

Sanctions Policy

1 General

- 1.1 As part of the Skills and Education Group Access¹ quality assurance procedures, we monitor our providers to ensure they continue to comply with the requirements of our Provider Handbook, Provider Agreement, policies and procedures.
- 1.2 In the event of any proven failure by providers to comply with these requirements, we assess the potential impact on students and determine the course of action required to support the provider and minimise the risk to student achievement.
- 1.3 Issues identified during external monitoring activity are usually supported by a provider action plan, detailing the issue to be addressed, by whom and when.
- 1.4 Major issues or continued failure to address actions following moderation activity may result in sanctions against the Provider.
- 1.5 The table in Appendix 1 below outlines the level of sanction that may be applied, the reasons for it and the possible course of action we may take.

2 Sanction Procedure for Providers

- 2.1 Sanctions may be recommended by our External Moderators or identified during other quality assurance activity.
 - 2.1.1 When sanctions are recommended by an External Moderator we will discuss the recommendation with them, review the evidence and determine if a sanction should be applied.
 - 2.1.2 Issues identified following other quality assurance activity are notified to the Access the HE team, where the evidence is reviewed, and sanctions applied as necessary in line with this policy and tariff of sanctions.
- 2.2 Any sanctions to be applied are communicated in writing to the Provider's Quality Manager outlining the reasons for the sanction and the actions to be taken.

¹ Skills and Education Group Access is a QAA-licensed Access Validating Agency and part of the Skills and Education Group.

- 2.3 Where a level 3 or level 4 sanction has been applied we may also notify the Regulators² or other Access Validating Agencies and Awarding Organisations. Such breaches will have the potential to have an Adverse Effect in that they may:
- seriously disadvantage Students
 - adversely affect our ability to undertake the delivery or award of qualifications in accordance with our AVA Licensing Agreement
 - adversely affect the standards of qualifications which we make available
 - adversely affect our reputation.
- 2.4 In all cases we expect a timely response to these communications in terms of an acknowledgement, request for clarification if required and a provider action plan.
- 2.5 Any sanctions will remain in place until such time
- any investigation has been completed
 - the Provider can confirm all actions have been carried out
 - evidence of these actions has been seen by us or one of our representatives
 - we have informed the Provider that the sanction has been lifted.
- 2.6 Providers may appeal against any sanction applied and must follow the process in our Enquiries and Appeals policy and procedures.

3 Sanction Procedures for Students

- 3.1 Although student malpractice will typically be dealt with by Providers within the assessment and internal quality assurance process, we may have cause to impose a sanction on an individual directly. This may occur in the following circumstances:
- 3.1.1 Where external assessment has uncovered anomalies in the assessment evidence which are proved to be attributable to an individual student.
- 3.1.2 Where external moderation uncovers any malpractice which is proved to be attributable to an individual student.
- 3.2 In all such cases an individual's assessments, where proven to be invalid, will need to be redone and new evidence, which can be proved to be authentic, provided, subject to the resubmission and referral rules set out by QAA.

² QAA – the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, and any other regulator that is relevant.

4 Quality Assurance

- 4.1 This policy will be reviewed biennially to meet regulatory compliance or following any case of confirmed malpractice.

Appendix 1: Sanctions Table

Reasons for Sanction	Sanction Level	Possible consequences of Sanction at this level
Not responding to previously agreed actions within timescales specified	1	- Remote moderation rights removed
Not responding to requests for further information		- Additional moderation /compliance visit (at cost to the Provider)
Insufficient / unqualified assessors / internal moderators		- Moderation of full cohort (at cost to the Provider)
Insufficient records to allow moderation		- Advisory visit (at cost to the Provider)
Inconsistent assessment decisions / poor assessment practice		- Review/revalidation of internal assessment tasks (at cost to the Provider).
Internal assessment methods / tasks insufficient to allow students to achieve		
No internal quality assurance	2	- Temporary suspension of moderation / marking activity
Potential/alleged Malpractice		- Temporary suspension of registrations
Failure to respond to requests for payment		- Temporary suspension of certification.
Persistent non-compliance with awarding organisation procedures		
Continued failure to meet assessment standards		
Inadequate invigilation procedures		

Reasons for Sanction	Sanction Level	Possible consequences of Sanction at this level
Permanent loss of integrity of assessment decisions leading to student disadvantage	3	- Removal of Diploma Approval
Persistent failure to comply with actions / respond to communications		- Inform the Regulators
Significant concerns / lack of confidence with provider quality assurance in curriculum area		- Inform other Awarding Organisations.
Total breakdown of communications with provider.	4	- Removal of Provider approval
Significant failure of management to address issues.		- Inform the Regulators
Persistent failure to pay for services / respond to outstanding debts.		- Inform other Awarding Organisations and Access Validating Agencies
Proven fraudulent activity		- Inform any other stakeholder