

Learner Appeals Policy and Procedure 2026-27

NextStep Training Ltd (NST)

Document control

This is Version 2.0 of the policy for 2026-27. It replaces the version updated in February 2025. It is now the single appeals procedure for NST (the separate appeals section in the Complaints Handling Policy has been removed), names current roles, and adds appeals about end-point assessment for apprentices.

Version	Date	Author	Authorised by	Next review
2.0	21 October 2026	Sharron Williams (Quality Manager)	Ahmed Khan, Managing Director	21 October 2027
1.x	February 2025	—	Ahmed Khan, Managing Director	February 2026

Next review date: 21/10/2027

Approval: This policy has been reviewed and approved by

Name: AHMED KHAN

Title: Managing Director (CEO)

Signature: 

Date: 21/10/2026

Introduction

As an approved centre for awarding organisations, NST has an appeals procedure so that apprentices and learners know they have the right to challenge an assessment decision they are unhappy with.

Reasons for an appeal may include:

- you do not understand why you are not yet regarded as competent, because feedback from your tutor or assessor was unclear
- you believe you are competent and the tutor or assessor has misjudged you or missed important evidence
- you are unhappy with the number of opportunities you were given to show competence
- you feel you experienced discrimination in the assessment process
- you believe NST did not follow its procedures properly, consistently and fairly, or the assessment conditions or environment disadvantaged you

Complaints about other aspects of NST's service are dealt with under the Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure.

NST's assessments fall into three groups: internally marked assessments and exams; externally marked assessments and exams (including Functional Skills); and end-point assessment (EPA) for apprenticeships, carried out by an independent end-point assessment organisation.

Roles in this procedure

Role	Holder
Head of Centre	Ahmed Khan, Managing Director
Quality Manager (manages appeals and keeps the appeals log)	Sharron Williams
Head of Quality	Linda Campbell
Programme manager or course leader	Your programme lead, named in your learner handbook
Learner engagement and exams administration	admin@nextsteptrainingltd.co.uk · 020 7247 5497

1. Internally marked assessments and exams

1.1 For internally marked assessments and exams, NST's tutors and assessors assess work and award grades. Results are then sent to the awarding organisation, which awards the qualification.

1.2 To make sure judgements are consistent, NST has a quality assurance process of internal quality assurance, moderation and standardisation. The awarding organisation also samples assessors' decisions and NST's procedures.

1.3 You have the right to appeal if you believe that:

- an administrative or similar error has occurred
- the assessment was not carried out in line with the programme or unit guidance, or NST's assessment policy

- your performance was affected by illness or another valid reason during the assessment

1.4 Your appeal should be supported by evidence, such as examples of your work or medical evidence.

1.5 You cannot appeal against the academic judgement of an assessor where the correct process was followed. This includes the mark awarded for a piece of work or a judgement about whether you have met the competence standard.

How to appeal

1. **Talk to your tutor or assessor** within one week of receiving your result. If you do not feel able to, speak to your programme manager or the Quality Manager.
2. **Appeal in writing** to the Quality Manager, Sharron Williams, within two weeks of receiving your result, using the appeal form (Appendix 1) or by email to admin@nextsteptrainingltd.co.uk. Include any evidence you want considered, and tell us if you would like to meet, or need help putting your appeal in writing.
3. **Investigation:** the Quality Manager, or an internal quality assurer who was not involved in the assessment, will review your appeal and the evidence. We aim to send you a full response within 20 working days. If your appeal is complex and needs longer, we will tell you within those 20 working days and say when to expect a response.
4. **Appeal panel:** if you are still unhappy, you can ask in writing, within 10 working days of our response, for your appeal to go to an appeal panel. The panel is chaired by the Head of Quality or another senior person not involved in the decision, with an internal quality assurer and an assessor who have not been involved with you. It will meet within 4 weeks and give its decision in writing.
5. **Outcome:** if the appeal is upheld, the panel may ask the assessor to reconsider the decision, or arrange for another assessor to reassess the work. If the appeal is not upheld, you will still have access to assessment; a change of assessor is at the panel's discretion.

1.6 The appeal panel's decision is the final stage of NST's internal procedure. If you wish to appeal externally, for example to the awarding organisation (such as NCFE, BCS or ICQ), we will explain how in our decision letter. After the awarding organisation's procedure, you may contact the relevant qualification regulator (Ofqual in England).

