

# Wine Plus+ WSET Policies & Procedures

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## Policy for Candidates requesting Feedback, Enquiries and Appeals against Examination Results

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The Wine & Spirit Education Trust operates a thorough system of checks before the release of examination results in order to ensure that, as far as possible, they are completely accurate.

The **enquiries and appeals** system exists to identify and correct errors in marking and/or processing. However we would like to emphasise that a scanning process is used to mark multiple choice questions and it is therefore very rare for initial marks to be incorrect, providing the candidate has completed the answer form header correctly. **Feedback** on a candidate's performance may be requested to assist them in preparing for future examinations as an additional service when requesting an Enquiry.

### Enquiries (and Feedback)

If a candidate considers that an error may have been made in the grading of papers, they may ask to have an examination paper reviewed and re-marked. To do this they should contact their Approved Programme Provider (the organisation with whom the examination was sat) and ask for a copy of these guidance notes and the [Application Form for Enquiries against Examination Results](#) (or applicable form for Diploma examinations). Alternatively, they can contact the Examinations Administrator at WSET® Awards and request a copy of the application form.

The completed application form requesting a review of examination results must be received by WSET® Awards within the following timeframes. Any request received outside of this time frame will not be reviewed.

- Foundation Certificate – within 5 weeks of the date of the examination
- Intermediate Certificate - within 5 weeks of the date of the examination
- Professional Certificate - within 5 weeks of the date of the examination
- Advanced Certificate – within 13 weeks of the date of the examination
- International Higher Certificate – within 9 weeks of the date of the examination
- Diploma (excluding course work) – within 14 weeks of the date of the examination
- Diploma (coursework assignment) – within 16 weeks of the date of the examination

WSET® Awards will confirm receipt of Enquiries Against Examinations Results within 3 working days (usually by e-mail) and the APP will also be advised that an enquiry is in process.

All examination papers will be re-marked by a member of the WSET® Awards team not involved in the original marking process.

WSET® Awards will advise the candidate and APP of any decision resulting from the review of an examination paper within the same time frame as the issue of results for each qualification level.

Where re-marking results in a change to the original grade, WSET® Awards will:

- Amend the examination result accordingly;
- Issue a new certificate free of charge following return of the original certificate if applicable;
- Refund the enquiry application fee in cases where the error was made by WSET® Awards;

When lodging an Enquiry, candidates may also request **feedback** on their examination scripts to assist them in preparing for future examinations. Candidates who would like to receive feedback on their examination papers should complete the relevant section of the application form. Feedback will be issued within the same timeframes as the issue of results for the relevant qualifications.

**Note:** for the Diploma only, feedback may be requested without an enquiry, and is available for individual questions as opposed to the entire exam. Please see the Diploma section of this handbook for details.

## Appeals

A candidate may only appeal against an examination result once an enquiry has been processed.

Any candidate unsatisfied with the result of the review and re-marking of an examination paper should contact the Approved Programme Provider or the Examinations Administrator at WSET® Awards and request an [Appeal against Examination Results Application Form](#).

The Application Form must be completed and returned to WSET® Awards, together with the appropriate fee, no more than 10 working days following notification of the enquiry decision. Appeals received outside of this timeframe will not be reviewed.

WSET® Awards will confirm receipt of an Appeal Against Examination Results within 3 working days (usually by e-mail) and the APP will also be advised that an appeal is in process.

All appeals will be assessed by the Director of WSET® Awards, and subsequently submitted to the Appeals Panel for independent review. The Appeals Panel includes one independent member, who is not, and has not been at any time during the past seven years, a member of WSET® Awards' board or committees, or an employee or examiner.

WSET® Awards will advise the candidate and APP of any decision resulting from an appeal within 40 working days for qualification levels 1-3 and 60 working days for the Level 4 Diploma and Level 5 Honours Diploma.

Where appeals are upheld WSET® Awards will:

- Refund the appeal application fee;
- Amend the examination result accordingly;
- Issue a new certificate free of charge following return of the original certificate as appropriate.

