a qualification or apprenticeship assessment.

4.2 An **Approved Centre** is an organisation formally approved by iPET Network to deliver qualification training and/or assessment in accordance with iPET Network requirements. Where an Approved Centre has delivered or marked the assessment, Candidates must complete the Centre's internal enquiries and appeals procedure before escalating to iPET Network.

4.3 A **Training Provider** is an organisation responsible for delivering the apprenticeship programme that prepares Apprentices for assessment. Training Providers may or may not be approved to deliver assessment. Where they are the requirements for Apprenticeship Assessment Centres apply.

4.4 An **Apprenticeship Assessment Centre** is a Training Provider, employer, or other organisation that has been specifically approved by iPET Network to carry out delegated apprenticeship assessment in line with revised apprenticeship assessment principles. These Centres must meet iPET Network's assessment and quality assurance requirements and are required to operate an internal enquiries and appeals process for apprenticeship assessments they deliver.

4.5 In the context of apprenticeship assessment, the **Employer** is the organisation employing the Apprentice.

4.6 **Informal Clarification** is introductory discussion to clarify the reasons behind an assessment decision before a formal Enquiry or Appeal is submitted (not to challenge the decision).

4.7 An **Enquiry** is pre-appeal procedural and/or clerical check of an assessment decision, available only for assessment types where such a check is meaningful. An Enquiry reviews administrative or procedural aspects but does not re-assess or re-mark work.

4.8 An **Appeal** is a formal request for iPET Network to review an assessment decision on the grounds that procedures were not followed correctly, the decision was not reached fairly, or it is inconsistent with assessment criteria and requirements.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 **iPET Network** is responsible for operating an independent, transparent and timely Enquiry and Appeals process. All iPET Network staff involved in Enquiries and Appeals must have appropriate expertise and must not have had any prior involvement in the assessment decision under review.

5.2 **Approved Centres** delivering qualification assessments are responsible for:

- Conducting assessments in accordance with iPET Network requirements.
- Maintaining accurate assessment and internal quality assurance records
- Operating their own internal enquiries and appeals procedures
- Supporting Candidates to understand assessment outcomes
- Providing iPET Network with all requested records when an appeal is escalated
- Ensuring Candidates are not prevented or discouraged from escalating an appeal to iPET Network once the Centre's internal process has concluded

5.3 Approved Centres may also support Candidates where the assessment has been delivered directly by iPET Network. In such cases, Centres are responsible for assisting Candidates to understand their result, providing relevant records when requested, and supporting the Candidate through the iPET Network Enquiry and Appeals process.

5.4 Approved Centres may submit an Enquiry or Appeal on behalf of a Candidate only where the Candidate has provided explicit written consent.

5.5 **Training Providers** who deliver the Apprenticeship programme of learning but do not conduct the assessment are responsible for:

- Supporting Candidates to understand assessment outcomes, including results issued by iPET Network
- Maintaining relevant training records to support the Candidate where needed

- Providing information requested by iPET Network during an appeal where it relates to the Candidate's training or readiness
 - Assisting Candidates to access the iPET Network Enquiry and Appeals process
- Training Providers may submit an Enquiry or Appeal on behalf of a Candidate only with the Candidate's explicit written consent.

5.6 Where an organisation has been approved by iPET Network as an **Apprenticeship Assessment Centre**, and conducts apprenticeship assessment accordingly, it is responsible for:

- Delivering assessment in line with the apprenticeship assessment plan and iPET Network requirements
- Maintaining accurate assessment and quality assurance records
- Operating and completing its internal enquiries and appeals route for any assessment decisions it makes
- Supporting Apprentices to understand their results and assessment feedback
- Supplying all relevant records to iPET Network when the Apprentice escalates an appeal after completing the AAC's internal process

5.7 **Employers** (Apprenticeships) may support an Apprentice to understand assessment decisions and may act as a representative during the Enquiry or Appeals process with the Apprentice's explicit consent.

5.8 **Candidates** are responsible for following the correct process depending on where the assessment was conducted.

