

HiQual UK

ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE POLICY

HQUK-POL-AG-001

Document Control Item	Details
Organisation	HiQual UK
Policy Title	Academic Governance Policy
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Policy Owner	Dr. James, Head of Quality Assurance
Approval Authority	Governing Board
Review Cycle	Annual, or earlier where regulatory, operational or organisational changes require review
Classification	Public Policy
Applies To	Governing Board, Academic and Standards Committee, HiQual UK personnel, approved centres, assessment personnel and relevant stakeholders

Governance framework for academic standards, qualification integrity and learner protection

1. Purpose

HiQual UK is committed to maintaining effective, transparent and accountable academic governance arrangements that protect the integrity of its qualifications and support consistent academic standards.

The purpose of this Academic Governance Policy is to establish the governance framework through which HiQual UK oversees qualification development and approval, assessment, quality assurance, approved centres, certification, learner protection, academic integrity and continual improvement.

This policy defines the principal academic governance responsibilities, decision-making arrangements, reporting lines and controls required to support fair, impartial, evidence-based and consistent academic decisions.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all HiQual UK activities that may affect academic standards, qualification integrity, assessment decisions, learner protection or the quality and credibility of HiQual UK qualifications.

It applies to the Governing Board, Academic and Standards Committee, Head of Quality Assurance, appointed investigators and reviewers, assessment and quality assurance personnel, approved centres, contractors and other persons acting on behalf of HiQual UK where their activities affect academic governance.

3. Governance Principles

HiQual UK will operate its academic governance arrangements according to the following principles:

3.1 Academic Standards

Academic decisions will be made with the objective of maintaining appropriate and consistent standards across HiQual UK qualifications and approved centres.

3.2 Independence and Impartiality

Academic decision-making will be sufficiently independent from commercial, operational or personal interests. Actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest must be identified and managed.

3.3 Accountability

Responsibilities and decision-making authority will be clearly assigned, documented and subject to appropriate oversight.

3.4 Evidence-Based Decision Making

Significant academic decisions will be supported by appropriate evidence, records and documented rationale.

3.5 Fairness and Consistency

Learners, centres and other stakeholders will be treated fairly and consistently, subject to legitimate differences in circumstances and applicable procedures.

3.6 Transparency

Governance arrangements, responsibilities and relevant decisions will be documented and communicated to those who need to know, subject to confidentiality and data protection requirements.

3.7 Learner Protection

Governance decisions will take account of learner interests, qualification integrity and the need to minimise risks to learners.

3.8 Continuous Improvement

Quality data, complaints, appeals, assessment outcomes, centre monitoring and other relevant information will be used to identify opportunities for improvement.

4. Governance Structure

HiQual UK will maintain a governance structure appropriate to the scale and nature of its activities. The principal academic governance bodies and roles are:

4.1 Governing Board

The Governing Board has overall responsibility for the governance, strategic direction and organisational oversight of HiQual UK.

The Governing Board will ensure that appropriate arrangements exist for academic governance, quality assurance, risk management, learner protection and the integrity of HiQual UK qualifications.

The Governing Board will approve this policy and significant changes to the governance framework.

4.2 Academic and Standards Committee

The Academic and Standards Committee is the principal committee responsible for oversight of academic standards and qualification integrity.

The Committee will provide oversight of qualification approval and review, assessment standards, quality assurance, centre-related academic risks, academic integrity, significant complaints and appeals where these may affect academic standards, and systemic quality issues.

The Committee may require corrective or preventive action where evidence indicates a material risk to academic standards, learner protection or qualification integrity.

4.3 Head of Quality Assurance

The Head of Quality Assurance has operational responsibility for coordinating the quality assurance and academic governance framework.

Responsibilities include monitoring quality trends, coordinating reporting to the Academic and Standards Committee, overseeing investigations and corrective actions where assigned, maintaining policy controls, and ensuring that material academic risks are escalated appropriately.

4.4 Qualification and Assessment Personnel

Appropriately competent subject, assessment and quality assurance personnel will be appointed for relevant academic functions.

