



Reference Number: AQ_10-a07

Candidate and Centre Sanctions Policy

Revision History

Version	Last revised	Next review date	Policy Owner	Notes
AQ10	19 April 2013	31 March 2014	James Stephenson	Policy created
AQ10-a01	15 July 2013	31 March 2014	James Stephenson	
AQ10-a02	30 September 2013	31 March 2014	James Stephenson	Minor amendments
AQ10-a03	4 December 2013	31 March 2014	James Stephenson	Updated to house style
AQ10-a04	1 July 2014	30 June 2015	James Stephenson	Minor updates
AQ10-a05	10 June 2015	30 June 2016	James Stephenson	Minor updates
AQ10-a06	4 January 2016	30 June 2016	Claire Garth	Updates
AQ10-a07	1 February 2016	30 June 2017	Quality Assurance Manager	Updates

1. Introduction

1.1. Policy Statement

NCC Education is committed to ensuring access to fair assessment for all candidates, to protecting the integrity of qualifications which we award, and to maintain full compliance with the expectations of our regulators, Ofqual. To that end, this policy is designed to define the range of possible sanctions which NCC Education may impose on centres, centre staff and candidates, as a response to incidences of malpractice, maladministration or candidate academic misconduct.

1.2. Decisions on the Application of Sanctions

Sanctions will be imposed by NCC Education in the following circumstances:

- a) a centre or one of its staff has been found to have committed malpractice or maladministration, as defined in NCC Education's *Malpractice and Maladministration Policy*
- b) a centre has been found to have otherwise breached NCC Education's accreditation/approval standards or Academic Regulations
- c) a centre has breached NCC Education's Marketing Guidelines
- d) a centre has failed to pay an invoice or invoices within the stated terms
- e) a candidate has committed academic misconduct.

Sanctions against centres and centre staff are imposed under the authority of either the Director of Qualifications and Academic Delivery, the Quality Assurance Manager, or the Financial Controller.

Centre Sanctions at stages three and four (where a centre's accreditation is to be suspended or removed) are imposed under the authority of the Director of Qualifications and Academic Delivery, under advice from the Quality Assurance Manager and/or the Financial Controller.

Sanctions against candidates are imposed under the authority of the relevant Assessment Board.

1.3. Communications

NCC Education will normally communicate with the Head of Centre on the subject of sanctions against the centre (or its staff), except where the Head of Centre is or has been subject to a malpractice case. In such cases, NCC Education will communicate with another appropriate person, such as the Chair of the centre's governing body or the centre owner. However NCC Education reserves the right to communicate directly with employees of centres who have been sanctioned where circumstances warrant this (for example, if an individual is no longer employed by a centre). In such instances, NCC Education will advise the Head of Centre of our intention to contact such a person directly, and it is expected that the Head of Centre will co-operate in the provision of the person's contact details.

Where sanctions are imposed on a candidate, NCC Education will provide a written statement of the sanctions imposed to the Centre Co-ordinator along with the results for that assessment cycle. This report must be passed to the candidate along with his or her statement of results. NCC Education will only communicate directly with a candidate (or candidate's representative) when the candidate is no longer associated with the centre (for example, if they have completed their qualification). In such instances, NCC Education will advise the Head of Centre of our intention to contact a candidate directly, and it is expected that the Head of Centre will co-operate in the provision of the candidate's contact details.

Any enquiries about sanctions which have been imposed (other than appeals against decisions, which are covered later) or about the content of this policy can be addressed to the Quality Assurance Manager using the following methods:

By email: quality@nccedu.com

By post: For the attention of the Quality Assurance Manager
NCC Education
The Towers
Towers Business Park
Wilmslow Road
Didsbury
Manchester M20 2EZ
UK

By phone: +44 (0)161 438 6200

By fax: +44 (0)161 438 6240

Opening hours: Monday - Friday 08:30-17:00 (GMT)

2. Sanctions against Centres

Sanctions which may be imposed on centres, either individually or in combination, are as follows:

Stage 1	Written Warning	The centre will be warned in writing of whatever matter has caused NCC Education to consider sanctions. Normally this approach will be used for a first/minor breach of regulations.
	Action Plan	NCC Education will produce an action plan outlining the changes to centre systems which are required to address the issue which has arisen and prevent it from recurring in future. For an Action Plan to be deemed complete, NCC Education will need to receive a report from the Head of Centre with appropriate supporting evidence.
Stage 2	Additional monitoring / inspection	Where there are doubts about the way in which qualifications are being delivered at a centre, NCC Education may impose additional monitoring and inspection visits. These will be charged to the centre and may not be announced in advance.
	Independent Invigilators	Where there are concerns about the way in which examinations are being conducted at a centre, NCC Education may appoint independent invigilators whose cost will be charged to the centre.
Stage 3	Suspension of Accreditation/ Approval (Placed 'On Stop')	The centre's accredited/approved status will be suspended when there are significant concerns about delivery at a centre, and/or when significant unpaid debts have been accumulated. When Centres have been consistently non-compliant with requests for information requested by NCC Education including declarations of compliance as required as part to annual centre monitoring. Suspension of accreditation/approval means that no services will be provided. Access to Connect and Campus will also be suspended.
Stage 4	Disaccreditation	In the case of severe breaches of regulations or for centres who have been repeatedly sanctioned in other ways, NCC Education reserves the right to disaccredit centres.

3. Sanctions against Centre Staff

NCC Education does not have a role in matters affecting a member of staff's contractual relationship with a centre or with the application of the centre's disciplinary policy. However, NCC Education does reserve the right to make directions to centres about the engagement of particular members of staff in the delivery of our qualifications, in order to maintain the integrity of our assessments, as follows:

Stage 1	Written warning	The centre will be warned in writing of whatever matter has caused NCC Education to consider sanctions. Normally this approach will be used for a first/minor breach of regulations.
Stage 2	Special conditions	NCC Education may require the centre to impose limits preventing an individual from engaging in all or part of the assessment process.
Stage 3	Suspension	NCC Education may require the centre to impose a bar preventing an individual from the delivery or assessment of qualifications for a defined period. NCC Education may also warn other awarding bodies when a suspension has been imposed.

Failure of a centre to impose such sanctions on its own staff will be construed as malpractice and may result in centre sanctions.

4. Sanctions against Candidates

NCC Education reserves the right to impose the following sanctions against candidates:

Loss of Marks for a Section	Where Academic Misconduct has been found in a particular section of an assessment, the marks for that section may be set to zero or capped at 40.
Loss of Marks for an Assessment Component	Where Academic Misconduct has been found throughout a particular assessment component, the marks for that assessment component may be set to zero or capped at 40.
Disqualification from a Qualification	Where severe or repeated Academic Misconduct has been identified, a candidate may be disqualified from a qualification for a period of time. The candidate would then be required to re-register on the qualification, though credit could be transferred from the first attempt at the qualification (subject to the rules laid out in NCC Education's Academic Regulations). NCC Education reserves the right to extend disqualification to all NCC Education qualifications. Any decisions to disqualify candidates from a qualification are at the discretion of the Director of Qualifications and Academic Delivery

5. Appeals against Sanctions

When any sanctions have been imposed there is a right of appeal as follows:

- where sanctions have been imposed on centres and/or centre staff, letters of appeal should be addressed to the Director of Qualifications and Academic Delivery.
- where sanctions have been imposed on an individual candidate, the published *Review of Results and Appeals Process* will be followed.