5.9 Where the assessment was carried out by an Approved Centre or Apprenticeship Assessment Centre the **Candidate** must complete the Centre's internal enquiries and appeals procedure before escalating to iPET Network. Once the Centre route is exhausted, the **Candidate** may escalate directly to iPET Network regardless of whether the Centre agrees with or supports the appeal.

5.10 Where the assessment was carried out directly by iPET Network the **Candidate** may submit an Enquiry (if applicable) or Appeal directly to iPET Network without completing a Centre-level review.

6. Submission of an Appeal by a Representative of the Candidate

6.1 An Appeal may be submitted directly by the Candidate or, with the Candidate's explicit consent, may be submitted on the Candidate's behalf by:

- An Approved Centre
- A Training Provider
- An Employer (apprenticeships only)

6.2 Consent must be confirmed in writing by the Candidate and supplied as part of the appeal submission.

6.3 An organisation acting on behalf of a Candidate may not prevent, delay, or discourage the Candidate from submitting an Appeal directly to iPET Network.

7. Informal Clarification Stage

7.1 This is an introductory discussion between:

- A Candidate and the Approved Centre, Training Provider, Apprenticeship Assessment Centre, or Employer, or
- An Employer/or Training Provider on behalf of an Apprentice with ipet Network's End-point Assessment department, or
- An Approved Centre, on behalf of a Learner and ipet Network's External Quality Assurance team,

to clarify the reasons behind an assessment decision before a formal Enquiry or Appeal are submitted (not to challenge the decision).

7.2 This step is optional but often resolves concerns promptly.

7.3 Informal Clarification does not pause or extend any deadlines.

7.4 Candidates are advised that discussions held as part of the Informal Clarification Stage do not stop, delay, or extend the time limits for submitting an Enquiry or Appeal.

7.5 If a Candidate wishes to proceed to an Enquiry or an Appeal, they must ensure that their submission is made within the relevant timescales set out in this policy, regardless of whether Informal Clarification is ongoing.

7.6 Approved Centres, Training Providers and Employers should make Candidates aware of these deadlines when providing informal explanation or support.

8. Enquiry Stage (Pre-Appeal)

- 8.1 The Enquiry Stage applies only to assessment types where a procedural or clerical check is possible. Examples include written examinations, knowledge tests and structured written assignments.
- 8.2 The Enquiry Stage does not apply to:
- Practical observations
 - Professional discussions
 - Holistic assessments
 - Portfolio/workbook assessments
 - When assessment has been completed by an Approved Centre or Apprenticeship Assessment Centre and they have already completed an Enquiry (clerical check)
- 8.3 Candidates must submit a completed Assessment Enquiry and Appeals Form to compliance@ipetnetwork.co.uk within FIVE working days of receiving the assessment result or Approved Centre/Apprenticeship Assessment Centre outcome.
- 8.4 iPET Network will acknowledge the Enquiry within FIVE working days.
- 8.5 Enquiries will be reviewed by the End-point Assessment Manager (for apprenticeship assessments) and by the Quality Manager for qualification assessments, as long as they have not been involved in the assessment and must not be involved in any internal or external quality assurance relating to the assessment. If there is any conflict of interest the manager will delegate the enquiry to another appropriate senior member of the relevant team.
- 8.6 The enquiry reviewer may consult subject matter experts were necessary.
- 8.7 The Enquiry outcome will be issued within FIFTEEN working days.
- 8.8 During an Enquiry, iPET Network will complete a structured procedural review designed to confirm whether the assessment decision may have been affected by an administrative or process related error. The Enquiry does not reconsider assessor judgement or re-assess the Candidate's work; rather, it focuses on verifying that all assessment and quality assurance requirements were applied correctly.