Where specialist expertise is required, HiQual UK may appoint external subject specialists, reviewers, assessors or advisers, provided conflicts of interest are appropriately managed.

4.5 Approved Centres

Approved centres are responsible for delivering HiQual UK qualifications in accordance with applicable centre requirements, qualification specifications, assessment arrangements and HiQual UK policies.

Centres must cooperate with monitoring, quality assurance, investigations and corrective actions and must escalate matters that could materially affect learners or qualification integrity.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Academic governance responsibilities will be documented so that authority, accountability and escalation routes are clear.

The Governing Board is responsible for overall governance and strategic oversight.

The Academic and Standards Committee is responsible for academic standards and qualification integrity oversight.

The Head of Quality Assurance is responsible for operational coordination and quality monitoring.

Assessment, quality assurance and subject personnel are responsible for carrying out assigned academic functions competently, objectively and in accordance with approved procedures.

All personnel are responsible for maintaining confidentiality, declaring conflicts of interest, preserving evidence and escalating serious concerns.

6. Committee Membership and Competence

Committee membership will be appropriate to the responsibilities of the body and will include persons with suitable knowledge, experience or professional competence for the matters under consideration.

Members must act in the interests of academic standards and qualification integrity rather than personal, commercial or centre interests.

HiQual UK will seek to maintain an appropriate balance of expertise and, where practicable, avoid over-reliance on a single individual for significant academic decisions.

7. Conflicts of Interest

All persons involved in academic governance must declare actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

A person must not participate in a decision where their involvement could reasonably compromise, or appear to compromise, impartiality.

Conflicts and any resulting management action will be documented in the relevant governance record.

This section should be read alongside the HiQual UK Conflicts of Interest Policy.

8. Meetings and Decision Making

Academic governance meetings will be scheduled as necessary to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

Agendas and supporting papers should be circulated sufficiently in advance to allow members to consider matters properly.

Decisions should be based on relevant evidence and recorded with sufficient detail to demonstrate the decision, rationale, actions and responsible persons where applicable.

Where a matter cannot be resolved at committee level, it will be escalated to the appropriate senior authority in accordance with the governance framework.

9. Quorum and Voting

Each governance body will establish a reasonable quorum appropriate to its terms of reference.

Members with a conflict of interest will not be counted as participating in a decision where the conflict prevents their involvement.

Where voting is required, decisions will normally be determined by a simple majority of eligible members present, unless the relevant terms of reference require a higher threshold.

The Chair should ensure that significant dissenting views are appropriately recorded where relevant to the decision.

10. Terms of Reference

The Governing Board and Academic and Standards Committee will operate under documented terms of reference approved by the appropriate authority.

Terms of reference should define purpose, authority, membership, responsibilities, quorum, meeting arrangements, reporting requirements and review arrangements.

11. Academic Decision-Making Authority

HiQual UK will maintain clear authority arrangements for decisions relating to qualifications, assessment, quality assurance, centres, certification, complaints, appeals and academic integrity.

Decisions that may materially affect academic standards, qualification integrity or learner protection will be referred to an appropriately senior and independent authority.

No individual should exercise authority beyond their approved role or delegated responsibility.

12. Qualification Governance

Qualifications will be developed, approved, reviewed and withdrawn through controlled arrangements that consider academic standards, qualification purpose, assessment validity, resources, learner needs and relevant external requirements.

Significant changes to a qualification should be subject to appropriate academic review and approval before implementation.

Qualification records, specifications and approval decisions will be maintained as controlled records.

13. Assessment Governance

HiQual UK will maintain governance arrangements for assessment design, setting, delivery, marking, moderation, verification, results and certification.

Assessment arrangements should support validity, reliability, fairness, security and consistency.

Where assessment decisions or assessment processes may materially affect academic standards, the matter will be subject to appropriate quality assurance and governance oversight.

14. Quality Assurance and Centre Oversight

HiQual UK will maintain a quality assurance framework covering qualification delivery, assessment, centre performance and other activities relevant to academic standards.

Approved centres will be monitored through proportionate methods, which may include documentary review, sampling, audits, meetings, risk-based monitoring and corrective action.

Significant or recurring centre risks will be escalated through the appropriate governance structure.