Where the outcome of an appeal brings into question the accuracy of the marks of other candidates' sitting the same examination paper, WSET Awards will review all scripts and make amendments as necessary to maintain the integrity of the qualification.

Where an appeal remains unresolved following the process outlined above, applicants may request that their case be submitted for final independent review. In such instances, all supporting documentation pertaining to the case will be submitted to our Independent Reviewer who is the Internal Quality Assurance Leader of a separate OfQual accredited Awarding Body.

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## Policy for Candidates Requiring Reasonable Adjustments

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**A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.**

WSET<sup>®</sup> Awards seeks to conduct the assessment of all candidates in a way that puts them at no disadvantage, or advantage, over other candidates.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve:

- Changing standard assessment arrangements, for example allowing candidates extra time to complete the assessment activity
- Adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in large text format
- Providing access facilitators during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or reader
- Re-organising the assessment room, such as removal of visual stimuli for an autistic candidate.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the candidate access to the qualification. The use of reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a candidate's work.

It is the APP's responsibility to identify at the time of candidate registration any special assessment needs which require reasonable adjustments to be made for examination purposes.

The APP should inform WSET<sup>®</sup> Awards at the earliest opportunity using [Request for Reasonable Adjustment Form](#) so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Out of fairness to all candidates, evidence of the individual circumstances giving rise to the request must be produced.

The specific arrangements for the examination process itself, or for marking, will be agreed in each case between the Programme Provider's Examinations Officer and the Examinations Administrator at WSET<sup>®</sup> Awards, and will vary according to individual circumstances. WSET<sup>®</sup> Awards reserves the right to seek the advice of independent agencies as appropriate in coming to a decision on specific arrangements. Please note that APPs may not offer Reasonable Adjustments to any candidate until this has been agreed with WSET<sup>®</sup> Awards.

Due notice is required in order for appropriate arrangements to be agreed and put into place. The period of notice required is at least four weeks prior to the examination date for Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced Certificate examinations, and at least 8 weeks before the published dates for Diploma examinations. Further details are contained in the Examination Regulations for each specific qualification and in [Appendix 3](#) Guidance for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations'.

Candidates and their advisors should also be aware that it is not appropriate to make requests for special arrangements where the candidate's particular difficulty directly affects performance in the actual attributes that are the focus of the assessment.

It should be noted that reasonable adjustments will not give unfair advantage over candidates for whom reasonable adjustments are not being made, or alter the assessment demands of the qualification as detailed in the qualification specification.

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## Policy for Candidates Requiring Special Consideration

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**Special consideration is an action taken after an assessment to allow candidates who have been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury, indisposition or adverse circumstances at the time of the assessment to demonstrate attainment.**

A candidate may be eligible for special considerations if:

- performance in an examination is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the candidate. This may include recent personal illness, accident, bereavement or examination room conditions;
- alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate;
- the application of special consideration would not mislead the end-user of the certificate.

WSET<sup>®</sup> Awards must be notified in writing within seven days of the examination date where special consideration is being requested using the [Request for Reasonable Adjustment Form](#). Eligibility will only be considered if accompanied by supporting independent documentation.

Where a candidate is unable to attend an examination due to recent personal illness, accident or bereavement, WSET<sup>®</sup> Awards will endeavour to transfer the candidate to an alternative examination date at no extra cost.

In cases of serious disruption during the examination, the Examinations Officer must submit a detailed report of the circumstances and candidates affected to the Examinations Administrator at WSET<sup>®</sup> Awards. This must be returned with the completed examination papers.

It should be noted that WSET Awards does not offer aegrotat awards and that all assessment requirements of WSET qualifications must be met. It is also our policy that special considerations will not give unfair advantage over candidates for whom special considerations are not being applied, or alter the assessment demands of the qualification as detailed in the qualification specification. Further guidance is available in [Appendix 3](#) 'Guidance for Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations'.

