Virtual Learning uk

TITLE	VERSION
Assessment Decisions Appeals Policy 2026-2027	6

APPROVAL BODY	DATE	REVIEW DATE
Board of Governors	August 2026	August 2027

LEAD PERSON	FE Senior Quality Lead(s)

POLICY STATEMENT

VLUK recognises that there may, from time to time, be disputes regarding assessment decisions. VLUK believes that all appeals against assessment decisions are considered in an equitable, open and expedient manner and that they be resolved as early as possible.

BACKGROUND

VLUK is a National Independent Training Provider, delivering education in the 16-19 FE sector. It is part of The Oxford Virtual Education Group. VLUK is led by a Chief Executive Officer, accountable to a Board of Governors and Group Chief Executive Officer and supported by an Executive team and a Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Accountable to the SLT is a layer of middle management located throughout the country. The Middle Leadership team is responsible for tutors and enrichment staff.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Assessment Decisions Appeals Policy is to support learners and staff to appropriately deal with any disputes around assessment decisions with the aim of these being resolved effectively. It aims to provide learners with a clear framework within which they can appeal against assessment decisions.

SCOPE

The Assessment Decisions Appeals Policy applies to all staff and learners at VLUK alongside Governors, Executive & Senior Leadership Teams, Middle Leaders, Tutors and Support Staff and confirms VLUK's approach to Assessment Decisions and Appeals. The policy only applies to all summative assessments, including internally assessed coursework, portfolios, and practical assessments. In all cases, the Awarding Organisation policy must be consulted and adhered to along with the main principles outlined within this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Summative Assessment: Assessments that contribute directly to achieving the learner's qualification and/or contribute to the final grades awarded for the qualification.

Valid Grounds for Appeal: Specific reasons that justify an appeal, including procedural irregularity, failure to apply published assessment criteria accurately, unmitigated bias, or failure to account for pre-approved Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations.

Working Days: Operational weekdays (Monday to Friday), excluding national public holidays and official institutional closure periods.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Governors	The Governing Board or a delegated committee review and challenge the effectiveness of the internal controls and the management of risk detailed in this policy.

Chief Executive Officer	Overall responsibility and oversight of this policy, ensuring KPIs are met and that resources are used effectively and appropriately.
Executive and Senior Leadership Teams	Responsible for holding the Lead Person to account with regard to the suitability of the appeals policy, implementation of this policy and the benefits to the organisation and staff.
Lead Person	Responsible for the implementation and delivery of this policy, ensuring the policy aligns with regulatory requirements, Awarding Organisation guidelines and best practice.
All Line Managers	Responsible for ensuring all line managed employees are aware of and follow this policy.
All Teaching Staff	Responsible for ensuring all learners are aware of the policy and adhere to it.
All Employees and Volunteers	Responsible for understanding and upholding the principles of this policy, in line with professional standards.

POLICY - FRAMEWORK

VLUK allows all learners the right of appeal against decisions relating to Internal Assessment of evidence provided against learning outcomes and grading criteria on all programmes where such assessment is required.

LEARNER APPEALS AGAINST ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

This framework outlines the stages involved when a learner feels that a grading decision about their work is unfair and meets the valid grounds for appeal. The framework covers work marked/assessed by VLUK tutors which form part of an overall assessment grade.

It is designed to ensure that learners are treated fairly. There are people at VLUK who will help and support learners as shown below. A parent/guardian or a friend/representative is welcome to accompany a learner to any meetings at any stage of the following process.

VALID GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

Learners cannot appeal simply because they disagree with the grade awarded or the academic judgment of the tutor. An appeal will only be considered if it is based on one or more of the following grounds:

1. Procedural Irregularity: The assessment process was not conducted in accordance with the unit specification or approved assessment plan.
2. Bias or Discrimination: There is evidence of bias, prejudice, or unfair treatment by the assessor.
3. Assessment Criteria Misapplication: The assessor failed to apply the published assessment and grading criteria correctly.
4. Mitigating Circumstances / Adjustments: Approved Reasonable Adjustments or Special Considerations were not applied or taken into account during the assessment process.

Stage 1:

In the first instance, the learner should contact and talk to the tutor directly involved with the assessment decision within 10 working days of receiving their marked work. Often concerns about grading can be resolved easily when the issues are talked through.

Stage 2:

If Stage 1 is not successful or not possible, the learner should submit a formal appeal using Appendix 1 to the VLUK Head of Campus within 5 working days of the Stage 1 outcome. The Head of Campus will attempt to resolve the concern. This may involve the Head of Campus or an independent person re-marking the work. At this stage, details of the appeal will be recorded by the Head of Campus for monitoring purposes.

Stage 3:

If the learner is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, they should resubmit the Appendix 1 form to the appropriate Senior Quality Lead within 5 working days of receiving the Stage 2 decision. The Senior Quality Lead will consider the case and may decide to seek further independent advice or may choose to hold an appeal panel to discuss the appeal.

