

A2A QUALIFICATIONS LIMITED

Ofqual Recognised Awarding Organisation | End-Point Assessment Organisation

Expected Behaviour and Respect for Staff Policy

How we work together with apprentices, employers, training providers and partners

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1. Our commitment, and what we ask in return

A2A Qualifications Limited delivers apprenticeship assessment and assessor/IQA training. Almost all of our work is done remotely, through video assessments, calls, email and secure online systems.

Our assessors understand their job is to make the process as clear, fair and calm as it can be.

This policy sets out two things: the standard of behaviour you can expect from everyone who works for A2A, and the standard we ask of everyone who works with us. It is published so that the expectation is clear on both sides before anything goes wrong.

The great majority of our interactions are straightforward, professional and positive.

2. Who and where this applies

This policy applies to everyone who interacts with A2A staff, including apprentices, employers, line managers, training providers, suppliers, contractors and members of the public.

It applies wherever that interaction takes place, including:

- Video assessments, professional discussions, presentations and interviews.
- Telephone calls and voicemails.
- Email, written correspondence and messages sent through our assessment systems.
- Gateway meetings, standardisation calls and any other scheduled contact.
- Social media and online posts about A2A or about individual members of our staff.

For the purposes of this policy, A2A staff means our employees and the independent assessors, independent quality assurers and other associates we engage. They are all entitled to the same protection.

3. What you can expect from us

This is not a one-sided policy. Everyone working for A2A is required to:

- Treat you with courtesy, patience and respect, whatever the circumstances.
- Be clear about what happens next, what is expected of you and when you will hear from us.
- Assess fairly, consistently and only against the published assessment plan that applies to the apprentice.
- Declare any conflict of interest and step aside where independence could reasonably be questioned.
- Keep your information secure and confidential.
- Make reasonable adjustments where they are needed, without fuss and without asking for more information than is necessary.
- Explain a decision, and tell you how to challenge it if you disagree.
- Listen properly to a complaint and deal with it under our published Complaints Policy.

If any member of A2A staff falls short of this, we want to know. Section 8 explains how to tell us.

4. What we ask of you

We ask everyone working with us to:

- Treat our staff with the same courtesy and respect they will show you.
- Be honest and accurate in what you tell us and in the evidence you submit.
- Turn up to booked sessions on time, or tell us as early as you can if you cannot.
- Raise problems and disagreements through the routes set out at section 8, rather than through pressure on an individual assessor.
- Respect the privacy of our staff and of other apprentices.
- Keep to the practical arrangements for remote assessment set out at section 6.

5. Behaviour we will not accept

We will not accept the following, from anyone, in any format:

- Aggression, intimidation, shouting, threats or violence, whether directed at a member of staff or at their family.
- Abusive, insulting, humiliating or obscene language.
- Harassment or sexual harassment, including unwanted comments about a person's appearance or body, sexual remarks, innuendo, propositions, unwanted personal attention, or sharing sexual images or material.
- Discriminatory conduct or language relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Personal, targeted criticism of a named member of staff, including online.
- Recording, photographing or screenshotting a session, or a member of staff, without our written agreement.
- Contacting a member of staff on their personal telephone number, personal email or personal social media accounts.
- Repeated, excessive or unreasonably persistent contact after a matter has been answered or a process has concluded.
- Attempting to influence an assessment decision, as set out at section 5.1.
- Offering a gift, hospitality, payment or any other inducement to a member of A2A staff.

5.1 Attempting to influence an assessment decision

Our assessors must reach their own judgement on the evidence, independently. Any attempt to influence that judgement outside the proper process is a serious matter and is treated as potential malpractice under our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, not simply as a conduct issue. This includes:

- Pressing an assessor to confirm, predict or change a grade.
- Approaching an assessor privately, or outside a scheduled session, about an outcome.
- Suggesting that A2A's commercial relationship with an employer or provider should affect a decision.
- Implying that a complaint, a poor review or the withdrawal of business will follow an unwelcome outcome.

Where this arises, we will record it, investigate it under the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, and inform the relevant employer or training provider. Depending on the findings, an assessment outcome may be withheld, voided or reviewed.

5.2 What is not unacceptable behaviour

It is important to be clear about what this policy does not cover. None of the following is unacceptable behaviour, and none of it will ever be treated as such:

- Disagreeing with an assessment decision, firmly and in strong terms.
- Making a complaint about A2A, an assessor or the process.

