

PRCA ENQUIRIES AND APPEALS POLICY FOR APPRENTICES

1. INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the PRCA Enquiries and Appeals Policy for apprentices in relation to:

- Centre assessment decisions
- Reasonable adjustment decisions
- Special consideration decisions

This policy does not address appeals against malpractice which are detailed in the PRCA Malpractice Policy.

2. PURPOSE

The PRCA is responsible for securing and maintaining the standards of its qualification delivery. Consequently, PRCA has developed policies and procedures to underpin the delivery of accredited qualifications to protect the centre, apprentices and employers, and ensure that valid decisions are made following consideration of all available evidence. The PRCA seeks to be fair and transparent in its dealings with apprentices. The PRCA has in place procedures for enquiring and appealing PRCA assessment decisions.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to individuals undertaking PRCA apprenticeships, and PRCA apprenticeship delivery staff, and assessors/coaches.

4. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRCA

The PRCA, as an accredited centre which delivers the PR Apprenticeship and AIM Awards qualifications, is required to have an enquiries and appeals policy and a complaints policy supported by effective procedures. The PRCA is required to ensure apprentices are fully aware of the assessment requirements for the qualification they are working towards and ensure that apprentices understand the centre's policies and procedures including the enquiries and appeals and complaints policies and procedures.

5. ENQUIRIES AND APPEALS REGARDING PRCA ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

5.1 WHAT ARE ENQUIRIES AND APPEALS REGARDING PRCA ASSESSMENT DECISIONS?

Apprentices are entitled to question an assessor's decision following an assessment. Apprentices must utilise the PRCA's enquires and appeals policy to challenge a decision in relation to the assessment of their work.

The following diagram sets an overview of the enquiry and appeals process and explanations follow:



(i) ASSESSMENT DECISION ENQUIRY

An assessment decision enquiry reviews the apprentice's evidence to determine if it meets the relevant assessment criteria for the achievement of the unit. The review is undertaken by an **alternative PRCA Assessor/Coach** and is coordinated by the Head of Apprenticeships (at prapprentice@prca.org.uk).

(ii) STAGE 1 APPEAL

Stage 1 Appeals are considered by a **PRCA Internal Verifier** who reviews the apprentice's evidence to determine if it meets the relevant assessment criteria for the achievement of the unit. The PRCA Internal Verifier will only consider a Stage 1 Appeal when an assessment decision enquiry has been requested, processed and the outcome has been issued to the apprentice. The PRCA Internal Verifier will consider whether the correct procedures were followed consistently during the enquiry stage and whether they were applied properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

(iii) STAGE 2 APPEAL

Stage 2 Appeals are considered by the Head of Apprenticeships. The Head of Apprenticeships may consult independent assessors/internal verifiers who are not working for PRCA.

The Head of Apprenticeships will draw upon the facts from the enquiry stage and the Stage 1 Appeal (PRCA Internal Verifier). The Head of Apprenticeships will consider whether the PRCA has followed required procedures consistently and has applied them properly and fairly in arriving at judgements. The Head of Apprenticeships is not concerned with making judgements about an apprentice's work.

5.2 PROCEDURES FOR ENQUIRIES AND APPEALS REGARDING PRCA CENTRE ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

(i) ASSESSMENT DECISION ENQUIRY

An assessment decision enquiry cannot be requested for a partially completed unit, the apprentice must consider that they have satisfied all of the assessment criteria for the unit in order to request an assessment decision enquiry. Assessment decision enquiries must be requested in writing to the Head of Apprenticeships, with the required supporting documentation (or reference to evidence stored within the e-portfolio system). The apprentice must first have sought to resolve their concerns with their assessor. The reasons for the enquiry must be stated.

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(stephanie.umebuani@prca.org.uk)
7 Stratford Place
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Assessment decision enquiry requests will be acknowledged by the PRCA Head of Apprenticeships within 5 working days of receipt. An apprentice, who has not received an acknowledgement within 5 working days, must contact the Talent and Professional Development Director.

The outcome of the assessment decision enquiry will be provided to the apprentice within 25 working days of the date of the acknowledgement letter.

(ii) PROCEDURES FOR STAGE 1 APPEAL

An apprentice must request a Stage 1 Appeal within 20 working days of the date of the notification of the assessment decision enquiry outcome by contacting the Head of Apprenticeships.