Stage 4:
If the learner is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 3 or feels that the correct procedure has not been followed, they may submit a final internal appeal in writing to the Director of Operations within 5 working days of the Stage 3 decision, stating clearly the grounds of the appeal.

The Director of Operations will convene a final Appeals Review Panel within 10 working days of receipt. The learner, who may be accompanied by a parent/guardian/friend/representative, may be invited to attend. The final internal decision will be confirmed in writing to the learner within 5 working days of the panel meeting.

Stage 5:
A final right to appeal exists through The Awarding Organisation for the qualification. All Awarding bodies expect most enquiries or appeals from individual learners to be resolved within the centre and will only consider an individual learner's enquiry or appeal after the centre's internal enquiries or appeals procedures have been fully utilised. Where a learner remains dissatisfied following internal enquiries or appeals policy, they are advised to make an enquiry or appeal, in writing to the awarding body for the qualification being completed.

For Pearson, this is the Pearson Vocational Quality Standards team. The team can be contacted at vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com. Evidence of the centre's appeal framework having been utilised must be provided. Further details of the Pearson Appeals Policy can be read Here**.**

For RSL, this is the RSL Vocational Quality Standards team. The team can be contacted at vocational@rslawards.com. Evidence of the centre's appeal framework having been utilised must be provided.

POLICY - TIMELINES

In normal circumstances, any appeal must begin at Stage 1 within 10 working days of receipt of marked work by the learner.

All appeals will be dealt with speedily and in confidence. At Stage 1, appeals will be addressed within 3 working days; at Stage 2, within 5 working days; at Stage 3, within 10 working days; and at Stage 4, within 15 working days total (up to 10 working days to review/convene panel and 5 working days to issue written decision). The outcome of any appeal reaching Stages 2, 3, and 4 will be communicated to learners in writing. See below for the Appeal Application Form. **See below for the Stage 2 and 3 Form**.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints about assessment decisions and appeals at VLUK should be directed to the Senior Quality Leads danny.holmes@vluk.org, amie.dovey@vluk.org and marley.lodge@vluk.org in the first instance.

REFERENCES

Quality of Assessment and Verification Policy
Assessment Malpractice Policy
Reasonable Adjustment Policy
Appendix 1 - Application for an Appeal

SIGNATORIES



Chief Executive Officer
1st August 2026



Chair of Governors
1st August 2026

Appendix 1 - Application for an Appeal
Campus Name:
Learner name and number:
Tutor Name:
Head of Campus Name:

STAGE 2 / STAGE 3 APPEAL (Delete as appropriate)
The details provided on this document will form the basis of the case being put forward by the appellant. When completing the details, please pay particular attention to the grounds for appeal and summarise your reasons for appealing. If you require clarification or assistance, please contact the appropriate awarding body. Please indicate the type of appeal or review being initiated Enquiries about Results Maladministration/Malpractice Access Arrangements or Special Consideration Review of other administrative decisions. If this is an appeal against the outcome of an enquiry about results or an access arrangement/special consideration decision, please indicate below whether this is an application for a Stage 2 or a Stage 3 Appeal. Please note that learners/Tutors cannot proceed to a Stage 2/3 Appeal unless they have already initiated a Stage 1 Appeal and this appeal has been completed with the tutor.

1. Examination series:

2. Title and level of specification and unit/component number (if applicable):

3. If this is an appeal against the outcome of an enquiry about results please indicate the grade being appealed.

4. Grounds of appeal: Please state the grounds for this appeal and attach all supporting documentation. If the learner attends a hearing, there will be opportunities for further points to be raised during the hearing, but substantive new evidence should not be introduced on the day of the hearing. It is in the interest of all parties that all grounds of appeal are clearly stated in the application. (Note: Appeals must be against awarding body procedures)

   GROUNDS FOR APPEAL (Please tick all that apply and provide detailed evidence below):

   - [ ] Procedural Irregularity (Assessment procedures were not followed correctly)
   - [ ] Bias or Discrimination (Unfair treatment or prejudice)
   - [ ] Misapplication of Criteria (Marking did not align with published assessment criteria)
   - [ ] Unmitigated Adjustments (Approved Reasonable Adjustments were not applied)

   Please state clearly the grounds for this appeal and attach all supporting documentation (e.g., assignment copy, feedback sheets, correspondence). Note that substantive new work cannot be introduced at this stage

5. Names and positions of people attending a Stage 2 or Stage 3 Appeal.

Signed:

Date:

Submit to the Senior Quality Lead (marley.lodge@vluk.org for South or danny.holmes@vluk.org for North or amie.dovey@vluk.org for Performing Arts and Creative Digital Media) who will log the appeal and distribute it to the appropriate officer.