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BCS Professional Certification

Provider Sanctions Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy is aimed at Accredited Training and Examination Organisations delivering PDS Certifications who have failed to meet aspects of our delivery requirements and/or the standards as laid down by any external Awarding Bodies in respect of regulated certifications (such as AXELOS the Official Accreditor for ITIL ® and PPM ® and ISTQB for Software Testing certifications). This document sets out the sanctions BCS may impose on Providers in such situations. The policy also ensures that any sanctions are applied in a consistent manner by BCS staff.

2. Your responsibility as a Provider

It is important that all staff (including consultants, contractors and temporary staff) involved in the delivery of certifications are fully aware of the contents of the policy and its possible implications on your organisation should you fail to comply with requirements specified by BCS in relation to the delivery of our certifications (some of which are specified by other Awarding Bodies).

3. Maintaining standards of our certifications

BCS has a responsibility to the candidate taking our certification(s), the wider community and the relevant Awarding Bodies to ensure that Providers deliver our certifications in accordance with relevant standards. In order to meet this responsibility, the performance of each Provider is monitored by BCS.

4. Approach to imposing sanctions

BCS has a range of sanctions that can be imposed on a Provider depending on:

- the seriousness of the situation
- the level and track-record of the Providers previous non-compliance(s)
- the risk to the interests of candidates
- the integrity of the certifications
- any adverse effects with public confidence in our exams

Nonetheless, BCS aims to ensure that the application of sanctions is not used lightly. We would hope that through our approach to Provider support and the creation of appropriate action plans, we will work with Providers to prevent situations arising that would warrant a sanction being imposed.

5. Possible reasons to impose sanctions

If sanctions are required, then they will be applied depending on the nature of the situation. For example, if the Provider has:

- outstanding non-conformances (outside of agreed timescales)
- unsatisfactory response to non-conformances
- failure to adhere to the BCS Accreditation agreement requirements
- failure to adhere to the Official Accreditor scheme requirements
- suspected or proven cases of maladministration/malpractice which are being investigated
- making certification claims before accreditation has been awarded
- deliberately misleading information such as stating you are accredited for certain qualifications when this is not the case on the website or other promotional materials
- refusing access to premises and/or records to the staff of BCS or the relevant Awarding Body such as the Official Accreditor
- cancelling a planned audit without a legitimate reason
- consistently failing to deal with complaints from candidates or their employer to the satisfaction of BCS
- information provided to BCS or other interested party is found to be misleading or deliberately inaccurate
- repeatedly cancelling courses when candidates are booked on the sitting
- suggesting there are multiple course venues when this is not the case
- evidence that the accredited materials are in breach of copyright
- non-payment of invoices
- failure to refund candidate course or examination fees when required
- incorrect use of certifications marks and/or Intellectual Property Rights
- failure to ensure that your Affiliate is abiding by the relevant requirements
- no accredited courses are offered for any rolling 3-month period
- no examinations are ordered and taken in a rolling 3-month period
- evidence of an ineffective management system in cases of serious incidents
- BCS believes that the Provider has brought BCS into disrepute
- pass rates for three consecutive examinations (following a BCS accredited training course) fall significantly below the average pass rate for that examination
- significant changes to the organisation (such as change of ownership or country of registration)
- significant changes to the courseware without BCS review and approval
- failure to submit revised course materials if this is required by BCS
- failure to return live examination papers to BCS
- failure to use the correct examination materials for certain examination sittings
- failure of a surveillance visit or audit that are performed by BCS or other authorised Awarding Body such as the Official Accreditor
- intentional breach of equal opportunities

If any of these conditions are not met BCS may withdraw or suspend the approval. The examples above for recommending and imposing sanctions are only indicative and not meant to be an exhaustive list.

6. Sanctions which may be imposed

Non-compliances will be reviewed by the Policy, Compliance and Audit Team along with any other relevant internal stakeholders such as the Service Delivery Manager, Account Manager or Accreditation Manager.

BCS may choose to apply the following sanctions to a single certification, a certification sector or all certifications depending on the seriousness of the non-conformance(s).

Sanctions may include:

- **Withholding of candidates results:** We will not provide the Provider or candidate with the results for the examination(s) until the issue has been resolved
- **Preventing the booking of examinations** (e.g. not allowing you to book examination sessions with BCS) until the issue has been resolved
- **Suspension of Accreditation:** This is the temporary removal of accreditation for a limited period of time to be decided by BCS. New examination requests will not be processed and candidate results will be withheld until accreditation has been reinstated. The Provider must not accept any further candidate bookings and remove any references to accreditation from the website or other information in the public domain until BCS has provided written confirmation of the reinstatement of accreditation. They must also stop using any trademarks or logos associated with the relevant certification
- **Withdrawal of Accreditation:** This is a permanent removal of accreditation. The Provider must remove any reference to the accreditation status including website and other information in the public domain. They must also stop using any trademarks or logos associated with the relevant certification. This will only be used in exceptional circumstances such as a critical non-conformance, or more, or the continued failure of the Provider to address outstanding actions or complaints.

BCS will not impose the immediate withdrawal of accreditation for a certification or range of certifications without the Provider being given an opportunity to address the area(s) of non-compliance and the non-conformance poses a significant threat to the interest of either the candidate(s) or the integrity of the certifications.

BCS will always communicate the nature of the sanction and the rationale for its application to you. If you disagree with the imposed sanctions you have the right to appeal in accordance with our Appeals Policy.

7. Associated Documentation

[Malpractice and Maladministration Policy](#)
[Appeals Policy](#)

8. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in line with departmental quality standards and regulatory criteria. We will also take into account any customer feedback, trends from our internal monitoring arrangements, changes in our practices, actions from the Awarding Bodies or other relevant external agencies as well as changes in legislation. If you would like to feedback any views, please contact us.