

LASER Access to HE Centre Withdrawal Policy and Procedures

Policy Statement

Any centre approved to offer Laser Learning Awards (LASER) Access to HE provision may at any time and for any or no reason, rescind their approval in line with the latest Centre Recognition Agreement usually signed by the Head of Centre on behalf of the Centre.

Similarly, LASER may choose to temporarily suspend or permanently terminate the approval of any of its centres at any time, in line with the latest Centre Recognition Agreement usually signed by the Head of Centre on behalf of the Centre. This includes suspending or terminating approval where a centre has failed to comply with any of the requirements set out in the signed Centre Recognition Agreement and/or other documents or policies, including where there is reasonable cause to believe that inaccurate information has been supplied to LASER, or malpractice/maladministration has taken place, and where no non-compliance or malpractice has necessarily taken place or been proven.

Policy Relevance

This policy is relevant to all LASER approved Access centres and sets out the key steps which will be taken when the approval of a centre is suspended or permanently withdrawn, whether by the centre or by LASER. It should be considered alongside the LASER Centre Recognition Agreement, Access Centre Recognition Addendum, LASER Access to HE Centre Approval Policy, LASER Access to HE Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, LASER Access to HE Sanctions Policy, and any specific individual approval application forms, where appropriate.

Policy Responsibility and Review

This policy is the responsibility of the Head of Access and will be reviewed by April 2028 at the latest.

Rescinding of Centre Approval by the Centre

A centre may rescind and withdraw from LASER approval at any time, for any reason or for no reason.

This decision must be notified to LASER in writing by the Head of Centre, with the relevant notice period given, in line with the current Centre Recognition Agreement signed on behalf of the centre. This can take the form of an email and can be sent to any LASER contact, including the Head of Access, the Access Quality Manager, or the administration team.

Whilst no reason needs to be given, any feedback provided will help LASER to ensure a high quality service continues to be offered to its centres.

The centre will be removed from any lists of LASER approved centres which may exist, once approval is withdrawn (ie at the end of the notice period).

All centre approval withdrawals will be reported to LASER's Access Quality & Development Committee and Board, with reasons for withdrawal. This collated data may be used by LASER to monitor trends and for quality assurance and improvement purposes.

Where centre approval is rescinded after any fee has been paid, such as application fee, or annual fee, no refund will be given.

Any liability of the centre to any staff/contractors or learners, eg if scheduled to deliver a training course after rescinding their approval, is a matter between the centre and the individual/s concerned. LASER has no liability to individuals or to the centre in this case.

Please see below for obligations which continue after a centre has rescinded its LASER approval.

Suspension or Withdrawal of Centre Approval by LASER

The following considerations (not an exhaustive list) are examples of what may be taken into account when considering temporarily suspending or permanently withdrawing a centre's approval:

- Centre's compliance with LASER requirements for centre and/or qualification approval.
- Centre's compliance with requirements of regulators (QAA) and/or compliance with legislative requirements.
- Inadequate centre resources including physical, professional and financial, relevant to provision being offered.
- Ease of communication with, including responsiveness of centre staff.
- Co-operation of centre staff with any sanctions, conditions, recommendations, monitoring activity and/or investigation including but not limited to providing full and accurate responses and/or evidence by given deadlines.
- Any connections between the centre/any individuals connected with it, and any other centres involved in any malpractice findings and/or withdrawal of approval by LASER or any other body, and/or any regulatory/legal action.
- Any information which comes to light after approval and which conflicts with information supplied during the approval process. This includes but is not limited to declarations made by Head of Centre, trainers, and IQAs.
- Failure to pay invoices on time and/or failure to abide by any financial agreement made.
- Where, acting reasonably, LASER has doubts that the centre, or any individuals connected with it, is able or willing to comply with any regulatory and/or other requirements placed upon it.
- Where, acting reasonably, LASER believes that the integrity of its awards and/or its reputation may be at risk by association with the centre or any individuals connected with it.
- Where, acting reasonably, LASER believes the centre/any individuals connected with it, or the individual, may compromise the ability of LASER to comply with any legal and/or regulatory requirements upon LASER.