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## Malpractice Policy and Procedures

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The headings below list categories of malpractice by APP staff and candidates which may adversely affect the integrity of WSET<sup>®</sup> qualifications and certification. These examples are not exhaustive and are intended as guidance to APPs and their candidates on the WSET<sup>®</sup>'s definition of malpractice:

- a) A deliberate attempt to discredit the WSET<sup>®</sup>, or to bring the WSET<sup>®</sup> into disrepute in any way;
- b) Fraudulent use of WSET<sup>®</sup> certificates and issue of bogus examination results;
- c) Insecure storage of examination papers;
- d) Unauthorised amendment, copying or distribution of examination papers;
- e) Plagiarism of any nature by candidates;
- f) Disruptive behaviour by candidates;
- g) Candidates in breach of published Examination Regulations and APP in breach of invigilation rules or the Code of Conduct
- h) Failure to follow procedures as laid out in the APP Operating Handbook;
- i) Change of examination location or altered facilities so they no longer meet the required standards;
- j) A change in control of the APP that results in the new management being unable to meet WSET<sup>®</sup> Awards criteria;
- k) Failure to administer examination in line with the assessment requirements;
- l) Denial of access to resources (premises, records, information, candidates and staff) by authorised WSET<sup>®</sup> representatives and / or the Regulatory Authorities;
- m) Breach of copyright;
- n) Non-payment of fees for WSET<sup>®</sup> services or examinations;
- o) Breach of the APP Code of Conduct.

Malpractice is divided into two main categories;

### **Major Malpractice**

Serious and /or deliberate breaches of conduct, or serious neglect of professional duty, this category of malpractice represents a high risk to the integrity of the qualification. Major Malpractice could result in the invalidation or revocation of examination results and / or certification. In this instance OfQual must be informed of the malpractice case and WSET® Awards will take all appropriate action as directed by the Regulatory Authority. An example of Major Malpractice would be, 'Fraudulent use of WSET® certificates and the issue of false examination results'.

### **Minor Malpractice**

Minor and /or accidental breaches of conduct or neglect of professional duty, or those more major breaches not considered to be deliberate or malicious in intent, this represents a lower risk to the integrity of the qualification and would not affect examination results or certification. Examples of minor malpractice could include, 'failure to follow procedures laid out in the Operating Handbook', or 'breach of copyright'.

### **Reporting Malpractice**

All APPs are required to report any case of malpractice by candidates, educators, invigilators or centre staff to the Centres Co-ordinator and Quality Assurance Manager at WSET® Awards immediately using the [Notification of Potential Malpractice Form](#).

Failure to do so may result in the refusal to issue results and Certification to candidates, the invalidation of examination results or the withdrawal of approval to offer WSET® qualifications.

Where APP personnel are involved, the APP should follow its own procedures and keep WSET® Awards informed of the steps taken to resolve the situation.

Malpractice may be reported to WSET® Awards by a WSET® Awards appointed Approval Visitor. In this instance the APP will be advised during the approval visit that a case of Malpractice is being reported.

WSET® Awards will also act upon reports of suspected or actual malpractice received from candidates or other parties regarding an APP's activities or personnel which may affect the integrity of WSET® qualifications. In such circumstances, the main contact at the APP will be notified and invited to respond prior to further action being taken.

### **WSET® Awards responsibility**

WSET® Awards will confirm receipt of a report of suspected or actual malpractice within 3 working days.

Should a case of malpractice be raised with WSET® Awards against the Programme Provider, the main contact will be notified and invited to respond prior to further action being taken.

WSET® Awards will request supporting evidence from the APP, Candidate or other parties to validate the report of suspected or actual malpractice.

When supporting evidence has been supplied, WSET® Awards will conduct a full investigation of the suspected or actual malpractice to identify the cause and to determine whether malpractice has actually occurred.

Where it is determined that malpractice has occurred, a report will be filed. This will include whether the malpractice is accidental or deliberate, and represents a major or minor threat to the integrity of the qualification.

WSET® Awards will subsequently decide whether any sanctions should be applied to the APP, their staff or the candidate concerned.

