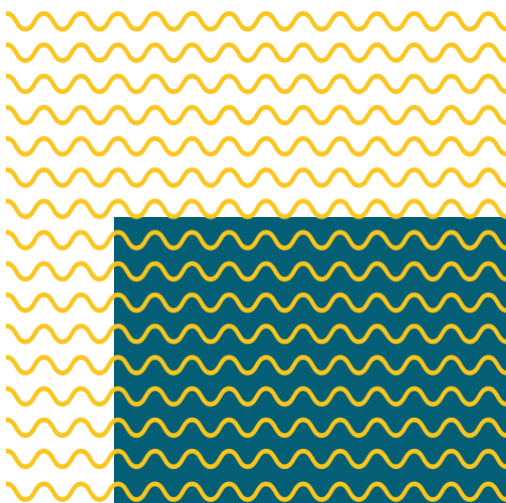


# On-Course Referral Policy



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## 1. Introduction

This policy relates to the application for on-course referrals in line with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) regulation and Grading Scheme Handbook.

### 1.1 The Difference between Resubmission and Referral

***Resubmission [the student's first attempt to 're-take' all or part of an assignment]***

The process of resubmission applies when an assignment has been submitted which does not meet the Learning Outcome specified for that assignment, in which case it cannot contribute towards the award of credit or be eligible for grading.

The student is given **one** opportunity to resubmit further work to meet the Learning Outcome, having been given feedback from the assessor that identifies where particular criterion/a have not been met. Students must **ONLY** resubmit work for the criterion/a they have not achieved and must not resubmit or be assessed on criterion/a already achieved. This process is designated the first resubmission.

The time limit for a student to resubmit should be proportionate to the amount of assessment criteria that the student failed to achieve and the student's circumstances. The principle to be used is that the student should re-attempt the assessment criteria as soon as possible after feedback by the tutor.

***Referral [further attempt, after the first, to 're-take' all or part of an assignment]***

When a student has not achieved the Learning Outcome through an assessment on **first resubmission**, or when the original submission was **late without an agreed extension**, the student may seek permission to make a **referral application (second resubmission)**.

When this occurs within the duration of the course, the process described below must be used. Where this occurs at the end of the course (for example, in final assessments) the process described in **Appendix 1** must be followed.

## 2. Intended Audience

- Provider staff responsible for Quality Assurance
- Skills and Education Group Access Staff
- External Moderators
- Assessors
- Internal Moderators
- Key stakeholders involved in qualification development
- QAA

### 3. Principles of reassessment

The principles that inform the QAA regulations related to reassessment are:

- The number and type of opportunities for reassessment are limited and clearly defined – a maximum of 15 credits can be achieved via second resubmissions per student
- The opportunity to be reassessed does not confer an undue advantage on those who achieve only after reassessment or diminish the achievements of those who achieve at the first attempt
- Reassessment opportunities do not undermine confidence in the standard of the Access to HE Diploma
- Account is taken of any extenuating circumstances affecting the student
- Course tutors play a central role in making decisions about reassessment and tutor decisions about reassessment are confirmed through moderation
- Opportunities for reassessment do not place unreasonable or unmanageable burdens on tutors or moderators
- Assessment regulations are consistent with the broader principles and procedures for the award of credits and grades on the Access to HE Diploma.

### 4. Interpretation by the Access Validating Agency (AVA)

It is the policy of the AVA that no student should be disadvantaged by any action, either by the provider, or the AVA, that is out of their control; therefore this process must be transparent and should be executed in a timely fashion. The process for on-course referrals will be followed in principle.

The tutor team must make it clear to students during the induction process and through written guidance related to assessment, that the opportunity to apply for a referral is **not an automatic right**. It is clearly defined and not to be used as a strategy for gaining an advantage over other students.

**Students must also be informed that any opportunity for a referral will be set against a new assessment activity.**

The AVA will record requests for referrals by:

- Student
- Diploma
- Provider
- Unit

Where trends are identified that cause concern, the AVA will work with the Centre Moderator to investigate.

Referrals should be submitted to the AVA throughout the academic year. The Awards Board will only consider those referrals for which the date of the assessment decision is near the end of the course (see 5.2 below).

Any one student will have the opportunity to submit referrals for a second resubmission up to a **maximum credit value of 15**. In cases of extenuating circumstances beyond this (and where appropriate evidence is presented in support), the AVA may agree that additional referrals can be considered.

The designated Centre Moderator will make a recommendation to the AVA, following a review of evidence presented as part of a referral request. The AVA will confirm a decision outcome to the provider, which will be shared with the student/s named within the request.

## 5. Circumstances Relevant to Referral Requests

QAA states that normally, a student is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit work which fails to meet all the requirements of the associated learning outcomes. The referral process allows the course team to recommend that a student is permitted a second resubmission opportunity. Referral may also be requested for students who have submitted work after a deadline without an agreed extension, and this work fails to meet all the requirements of the associated learning outcomes.

If the need for referral occurs at the end of the course (for example, as the consequence of assessments that have taken place in the last **four weeks** of a course), the recommendation is taken to the Final Awards Board, as referrals at this stage have implications for staffing, resources and results that need to be fully considered and carefully managed (**See Appendix 1**).

The Final Awards Board **will not** normally receive student requests for referral that should have been presented to the AVA before the last four weeks of the course. However, in cases of extenuating circumstances, the AVA may agree that additional referrals can be considered, (see section 4.3). The AVA may impose sanctions where there is clear evidence of maladministration of the provider management of the referral process.

Extreme mitigating circumstances may be considered outside of this rule by agreement by the Chair of the Final Awards Board and the Centre Moderator.

The AVA expects the provider and Centre Moderator to take into consideration the best interests of the student when making a decision on the application for referral. The evidence submitted should indicate the ability and potential of the student to succeed on the Access to HE Diploma course and in HE. Thus, there should already be sufficient evidence of achievement by the student on the course, e.g. a number of achieved credits of at least 15 to support the AVA decision.

## 6. On-course Referrals by the Provider

### Before Referral

Details of the referral process must have been communicated to student/s in writing, either in hard copy or on-line, and covered at the induction stage of the course.

The student has completed the (first) resubmission of work and failed to achieve all the assessment criteria for the assignment.

The resubmitted work is then internally moderated.

If the internal moderator agrees with the assessor's decision of non-achievement the assessor will then discuss the best way for the student to progress. (If the internal moderator disagrees with the assessor's decision of non-achievement, the usual internal processes will be implemented).

The tutor raises the possibility of a referral with the internal moderator. The internal moderator ensures that the following requirements are complied with:

- Tutors have discussed with the student the best way for the student to progress, this may or may not include a referral
- The student has been informed that referral does not automatically result in approval for a second resubmission
- The student has been informed that the decision to allow a further opportunity to submit one or more assignments during the course is made by the AVA on the basis of evidence presented
  - The student, assessor and internal moderator must all formally agree to implement the referral process. **It is important to note** that the tutor and internal moderator should only consider making a request to the AVA if they have confidence that the student has acted in good faith and is deserving of another opportunity.

## 7. The Referral Application Process

The on-course referral application form can be downloaded from the provider's SharePoint site.

The provider (Internal Moderator or Course Leader) prepares and submits the application and supporting evidence to: [acesstohe@skillsedugroup.co.uk](mailto:acesstohe@skillsedugroup.co.uk).

Missing evidence will delay the process and is likely to impact on the student's progress.

Evidence **must** include:

- Brief outline of extenuating circumstances, reasons for the application and provider support. A provider should only submit an application on behalf of a student if they have evidence that another submission opportunity would be in the best interest of the student, and not disadvantage other students
- The proposed new assignment to be used to assess the relevant assessment criterion/a
- Copies of the mapping sheets and feedback from the assessor on both the original and resubmitted work
- Copy of any related internal moderation records
- Any other responses to assignments that also contribute to the achievement of the unit involving the assignment to be considered for referral; including mapping and feedback on assignments
- The student's profile of achievement up to the point of referral, which must indicate any achievements resulting from a resubmission, late submissions or extensions to the set deadline.

