



Whistleblowing Policy

CENTRES, LEARNERS AND EDUQUAL

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1 Introduction and Policy Statement

EduQual performs and maintains comprehensive quality assurance processes and procedures. These procedures are designed to safeguard EduQual's integrity as a business and as an Awarding Body, and are also designed to ensure the validity of EduQual-accredited qualifications and EduQual-accredited assessment methodology. In particular, EduQual maintains up-to-date policies for staff and centres in order to meet any requirements stipulated by the regulatory authorities.

This Whistleblowing Policy for Centres, Learners and EduQual is designed to support individuals who wish to report on instances of malpractice within EduQual and/or within EduQual-accredited centres.

Readers are also referred to EduQual's 'Malpractice and Maladministration Guidance (Centres) / (EduQual) documents. The whistleblowing provisions of employment-rights legislation exists to help protect 'whistleblowers' against penalisation or dismissal by employers.

This Whistleblowing Policy applies to all individuals who may be involved in any way with the development, accreditation, delivery, award and/or study of all EduQual qualifications. This includes learners, tutors/assessors, centre staff (including managers and administrators) and EduQual staff (including consultants).

EduQual staff should also refer to the 'Malpractice and Maladministration Guidance (EduQual) document for further details on reporting incidents of alleged malpractice.

2 Definition of Whistleblowing

'Whistleblowing' is the term applied to the disclosure of information for the purposes of revealing suspected malpractice or wrongdoing, or the disclosure of information for the purposes of revealing suspected covering-up of malpractice or wrongdoing. Whistleblowing is distinct from any personal grievances or complaints that an individual may have with their employer.

3 Protection of Whistleblowers

This policy is designed to prevent harm, manage risk, and where possible to protect the employees of EduQual, its associates, and its accredited centres. However, the particular nature of disclosures made by whistleblowers may alter the way in which those disclosures are dealt with under the law, and it is therefore important that individuals considering 'whistleblowing' are themselves satisfied that adequate protection exists to cover them against unfair treatment by employers against whom disclosures have been made.

For this reason, potential whistleblowers may wish to get independent legal advice before formalising any disclosures by bringing them to public attention. An alternative source of free and confidential advice is the whistleblowing body 'Public Concern at Work' (<http://www.pcaaw.org.uk/>).

4 Whistleblowing within EduQual

EduQual employees should follow the procedures outlined within this policy. Please also see 'Malpractice and Maladministration Guidance (EduQual)' document for more information about reporting malpractice.

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5 Whistleblowing Procedure for Learners/Centre Staff

- 1) **If you have a concern that malpractice or wrongdoing has taken place which affects the integrity and/or delivery of EduQual qualifications:**
 - If you are a learner, raise the issue with your tutor/assessor, who will refer the matter upwards if necessary
 - If you are a member of staff at a centre, raise the issue with your line manager

- 2) **If your concerns are not addressed at this stage, or if you feel that it is not possible to raise concerns internally, then you should:**
 - Contact EduQual and address your concerns to EduQual's Responsible Officer, using the **Whistleblowing Report Form**

6 EduQual Response Procedure

- 1) After receiving your information as outlined on the **Whistleblowing Report Form**, EduQual will evaluate your concern(s). EduQual may at this stage ask you for more evidence/information.
- 2) EduQual will decide whether and how to pursue the concerns you raise. You will receive an update on any course of action taken by EduQual within 10 working days of raising your concern.
- 3) EduQual will inform the regulatory authorities of the issue(s) raised and the course of action to be taken. The regulatory authorities will be informed at all stages of any investigation of the circumstances as undertaken by EduQual.
- 4) Upon conclusion of any investigation, EduQual will provide you with a summary update of outcomes given the need to protect confidentiality. This will be done within 10 working days of the conclusion of the investigation.
- 5) The regulatory authorities will be provided with full details of the investigation/evaluation and where any serious issues are proven, other awarding bodies offering the same or similar qualifications may also be informed.

7 Confidentiality

Note: Once you have raised a concern with EduQual, you may not contact them on a daily (or otherwise regular) basis in order to seek constant updates. EduQual has a responsibility to all parties concerned with respect to confidentiality in any ongoing whistleblowing investigation. At all stages in the matter being investigated, EduQual will take every possible step to ensure the ongoing confidentiality of your details. We will treat your disclosures with sensitivity and care and decide upon an appropriate response. We may decide to share details of the disclosure(s) with third parties if we consider it necessary.

EduQual will endeavour to keep a whistleblower's identity confidential when asked to do so by the whistleblower. However, as required by law and by the regulatory authorities, we may need to disclose your identity to:

- The police, fraud prevention agencies or other law enforcement agencies in order to investigate or prevent crime, including fraud
- The courts (in connection with court proceedings)
- Another person to whom we are required by law to disclose your identity
- The regulatory authorities responsible for the standards and integrity of the qualification(s) concerned

A whistleblower should also recognise that he or she may be identifiable by others due to the nature and/or circumstances of their disclosure(s).

8 How to contact us

The best method by which we can receive whistleblowing disclosures is via our **Whistleblowing Report Form**. A copy of the form is provided overleaf at the end of this document. This form may be appended to an email as an attachment, or sent to EduQual via post.

Whistleblowing disclosures can also be made to EduQual's Accountable Officer on **+44(0) 203 713 9458** during normal office hours.

You may also complete the **Whistleblowing Report Form** and send it by post to:

**The Accountable Officer
EduQual
Riverbank House
1 Putney Bridge Approach
London
SW6 3BQ**