- Appealing a decision, or asking for one to be reviewed.
- Asking difficult questions, asking the same question again because the answer was not clear, or chasing us for a response.
- Being upset, tearful, frustrated or visibly anxious during an assessment.
- Telling us we have got something wrong.

We would far rather you challenged us than stayed silent. This policy is about how concerns are expressed, never about whether you are entitled to raise them.

6. Remote assessment: practical arrangements

Because our assessments are conducted remotely, a few practical points help everyone:

- Join from a quiet, private space where you will not be interrupted and where your conversation cannot be overheard.
- Do not have anyone else present, or within earshot, unless we have agreed it in advance. If you need a supporter present as a reasonable adjustment, tell us beforehand and we will arrange it.
- Keep your camera on where the assessment method requires it, and be appropriately dressed and positioned.
- Do not drive, travel or attempt to work while taking part in an assessment.
- Do not record the session. A2A will tell you in advance where we are recording, and why.

If the environment makes a fair assessment impossible, the assessor may pause or end the session and rebook it. This is not a penalty and will not affect the outcome.

7. What we will do

Where behaviour falls below the standard in this policy, we will respond proportionately. We will normally begin with the least restrictive step that resolves the problem, and we will explain what we are doing and why. Our response may include:

Step	When we would use it
A verbal request to stop, during the session	A one-off comment or a rising tone, where the session can continue once it is addressed
Pausing or ending a session and rebooking it	Where the behaviour makes a fair assessment impossible at that moment
A written reminder of this policy	Where the conduct is more than a one-off, or where correspondence has become inappropriate
Restricting contact to a named single point of contact, or to written correspondence only	Persistent, excessive or distressing contact, or repeated contact with an individual assessor
Raising the matter with the employer or training provider	Where the person is an apprentice or an employer representative and the behaviour has continued
Referral under the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy	Any attempt to influence an assessment decision, or an inducement offered
Withholding, voiding or reviewing an assessment outcome	Where the integrity of the assessment has been compromised
Suspending or withdrawing services under the customer agreement	Serious or repeated behaviour, or a pattern across an organisation
Reporting to the police	Threats, violence, or conduct we believe may be a criminal offence

Any decision to restrict contact or withdraw services will be confirmed in writing, will explain the reasons, will say how long it applies for, and will tell you how to ask for it to be reviewed. We will always make sure an apprentice retains a route to complete their assessment and to use our Complaints Policy and Enquiries and Appeals Policy, even where contact has been restricted.

Where a reasonable adjustment, a disability, a health condition or a period of acute personal distress is relevant to the behaviour, we will take that into account before deciding what to do. Please tell us if that applies — you do not have to give us detail you would rather not share.

8. Raising a concern with us

If something has gone wrong, please use the right route — it will get you a faster and better answer:

If you want to...	Use
Challenge an assessment decision or grade	Enquiries and Appeals Policy
Complain about the service, the process or a member of staff	Complaints Policy
Request a reasonable adjustment or raise special considerations	Reasonable Adjustments Policy and Special Considerations Policy
Report suspected malpractice or maladministration	Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
Raise a concern about equality, diversity or inclusion	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Report behaviour by an A2A member of staff that falls short of section 3	Complaints Policy, or contact the Director directly

All of these policies are published on our website. If you are not sure which applies, contact us and we will direct your concern to the right process and tell you who is dealing with it.

9. Reporting an incident to us

If you witness or experience behaviour that falls below the standard in this policy — whether by an A2A member of staff or by anyone else — please tell us. Contact the Compliance Manager, or the Director where the matter concerns the Compliance Manager. We will acknowledge your report, tell you who is handling it, and treat it confidentially so far as we reasonably can.

We record all incidents, including those resolved on the spot, so that we can see patterns and take preventative action. Reporting an incident will never disadvantage an apprentice or affect an assessment outcome.

10. Why we have this policy

A2A has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to protect its staff from harassment, including harassment by third parties such as apprentices, employers and training providers, and to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment. Publishing this policy, and acting on it, is part of how we meet that duty.

As an Ofqual recognised awarding organisation and end-point assessment organisation, A2A is also required to protect the integrity and independence of its assessment decisions. The provisions of this policy dealing with attempts to influence an assessment decision exist for that reason.

11. Related documents

This policy should be read with the following, all of which are published on our website:

- Complaints Policy

- Enquiries and Appeals Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy and Special Considerations Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Data Protection Policy