



Invalid & Incorrect Certificates

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Introduction

This policy outlines the procedures that centres must follow when an invalid or incorrect claim for certification has been made. It is essential that such claims are reported to Focus Awards promptly to uphold the integrity and accuracy of the awarding process. The policy provides guidance on identifying errors, submitting the necessary documentation, and conducting internal investigations. It also details the potential consequences of malpractice or maladministration and the actions Focus Awards may take in response. By adhering to this policy, centres help maintain the credibility of the qualifications and protect the interests of learners and stakeholders.

Invalid/incorrect claims

If an incorrect or invalid claim has been made you must notify Focus Awards as soon as you become aware of the claim.

You will be required to complete the form found at the end of this policy and submit it to info@focusawards.org.uk. Certificates must be returned to Focus Awards via tracked mail.

It is important you carry out an internal investigation and report your findings to Focus Awards. There is an area within the form on which you must provide this information.

Examples of invalid/incorrect claims

Incorrect/invalid certificate examples include (but are not limited to):

- The learner's birthdate is inaccurate.
- Although the certificate specifies different units from those completed by the student, the award is still valid.
- A valid claim is made for a learner, but incorrect units have been selected.
- The certificate's qualification does not match the learner's completed or declared qualification.
- Certifying the same learner on multiple occasions for the same qualification

Please note: If the name on the certificate is inaccurate, you should instead fill out the Focus Awards Replacement Certificate form.

Investigation

Upon Focus Awards receiving a notification of Invalid/Incorrect claim our Quality Assurance team will be notified and an investigation launched in accordance with the Focus Awards Maladministration and Malpractice Policy. If the investigation confirms malpractice or maladministration has taken place, we will consider what action(s) to take which will:

- minimise the risk to the integrity of certification now and in the future,
- maintain public confidence in the delivery and awarding of the qualification,
- discourage others from carrying out similar instances of malpractice or maladministration,
- ensure there has been no gain from compromising our standards.

The action we may take includes, but is not limited to:

- imposing restrictions and deadlines to your Centre and its activities to address the instance(s) of malpractice/maladministration and prevent it/them from reoccurring, such as:
 - undertaking additional/increased visits to the Centre to provide a greater level of support and/or monitoring depending on their needs and performance.
 - requiring specific (named) Centre staff to undergo additional training and/or scrutiny by the Centre if there are concerns about their ability to undertake their role in delivering Focus Awards qualifications effectively.
 - not permitting specific (named) Centre staff to be involved in the delivery or assessment of Focus Awards qualifications.
 - imposing sanctions on your Centre. If this is considered necessary, these will be communicated to you in accordance with our Sanctions Policy, together with detailed rationale for the sanction(s) selected.
- taking direct action against a learner in relation to proven instances of maladministration or malpractice such as some or all of the following (which may be communicated to the learner by Focus Awards and/or the learner's Centre):
 - issuing a written warning that if the offence is repeated further action may be taken
 - loss of all marks/credits for the related work
- In cases where certificates are deemed to be invalid, inform Centre(s) concerned why they're invalid and any action the Centre must take for reassessment and/or withdrawal of the certificates. We'll also ask the Centre(s) to let the affected learners know the action we're taking, that their original certificates are invalid, and ask the Centre – where possible – to return the invalid certificates to Focus Awards. In addition, we'll:
 - amend our database so that duplicates of the invalid certificates cannot be issued. We also require the Centre to amend their records to show that the original awards are invalid,
 - amend aspects of our awarding arrangements, and if required assessment and/or monitoring arrangements and associated guidance, to prevent the issue from reoccurring,
 - inform relevant third parties (e.g., funding bodies) of our findings in case they need to take relevant action in relation to the Centre, and
 - carry out additional, related investigations if we suspect the issue may be more widespread at the Centre and/or at other Centres.

Note: This list is indicative only and is not intended to be exhaustive.

Contact us

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our support team.

E: info@focusawards.org.uk

T: +44(0)333 3447 388

Version History

The version history for this policy is maintained within the Focus Awards Policy Document Control List.

Invalid Certificate

The following form should be completed accurately, providing as much detail as possible. You must return any invalid or incorrect certificates issued - by tracked mail - to Focus Awards Head Office, the address for which can be found at the end of this Policy.

Centre Name:		Centre No:	RFC
Centre Contact Details			
Centre Contact Name:			
Centre Contact Email Address:			
Centre Contact Number:			
Certificate Details			
Are the certificate claims	☐ INVALID	☐ INCORRECT	
Number of invalid certificates identified:			
Batch Numbers:			
Qualification(s) and candidate ID Numbers:			
Have the Certificates been issued to the learners?	☐ YES	☐ NO	
Are the Certificates currently being held at the Centre?	☐ YES	☐ NO	
Please provide detail on how the certificates have affected learners.			

Centre Investigation

Please complete all the questions below to help us determine the scope of the problem:

How and when were you made aware that the Certificates were not correct?

Who claimed for the Certificates?

What actions have you carried out to investigate the root cause of this issue? Please provide a detailed response and evidence where appropriate.

What was the root cause following your investigation?

('human error' is not a valid reason)

To avoid future invalid certificate claims being made by your Centre, we must be sure you've addressed the source of the problem. Please let us know:

What is your procedure for obtaining certificates? Please attach a copy of both your policy and procedure on return of the completed form.

What additional checks have you carried out to ensure no further learners have been affected?

What actions have you taken to ensure that future claims for certificates are accurate and correct?

Declaration

I declare that the information provided in this form is true and accurate .

Centre Contact Name:

Centre Contact Signature:

Centre Contact Date:

If different person(s) to the above, please ensure the document is also signed below by the Head of Centre

Name (Please Print):

Signature:

Date: