



INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on being registered to take one or more of the qualifications offered by the IMI's awarding organisation. This means that when you complete your qualification successfully, the IMI will be the organisation that issues you with your certificate having checked that the centre (e.g. college or training provider) has carried out all of your assessments correctly.

Before you start on your programme there are some things you must know. These are:

- how you are registered
- how you will be assessed
- how you will get your certificate
- how to contact the IMI
- what to do if you need to complain or appeal against an assessment decision.
- how much your qualification costs.

Your centre should tell you all these things as part of your induction which should also include all the details of the qualification(s) you are taking, plus very important topics such as health and safety, equal opportunities, data protection and the centre's expectations of you while you attend there.

HOW YOU ARE REGISTERED:

The centre you are attending has been approved to offer IMI qualifications and will register you on the qualification you have chosen.

Once you have been registered, you will be given a unique registration number. The IMI's awarding organisation has a customer charter that means we will confirm your registration (i.e. issue this number) between 3 and 10 days depending on the way your centre gives us your details.

You will be given this number by your tutor or assessor. You should make a note of this number and keep it safe as you will need to quote this number should you wish to contact the IMI.

HOW YOU WILL BE ASSESSED:

This is difficult to summarise as the type and number of assessments you need to pass will depend upon the qualification you are taking.

If you are taking a Vocational Competence Qualification (VCQ), National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) a lot of your assessments will take place in your workplace. Your assessor will come and watch you carrying out certain tasks as part of your job and ask you to explain what you are doing. You will also have to collect evidence (e.g. job cards) to help show that you have completed jobs correctly when the assessor isn't there. Your boss and senior workmates may also have to confirm the standard of your work. You will also have to pass a number of online assessments which are usually multiple choice theory tests.



If you are taking a Vocationally Related Qualification (VRQ) – sometimes called technical certificates – your assessments will take place mainly in your college or training centre. You will have to complete a number of practical tasks, answer questions, complete some written tests and maybe an assignment. You will also have to pass a number of online tests which are multiple choice theory tests.

If you are taking motor vehicle qualifications as part of an apprenticeship, you are likely to have to take other qualifications relating to ‘life skills’. Which qualifications you have to take varies from country to country. In England you will do Key Skills or Functional Skills, in Scotland Core Skills or if you live in Wales you will take Essential Skills Wales. Each of these qualifications have different requirements and your tutor or assessor will explain exactly what is needed. As an apprentice, you will also have to learn Employment Rights and Responsibilities.

This is just a brief outline of the main qualifications that the IMI’s awarding organisation offers. You may also be registered for IMI Accreditation, the irtec Licensing Scheme or a Quality Assured Programme. These are not qualifications and will have specific assessment requirements.

Note: The IMI will arrange for assessment material to be provided in Welsh or Irish (Gaelige) at the request of your approved centre.

HOW YOU GET YOUR CERTIFICATE:

When you have completed your programme and your assessors are satisfied that you have met all the requirements of the qualification you are taking, your centre will contact the IMI to request your certificate.

The IMI will check that everything is in order and if we are satisfied that this is a valid claim we will issue your certificate and send it to your centre. The IMI’s awarding organisation has a customer charter that means we will send out your certificate between 3 and 10 days depending on the way your centre makes the claim.

If you haven’t received your certificate within a month of you completing your qualification, please ask your tutor or assessor to check that your certificate has been claimed and if necessary contact the IMI to find out what’s happened to this claim.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

The person from the IMI you are most likely to meet is your centre’s external quality assurer. External Quality Assurers visit centres to check that all IMI requirements are met and that the centre is carrying out assessments correctly. Occasionally, the external quality assurer may talk to you to find out what you think about your qualification and the processes you have to follow.

If you do meet an external quality assurer, don’t hesitate to ask questions or discuss any queries you might have. They will be more than happy to help you.



If you want to contact IMI direct at head office the details are:

The Institute of the Motor Industry, Fanshaws, Brickendon, Hertford, SG13 8PQ
Tel: 01992 511521

If you have a simple query for example about your registration or certificate it is probably easiest to telephone. If you need to contact us on a more serious matter, such as a complaint about your centre, please see Appendix 1 below.

Note: All communications from the IMI will be in English.

HOW TO COMPLAIN OR APPEAL AGAINST AN ASSESSMENT DECISION:

If you have cause to complain about an assessment decision or any other aspect about the qualification you are taking, you should first discuss the problems with your centre representatives (e.g. your assessor). They will have a procedure which both you and they must follow. The centre should have given you a copy of this procedure at the start of your programme. If not, ask to see a copy before you make your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the centre's response, you may complain directly to IMI or the relevant regulatory authority for that qualification. The process for doing this is contained at the end of these notes (Appendix 1). Even then, if you are not satisfied with the outcome of this process, you can make an appeal. The way to do this is also explained in Appendix 2.