15. Academic Integrity and Malpractice

HiQual UK will maintain procedures for identifying, investigating and managing malpractice, maladministration, assessment irregularities, plagiarism, cheating, falsification, certification fraud and other threats to qualification integrity.

Serious or systemic integrity concerns will be escalated to appropriate senior governance authority.

Academic governance records should demonstrate that significant integrity matters were considered fairly, consistently and independently.

16. Complaints and Appeals Governance

Complaints concerning services or organisational processes will be managed under the Complaints Policy.

Assessment results and other academic decisions will normally be managed through the applicable Appeals Policy or Enquiry About Results Procedure.

Where complaints or appeals identify systemic academic risks, trends or weaknesses, these will be reported through the appropriate quality assurance and governance structures.

17. Learner Protection and Safeguarding

Academic governance will consider learner protection as a core governance responsibility.

Serious safeguarding, learner safety, qualification fraud, serious misconduct or significant regulatory concerns will be escalated promptly to the appropriate senior officer or specialist process.

Governance decisions must not expose learners to avoidable or unreasonable risks.

18. Risk Management and Escalation

HiQual UK will identify, assess and monitor risks that could affect academic standards, qualification integrity, assessment security, centre performance or learner protection.

Material risks will be escalated to the appropriate governance body and, where necessary, included in organisational risk reporting.

Corrective or preventive action will be assigned, monitored and closed with appropriate evidence.

19. Data, Records and Confidentiality

Academic governance records will be maintained securely and in accordance with applicable data protection and records management requirements.

Records should be sufficient to demonstrate governance decisions, evidence considered, conflicts declared, actions agreed and follow-up completed.

Confidential information will be shared only with persons who have a legitimate need to access it.

20. Reporting and Performance Monitoring

The Head of Quality Assurance will coordinate appropriate reporting on academic quality and governance matters.

Reports may include qualification performance, assessment and certification data, centre monitoring outcomes, complaints and appeals trends, malpractice and maladministration, conflicts of interest, learner protection concerns, corrective actions and emerging risks.

The Academic and Standards Committee will review relevant trends and determine whether additional action is required.

21. External Expertise and Independence

HiQual UK may use external specialists, independent reviewers, subject experts or other competent persons where this strengthens the quality or independence of academic decision-making.

External persons must have appropriate competence and must comply with confidentiality and conflict-of-interest requirements.

22. Delegation

Academic responsibilities may be delegated only where the delegation is documented, the recipient is competent and the delegating authority retains appropriate oversight.

Delegation does not remove the requirement for accountability, evidence or quality assurance.

23. Policy Exceptions

Any proposed departure from this policy must be justified, documented and approved by an appropriately authorised person or governance body.

Exceptions must not undermine academic standards, learner protection, impartiality or the integrity of HiQual UK qualifications.

24. Monitoring and Review of this Policy

The Head of Quality Assurance will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and recommend amendments where required.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where required because of changes in regulatory expectations, organisational structure, qualification delivery, assessment systems, governance arrangements, significant risks or lessons learned.

Amendments will be submitted to the appropriate governance authority for approval.

25. Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside:

- Complaints Policy
- Quality Assurance Policy
- Assessment Policy

- Appeals Policy
- Qualification Approval Policy
- Centre Recognition Policy
- Centre Monitoring Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration Policy
- Certification Policy
- Learner Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Records Management and Retention Policy
- Assessment Security and Confidentiality Policy
- Risk Management Policy

26. Document Control

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27. Version Control

Version	Date	Description of Change	Author	Approval
1.0	20 July 2026	Initial publication of HiQual UK Academic Governance Policy	Head of Quality Assurance	Governing Board

28. Policy Statement

HiQual UK is committed to maintaining effective academic governance arrangements that protect academic standards, qualification integrity and learner interests.

The organisation will ensure that significant academic decisions are appropriately authorised, evidence-based, impartial, documented and subject to effective quality assurance and oversight.

HiQual UK will use governance information, quality data, complaints, appeals, assessment outcomes and other relevant evidence to support continual improvement and maintain confidence in its qualifications and services.

END OF POLICY