

No-Fee Policy and External Costs

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1. No compulsory purchases

Applicants are not required to buy membership, media services, publicity materials, consultancy packages or designated testing. They may prepare the application themselves. External service prices have no bearing on the decision of Gold Standard Quality Awards.

2. Reporting unauthorised charges or representation

A claim that a person may collect programme fees, internal-allocation fees or guaranteed-award fees does not authorise that person to represent the programme. Reports should include payment demands, web pages, contracts or communications, for examination under the applicable procedure.

3. Comparisons with other programmes

Statements concerning this programme are limited to its own no-fee and independence arrangements. They must not imply that every fee-charging evaluation sells awards. Conduct by other organisations must be described using verifiable facts.

4. No programme fees at any stage

No fees are charged for eligibility checks, formal applications, document verification, award decisions, corrections, public registration, electronic certificates, mark licences, renewal, changes, complaints or reconsideration.

5. No paid award tiers or priority decisions

There are no gold, silver or bronze tiers, paid membership conditions, compulsory publicity packages or paid expedited decisions. Donations, purchases, funding and sponsorship cannot be exchanged for an award. Financial support creates no entitlement to recognition.

6. External services arranged by applicants

Applicants independently select eligible providers for testing, translation, notarisation and Apostille services, and pay those providers directly. Gold Standard Quality Awards does not designate or recommend partner testing bodies, participate in their charges or receive a commission.

7. Payments and guarantees cannot replace verification

Agents and advisers must hold genuine authorisation. Their charges do not affect the independent decision of Gold Standard Quality Awards. Claims of internal allocations, designated payments or guaranteed awards should be documented and reported.

8. Records, administration and correction

For matters covered by this document, records must retain the application or case number, specific product and market, version used, documents and page references, responsible personnel, material dates, reasons and formal notices. Personal information and trade secrets are handled according to access permissions. Questions about a record may be raised through correction, complaint or reconsideration channels available to an entitled applicant. Submission alone does not alter an existing decision or licence. The outcome is determined by the formal notice and current record.

9. Effective date, application and version control

Version 2.0 of this document is published and takes effect on 19 October 2026. It applies to relevant matters formally submitted after that date. Existing applications retain their original snapshot and rules. Material changes are notified separately and handled under transitional arrangements; new conditions are not retrospectively inserted into historical decisions. Website and downloadable texts must agree. Superseded versions identify their replacement, and name or wording corrections are recorded separately from substantive amendments.