



The Law Society

Conveyancing Quality Scheme

Appeals Policy

All applications for CQS accreditation, ongoing membership and reaccreditation are assessed by the Law Society's CQS office using the CQS risk scorecard. Any application may be referred to the CQS Assessment Panel if the firm fails to meet the required minimum standard, at the discretion of the CQS Office.

Practices may request an appeal against decisions made by the Law Society's CQS office or CQS Assessment Panel.

Decisions that will be considered are limited to;

1. Decisions to reject an application to CQS
2. Decisions to defer (pending remedial action) an application to CQS
3. Decisions to suspend membership of CQS
4. Decisions to revoke membership of CQS

Decisions made by the appeal panel are final.

1. Procedure to appeal a decision to reject an application to CQS

The practice will be informed in writing of any decision to decline the application and the reasons for that decision.

An appeal must be made within 21 days of the date of the written notification from the CQS office. Reasons for the appeal should be detailed and written submissions and relevant documentary evidence should be provided for the consideration of the Appeal Panel.

All appeals should be accompanied with payment for the appeal fee of £300 (£250 + VAT)

2. Decisions to defer (pending remedial action) an application to CQS

The practice will be informed in writing of any decision to defer the application and the letter from the CQS office will include the details of the remedial actions the applicant must take and the timescale by which these actions must be completed in order to reactivate the application.

An appeal must be made within 21 days of the date of the written notification from the CQS office. Reasons for the appeal should be detailed and written submissions and relevant documentary evidence should be provided for the consideration of the Appeal Panel.

All appeals should be accompanied with payment for the appeal fee of £300 (£250 + VAT)

3. Decisions to suspend membership of CQS

4. Decisions to revoke membership of CQS

The CQS office and the CQS Assessment Panel reserve the right to suspend or revoke membership at any time for any reasonable reason. Reasonable reasons shall include (but not be limited to):

- a) any breach of the Practice Agreement or any breach by the SRO of any obligations set out in the Practice Agreement which are not remedied (if capable of remedy) within 14 days of being required by written notice to do so
- b) the Practice or the SRO do or omit to do something which, in the reasonable opinion of the Law Society, could be detrimental to the reputation and integrity of the CQS and its brand
- c) the ongoing membership of the firm poses an unacceptable level of risk to CQS
- d) the firm no longer meets the minimum standard required by the CQS risk scorecard
- e) any failure to co-operate with requests for information by the CQS Office during the period of membership

A practice will be informed in writing of the reasons why the CQS office is considering or has effected removal of accredited status.

The CQS office will confirm that removal will be effected on a specified date.

An appeal must be made within 21 days of the date of the written notification from the CQS office. Reasons for the appeal should be detailed and written submissions and relevant documentary evidence should be provided for the consideration of the Appeal Panel.

All appeals should be accompanied with payment for the appeal fee of £300 (£250 + VAT)

There are three possible outcomes following referral to the Appeal Panel:

- The practice will be given a timescale within which to remedy the circumstances that have led to breach of its obligations under the scheme and that failure to do so will result in its accredited status being terminated
- The practice will be informed in writing of the reasons why accreditation is being removed and the date on which the removal will take effect
- The practice will be informed that their appeal has been successful

There is no right of appeal on this decision but the practice may wish to reapply for accreditation if it can provide evidence that it has remedied the behaviour or deficiencies that have put it in breach of its scheme obligations.

How to appeal

If you would like to initiate an appeal against a decision made by the CQS Office or Assessment Panel, please write to the CQS Office, The Law Society, 113 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1PL, clearly outlining the reasons for your appeal and including any submissions and relevant documentary evidence.

Your request will be acknowledged within 10 days. You will then be advised of the date on which the Appeal Panel will consider the appeal and the decision as soon as possible after the date of that meeting.

The Appeal Panel will consider the written evidence and make a decision based on your submission. In exceptional circumstances, a practice may be invited to give oral evidence.