

Signature Appeals Procedure

This policy is aimed at our approved centres. Signature has a procedure for dealing with appeals, which is divided into the following categories:

- Assessment results
- Signature's decision to 'not support' a group of National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) portfolios
- Signature's decision to decline a centre's request to make reasonable adjustments or give special considerations
- Signature's decision relating to any action to be taken against a learner or a centre following an investigation into malpractice or maladministration.

Appeal services for assessment results

Signature aims to ensure that all our assessments are carried out to the highest possible standards and that assessment decisions are fair, reliable and consistent. However, we recognise that from time to time a centre or candidate may be unhappy with assessment decisions we make.

As part of the approval process, we ask that centres have an appeal policy. Candidates should discuss enquiries about results with their centre before appealing to us. If the assessment was in British Sign Language (BSL) or Irish Sign Language (ISL), the centre will have a copy of the assessment tape(s) and be able to look at the assessment again.

We do not accept appeals from candidates directly.

If the centre agrees with the candidate, the centre should complete an IR1 form – Request for Investigation upon Results and request one of the following services on their behalf:

Stage 1

1. Investigation upon results

1A	Administration check	(i) We double-check that the correct mark has been entered into our database, and that no other handling error has been made, and (ii) We provide a breakdown of the marks (BSL Levels 1 and 2 only)
1B	Re-mark – practical assessments	We arrange for a senior assessor to mark your candidate's work. This will not be the assessor who marked it the first time.
1C	Remark – assessment papers	We arrange for your candidates assessment paper to be re-marked. This will not be re-marked by the assessor who marked it the first time.
1D	Internal Review	Review the outcome of 1A and/or 1B above.

Stage 2

2. External Appeal

2	Appeal Stage 2	Final stage if not satisfied after Stage 1
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For further details of these services, see table on page 3.

Cost of appeals

We charge a fee for appeals, because they involve quite a lot of work for us. However, if candidate's result changes from 'fail' to 'pass' after an appeal, no fee is charged.

Appeal outcomes

If an appeal exposes a concern about the accuracy of results for other candidates in the same assessment, we will decide whether some or all of their work needs to be re-marked. This is to make sure that the interests of all candidates and the integrity of the unit or qualification are protected. If this happens, we will make any necessary adjustments to the results and notify you of any candidates whose results have been affected.

Appeal services (continued)

	Service	When to use this service	What happens	Your deadline	Cost	Our deadline	What we will give you
1A	Administration Check	If a candidate's results differ significantly from what you expected, whereas others in the same group were as expected.	<p>You complete Form IR1, giving full details of what service is requested. You send us the form.</p> <p>We double-check that marks have been correctly totalled and recorded, and/or correctly recorded against the candidate's name, and</p> <p>We check the mark sheet (BSL Level 1 and 2 only) and provide a breakdown of how the marks have been awarded.</p>	8 weeks from issue of results	£10 per candidate	Outcome issued within 3 weeks	A letter informing you of the outcome of the check, and (BSL1 and 2 only) the marks awarded for each skill area.
1B	Re-mark – practical assessments	If a candidate's results show a Fail and a Pass was expected and you also support the candidate's opinion that an error of marking may have been made.	<p>You complete Form IR1, giving full details of what service is requested. You send us the form and the relevant assessment tape¹ (BSL/ISL assessments).</p> <p>We send you a letter to acknowledge that we have received the re-mark request and any relevant materials. We appoint a senior assessor to mark the disputed work. We do not give this person the original assessor's mark.</p>	8 weeks from issue of results	The same as the candidate registration fee for the unit concerned only if the appeal is unsuccessful	Within 4 weeks of the confirmation letter.	<p>If the candidate's result changes from 'fail' to 'pass', we will issue a new result slip which will be available on the Signature portal.</p> <p>If the candidate's result is still 'fail' we simply inform you that the original result stands and we issue an invoice. No other feedback is provided.</p>

¹ Centres are advised to retain a further copy of any assessment tape(s) sent in with the IR1 form.