The PRCA Head of Apprenticeships will send an acknowledgement letter to confirm receipt of a Stage 1 Appeal request within 5 working days of its receipt. An apprentice, who has not received an acknowledgement within 5 working days, must contact the Talent and Professional Development Director.

The outcome of a Stage 1 Appeal will be notified to the apprentice within 25 working days of the date of the acknowledgement letter. If the Internal Verifier finds that the appropriate procedures have not been followed, it will inform the Coach and recommend appropriate action(s). This may or may not include reconsideration of the assessment decision. If the Internal Verifier confirms the decision of the PRCA Coach, the Apprentice is advised accordingly.

(iii) PROCEDURES FOR STAGE 2 APPEAL

A Stage 2 Appeal can only be requested if a Stage 1 Appeal has been requested and the outcome received by the Head of Apprenticeships, from the Internal Verifier. The apprentice must provide a clear reason why it is considered that the PRCA did not follow due process and a reason for escalating the appeal. The apprentice must apply for a Stage 2 Appeal within 20 working days of the date of the notification of the Stage 1 Appeal outcome by contacting the Head of Apprenticeships.

The PRCA Head of Apprenticeships will send an acknowledgement letter to confirm receipt of a Stage 2 Appeal request within 5 working days of its receipt. An apprentice, who has not received an acknowledgement within 5 working days, must contact the Talent and Professional Development Director.

The Head of Apprenticeships will conduct the Stage 2 Appeal within a maximum of 40 working days after a request for a Stage 2 Appeal has been received. If the Head of Apprenticeships finds that the appropriate procedures have not been followed, it will inform the Coach and recommend appropriate action(s). This may or may not include reconsideration of the assessment decision.

If the PRCA Head of Apprenticeships confirms the decision of the Internal Verifier, the Apprentice is advised accordingly.

6. ENQUIRIES AND APPEALS REGARDING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT DECISIONS

6.1 WHAT ARE ENQUIRIES AND APPEALS REGARDING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT OR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION DECISIONS?

PRCA apprentices are entitled to request reasonable adjustments in accordance with the *PRCA Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy*. This policy sets out the PRCA's responsibility for determining a learner's reasonable adjustment and putting the adjustment in place. An apprentice who is dissatisfied with the PRCA's handling of a request for a reasonable adjustment or special considerations must utilise this enquiries and appeals procedures if the apprentice wishes to challenge the decision or handling of the request.

An apprentice can request a Stage 1 Appeal if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the reasonable adjustment or special considerations enquiry. If the apprentice is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 Appeal, they can request a Stage 2 Appeal.

The following diagram sets an overview of the enquiry and appeals process. Explanations follow:



(i) REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT OR SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS ENQUIRY

A reasonable adjustment enquiry involves the review of the apprentice's reasonable adjustment or special considerations application to their assessor and the decision in relation to the application. The review is undertaken by a **PRCA employee** outside of the Apprenticeship team. The employee will consider whether the assessor:

- used procedures which are consistent with the *PRCA Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy*
- applied its procedures properly and fairly in reaching its judgement

(ii) STAGE 1 APPEAL

Stage 1 Appeals are considered by the **Internal Verifier** who will only consider a Stage 1 Appeal when a reasonable adjustment or special considerations enquiry has been requested, processed and the outcome has been issued. The Head of Apprenticeships will consider whether the correct procedures were followed consistently during the enquiry stage and whether they were applied properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

(iii) STAGE 2 APPEAL

Stage 2 Appeals are considered by the **Head of Apprenticeships** who will draw upon the facts from the enquiry stage and the Stage 1 Appeal. The Head of Apprenticeships will consider whether PRCA has followed required procedures consistently and has applied them properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

The decision of the Head of Apprenticeships is final.

6.2 PROCEDURES FOR ENQUIRIES AND APPEALS AGAINST REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT OR SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS DECISIONS

(i) REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATION ENQUIRY

Reasonable adjustment and special consideration enquiries must be requested in writing to the Head of Apprenticeships. The reasons for the enquiry must be recorded. These enquiries will be acknowledged by the Apprenticeships team within 5 working days of receipt by PRCA. An apprentice, who has not received an acknowledgement within 5 working days, must contact the Talent and Professional Development Director.

The outcome of the enquiry will be provided to the apprentice within 25 working days of the date of the acknowledgement letter.