8.9 As part of the Enquiry, iPET Network may undertake the following checks, as appropriate to the assessment method:

- **Verification of Mark Totals and Numerical Accuracy**
 - Confirm that all marks or scores were added correctly
 - Check that marks were transcribed accurately from marking documents to result systems
 - Confirm that no responses or sections were omitted during marking
- **Verification of Grading Boundaries and Results Application**
 - Check that grading boundaries, pass marks or thresholds have been applied correctly
 - Confirm that the correct grade descriptor or grading rule was used.
 - Ensure that the correct assessment plan or qualification specification was applied
- **Checks on Assessment Evidence and Documentation**
 - Confirm that all evidence submitted for assessment was reviewed and considered
 - Ensure that all mandatory components were completed and included
 - Check that assessment documentation is complete, properly recorded and internally quality assured where required
- **Version Control and Assessment Material Verification**
 - Ensure that the correct and current version of the assessment material was used
 - Verify that the Candidate completed the correct assessment task or paper
- **Process and Procedure Compliance Checks**
 - Confirm that assessment conditions and requirements were followed
 - Review whether internal quality assurance steps were carried out in line with iPET Network expectations
 - Identify whether any administrative or procedural error may have impacted the Candidate's result
- **Cross-Checking System Entries and Record Accuracy**

- Validate that Candidate details, assessment records and results were entered correctly into iPET Network systems
- Check that the result communicated to the Candidate matches the recorded decision
- Clarification with Approved Centres and Apprenticeship Assessment Centres
- Where assessment was delivered by a Centre or AAC, iPET Network may contact them to confirm procedural steps or request additional records

8.10 If an error or inconsistency is identified, iPET Network may correct the record, amend the result, or require a reassessment where appropriate and justified.

8.11 If no procedural error is found, the Enquiry outcome will confirm that the original result stands.

8.12 If dissatisfied, the Candidate may proceed to Stage 1 Appeal.

9. Stage 1 Appeal – Formal Review

9.1 A Stage 1 Appeal is the first formal stage of the iPET Network Assessment Appeals Process. Candidates may enter Stage 1 Appeal within TEN working days of an Enquiry outcome or, where the Enquiry Stage is not applicable, within FIVE working days of receiving the assessment result.

9.2 A completed Assessment Enquiry and Appeals Form must be submitted to compliance@ipetnetwork.co.uk. Appeals may be submitted directly by the Candidate or, with the Candidate's explicit written consent, by an Approved Centre, Training Provider or Employer.

9.3 iPET Network will acknowledge receipt of the Stage 1 Appeal within FIVE working days.

9.4 The Stage 1 Appeal will be undertaken by the iPET Network Compliance Team, who:

- Have had no prior involvement in the assessment decision, quality assurance or Enquiry stage
- Hold the necessary regulatory, assessment or quality assurance expertise
- May request assessment, marking and quality assurance documentation from Approved Centres or Apprenticeship Assessment Centres

- May consult an appropriate subject matter expert where clarification of technical or occupational requirements is required

9.5 The stage 1 review consider:

- Whether the correct assessment and quality assurance procedures were followed
- Whether the assessment criteria were applied fairly, consistently and correctly
- Whether any administrative, procedural or technical error may have affected the result
- Whether all relevant evidence was properly considered
- Whether the assessment decision is supported by the assessment evidence

9.6 The Stage 1 Appeal outcome will be issued within TWENTY working days of acceptance.

9.7 Possible outcomes include:

- Appeal upheld – the assessment decision is changed
- Appeal amended – a grading or decision adjustment is made
- Reassessment directed – the assessment must be re-taken under independent conditions
- Appeal dismissed (no valid grounds) – the submission does not meet the criteria for an appeal
- Appeal dismissed (decision confirmed) – all procedures were followed correctly and the original decision is upheld
- Explanation provided – where appropriate, iPET Network may provide further written clarification to support the Candidate's understanding without compromising assessment integrity

9.8 Where the Candidate remains dissatisfied, they may escalate the case to Stage 2 within TEN working days of the Stage 1 outcome

10. Stage 2 Appeal – Independent Review

10.1 A Stage 2 Appeal is the final internal stage of the process. It must be submitted within TEN working days of the Stage 1 outcome using the Assessment Enquiry and Appeals Form, sent to compliance@ipetnetwork.co.uk.

10.2 iPET Network will acknowledge receipt within FIVE working days.