All evidence must be clearly labelled and mapped to the application form.

**Reminder:** Requests for referrals will not normally be considered where the total credit value of the units that have already been achieved through referral or might be achieved as an outcome of a further referral, is more than **15**.

## **8. Decisions**

The AVA has the responsibility for accepting all referral requests and for reporting decisions on referrals to providers, which will usually be by recommendation to the AVA by the Centre Moderator.

- The AVA will check that all the required, and correctly labelled documentation has been uploaded to SharePoint
- The AVA will acknowledge receipt of the appropriate documentation
- Incomplete documentation will be returned to the provider for action and will incur an additional administration fee
- The AVA will ask the Centre Moderator to review the documentation and will aim to provide feedback **within five working days** from receipt
- The AVA will communicate the Centre Moderator's decision on the referral application to the provider via the internal moderator and/or course co-ordinator **within three working days** following receipt of the recommendations from the Centre Moderator.

## **9. Required Action by the Centre Moderator**

In making the referral decision, the Centre Moderator will consider all the evidence to form a professional judgement as to whether the opportunity for a referral should be granted; this judgement must be in the best interests of the student and should not disadvantage other students. The allocated Diploma Moderator may also be asked for their endorsement.

Should there be any difficulty with the decision the Centre Moderator will discuss the issue of 'best interests' with the AVA as appropriate. Decisions about referrals made by the Centre Moderator must include:

- Whether a second resubmission opportunity should be offered
- The nature and extent of the requirements for resubmission, this must comply with the relevant requirements for first resubmissions
- The deadline for the second resubmission. For referrals during the year, the deadline will take into account:
  - the need to inform the student of the decisions, which will be as soon as possible after the decision has been communicated to the provider
  - the need to allow a limited but reasonable time for the student to complete the resubmission
  - the need to assess and internally moderate the resubmitted assignment(s)

The Centre Moderator will complete the approval documentation and forward to the AVA for final decision to be communicated to the provider.

The Centre Moderator will also brief the allocated Diploma Moderator on the outcome and direct them to check the outcome as the next sampling event.

The outcome of all referrals must be reported to the Final Awards Board, in line with guidance on the Final Awards Board Summary Sheet.

## **10. Referrals beyond the 15 Credit Limit**

For referrals for a student beyond the 15 credit limit, the AVA will go through the same process that the Centre Moderator is required to follow and, in addition, will take advice from the provider's quality manager to ensure all provider policies have been followed, e.g. reasonable adjustments, internal moderation, student support as per the Learning Programme Plan.

In making the decision, the AVA will consider what is fair to all students on the course.



## **11. Appeals Against the External Moderator’s Decision**

If a student or provider wishes to appeal against the AVA’s decision, the appeals process should be followed. The Skills and education Group Appeals Policy is available on the provider SharePoint site or on request.

## **12. Fees and Charges**

The AVA will invoice the provider for each referral application submitted. This will be in accordance with the AVA’s charging policy.

