

Appeals Policy

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Purpose:	To set out the policy and procedure to be followed by NPC when dealing with appeals about its qualifications or services		
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1. Purpose and Scope of Policy

The National Paralegal College (NPC) is a trading name of NALP Training Company Limited. It offers both internally developed and certificated courses and fully regulated qualifications, accredited by a Recognised Awarding Organisation to its Learners, all of which are delivered on a distance learning basis. All of its courses and qualifications are aimed at the Paralegal sector.

This policy sets out how NPC will deal with any appeals against the decisions it makes in respect of the courses and qualifications it offers, whether these are awarded by a recognised Awarding Organisation or are self-certificated by NPC.

2. Appeals Against Assessment Decisions

Appeals cannot be made against decisions that are primarily based upon an exercise of academic judgment. Where an assessment decision has been made by an Awarding Organisation, the Learner should refer to that Awarding Organisation's specific Appeals Policy.

Where an assessment decision is made by NPC these are assessed against strict marking criteria and all staff making assessment decisions are fully qualified and trained to ensure a standardised approach to marking.

The majority of courses and qualifications offered are assessed via assignments issued to the Learners to complete within a set timeframe. Some courses are assessed via a Course Review Test taken online which is marked automatically and therefore the results are not subjective and there is no possibility of human error.

3. Appeals Against Decisions on Requests for Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations

A learner may appeal if NPC has declined a request for a special consideration or reasonable adjustment. In these cases, the NPC Compliance & Regulatory Officer will review the application and make a final decision about whether the grounds for refusal was justified in terms of the equal opportunities and fair access to assessment policy and the policy for reasonable adjustments and special considerations.

The Compliance & Regulatory Officer will make the decision known to the learner within 10 days of the decision being made. If there is any delay to this deadline for any reason, the Compliance & Regulatory Officer will inform the Learner, providing a revised deadline for completion and keep them updated of any progress made.

Where the decision has been made by the Awarding Organisation, Learners should refer to their specific Appeals Policy. If the decision has been made by NPC but is in relation to a regulated qualification certificated by an Awarding Organisation, Learners have the right to escalate such appeals to the Awarding Organisation.

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4. Appeals by Learners Against Disqualification or Referral due to Suspected Malpractice

If it is suspected that a Learner has committed some form of malpractice – for instance, plagiarism within an assignment – their result may be ‘Referred’ meaning that they must re-take the assignment. If there has been more than one instance of suspected malpractice, or if the malpractice is deemed to be of a more serious nature, the Learner may be disqualified.

In respect of qualifications awarded by an Awarding Organisation, all appeals must be directed to NPC in the first instance, however the ultimate decision lies with the Awarding Organisation. A Learner should refer to the appeals policy of the relevant Awarding Organisation in such circumstances.

If the referral or disqualification has been applied in respect of a NPC course, this will be dealt with by NPC. In such instances, there is no right of escalation to an Awarding Organisation.

All appeals must be made within 20 working days of receipt of the official written notification of the decision to refer or disqualify. For the avoidance of doubt, any such notification issued via E-mail will be deemed to have been received the working day following it being sent by NPC and any notification issued by post will be deemed to have been received 3 working days after posting by NPC. If a Learner has not received an official notification within 5 working days of a decision being due of their being verbally informed that a decision has been taken, the Learner must contact NPC to advise them of this. **Late appeals will not be considered on the basis that the notification had not been received.**

There are 3 stages to an appeal brought by a Learner in relation to referrals or disqualifications:

4.1 Stage 1 – Informal Review

In the first instance, the case will be sent back to the staff member who made the original decision for them to review and reconsider their decision. Once they have completed this review, they will provide a report to the CEO, including a rationale for either upholding or changing the original decision. The CEO will take a view on whether the new decision rationale is acceptable and inform the Learner of the outcome within 3 working days of the decision being made.

4.2 Stage 2 – Formal Review

If the Learner remains dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, all information available, will be reviewed by either the CEO or the Compliance & Regulatory Officer. The reviewer will check all aspects of the case thoroughly and consider:

- All reports from relevant staff members, such as administration, assessors/markers, etc.
- Any correspondence from learners or users of the qualification regarding the
- Any evidence provided by the assessor/marker who first raised the issue of potential malpractice and any rebuttal evidence supplied by the Learner

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- Any guidance received from the relevant Awarding Organisation, if applicable

The reviewer will determine whether the correct process for suspected Learner malpractice has been followed, whether the actions taken against the Learner were appropriate and proportionate, and whether the appeals process has been followed up to date. They will determine whether the original decision will stand and inform the Learner of their decision within 3 working days of it being made and ensure all records have been updated.

4.3 Stage 3 – Escalation to Awarding Organisation

Learners who are studying regulated qualifications awarded by Recognised Awarding Organisations, have the right to escalate their case to the relevant Awarding Organisation. Learners will need to provide the Awarding Organisation with full details of the case and a clear rationale why they believe the decision made is unfair. NPC is committed to cooperating fully with our Awarding Organisations in any resulting investigation and will provide them with all records in relation to the Learner, the incident of suspected malpractice and any evidence to support this including emails, text messages, notes of conversations or meetings held, and any commentary on social media, etc.