

## Accreditation Refunds and Appeals Policy

<b>Last reviewed</b>	June 2019
<b>Next review due</b>	June 2021
<b>Responsible division</b>	Operations
<b>Responsible director</b>	Director, Finance
<b>Applies to</b>	Customers of all Ambition programmes which are intended to lead to the awarding of qualifications either optionally or for all participants
<b>Exceptions</b>	Where contracts differ from this policy, the contractual terms will apply
<b>Audience</b>	Participants, schools and delivery partners
<b>Applicable laws</b>	N/A
<b>Other relevant regulations</b>	N/A

1. Objectives.....	1
2. Background and Legal/Regulatory Framework.....	2
3. Policy and Procedures.....	2
Scope of policy .....	2
Guiding principles.....	2
Refund requests arising from loss of accreditation (in case of NPQs).....	2
Refunds arising from other reasons.....	3
Scale of refunds.....	3
Process and timing of refunds .....	3
Appeals.....	3
4. Links to Other Policies.....	4

### 1. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to provide clarity on the circumstances which would result in refunds being made to the customer (school/participant/MAT/delivery partner) in the event of participants not being able to complete a qualification awarded by Ambition, and to outline the process and how we would manage any appeals to such decisions.

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## 2. Background and Legal/Regulatory Framework

As with any programme provided by Ambition Institute, our aim is for participants to complete programmes in their entirety, including gaining intended qualifications where applicable. Where the programme carries an NPQ qualification, or results in an apprenticeship being achieved and an apprenticeship certificate being issued, there is also a need to provide assurances over value for money, and the use of public money more broadly.

In creating a policy, we therefore aim to adopt a fair and consistent basis for determining when and how any refunds may need to be made, and to clarify this for schools, and to ensure that our policy is consistent with the criteria laid down by the Department for Education (see link below) in respect of repayment of scholarships.

## 3. Policy and Procedures

### Scope of policy

This policy will cover our approach to refund requests, and the appeal against decisions for reasons such as:

- > Refund policy should we lose accreditation ability and not be able to place participants with another provider.
- > Refund requests for other reasons including but not limited to:
  - if a participant has withdrawn from a programme due to dissatisfaction with a programme;
  - if a participant has withdrawn from a programme due to other reasons;
  - if a participant completes a programme but does not complete their qualification (e.g. does not submit assignments), whether due to programme dissatisfaction or otherwise;
  - if a participant has completed the programme but failed their qualification.

### Guiding principles

- > Our aim is to adopt a consistent and transparent approach. However, we also recognise that issues do arise which requires a more individualised approach and discretion may be exercised in such circumstances.
- > Any refund of a programme fee would only be agreed once other options have been considered, for example, deferral to a later cohort or attempt to resolve the issue causing dissatisfaction.
- > Any refund agreed will take into account the costs that we as a provider have incurred as well as any amounts that will be repaid to the Department for Education where a scholarship has been awarded.

### Refund requests arising from loss of accreditation (in case of NPQs)

- > Ambition Institute has good connections with a range of other NPQ providers. In the event of loss of accreditation, we aim to secure suitable alternative provision for participants which would allow them to complete their programme.
- > In such circumstances the suitability of provider will be determined by Ambition Institute.
- > If Ambition is unable to secure suitable alternative provision, then a full refund would be made to the partner organisation in respect of all programmes which are current at the date that our accreditation ceases. Refunds will only be made for those participants who have been registered and assigned to a named cohort.

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### **Refunds arising from other reasons**

- > If a participant has withdrawn from the programme through reasons beyond the participant's control, Ambition may, and at their discretion, agree a partial or full refund of the applicable programme fee.
- > If a participant has withdrawn from the programme or fails to complete the programme for reasons of programme dissatisfaction, Ambition may, and at their discretion, agree a partial or a full refund of the applicable programme fee.
- > Where a participant completes the programme but does not complete the qualification no refund will be payable.
- > For the avoidance of doubt, we will not agree refunds requested as a result of a candidate failing to qualify for the award of an NPQ.

### **Scale of refunds**

- > The repayment of fees is at the discretion of Ambition Institute where we are the direct provider and is dealt with specifically in individual programme contracts. For those on programmes delivered by the NPQ Alliance partners, repayment of fees is at the discretion of the partner and should be dealt with specifically in individual programme contracts.
- > Given the variance in intensity of delivery on programmes at different times, for example, the use of residentials which carry a higher cost than twilight or full day delivery, the suggested amounts will take into account content already delivered, and the cost of this. This will be at the discretion of Ambition, or in the case of the NPQ Alliance, the lead provider.

### **Process and timing of refunds**

- > Refunds will be considered following a formal request from the candidate or delivery partner, which should be made through their usual communication channels.
- > Provided all necessary information has been provided in the formal request, requests will be escalated to the Programme leader for the programme in question who will make a refund decision with reference to this policy and communicated to the requesting party within 15 working days of the request.
- > Where a refund has been agreed this will be processed by our Finance team within 30 days of the agreement being communicated to the school/participant.
- > In cases where scholarships or other funding has been received for the participant in question, Ambition will follow the guidelines of the funding body in question; in the case of NPQs, this will be the NPQ Scholarship – Repayments and Refunds Guidance.
- > In the event that the participant is registered with a delivery partner that has received a scholarship for the participant prior to the refund being agreed, Ambition Institute will invoice the partner/school for the agreed amount to be refunded.

### **Appeals**

- > The initial decision on whether to award a refund will be made by the Programme Leader for the programme in question. Where this is outside of the usual policy and contractual terms of the programme in question, this will require approval from the Finance Director.
- > Where the customer wishes to appeal this decision, this should be put in writing within 5 days, outlining the reasons for the appeal.
- > Appeals will be considered by the Dean for the programme in question and the final decision communicated to the participant organisation within 30 days from the appeal being received by

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Ambition. Again, where this is outside of the usual policy and contractual terms of the programme in question, this will require approval from the Finance Director.

- > The decision made by those considering the appeal will be final.

#### **4. Links to Other Policies**

Other policies referenced here include:

- > NPQ Scholarship – Repayments and Refunds Guidance