



SANCTIONS POLICY

Issue Number	Effective Date	Amendments	Reason for Amendments
4	30 October 2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Rebranding of the header and footer.2. The addition of wording to level 3 sanction regarding unpaid invoices over 60 days.3. General rewording for better clarity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Companywide rebranding on all IMI material.2. Internal IMI review.3. Internal IMI review.

INTRODUCTION

This policy is to ensure that any IMI approved centre that fails to comply with the IMI’s quality assurance requirements, or those of the regulators, will receive sanctions against them. Such sanctions could lead to suspension of certain centre activities or the withdrawal of centre approval.

LEVELS OF SANCTIONS

The IMI’s sanctions are based on five levels of transgression:

Level	Sanction	Rationale
1	Actions to address non-compliances identified.	Non-compliance with approved centre criteria but no threat to the integrity of assessment decisions.
2	Removal of, or refusal to grant direct claims status for specific or all qualifications (i.e. all future claims for certification must be authorised by an IMI external quality assurer).	Close scrutiny of the integrity of assessment decisions required.
3	(a) Suspension of registrations. (b) Suspension of certification.	(a) Adverse effect on candidates. (b) Loss of the integrity of assessment decisions – danger of invalid claims for certification.
4	Withdrawal of centre approval for specific qualifications.	Irretrievable breakdown in management and quality assurance of specific qualifications.
5	Withdrawal of centre approval for all qualifications.	Irretrievable breakdown in management and quality assurance of all qualifications offered by the centre.

IMI external quality assurers (EQAs) are authorised to issue level 1 or level 2 sanctions against an approved centre that fails to comply with IMI or regulatory requirements governing the qualifications or accreditations being offered. These sanctions will take effect immediately they are issued and will be recorded in IMI Centres Hub.

Where other members of the IMI’s compliance team has cause to recommend level 1 or 2 sanctions against the centre, the centre co-ordinator will be notified immediately in writing of the areas of concern and any actions required.

Any level 3 or 4 sanction that involves the suspension of activities or the withdrawal of approval, must be authorised by an EQM or the Compliance Manager. They will ensure that the centre co-ordinator is notified, in writing, of any suspensions or withdrawals.

Any level 5 sanctions proposed must be agreed by the IMI Compliance Panel and authorised by the Head of External Quality & Assessment Services and/or a member of the IMI Executive Directors Team.

The centre has the right of appeal against any sanctions issued. Appeals should be made in accordance with the IMI Appeals Policy.

LEVEL 1 SANCTION

This sanction will be issued to centres that do not comply with aspects of the approved centre criteria but where there is no apparent threat to the integrity of assessment decisions. It will result in actions being awarded to the centre which must be resolved before the sanction will be lifted.

Non-compliances which will attract a level 1 sanction include:

- the centre's aims, policies and responsibilities of key personnel not being clear or well understood by the centre co-ordinator and the assessment team
- internal quality assurance procedures and practices not documented clearly
- poor communication with the IMI, including failure by the centre to notify the IMI of any changes in centre personnel
- any premises, facilities and equipment used for assessment purposes do not comply with the relevant health and safety legislation
- inadequate development plans for assessors or internal quality assurers
- candidates not aware of their rights and responsibilities (e.g. appeals procedure)
- inadequate assessment planning with candidates
- queries are not resolved or recorded
- poor access to different assessment methods
- inadequate monitoring or review of procedures

LEVEL 2 SANCTION

This sanction will be issued to centres where the EQA, or other member of the IMI's quality assurance team, feels that close scrutiny of assessment decisions is required.

The effect of this sanction will be the refusal to grant, or removal of, direct claim status for one or more of the qualifications being offered by the centre.

Note: Direct claims status for a qualification means that certificates can be claimed for that qualification without prior authorised by the EQA.

Non-compliances which will attract a level 2 sanction include:

- the centre co-ordinator, internal quality assurer or assessors have insufficient time, resources or authority to perform their role
- decisions of unqualified assessors have not been countersigned by qualified assessors
- assessment decisions are not consistent
- insufficient assessors and/or internal quality assurers
- decisions of unqualified internal quality assurers have not been countersigned by qualified internal quality assurers
- records are insufficient to allow audits of assessment
- previously agreed corrective measures relating to a level 1 sanction have not been implemented by the timescales agreed.

LEVEL 3 SANCTION

There are two parts to a level 3 sanction. Although it is conceivable for future registrations only to be suspended (3a), it is more than likely that the centre's certification activities will be suspended (3b) should it be found that there has been an adverse effect on candidates, a loss of the integrity of assessment decisions, a danger of invalid claims for certification having been, or about to be made or as a result of proven malpractice. Suspension of certification may be applied to individual qualifications or all qualifications offered by the centre and certifications will not be issued by IMI while this level of sanction is applied.

Note: It is the IMI's policy to work closely with centres to advise them on areas of concern, thus avoiding suspension or any subsequent withdrawal of approval. However, if a centre either cannot, or chooses not to, implement the advice and recommendations of the IMI, then a level 3 sanction will be issued and a suspension will be enforced.

Non-compliances which will attract a level 3 sanction include:

- the assessment process disadvantages candidates
- assessment decisions are unfair or do not meet the requirements of the qualification, accreditation and/or Quality Assured Programme
- assessed 'evidence' is not the authentic work of candidates
- no suitable assessors or internal quality assurers
- the centre fails to provide access to the records, information, candidates and staff as requested
- records of assessment show serious abnormalities
- previously agreed corrective measures relating to a level 2 sanction have not been implemented by the timescales agreed
- proven cases of malpractice

Additionally, a suspension of goods and services (3a) will be imposed as a result of unpaid invoices of over 60 days in line with IMI Terms and Conditions.

LEVEL 4 SANCTION

A level 4 sanction, the withdrawal of centre approval for specific qualifications, accreditations or Quality Assured Programmes will be given where there is an irretrievable breakdown in the management and quality assurance of those qualifications, accreditations and/or Quality Assured Programmes.

Non-compliances which will attract a level 4 sanction include:

- significant faults in the management and quality assurance of qualifications which result in ongoing failure to meet all the requirements of the qualification
- previously agreed corrective measures relating to a level 3 sanction have not been implemented by the timescales agreed.



LEVEL 5 SANCTION

IMI centre approval will be withdrawn when there is an irretrievable breakdown in the management and quality assurance at the centre.

Non-compliances which will attract a level 5 sanction include:

- significant faults in the management and quality assurance of all qualifications, accreditations and Quality Assured Programmes offered by the centre
- previously agreed corrective measures relating to a level 4 sanction have not been implemented by the timescales agreed.