		
ISSUED BY: AO Director Caroline Walton	Awarding Organisation Policies and Procedures	**ISSUE DATE:** September 2026 **REVIEW DATE:** September 2027
	Sanctions Policy	**ISSUE:** V7

Scope and Purpose

Explosive Learning Solutions (ELS) will take all reasonable steps to prevent any adverse effects which could impact the assessment outcomes for apprentices and lead to one individual, or cohort being unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged in their Apprenticeship Assessments. Where ELS identifies any practices which could result in an adverse effect, sanctions will be applied consistently and proportionately to the parties involved.

This policy applies to all stakeholders and third parties involved in the Apprenticeship Assessment process and includes apprentices, their employers, training providers and their representatives and third-party suppliers. It applies particularly to areas where ELS relies on self-regulation by the stakeholders.

Sanctions are most commonly issued following an investigation into malpractice or maladministration. They may also be imposed where the offender has failed to complete a task that ELS has requested they do.
The sanction enforced will reflect the seriousness of the incident. When deciding the appropriate sanction(s), ELS will consider factors such as the actual or potential risk to the integrity of the Apprenticeship Assessment.

Definitions

Sanction: a potential penalty given because of failing to comply with ELS Apprenticeship Assessment rules and guidelines.

Adverse effect: an effect that goes against ELS desired Apprenticeship Assessment conditions.

Procedure

ELS will apply a range of appropriate and proportionate sanctions in response to events such as:

- Training providers failing to meet Gateway to completion requirements fully
- Inappropriate support or assistance to apprentices that unfairly helps them to pass an Apprenticeship Assessment component
- Failing to prepare apprentices fully for their Apprenticeship Assessments

(understanding of methods/components)
- Knowingly and repeatedly moving apprentices from the on-programme phase to Apprenticeship Assessment who are not likely to be successful resulting in resits and retakes
- Not advising ELS of apprentices who require reasonable adjustments for timely support to be provided
- Failing to disclose any actual or perceived individual or organisational conflict of interest
- Non-payment of Apprenticeship Assessment fees
- Inaccurate or out of date information shared (such as dates of breaks in learning, changes of address/workplace)

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Possible Sanctions

In the event that ELS identifies such practices, it will consistently impose sanctions to protect the apprentice and the validity, reliability and security of the Apprenticeship Assessment.

The following sanctions may be imposed:

- Issue a verbal warning with a notice to improve as discussed in monthly partner meetings
- Pausing Apprenticeship Assessment until internal investigation is conducted and concluded
- Pausing Apprenticeship Assessment until outstanding payments are received
- Report concerns the regulator/External Quality Assurance Provider (EQAP) where it is felt the adverse effect could impact on the reliability of the assessment outcome or on another Apprenticeship Assessment
- Decline of new registrations for Apprenticeship Assessment until agreed actions have been completed in a specified timeframe
- Early closure of the partner agreement

After investigation of a breach, if ELS advise that a sanction needs to be imposed, we will notify the training provider via email explaining the type of sanction that is going to be applied and the reasons why. This will be followed up in a letter, providing written confirmation posted to the training provider.

The training provider and apprentice are required to comply with the terms of any sanctions imposed within the relevant time scales. Any action must be completed. If they do not comply then further sanctions could be imposed, which could be more serious than the original sanction.

Once an investigation has been completed and the sanction imposed, ELS will review the situation on a step-by-step basis to amend or remove the sanction depending on the outcome of the review process. The training provider and apprentice will be notified of the outcome by email.

Reporting

Any sanctions will be reported to the ELS Board of Governors quarterly. This policy is reviewed annually and will be shared with all stakeholders.

Appeals

To appeal against a sanction, an appeal form must be submitted within 10 working days of the sanction being issued. The form must explain the grounds for the appeal and include any supporting evidence. Completed forms and supporting evidence should be emailed using the contact details provided in this policy. For further guidance, please refer to the ELS AO Appeals Policy.

The ELS Quality Assurance Manager will review the evidence provided and assess the appropriateness of the original sanction. A decision confirming whether the sanction will remain in place or be revoked, together with feedback, will be provided to the complainant within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome, the appeal will progress to Stage 2 of the ELS Apprenticeship Assessment Appeals process, where the Appeals Panel will collectively review the case.

Contact Information

Email: assessments@explosivelearningsolutions.com
Telephone: 01235 861805 ext 3
Address: 4 The Terraces, Library Avenue, Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 0SG

Review and Version Control

ELS is committed to ensuring all policy documentation is subject to document control and reviewed annually.

RELATED DOCUMENTS: -	**APPROVED BY: -**
004AO Appeals Policy	Caroline Walton, AO Director