2. Access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and special consideration

2.1 In line with awarding organisation and regulatory requirements, NST:

- recognises its duty to explore and provide access to suitable programmes through access arrangements, to apply for reasonable adjustments, and to make reasonable adjustments to its services for disabled learners
- identifies, decides on and implements appropriate access arrangements and reasonable adjustments, and never charges a fee for providing reasonable adjustments to disabled learners

2.2 Examples of failing to comply include putting unapproved arrangements in place, failing to consider access arrangements, and permitting arrangements without appropriate evidence.

2.3 Where it has appropriate evidence, NST will apply for special consideration for a learner who has experienced temporary illness, injury or another event outside their control that has had, or is likely to

have had, a material effect on their ability to take an assessment or show their normal level of attainment.

2.4 If you, or your parent or carer if you are under 18, disagree with NST's decision on access arrangements, reasonable adjustments or special consideration, and believe NST has not followed its responsibilities or procedures, you should:

- appeal in writing to the Head of Centre, Ahmed Khan, normally within two weeks of the decision
- provide any evidence you want considered
- tell us if you would like to meet, or need help putting your appeal in writing

2.5 The Head of Centre will check whether NST has complied with the relevant awarding organisation and Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regulations and followed due procedure, and tell you the outcome within 20 working days (or tell you within that time if longer is needed). If the appeal is upheld, NST will put the arrangements in place or submit the application.

3. Externally marked assessments and exams

3.1 For externally assessed or examined qualifications, appeals follow the awarding organisation's procedure. Contact learner engagement and exams administration within two weeks of receiving your results for information on the process, costs and deadlines.

3.2 Functional Skills exams are covered by the awarding organisation's post-results services. You will be told about deadlines and any costs during your course.

4. Appeals following a review of results (Functional Skills)

4.1 An appeal following a review of results must be submitted on your behalf by the Head of Centre within the awarding organisation's deadline (normally 30 days from the review outcome). Contact learner engagement and exams administration as soon as possible if you want to discuss this.

4.2 NST will need evidence that the awarding organisation used procedures inconsistent with regulatory requirements, applied its procedures improperly or unfairly, or applied the mark scheme improperly. The Head of Centre will assess the evidence against the awarding organisation's grounds for appeal and tell you the outcome in writing within 10 working days.

4.3 If you are unhappy with a decision not to submit an appeal on your behalf, you can ask for it to be reviewed by another senior member of staff. Contact learner engagement and exams administration within 3 working days of the decision and provide any further evidence.

5. BCS appeals

5.1 If you are unhappy with the outcome of an appeal submitted to BCS by NST, you can appeal directly to BCS within 20 working days of the assessment or test date. BCS may charge a fee, which is refunded if your result improves; check the current fee with BCS. Appeals go to centresupport@bcs.uk.

5.2 BCS will write to you with its decision, either amending the decision or confirming the original one. You then have the right to an independent review by someone not employed by, or connected to, BCS.

6. End-point assessment appeals (apprentices)

6.1 End-point assessment is carried out by an independent end-point assessment organisation (EPAO), which makes the final assessment decisions. Appeals against EPA results follow the EPAO's own appeals procedure. NST will give you the EPAO's details and help you make an appeal within its deadlines.

6.2 If you believe NST's own process before gateway was unfair, for example how your readiness for EPA was decided, you can appeal under Section 1.

7. Recording and monitoring

The Quality Manager keeps an appeals log and makes sure detailed, accurate records are kept securely in line with the Data Protection Policy. Appeals are monitored for themes, reported to the Managing Director and the Board of Governors, and used to improve assessment practice. Reports are shared with awarding organisations where required.

For questions about this policy, contact learner engagement and exams administration at admin@nextsteptrainingltd.co.uk or the Quality Manager on 020 7247 5497.

Appendix 1: Learner appeal form

Field	Details
Name of learner	
Programme and occupational standard	
Name of assessor	
Name of internal quality assurer	
Date of assessment	
Unit(s) or assessment(s)	

Stage 1: Tutor or assessor

Field	Details
Assessment details	
Learner's reasons for appeal	
Learner's signature and date	
Assessor's decision	
Assessor's signature and date	
Date appeal received / date of reply	

Stage 2: Quality Manager or internal quality assurer

Field	Details
Comments and decision	
Date appeal received	
Date of reply	
Name and signature	

Stage 3: Appeal panel

Field	Details
Panel members	
Decision and reasons	
Date appeal received	
Date of reply	
Name and signature of chair	

Field	Details
Entered in appeals log?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Date logged	
Name and signature	