Note: Users of public bodies in Scotland may also have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

HOW MUCH DOES YOUR QUALIFICATION COST?

The cost of gaining a qualification varies considerably depending upon the qualification you are taking. Costs can be divided into two areas, the fees paid to the IMI for registering and certificating candidates and the amount paid to the centre for any training you may need and all the assessments you have to take. Your centre will be able to provide you with these details and they are also likely to pay the fees to the IMI. However, for your information, these costs are listed on the IMI's awarding organisation website (www.theimi.org.uk/awarding).



INTRODUCTION

This document sets out our complaints policy and is aimed at our members, approved centres, candidates and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from IMI or an IMI affiliated individual or provision.

If you feel you have encountered a level of service that is below both your and our expectations, you should raise any concerns with us immediately. This will enable us to address any issues and see this as an opportunity to improve our services.

The IMI will always endeavour to resolve complaints promptly, constructively, fairly and proportionately having due regard to the nature of the complaint and the guidelines set out in this policy.

SCOPE

This policy covers complaints against a member or professionally registered individual of IMI concerning alleged breach(es) of IMI Professional Standards, complaints in relation to approved centres or a complaint about a service provided by IMI.

- **making a complaint against an IMI member or IMI professionally registered individual**

All IMI members and IMI professionally registered individuals commit to abide by the IMI Professional Standards.

If it is felt that a member or professionally registered individual of IMI has fallen below the expectation of these standards, you can submit a formal complaint to IMI for review using the online complaints form. You must provide evidence to support your complaint.

- **making a complaint about an IMI approved centre**

All IMI approved centres must have their own complaints and appeals policy which should state clearly how complaints relating to the delivery, including assessment, of IMI qualifications, accreditations or Quality Assured Programmes can be made. Complainants must first of all go through their centres own process before bringing the matter to the attention of IMI.

If, having exhausting the centres complaints process you are unhappy with the outcome, you can submit a formal complaint to IMI for review using the online complaints form. You must provide evidence to support your complaint.

- **making a complaint about a service provided by IMI**

If you have a complaint about our service the best way to resolve it will usually be to contact the member of staff you have been dealing with. You can do this over the phone, by email or in writing.

If you feel that this is not the right way to resolve your complaint, or you are not happy with the outcome, or your complaint is about a member of staff, you can submit a formal complaint to IMI for review using the online complaints form. You must provide evidence to support your complaint.

Although it is not possible to provide a definitive list of complaint scenarios, the following outlines the areas that we are unable to take forward in line with the scope of this policy.

- Complaints that haven't firstly been be raised with the relevant individual or IMI approved centre
- Complaints about individuals or organisations who are not current members, professionally registered or affiliated with IMI
- Complaints against members or professionally registered individuals unrelated to the relevant IMI Professional Standard
- Complaints more than 12 months past the complaint incident date
- Assessment decisions made by an IMI approved centre
- Advise on alternate dispute resolution schemes or act as an impartial mediator
- Complaint matters that are, or become, the subject of legal proceedings in any court or tribunal
- Fee disputes, complex technical disputes, disputes that turn on the resolution of a conflict of evidence (particularly oral evidence) between the parties, disputes between employer and employee or commercial disputes between businesses.

Some such disputes can only be resolved through the courts or preferably alternate dispute resolution. Where we identify at the outset that the nature of the complaint is not one which the policy is likely to resolve then we may signpost you to an appropriate body who can assist you.

The decision of IMI on whether a complaint is within the scope of this policy is final.

This policy does not cover complaints in relation to decisions made by IMI as these are covered by our Appeals Policy. If you are unhappy about the way an assessment was conducted and you suspect malpractice or maladministration may have occurred, you should send your concern to us in accordance with the arrangements in our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

BEFORE YOU COMPLAIN

Complaints under this policy should be made promptly and normally within 90 days of the complaint incident. IMI may at its discretion consider complaints made later than 90 days having regard to any unreasonable delay by any party involved, but will not hear any complaint which has been raised more than 12 months after the incident.

Please provide as much information as possible so that we can investigate your complaint promptly.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

You must ensure you have read and understood all details of IMI's complaints policy, including what we can and can't investigate, how IMI will handle the complaint and expected timescales.

A full description of the nature of the complaint (including dates and times if known), the names of the people you have dealt with so far, copies of all correspondence between you and the named party relating to the complaint must be submitted using IMI's online complaint form.

Note: IMI will not investigate anonymous complaints – however we may consider doing so where there is evidence to support an investigation and these will be taken forward in accordance with our Whistleblowing Policy.