	Service	When to use this service	What happens	Your deadline	Cost	Our deadline	What we will give you
1C	Re-mark – assessment papers	If a candidate's results show a Fail and a Pass was expected and you also support the candidate's opinion that an error of marking may have been made.	<p>You complete Form IR1, giving full details of what service is requested. (BSL/ISL assessments).</p> <p>We send you a letter to acknowledge that we have received the re-mark request. We appoint an assessor to re-mark the assessment paper. We do not give this person the original assessor's mark.</p>	8 weeks from issue of results	The same as the candidate registration fee for the unit concerned only if the appeal is unsuccessful	Within 4 weeks of the confirmation letter.	<p>If the candidate's result changes from 'fail' to 'pass', we will issue a new result slip which will be available on the Signature portal.</p> <p>If the candidate's result is still 'fail' we simply inform you that the original result stands and we issue an invoice. No other feedback is provided.</p>
1D	Internal Review	If you are not satisfied with the outcome of 1A and/or 1B/1C above, <i>and</i> you believe that the correct procedures were not followed during the clerical check or re-mark.	<p>You contact us to explain why you are unhappy with the procedures followed during the clerical check and/or re-mark. You provide any relevant evidence to support your appeal.</p> <p>We confirm that we have received the appeal. We appoint a small panel led by a senior member of Signature staff who has not previously been involved in the assessment or the Investigation upon Results to review the case. The panel will NOT re-mark the work or change the results – it will review the evidence and decide whether the correct processes were</p>	8 weeks from the issue of clerical check or re-mark result.	£55 per assessment ID/group.	Within 3 weeks	A letter informing you of the outcome, and action to be taken if the appeal has been upheld.

	Service	When to use this service	What happens	Your deadline	Cost	Our deadline	What we will give you
			followed. It may refer the case back for a further re-mark if procedures were not followed correctly. We will report the outcome of this review in writing to the centre.				
2	External Appeal	If you remain dissatisfied, <i>and</i> have a clear supportable reason for escalating the case to this stage.	<p>You contact Signature to request to progress to the stage 2 of the appeals process. You must supply a clear reason for wishing to move to this stage of the process, so that the independent chair of the panel is persuaded that it is justified.</p> <p>We refer the case to a small panel drawn from members of Signature’s Qualification Standards Committee, and including someone who is totally independent of Signature and its committees. Panel members will not previously have been involved in the case in any way. The panel is authorised to consider matters relating to the procedures involved in administering assessments and fairly arriving at judgements.</p> <p>It will not re-mark candidates’ work nor can it change results. However, it has power to direct Signature’s officers to reconsider a case and it may offer recommendations. The decision of the panel is final.</p>	2 weeks from notification of the outcome of stage 2A.	£150	Within 10 weeks, subject to convening Stage 2 panel within this timescale.	A letter informing you of the outcome, and action to be taken if the appeal has been upheld.

Appeal services for NVQ 'not supported' portfolios

Signature aims to ensure that all our external portfolio sampling is carried out to the highest possible standards. However, we recognise that from time to time a centre NVQ team may disagree with decisions we make.

If the centre NVQ team disagrees with the final NVQ report and decision for their group of portfolios, the centre should contact their Customer Support Officer to arrange an appeal for the group.

We do not accept appeals from candidates directly or from centres for individual 'not supported' portfolios within a group of 'not supported' portfolios.

Please refer to our fees booklet on our website www.signature.org.uk for the cost of NVQ appeals.

Other appeals

Appeals against a Signature decision relating to any action to be taken against a learner or a centre following an Investigation into malpractice or maladministration.

Appellant must have viable grounds for appeal such as:

- Signature has not followed published procedures.
- New evidence has come to light which could change decision
- Reasonable belief that action taken is not proportionate to the centre or individual's actions

Appeals must be made within two weeks of Signature informing centre/individual of outcome

Appeals will be heard by a small panel of individuals within Signature who have no prior knowledge of the details or been involved in the malpractice investigation and/or decision following the investigation.

Appeals against a Signature decision on Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Requests

Centres must contact Signature at the earliest opportunity in order to appeal against a decision.

- Signature will acknowledge all written/video letter complaints within two working days and within 28 working days to provide a response.

All enquiries, requests for an investigation, appeals, and other matters concerning assessment and verification decisions should be addressed to:

Quality Assurance Officer

Signature

Mersey House

Mandale Business Park

Belmont

Durham

DH1 1TH

Glossary:

BSL British Sign Language

ISL Irish Sign Language

NVQ National Vocational Qualification