10.3 The Stage 2 review is conducted by an Independent Reviewer who:

- Is not employed by ipet Network
- Has no contractual relationship that could influence the outcome
- Has had no involvement in the assessment, Enquiry, or Stage 1 review
- Has appropriate subject matter or assessment expertise

10.4 The review is document-based; neither Candidates nor Centres attend or present information in person.

10.5 The Independent Reviewer will determine:

- Whether Stage 1 was conducted correctly
- Whether assessment and quality assurance procedures were followed
- Whether the assessment decision is fair, evidence-based and aligned with requirements
- Whether any procedural, administrative or judgement-based error affected the outcome

10.6 A Stage 2 outcome will be issued within TWENTY working days. The possible outcomes are:

- Appeal upheld – the assessment decision is changed
- Appeal amended – a grading or decision adjustment is made
- Reassessment directed – an independent reassessment is required
- Appeal dismissed (no valid grounds) – the appeal does not meet the required criteria
- Appeal dismissed (decision confirmed) – the assessment decision and Stage 1 outcome were correct and compliant
- Further explanation provided – additional clarification may be issued to support understanding without compromising assessment security

10.7 The Stage 2 decision is final within iPET Network's internal procedures.

11. Outcome Explanations Provided to Support Understanding

11.1 Where an Enquiry or Appeal is not upheld, iPET Network may provide a clearer written explanation of the reasons why the decision stands. This explanation may include reference to the assessment criteria, evidence requirements, and procedural compliance, to support the Candidate's understanding.

11.2 For security and integrity reasons, iPET Network:

- Will not release model answers, assessment materials, marking guides or restricted content
- Will not provide information that risks compromising future assessment integrity
- Will provide explanations only to the extent necessary to clarify the decision

11.3 This approach supports transparency while maintaining the validity of assessment tools.

12. Re-sits During an Appeal

12.1 Re-sits cannot take place while an appeal on the same assessment decision is active.

12.2 Appeals will follow standard timescales, and re-sit arrangements can be made once the appeal outcome has been issued.

13. Fees

13.1 Stage 1 Appeals are not subject to a fee.

13.2 Stage 2 Appeals will incur an administration fee of £100 + VAT, which reflects the cost of appointing an Independent Reviewer and managing the review process.

13.3 The fee will be refunded in full where the Appeal is upheld.

13.4 Where a Stage 2 Appeal is upheld and iPET Network determines that the outcome was directly caused by an error, omission or procedural failure on the part of an Approved Centre or Apprenticeship Assessment Centre, iPET Network reserves the right to recover the Stage 2 Appeal fee from that Centre.

14. Referral to Regulators

14.1 Once all internal iPET Network Enquiry and Appeal stages have been completed, a Candidate may raise concerns with the relevant regulator only where the concern relates to procedural fairness, regulatory compliance, or the way iPET Network has applied its policies. Regulators cannot overturn or alter individual assessment decisions or grades.

14.2 iPET Network will meet all regulatory obligations relating to event notification and the reporting of Adverse Effects. Where an Enquiry or Appeal identifies:

- A failure in assessment or quality assurance procedures
- An error that has or could have affected results
- An issue that may impact other candidates
- Risks to the integrity, security or validity of assessments
- Any circumstance that meets regulatory reporting thresholds

14.3 iPET Network will notify the appropriate regulator(s) in accordance with their reporting requirements and within required timeframes.

14.4 Where an appeal is upheld and an issue is found to have wider implications, iPET Network will:

- Investigate whether other Candidates may have been affected
- Correct or mitigate any impact on other Candidates
- Take all necessary actions to prevent recurrence
- Notify other Approved Centres or Awarding Organisations, where required, according to Ofqual Condition A8.7
- Document and report the matter as required for regulatory compliance

14.5 Candidates will be informed that a referral to regulators concerns process compliance only, not the overturning of assessment outcomes.

15. Responsible Use and Sharing of Appeal Outcomes

15.1 iPET Network encourages Candidates, Approved Centres, Training Providers and Apprenticeship Assessment Centres to use Enquiry and Appeal outcomes in a responsible and constructive manner. Appeal outcomes relate to individual

assessment decisions and must always be interpreted within their proper context, including the full assessment criteria, evidence requirements and procedural steps that were followed.