HOW WE HANDLE COMPLAINTS

IMI will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 48 hours, letting you know who will be dealing with it. At all times we will ensure that personnel assigned have the appropriate level of training and competence and they have had no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter.

An initial review will be undertaken to determine whether the complaint is within the scope of this policy, the complainant will be informed of this within 5-10 working days and advised on the outcome or the next steps in the process. Where this is not possible, we will contact you to update you on our progress and provide a deadline by which we should be able to provide a further response.

COMPLAINT OUTCOME

At the end of an investigation, we shall notify the complainant and the relevant individual or party of our decision. If a complaint is upheld, IMI will identify what went wrong and why, taking remedial action as appropriate.

If it is found that an IMI member or professionally registered individual is in breach of any part of the IMI Professional Standards or an IMI approved centre is in breach of IMI or regulatory requirements, appropriate sanctions will be taken.

IMI are unable to pay or instruct individuals or associated parties to pay any financial compensation.

TAKING A COMPLAINT FURTHER

If you disagree with the decision taken by IMI or are unhappy by the way in which your complaint was handled, you can take the matter further and instigate an appeal in line with the arrangements outline in our Appeals Policy.

The determination of a complaint against a member or professionally registered individual of IMI under this policy is final and there is no further right of appeal.

If your complaint relates to a qualification and, after you have exhausted our appeals arrangements, you are still not satisfied with the outcomes, you can complain/appeal directly to the relevant regulatory authority for that qualification (e.g. Ofqual in England, SQA Accreditation in Scotland, CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland and Qualifications Wales). Each of these organisations will have a formal procedure in place to handle complaints and appeals.

Users of public bodies¹ in Scotland have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) as the final arbiter. Users have to exhaust the public body's own complaints procedure before the SPSO will consider their complaint, and it must usually have been raised within the previous 12 months. The complaint cannot be under consideration in a court of law.

¹ The SPSO's rules apply only to public bodies (e.g. FE colleges and local authority centres). Learners at centres that are not public bodies will not be able to escalate their complaints to the SPSO.



The SPSO defines a complaint as “an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more customers about [the college’s] action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by [the college²] or on its behalf”.

The SPSO will not consider complaints about academic decisions, such as the outcome of an assessment. These types of complaints should be treated as an appeal and should follow awarding bodies’ appeals processes.

The SPSO’s Further Education Colleges Model Complaints Handling Procedure can be found at <http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk/further-and-higher-education/>

² For some complaints, there will be no requirement for the college to escalate the complaint to awarding bodies, e.g. if the Complaint concerns the behaviour of a centre staff member (in this case, once the student has exhausted the college’s complaints process, they would go direct to the SPSO if dissatisfied).

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out our appeals policy and procedure and is aimed at our customers, including approved centres and candidates, who are delivering / enrolled on or have taken an IMI approved qualification (including units), accreditation or Quality Assured Programme. 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.

It is also for use by our staff to ensure they deal with all appeals in a consistent manner.

SCOPE

This policy covers appeals from:

- candidates and/or centres in relation to an assessment decision on the basis that we did not apply procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly and fairly
- centres in relation to an IMI decision concerning a centre's application to offer an IMI qualification, accreditation or Quality Assured Programme
- centres concerning the contents of a centre monitoring report
- centres and/or candidates relating to an IMI decision to decline a centre's request to make reasonable adjustments or give special considerations
- centres in relation to the application by the IMI of a sanction/action on a centre resulting from a monitoring visit or an investigation into malpractice or maladministration
- centres and/or candidates about a decision to amend a candidate/set of candidates results following a malpractice or malpractice investigation
- centres relating to a decision made by IMI following an investigation into a complaint about a centre.
- any person who believes that we have not applied our procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly, consistently and fairly.

CENTRE'S RESPONSIBILITY

It's important that centre staff involved in the management, assessment and internal quality assurance of our qualifications, accreditations and/or Quality Assured Programme and your candidates are aware of the contents of this policy. In addition, centres must have internal appeal arrangements which candidates can access if they wish to appeal against a decision taken by the centre. If an individual wishes to appeal against a decision taken by a centre it must first of all go through the centre's appeals process before bringing the matter to the attention of the IMI.

FEES

We will not charge centres or candidates a fee to cover the administrative and personnel costs involved in dealing with appeals. However, if the appeal is taken to independent review (see below) we will make a charge to cover the costs of the review. The appellant will be advised of these costs before the independent review is instigated and they will be refunded in full should the appeal be successful.



HOW TO APPEAL

Centres and/or candidates have 20 working days from the date we notified you of the decision you are appealing against in which to lodge an appeal against that decision. All appeals must be submitted in writing to the Compliance Manager (contact details outlined at the end of this policy). Alternatively, centre personnel can raise and submit an appeals form found in Centres Hub.

