Enquires about Results, Appeals, Complaints and Whistleblowing Policy

Who is this policy for

This policy applies to:

- FutureQuals Staff
- FutureQuals Associates such as External Quality Assurers (EQAs), Independent End-Point Assessors (IEPAs), and Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs)
- FutureQuals Approved Centres and their Staff, and Contractors
- FutureQuals registered Learners
- Any other individuals or entities who interact with FutureQuals in a professional capacity

Version	POL208-V26-4

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Version	Date	Description
POL208-V26-4	June 2026	
POL208-V26-3	April 2026	Additional detail added to Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) text. Whistleblowing added to title.
POL208-V26-2	January 2026	Updated Policy text and complaints process to include incidents, near misses and reference to the Ofqual Principles Condition.
POL208-V26-1	January 2026	Complaints, Enquiries and Appeals, Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle Blowing) policies combined across Qualifications and Apprenticeship Assessment. Previous Policy References – POL003-V24-1, POL008-V23-1, and POL016-V23-3

Please note: This version replaces all previous versions.

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Policy

The Enquires, Appeals, Complaints and Whistle Blowing policy outlines the procedures available to Learners and Approved Centres for raising concerns or challenging decisions made by:

- FutureQuals
- FutureQuals Approved Centres
- FutureQuals Approved Facilitators

It covers the following areas:

- Enquiries
- Appeals
- Incidents
- Near misses
- Complaints
- Whistleblowing

All concerns raised under this policy are managed fairly, transparently, and in accordance with regulatory requirements.

FutureQuals monitors trends in enquiries, appeals, complaints, and whistleblowing disclosures to identify and mitigate any emerging risks to the integrity of its qualifications and assessments.

FutureQuals tries to ensure that all decisions made are fair, consistent, and based on valid judgments. However, it is recognised that centres or learners may wish to appeal a decision. The items listed below are legitimate reasons FutureQuals will accept as grounds for an appeal.

- Sanction level given, either to an Approved Centre or Individual.
- Ruling on a complaint
- Inaccurate assessment
- Policies and procedures not being followed correctly
- Quality Assurance outcomes

The following circumstances outlined below do not meet the grounds for an appeal:

- Actual findings of a malpractice investigation
- Outcome of an application for centre or qualification approval
- Withdrawal of centre or qualification approval
- The removal from the FutureQuals Facilitator list
- Sanctions applied for non-payment of invoices

Where the outcome of an enquiry, appeal, complaint, or whistleblowing brings into question the accuracy of other results, FutureQuals will take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of all learners who are affected.

Please note:

- Proctoring footage will not be provided to any centre or learner and remains the property of FutureQuals. The footage is retained for 30 days, after which time it is deleted from the system and is not retrievable.
- All enquires/appeals and complaints regarding Apprenticeship Assessment must be made through the Approved Centre that registered the Apprentice.
- Learners wishing to make a complaint or appeal a decision must first exhaust the Approved Centre's appeals/complaints policy.
- Once a Public Interest Disclosure is made, FutureQuals have a duty to pursue it even if the individual withdraws the allegation as FutureQuals are required by the regulators to investigate any allegations that may impact on the standards and/or the integrity of FutureQuals qualifications.

Incidents and Near Misses

FutureQuals is committed to identifying, recording, and managing all incidents and near misses to protect the integrity and validity of its qualifications and assessments.
All staff, Approved Centres, facilitators and associates must report any incident or near miss that may relate to:

- the accuracy of assessments or results
- the delivery or quality assurance of assessments
- the conduct of a centre, facilitator, or assessor
- potential maladministration or malpractice
- risks to learners, the public, or FutureQuals' reputation
- any matter that could be considered a potential or actual adverse effect

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle Blowing)

A disclosure will only be treated as whistleblowing where the individual reasonably believes the information is true and that the matter is raised in the public interest, rather than as a personal grievance or individual dispute.

The following matters do not normally qualify as whistleblowing under this policy:

- personal grievances or employment disputes
- dissatisfaction with assessment outcomes, sanctions, or quality assurance decisions
- complaints about individual behaviours that do not meet the public interest test
- allegations made without reasonable belief or supporting information
- attempts to re-open matters that have already been investigated, without new evidence

Such matters will be managed under the appropriate complaints or appeals process.

Allegations of harassment or discrimination may constitute whistleblowing where they indicate a systemic failure, breach of legal obligation, or wider risk in the public interest. Individual complaints about personal treatment will normally be managed under the complaints processes.

Where a disclosure does not meet the criteria for whistleblowing, it may be reclassified and managed under the appropriate policy, including Complaints, Incidents, Malpractice or Appeals.

Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Sanctions Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

Links to regulatory criteria

Regulator	Regulatory rule or guidance document	Regulatory condition / principle
CCEA/ Ofqual/ QW	Standard / General Conditions of Recognition	A4, A6, A7, A8, B3, C2, D4, H1, H2, H6, I1, I2
Ofqual	EPA Qualification Level Conditions and Requirements	EPA3
SQA Accreditation	Regulatory Principles (2021)	RP2, RP5, RP13, RP14, RP16, RP17, RP18

Definitions

Appeal	To formally challenge assessment results or other decisions that differ significantly from expectations.
Apprenticeship Assessment	Formally known as "end-point Assessment," this is the independent assessment conducted by FutureQuals to confirm an Apprentice has met the requirements of their apprenticeship.
Approved Centre	A training provider that has been approved to deliver FutureQuals qualifications.
Approved Facilitator	An Individual who has been approved to deliver all or part the delivery of a FutureQuals qualification, assessment, or quality assurance process.
Complaint	The raising of dissatisfaction with the conduct, service, or decision of FutureQuals, Approved Centres, or an Approved Facilitator.
Enquiry	The seeking of clarification or further information or support regarding an assessment decision.
Incident	Any event, issue or concern that indicates dissatisfaction, operational disruption, procedural failure, or behaviour that may compromise the integrity, validity, reliability, comparability, manageability or fairness of FutureQuals qualifications, assessments or services.
Learner	An individual who is registered onto a FutureQuals qualification, this includes Apprentices sitting their Apprenticeship Assessment with FutureQuals
Near Miss	an event that did not result in an adverse effect but had the potential to do so.
Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle Blowing)	The confidential reporting of serious concern regarding one or more of the following matters is either happening now, took place in the past, or is likely to happen in the future: • A criminal offence • The breach of a legal obligation • A miscarriage of justice • A danger to the health and safety of any individual • Damage to the environment • Deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above points.

Process

Enquiries Process

1. Learner/ Approved Centre (Centre) submits enquiry about results to FutureQuals, this may be by email, phone, live chat, webform etc. The enquiry must be made within 10 working days of the decision being made, and must include full details of the enquiry, accompanied by all supporting documentation.
2. FutureQuals will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days from receiving an enquiry.
3. FutureQuals will undertake the relevant action and notify the Learner/Approved Centre of the outcome within 5 working days of the acknowledgement receipt of the enquiry. If for any reason these timescales cannot be achieved, FutureQuals will inform the Approved Centre contact of the anticipated timescale.

Outcomes of the enquiry are:

- No change
- A change to the original decision

Appeals Process

1. Learner/ Approved Centre (Centre) submits an appeal to Appeals@FutureQuals.com, clearly detailing their reason for the appeal, their desired outcome and attaching any evidence to support their appeal.
2. The appeal must be made within 10 working days of the decision being made, with full details of the appeal, accompanied by all supporting documentation.
3. FutureQuals will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days from receiving the appeal and confirm the stage 1 appeal fee.
4. The appeal fee must be paid within 10 working days of receiving the confirmation. If the fee is not paid within this timeframe, the appeal will be rejected and cannot be submitted again.
5. The Stage 1 appeal process will begin once the appeal fee has been paid or all required information has been received (whichever is later). FutureQuals will allocate the appeal to an individual to conduct the appeal review and then carry out the necessary actions and inform the learner or approved centre of the outcome within 20 working days.
6. If the Learner/Approved Centre are not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, they are able to appeal the appeal decision (stage 2 appeal) which has an additional fee.
7. The Stage 2 appeal must be made within 10 working days of the Stage 1 Appeal decision being made. With full details of the stage 2 appeal, accompanied by further supporting documentation if required.
8. FutureQuals will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days from receiving the appeal, and confirm the stage 2 appeal fee. The appeal fee must be paid within 10 working days of receiving the confirmation. If the fee is not paid within this timeframe, the appeal will be rejected and cannot be submitted again.
9. The Stage 2 appeal process will begin once the appeal fee has been paid or all further required information has been received (whichever happens later).
10. FutureQuals will allocate the review to a senior member of their senior leadership team to carry out the necessary actions and inform the learner or approved centre of the outcome within 20 working days.
11. If the appeal has not been upheld at stage 2, the appellant may request in writing for a final stage 3 review where an independent person not employed by FutureQuals will be allocated to make a final decision, which cannot be appealed. The appeal must be made within 10 working days of the stage 2 outcome.

12. FutureQuals will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days from receiving the stage 3 appeal and confirm the appeal fee. If the fee is not paid within 10 working days of receipt the appeal will be rejected and cannot be resubmitted.