15.2 Appeal outcomes may be shared within an Approved Centre, Training Provider or Apprenticeship Assessment Centre for the purpose of:

- Staff development and standardisation
- Improving assessment practice
- Strengthening internal quality assurance
- Ensuring consistent future assessment decisions
- Supporting the candidate who submitted the appeal

15.3 This internal sharing helps Centres reflect on learning, improve practice, and identify quality improvements.

15.4 Candidates and Centres must not share, publish or distribute:

- Restricted assessment materials
- Confidential documentation made available solely for the enquiry or appeal
- Any information relating to other candidates
- Internal ipet network correspondence
- Any information that may compromise assessment security or future assessment integrity

15.5 While Candidates have the right to share their own outcome, doing so outside of the assessment context or in a way that could lead to misunderstanding of the assessment process or distress or disadvantage to other Candidates, is strongly discouraged.

15.6 iPET Network reserves the right to address inappropriate sharing of confidential or restricted information under its Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, Sanctions Policy or Centre Agreement where such actions compromise assessment integrity or the confidentiality of assessment materials.

16. Data Protection and Record Keeping

16.1 iPET Network processes all personal data associated with Enquiries and Appeals in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the iPET Network Privacy Notice available on the iPET Network website. By submitting an Enquiry or Appeal, Candidates acknowledge that iPET Network will use the information provided for the purpose of investigating, reviewing, and responding to the case.

16.2 iPET Network will retain all Enquiry and Appeal records, including related correspondence, evidence, reports, and outcome letters, for a period of SIX years from the date the case is closed. This retention period supports regulatory audit requirements, quality assurance activities, legal limitation timeframes, and the ability of iPET Network to investigate any wider impact on other assessments or Candidates. Records are stored securely and accessed only by individuals who require the information to carry out their role.

16.3 iPET Network may share relevant information with Approved Centres, Training Providers and Apprenticeship Assessment Centres, including the final Enquiry or Appeal outcome, even where the Approved Centre, Training Provider or Apprenticeship Assessment Centre did not submit the appeal on the Candidate's behalf. This disclosure is necessary to:

- Ensure transparency regarding assessment decisions that relate to assessments they delivered or supported
- Enable approved centres, training providers, and apprenticeship assessment centres to fulfil their quality assurance responsibilities
- Support staff development, standardisation activities, and improved assessment practice
- Allow approved centres and training providers to support the candidate appropriately following the decision
- Meet regulatory obligations requiring awarding organisations and assessment organisations to work collaboratively with approved centres to address risks or improvements identified through appeals

16.4 Information will be shared only to the extent necessary for these purposes and will not include any material that is not relevant or appropriate for operational or quality assurance needs.

16.5 All parties involved in an Enquiry or Appeal are required to treat records and correspondence as confidential and to store or transmit such information securely in accordance with their own data protection obligations.

17. Monitoring and Review

17.1 This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by regulatory changes, feedback, or operational learning.

17.2 iPET Network monitors all Enquiries and Appeals to identify themes, risks, systemic issues or quality gaps.

17.3 Where an Appeal is upheld, iPET Network will:

- Conduct a review to determine whether other Candidates may have been impacted
- Take corrective action to amend incorrect results
- Instruct reassessment where appropriate
- Notify affected Centres, Training Providers, Apprenticeship Assessment Centres or Employers
- Review and, where necessary, revise assessment materials, guidance, or internal processes
- Update assessor or Internal Quality Assurance/ External Quality Assurance training
- Review Approved Centre risk ratings or sampling levels
- Record outcomes for standardisation and quality improvement purposes

17.4 This ensures that upheld appeals lead not only to individual correction but also to systemic improvements.

Contact Information

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Version Control

Date of Amendment	Version Number	Amendments
27/03/2026	1.0	Amalgamated policies P11, EPA1, EPA13 Enhanced clarity of stages of process Enhanced clarity regarding escalation Timeframes updated to provide transparency Clarification of limitations of enquiry stage and grounds for appeal Addition of responsible sharing section Updated data protection and record keeping information