Appeals should include the following information:

- centre details including contact, address and IMI centre number
- date(s) the centre or the candidate received notification of the IMI's decision
- full nature of the appeal (including supporting documents)
- the candidate's name and IMI registration number (if appropriate)
- title and number of the IMI qualification, accreditation or Quality Assured Programme affected (if appropriate)
- contents and outcome of any investigation carried out by the centre relating to the issue

Candidates who wish to appeal about their assessment results or about a related decision should either be supported by their centre and should have exhausted their centre's own appeals process before appealing to us. In the latter case, candidates must provide us with evidence that they have first appealed to their centre. It is expected that candidates will only appeal directly to us in exceptional circumstances.

Centres that appeal on behalf of their candidates must ensure that they have obtained the written permission of the candidate(s) concerned as grades/results can go down as well as up as a result of an investigation.

HOW WE RESPOND TO APPEALS

Upon receipt of all appeals our Compliance Manager will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 48 hours. We aim to carry out the first stage of the appeals process (i.e. an initial review of the potential appeal) and respond in full within 20 working days. However, in some cases the review processes may take longer, for example, if a centre visit is required. In such instances, we'll contact all parties concerned to inform them of the likely revised timescale.

At all times we will ensure that IMI personnel assigned to deal with the appeal have the appropriate level of training and competence and they have had no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter. If any IMI personnel have an involvement in the appeal matter they will not participate in any part of the appeals process. If the Compliance Manager has an involvement in the appeal matter they will not be responsible for overseeing and managing the appeals process.

The first stage of the process will be for us to undertake an initial review of the potential appeal to ensure that we have all the details needed and to ascertain if the issue can be resolved before it goes to a formal appeal. In all instances we will ensure that the person carrying out this initial review will not have a personal interest in the decision being appealed.

Following the initial review of the appeal we will write to the appellant with details of our decision to either:

- amend our original decision in light of the new rationale/evidence being put forward, or
- confirm that we stand by our original decision and stating the rationale for this decision.

In instances where we advise the appellant that we stand by our original decision, we will ask them to respond, within 15 working days, whether they now accept this decision or if they wish to proceed to the next stage of our appeals process which will be carried out by an independent party.

SEEKING AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW

If a centre and/or candidate is not satisfied with the decision following the initial review and want to proceed to the next appeal stage, we will arrange for an independent review to be carried out.

This will be carried out by someone who is not an employee of ours, a sub-contractor working for us, or otherwise connected to the IMI. They will be a person with the relevant competence to make a decision in relation to the appeal and will have no personal interest in the decision being appealed.

The person appointed to carry out the independent review will consider all the evidence presented and the investigations and decisions made at the previous stages of the appeals process. He/she will also determine whether we applied our procedures fairly, appropriately and consistently in line with our policies and procedures.

The independent review process may involve:

- a discussion with the appellant, candidate(s), centre and IMI personnel
- a request for further information from the appellant, candidate(s), centre or IMI personnel
- a centre visit.

The decision of the person appointed to carry out the independent review is final and we will let you know the outcome of this review within 20 days of receipt of the formal appeal. However, in some cases the review processes may take longer, for example, if a centre visit is required. In such instances, we'll contact all parties concerned to inform them of the likely revised timescale.

If the centre and/or candidate is still unhappy with the outcome following this stage of the process, they are entitled to raise the matter with the relevant qualification regulator (e.g. Ofqual in England or SQA Accreditation in Scotland, CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland or Qualification Wales). Each of these organisations will have a formal procedure in place to handle appeals.



SUCCESSFUL APPEALS AND/OR ISSUES BOUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION BY A REGULATOR

If any part of an appeal is upheld, as part of our review process, we will give due regard to the outcome and ascertain how best we can improve our service and/or processes. In particular, we will review our procedures to assess the impact on our product development, delivery or awarding arrangements and assessment process as appropriate.

In situations where the outcome of an appeal or a notification from the regulators indicates a failure in our processes, we will give due consideration to the outcome and we will take all reasonable steps to:

- identify any other candidate and/or centre that may have been affected by that failure,
- correct or, where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure, and
- ensure that the failure does not recur in the future.

REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

We will review this policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and revise it, as and when necessary, in response to external feedback, trends from our internal monitoring arrangements, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation. In particular, we will ensure this policy aligns with any complaints and appeals processes published by the regulators.

CONTACT US

If you wish to make an appeal in accordance with this policy, or if you have a query in relation to our complaints or appeals arrangements, please contact the Compliance Manager at:

The Institute of the Motor Industry, Fanshaws, Brickendon, Hertford, SG13 8PQ

Tel: 01992 511521

Email: qualityandcompliance@theimi.org.uk