(ii) PROCEDURES FOR STAGE 1 APPEAL

The apprentice must request a Stage 1 Appeal within 20 working days of the date of the notification of the enquiry outcome, by contacting the Head of Apprenticeships. The PRCA will send an acknowledgement letter to confirm receipt of a Stage 1 Appeal form within 5 working days of its receipt. An apprentice, who has not received an acknowledgement within 5 working days, must contact the Talent and Professional Development Director.

The outcome of a Stage 1 Appeal will be notified to the apprentice within 25 working days of the date of the acknowledgement letter.

If the **Internal Verifier** finds that the correct procedures have not been followed, it will inform the Head of Apprenticeships and remedial action will be taken.

(iii) PROCEDURES FOR STAGE 2 APPEAL

A Stage 2 Appeal can only be requested if a Stage 1 Appeal has been requested and the outcome received. The apprentice must provide a clear reason why it is considered that PRCA did not follow due process and a reason for escalating the appeal. The apprentice must apply for a Stage 2 Appeal within 20 working days of the date of the notification of the Stage 1 Appeal outcome by contacting the Head of Apprenticeships. The PRCA will send an acknowledgement letter to confirm receipt of a Stage 2 Appeal form within 5 working days of its receipt. An apprentice, who has not received an acknowledgement within 5 working days, must contact the Training and Professional Development Director.

The Head of Apprenticeships will conduct the Stage 2 Appeal within a maximum of 40 working days after a request for a Stage 2 Appeal has been received.

If the Head of Apprenticeships finds that the appropriate procedures have not been followed, it will inform the Apprentice and recommend appropriate action(s). This may or may not include reconsideration of the reasonable adjustment or special considerations decision.

If the Head of Apprenticeships confirms the decision of the Coach/Assessor, they are advised accordingly.

8 GROUNDS FOR APPEALS

Requests for Stage 1 or Stage 2 appeals must clearly set out the reason/s for requesting the appeal, focussing on whether the PRCA applied its procedures properly and fairly in reaching a judgement.

The PRCA will consider each appeal request to determine whether there are sufficient grounds for appeal. The PRCA will consider the validity of the grounds for the appeal put forward by an apprentice. Stage 1 Appeals will only be accepted if a relevant enquiry has been requested, processed, and the outcome issued to the apprentice, and the grounds for the appeal are valid. Stage 2 Appeals will only be accepted if a Stage 1 Appeal has been requested, processed, and the outcome issued to the apprentice, and the grounds for the appeal are valid.

(i) APPEALS TO AIM AWARDS AS THE AWARDING ORGANISATION

In the event that an apprentice is dissatisfied with the outcome of the PRCA's enquiries and appeals process and considers that the PRCA's decision continues to disadvantage them, the apprentice can

write directly to the awarding body, AIM. The above procedures must be fully exhausted without resolution, prior to this stage. The Apprentice should email their appeal to enquiries@aim-group.org.uk, outlining their appeal. AIM will acknowledge the appeal and indicate within 5 working days, following the process detailed in the **AIM Enquiries and appeals policy**.

9 MONITORING ENQUIRIES AND APPEALS

The PRCA monitors the enquiries and appeals it receives and considers the outcomes of enquiries and appeals to facilitate the ongoing review of PRCA policies and procedures.

In the event that consideration of an enquiry/appeal identifies shortcomings or failings in relation to policies, procedures or performance of the PRCA, action will be taken to prevent a recurrence of the failings identified.

10 PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY OF PRCA DELIVERED QUALIFICATIONS

In the event that the outcome of an enquiry/appeal brings the validity of the assessment results for the PRCA into question, the PRCA will take action to protect the interests of apprentices and the integrity of the qualification. The PRCA reserves the right to carry out further investigations including reviews of the work/assessments of apprentices without consulting AIM or seeking the apprentices/employers' permission.

11 USEFUL CONTACTS

For more information about the *PRCA Enquiries, Complaints & Appeals Policy and procedure* contact:

Head of Apprenticeships: Stephanie Umebuani

Address: 7 Stratford Place, London W1C 1AY


Email: Stephanie.Umebuani@prca.org.uk

12 DECLARATION FROM APPRENTICE

I have read and understand the process above.

Learner Signature/Name:

Date:

Date	Status/Summary of Changes	Approved By	Signature	Next Review
January 2022		Karen Wilkinson		January 2023