Outcomes of the appeal are:

- Appeal upheld (at which point, fees paid will be refunded)
- Appeal not upheld

Complaints Process

1. Formal complaint is submitted by letter or email. The complaint must include the following information:
   - Your name, address and contact details
   - Full details of your complaint
   - Any information or evidence that supports your complaint
   - The resolution you feel is warranted
2. FutureQuals will acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days, detailing the name of the person who is investigating your complaint, and a reference number for your complaint. If the complaint is excessively long or complex, we may ask you to provide a summary so that it is clear what the issues are.
3. FutureQuals will assign an individual member of staff not involved in the complaint to investigate the complaint. Where a complaint or appeal raises concerns that may indicate potential malpractice, FutureQuals will refer the matter to its Malpractice Policy and follow the appropriate procedures.
4. All complaints will be screened to determine whether they constitute, or reveal, an incident or near miss. Where appropriate, the matter will be logged on the Incident Tracker and reviewed to identify whether it indicates a potential or actual adverse effect. Where this threshold is met, FutureQuals will notify the appropriate regulator in line with Condition B3 and GCOR reporting expectations.
5. FutureQuals will undertake the relevant action and notify the Learner/Approved Centre of the outcome within 20 working days of acknowledging the complaint, provided that all submitted details and evidence is clearly and concisely labelled.
6. If the complaint does not meet the complaint requirements, then it will be rejected and closed. Should you supply the complaint requirements, the original complaint will be reopened and timelines applied from that date onward.
7. If the Learner/Approved Centre is not satisfied with the response, they can request a review of it within 10 working days of the date of our decision letter. In this circumstance, the request will be referred to a senior member of staff who will either allocate a senior member of FutureQuals staff not involved in the original complaint or an external individual. However, a further review will only take place if the Learner/Approved Centre provide clear reasons for making the request and set out the areas of concern, and must relate only to the way that the complaint has been investigated, and not the details of the complaint itself.

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle Blowing) Process

1. An individual contacts FutureQuals in writing, providing as much information and supporting evidence that is relevant as possible. It is important to note that it is not essential that there is clear evidence of wrongdoing, but the individual must be able to explain as fully as possible the nature of the allegation and the circumstances of your concern.
2. We encourage any individual to voice concern to FutureQuals under this policy and will make every effort to protect your identity. We will not disclose it without your consent unless we are required to do so by the police or other enforcement agencies, the courts in connection with court proceedings, or other third parties that we consider necessary e.g. relevant regulatory authorities. If the issue cannot be resolved without your identity being disclosed, we will discuss this with you prior to any disclosure. However, you should recognise that due to the nature or circumstances of your disclosure, it may be possible for others to identify you.
3. Anonymous disclosures will be considered, however, the ability to investigate may be limited where the individual does not provide sufficient detail or evidence. FutureQuals reserves the right to close a disclosure where it does not meet the threshold for investigation or is deemed vexatious or malicious.
4. FutureQuals will acknowledge your disclosure with 5 days if contact details have been provided.
5. FutureQuals will appoint an investigator that has not had any previous involvement or interest in the matter to undertake the investigation.
6. During the investigation FutureQuals may feedback to you any relevant progress and the likely timescale of the investigation. However, they will not disclose all details of the investigation activity nor, the full details of the outcome of the investigation.

If for any reason the timescales detailed in this policy cannot be achieved, FutureQuals will inform the Learner/Approved Centre of the anticipated timescale.

Regulators

FutureQuals will report any issues arising from complaints, appeals or public interest disclosures to the relevant regulator should there be any potential or actual adverse effect.

If your appeal/complaint relates to a qualification regulated by Ofqual, you may complain directly to Ofqual if you have exhausted this policy.
The following link will provide further information on how you may do this.
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual/about/complaints-procedure

If your appeal/complaint relates to a qualification regulated by Qualifications Wales, you may complain directly to Qualifications Wales if you have exhausted our complaints policy. The following link will provide further information on how you may do this.
http://qualificationswales.org/regulation/complaints/?lang=en&

If your appeal/complaint relates to a qualification regulated by CCEA Regulation you may complain directly to CCEA Regulation if you have exhausted our complaints policy. CCEA can be contacted by email at ccearegulation@ccea.org.uk

If your appeal/complaint relates to a qualification regulated by Qualifications Scotland Accreditation (formally SQA Accreditation) you may complain directly to Qualifications Scotland Accreditation if you have exhausted our complaints policy.

Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) The SPSO considers complaints about public services in Scotland which includes further education colleges, local authority centres, and higher education establishments i.e. universities and SQA Accreditation. If your complaint relates to a centre that is not a public body, you cannot escalate your complaint to the SPSO.
In all cases, complainants must have exhausted this policy before the SPSO accept the complaint for investigation.
However, if a complaint concerns the behaviour of a public service centre staff member, once the centre's complaints process has been exhausted, a complaint can be made to the SPSO without the need to escalate the complaint to FutureQuals. The SPSO cannot consider complaints about academic decisions such as the outcome of an assessment as these are considered to be an appeal.

Vexatious Complaints

FutureQuals reserves the right to cease correspondence where a complaint is deemed vexatious, abusive, or repetitive without new evidence.

Review Date

This policy shall be reviewed periodically or updated should there be any changes to legislation, regulation or custom and practice.