



# Exam Procedures Review Service

JANUARY 2022



## **Version history**

Version 3 of the Exam Procedures Review Service was published in January 2022. Version 2 was published in November 2019. There were temporary Exam Procedures Review Service procedures in place for summer 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19. This Exam Procedures Review Service document replaces any previously published document.

Feedback on this document is welcomed at any time. Please send any comments to [policy@qualificationswales.org](mailto:policy@qualificationswales.org)

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## Exam Procedures Review Service

1. The Exam Procedures Review Service (EPRS) is a procedure that Qualifications Wales undertakes to review the following three types of decisions taken by awarding bodies, in relation to eligible qualifications as described at paragraph 5 below:
  - marking and moderation;
  - reasonable adjustments and special considerations; and
  - malpractice or maladministration.
2. The EPRS will review whether or not the awarding body has complied with its Conditions of Recognition.

## Scope

3. In respect of GCSE and AS and A Level qualifications, awarding bodies are required to have appeals processes in accordance with ASC.I of our [Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for GCSE / GCE Qualifications](#). For the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate, awarding bodies are required to have appeals processes in accordance with Condition WB.E of our [Additional Standard Conditions of Recognition for the Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate](#).
4. The EPRS is used for reviewing these appeals undertaken by awarding bodies in relation to:
  - a. the result for any assessment in respect of a Learner, following a review of marking of Marked Assessment Material in respect of that assessment (for GCSE and GCE qualifications only);
  - b. the outcome of any review of Moderation of a Centre's marking of an assessment;
  - c. decisions regarding reasonable adjustments and special considerations; and
  - d. decisions relating to any action to be taken against a learner or a centre following an investigation into malpractice or maladministration.

5. EPRS relates to the award of **GCSE** and **AS or A Level qualifications** which are Approved by Qualifications Wales, and to the **Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate**.
6. Whilst the EPRS is for these three types of qualifications, we will also deal with complaints about the award of other regulated qualifications in line with our [Complaints About Awarding Bodies policy](#).

### **Who can apply for EPRS?**

7. Applications must be made by a Learner or Centre. The applicant must be the one directly affected by the awarding body's original decision.

### **What is EPRS?**

8. The role of the EPRS is to review the process undertaken by the awarding body in handling the appeal. Made up of a panel, the EPRS panellists will determine the extent to which the awarding body was compliant with our requirements and with their own policies and procedures. Therefore, only cases that have concluded a final decision stage will usually be heard by us. This is to ensure that the awarding body has had the opportunity to fully deal with the case and that we review that entire process for compliance. For the applicant, this means that an appeal process has been completed and possibly an independent reviewer has reviewed the decision by the awarding body and upheld that decision, before making an application to us. The EPRS is the final recourse.
9. In addition, EPRS will not normally consider an application made more than 20 working days after the date on which the applicant received a final decision from the awarding body.
10. Other complaints relating to awarding bodies' actions in the award of regulated qualifications may be dealt with in line with our [Complaints About Awarding Bodies Policy](#).

### **The EPRS Panel**

11. The EPRS panel will normally include our Head of Corporate Governance, Head of Monitoring and Compliance and Head of Regulatory Policy. The EPRS Panel

may at any time seek legal, technical or specific case related advice (e.g. such as around reasonable adjustments).

12. The Panel may at any time take legal, technical or other advice, and can also draw on independent reviewers as and when this is deemed necessary.
13. The EPRS panel may be undertaken as a desk-based review of all the evidence, or could conduct a hearing, as well as collect evidence including through interviews with relevant persons.

### **Contacting EPRS**

14. If you wish for your appeal to be reviewed by the EPRS, please contact us on:

Qualifications Wales  
Q2 Building  
Pencarn Lane  
Imperial Park  
Coedkernew  
Newport  
NP10 8AR

01633 373 222

[corporategovernance@qualificationswales.org](mailto:corporategovernance@qualificationswales.org)

15. When you contact us, you should notify us of the following:
  - your name;
  - the name of the relevant awarding body; and
  - a summary of the case, including the name of the relevant qualification and any relevant dates.

You should indicate that you wish the case to be reviewed by our EPRS, and include sufficient information to enable us to determine whether or not the case falls within the scope of our EPRS process.

## **Process for review**

16. On receiving the request, we will convene the EPRS panellists to determine if the request is within scope of this policy. On occasions when it is, we will subsequently contact the applicant to confirm this and outline our timescales to undertake the EPRS.
17. Where the request is not within the scope of this policy, we will contact the applicant to let them know within 10 days of receipt of their request explaining the reasons why.
18. The EPRS will normally take around 28 days to complete. If we require more time, we will contact the applicant and explain the reasons for this.
19. Where further evidence is required from the applicant and/or awarding body, we will notify them, specifying the evidence we require and set out the timescale in which that evidence must be provided.
20. Qualifications Wales will decide whether the further evidence should be disclosed to the applicant or to the awarding body, as appropriate and may allow a period for representations to be made following such disclosure.

## **Report**

21. The EPRS panel will produce a report summarising its findings. This may include recommendations to be made to the awarding body, centre or learner. The report will:
  - a. identify the aspect of the awarding body's own procedures that it believes the awarding body has failed to follow; and/or
  - b. identify the outcome that the awarding body has failed to secure and any Condition(s) that the panel believes the awarding has not complied with; and
  - c. identify any disadvantage or potential disadvantage to a relevant Learner; and
  - d. explain the reasons for its decision, including setting out the evidence on which it has relied, explaining any inferences it has drawn and any evidence on which it has not felt able to rely.

If the EPRS identifies instances of potential non-compliance on the part of an awarding body, this will be referred to the Monitoring and Compliance team. Whilst the report concludes the EPRS process, we envisage that findings of non-compliance will usually initiate a new workstream to investigate whether regulatory action is required in line with our [Taking Action When Things Go Wrong policy](#).

22. The EPRS Panel will submit their report to Qualifications Wales' Regulation Board.