

**Aptis ESOL**

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# Appeals and complaints policy



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# Aptis ESOL appeals policy

A test taker may appeal against a decision made relating to:

- Enquiry on results (EOR) – where the test taker is not satisfied with a reviewed result awarded through the standard EOR process.
- A withheld result – where the test taker is not satisfied with a decision taken by operational teams to withhold result, for example due to malpractice.

## Making an appeal after Enquiry on Results (EOR)

The appeals procedure after the enquiry on results aims to seek evidence and assurance that the standard EOR processes have been applied correctly. An appeal does not involve re-marking or re-assessment. However, if it is found that procedures have not been satisfactorily followed, this may result in further re-marking.

An appeal will be considered, if the test taker provides reasonable evidence and/or information to support a claim that we did not apply the EOR procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed correctly.

## Making an appeal against a withheld result

In the case of an appeal against a decision relating to a withheld result, we will review the evidence which led to the result being withheld, to ensure processes were followed without bias, and that the decision was indeed valid. If it is found that processes were not applied correctly, the result will be released.

## Submitting an appeal

Test takers should submit their appeal within 21 working days after they receive the outcome of their enquiry on results or after receiving a notification that their results were cancelled or withheld.

Reasons for the appeal in writing together with a proof of payment should be submitted through the local British Council test centre where the test taker took their Aptis ESOL test. Test takers should refer to their local test centre for more details on the process and the local fee for appeals. The fee for an appeal is usually 50% of the Aptis ESOL test fee. If the appeal is successful, the full fee will be refunded.

The outcome of an appeal is sent to test takers within ten weeks after the request has been received. If the appeal is successful, the centre refunds the full appeal fee. If the appeal is unsuccessful, the test taker loses the appeal fee.

**Note:** The right to appeal applies only to test takers who took Aptis in test sessions organised and invigilated by the British Council.

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## Aptis ESOL complaints policy

Aptis ESOL test takers can raise their concerns about their pre-test, test day or post-test experience either directly with their test centre or by contacting the British Council Customer contact team based in Manchester, UK, by following the [global complaint process](#).

### The Aptis ESOL complaints process is as follows:

Complaints are usually received by a local British Council customer service team or by a test centre staff member. The Customer service/test centre determines the level of complaint and follows the Aptis ESOL escalation model for the complaint investigation. The majority of complaints will be received at Level 1.

#### Level 1 complaints

If the complaint is Level 1, Customer service team member or Test centre representative should resolve it within **ten working days**. The decision is communicated to the test taker through the communication channel they prefer.

This investigation will consist of a revision of all communications between the test taker and the Aptis ESOL Test centre and will review the test operations to identify service failures or other operational issues that might have occurred. Any service failures or other issues will be investigated, including the reason for them and what steps were taken to fix the issues.

If we identify that issues have not been fixed, or have caused the test taker problems, we will put remedies in place wherever possible and communicate these to the test taker.

#### Level 2 complaints

If the complaint is Level 2, it is managed by the Head of department (depending on a centre's structure, this can be Customer Experience Manager, Country Director or a Regional Manager). This investigation will look again at the issues raised independently of the operations or customer service team and will take the necessary authority to determine whether the issues have indeed been resolved comprehensively and conclusively, or if failures still exist, re-visit the complaint conclusion and provide an alternative. At this level, the test taker should receive a reply **within 30 working days**.

If the Level 2 complaint is still unresolved or requires input from the Aptis ESOL global team, it should be escalated to the Global Assessments Business Development Team. A further input may be required from the Head of Global Assessments. These complaints relate to more serious and complex unresolved problems which are likely to be an intrinsic issue with the test delivery or other matter and may require a full review of the Aptis ESOL operations. As such, these teams will need to investigate the complaint at a high level to determine potential strategic changes to the Aptis ESOL test. Such changes should be put in place promptly, and communicated to the test taker, whose complaint conclusion may be affected.

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## Level 3 complaints

If the complaint is Level 3 or has reached Level 3, they are escalated to the Global Customer Contact Manager, who will review the case independently of Aptis ESOL Operations. If the case requires further investigation, and/or gaps are identified, it will be returned to the Head of Global Assessments with feedback and requirements for a further investigation. It normally takes **30 working days** to review the case at a Level 3 complaint.

In exceptional circumstances, if a complaint is not resolved at Level 3 it may go to an independent review body.

## External review

If a test taker's complaint passed through all three levels and has not been resolved, a test taker has the right to escalate their complaint to the external body.

The British Council's corporate external review body is an independent consultancy, Verita LLP, which specialises in conducting and managing investigations, reviews and inquiries for public sector and statutory organisations.

Referrals to Verita are only made by the Global Customer Contact Manager, and Verita will only accept complaints once they have been through this stage and a valid Verita reference number has been assigned.

It usually takes **60 working days** from the day of the receipt of the complaint for Verita to reach a final conclusion.

## Timeline for complaints

All complaints around customer's pre-test and post-test experience should be made within 90 days of the date that the event occurred, or the date that the issue came to the test taker's attention.

Complaints related to the conduct of the test (such as complaints about noise during Listening test) should be made on the test day.

## Complaints fee

There is no fee involved for a test taker wishing to complain.