Any case of malpractice that threatens the integrity of the qualification, results issue or certification will be reported to the Regulatory Authority.

Where the report is the result of an internal investigation by the APP, WSET® Awards will review all the documentation supplied and action taken to ensure that any decisions made by the APP are valid. WSET® Awards may request additional information to determine whether any sanctions should be applied to the APP, their staff or the candidate concerned.

## **Sanctions**

Following an investigation by WSET® Awards, it may be necessary to apply one or more of the following sanctions against the APP and/or their staff.

- Creation of an action plan / letter of warning;
- Withdrawal of internal assessment permissions;
- Invalidation of examination results / certification;
- Withdrawal of approval to offer a specific WSET® qualification;
- Withdrawal of approval to offer all WSET® qualifications.

Where previously agreed corrective measures are not implemented, the sanctions will progress to the next level of severity following the guidelines of the NVQ Code of Practice.

Following an investigation by WSET® Awards, it may be necessary to apply one or more of the following sanctions against an individual candidate or candidates.

- Letter of warning;
- The disallowing of an examination result;
- The invalidation of a certificate and/or unit certificate and recall of certification already issued;
- Refusal of entry to future WSET® qualifications.

All decisions with regard to malpractice will be communicated in writing within 20 working days following receipt of supporting documentation. Where it is not possible to respond within this timeframe, a written response will be given providing a date for completion.

Any candidate, educator, invigilator or APP has the right to appeal any decision made against them using the [General Appeals](#) section of this handbook, or as detailed in the [WSET® Customer Service Statement](#).

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## Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

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As an awarding body, WSET® Awards fully supports the principles of Equal Opportunities. We strive to ensure that all candidates for our qualifications are treated fairly and on an equal basis

Equal Opportunities are assured by:

- the selection, recruitment and training of those working for WSET® Awards;
- ensuring that the format and content of all syllabi, examinations and other materials meet the awarding body requirements and do not discriminate against anyone;
- anonymous assessment of examination candidates wherever possible;
- promoting practices and procedures in WSET® Approved Programme Providers (APPs) that give equal opportunities to everyone;
- requiring all WSET® Approved Programme Providers (APPs) to have equal opportunity policies in place;
- the variation of any conventional rules and regulations for the conduct of examinations which might inhibit the performance of candidates with specific needs, provided that the standard, quality and integrity of the assessment is not compromised. APPs should refer to the Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policies located in the WSET® Operating Handbook;
- the consideration of all aspects of this policy at an early stage in the development of new schemes or qualifications;
- working as appropriate with relevant organisations and agencies to develop measures to identify and prevent inequality of opportunity;
- making every effort to ensure that there is equality of opportunity in its assessment process, regardless of the candidate's gender, age, racial origin, religious persuasion, sexual orientation or disability;
- ensuring, to the best of our ability, that any documentation produced does not contain language or images which may be regarded as offensive or stereotypical, and that they reflect the diversity of contemporary society;

The WSET is an equal opportunities organisation and will consider applications from any organisation or individual who can demonstrate that they meet our approval criteria. We do not give any one provider exclusivity to offer our qualifications in a defined territory or region.

This policy is published in the WSET® Approved Programme Providers Operating Handbook and should be made available to candidates upon request.

### **NOTE TO CANDIDATES**

Candidates who believe they have been discriminated against should contact their Approved Programme Provider for further advice.

## **References and Definitions**

**Race Relations Act 1976.** This makes discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), and ethnic or national origin unlawful. The law covers people from all racial groups, including white people.

**Sex Discrimination Act 1975.** This deals with discrimination on grounds of sex or marriage and applies to men and women.

**Disability Discrimination Act 1995.** This deals with discrimination against disabled people – that is, when someone treats a disabled person less favourably than someone else, without justification, for a reason related to their disability. Discrimination also occurs if, without justification, a ‘reasonable adjustment’ is not made.

**DDA.** The Act applies to all those who provide goods, facilities and services to the public. The employment provisions of the Act apply to employers with 15 or more employees.