The reputation of LASER (and the merit of any LASER provision awarded) depends in part on the centres and individuals involved. Notwithstanding that LASER will endeavour to comply with any relevant legal requirements or regulatory requirements, whether any approval is suspended or withdrawn by LASER is ultimately at LASER's discretion and the factors listed above are not exhaustive. LASER shall have the sole right to determine if there are any other relevant factors to be taken into account. This could include factors that only become apparent to LASER after the approval process. LASER may rely upon information received in confidence, which will not be shared with the relevant centre, for example from regulatory authorities or other Awarding Organisations.

Approval may be suspended or withdrawn by LASER with immediate effect in certain circumstances including (but not limited to) breach of terms, supplying of false/inaccurate/misleading information, or malpractice, in line with the current Centre Recognition Agreement signed on behalf of the centre's approval application form.

LASER may take the decision to withdraw a centre's approval with the appropriate notice period where there is not necessarily any evidence of breach of terms, malpractice, etc, based on a lack of confidence in the centre's administration and/or management and/or delivery of any of its approved provision, in line with the current Centre Recognition Agreement signed on behalf of the centre.

The decision to suspend or withdraw approval will be taken based on the reasons for the concern and the level of risks and/or potential risks including (but not limited) to learners, the individual, the public, LASER's reputation, integrity of LASER's awards, and LASER's ability to comply with any legal and/or regulatory requirements.

LASER may also take the decision to withdraw a centre's approval with no reason required, in line with the current Centre Recognition Agreement signed on behalf of the centre.

Where approval is withdrawn for reasons relating to malpractice or compliance failures, to meet its regulatory obligations LASER is required to notify the relevant regulator, QAA. Notifications as above may also be made should a centre rescind its LASER approval whilst an investigation is underway into that centre/any individuals connected with it.

A centre whose approval has been withdrawn will be removed from any lists of LASER approved centres which may exist, upon withdrawal.

All centre approval withdrawals made by LASER will be reported to LASER's Access Quality & Development Committee and Board, with reasons for withdrawal. This collated data may be used by LASER to monitor trends and for quality assurance and improvement purposes.

If LASER's consideration of whether to suspend or withdraw approval requires any extra visits to the centre by LASER, the centre will be charged at the rates set out for additional/exceptional visits in the current LASER Pricing Policy and published on the LASER website. All fees are non-refundable, whatever the outcome of the visit. Where centre approval is suspended or withdrawn after any fee has been paid, such as application fee, or annual fee, no refund will be given.

In line with the current Centre Recognition Agreement signed on behalf of the centre, LASER has no liability to a centre whose approval it suspends or withdraws.

Please see below for obligations which continue after LASER has suspended or withdrawn a centre's LASER approval.

LASER operates an Access to HE Appeals Policy and Procedure, available on its website, which may be invoked under certain circumstances, subject to the appeal being within the scope of the policy. Please refer to the LASER Access to HE Appeals Policy and Procedure for further details.

Obligations During Suspension and After Withdrawal

A centre whose approval is suspended or withdrawn, whether by their own decision or as imposed by LASER, continues to have certain obligations on them which continue in force, in line with the current Centre Recognition Agreement signed on behalf of the centre and/or any other relevant policies or application forms/agreements. This includes but is not limited to:

- Providing information as requested relating to learners including contact details.
- Complying with any requests relating to enabling learners to complete the course they have started.
- Providing information/evidence as requested relating to monitoring activities/investigations.
- Returning the centre's approval certificate to LASER.
- Ceasing to use any Intellectual Property Rights belonging to LASER.
- Ceasing to use all LASER/associated logos.
- Paying all fees due and outstanding.

In these circumstances LASER has an obligation to do all it reasonably can to support learners who have started and/or are registered on LASER courses and may require co-operation from the centre in order to achieve this.

Policy Approval

Approved internally by CEO, 8 June 2023

Approved externally by AQDC, 8 June 2023

Latest review date: April 2028 for approval at AQDC in June 2028

Please note:

This policy is specifically relating to delivery of Access to HE qualifications, for corresponding policies relevant for all other LASER and Trident Awards (security industry qualifications) please click here: <https://laser-awards.org.uk/about/policies-and-procedures/>