## **13. Policy Responsibility and Review**

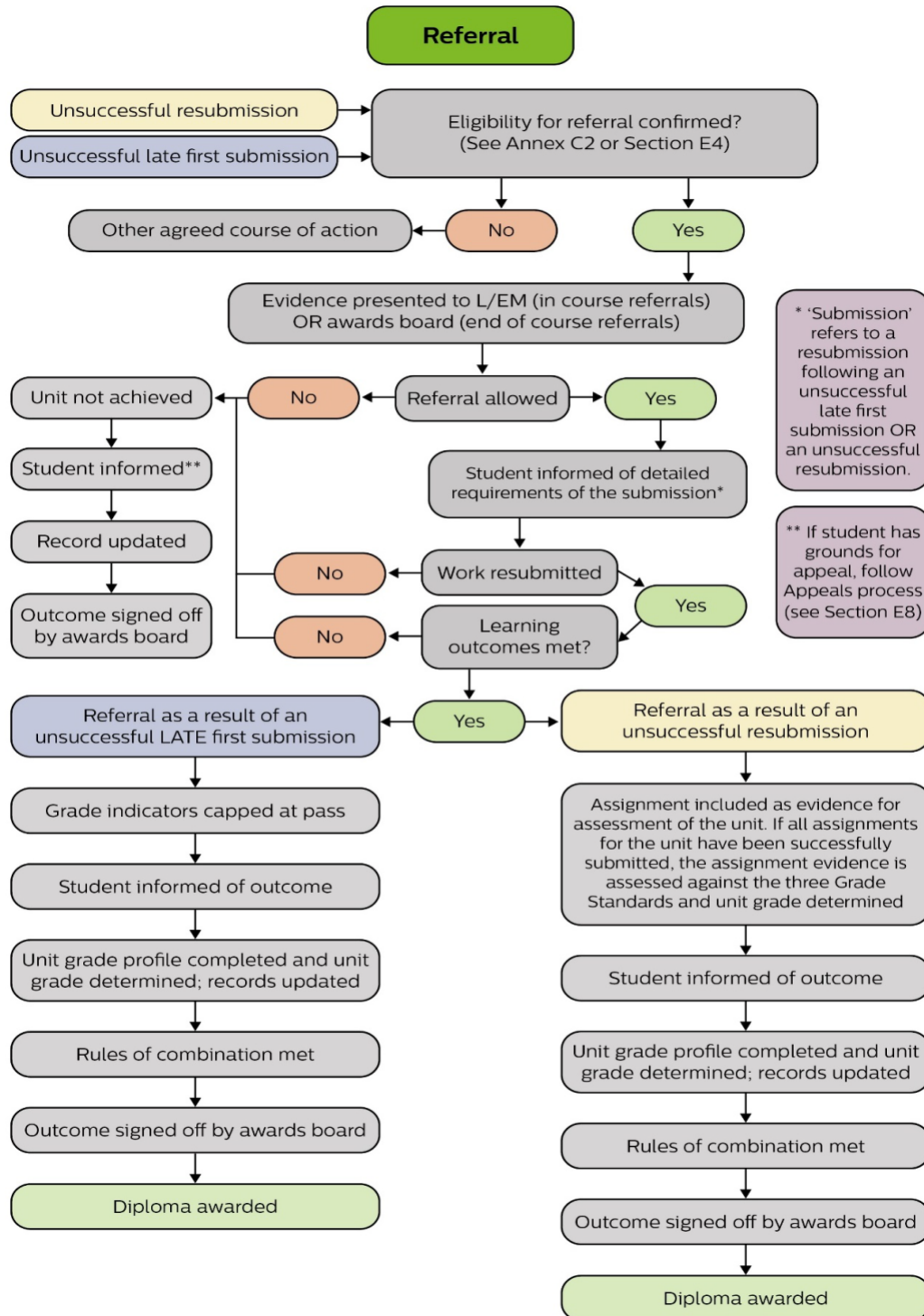
The AVA will review this policy periodically and revise when necessary, in response to customer and stakeholder feedback, changes in practice, requirements of the QAA or external agencies, or changes in legislation. The review will ensure that procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory criteria and are applied properly and fairly.

### **References:**

QAA Access to HE Diploma Specification  
QAA Grading Scheme Handbook 2023, Section E

## Appendix 1: Referral Process

Reference: QAA Grading Scheme Handbook 2023, Section E, page 8



## Change History Record

Version	Description of change	Approval	Date of Issue
2	Amendments made to align to revised grading model. Also changed 'centre' to 'provider' where appropriate	12.08.2024	01.09.2024
1	Original	23.02.2023	24.02.2023