



**NTIA**

## Complaints Policy

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## 1.0 Purpose

The complaints policy and its associated procedures are defined to encourage an open and transparent approach to the management of both complementary and critical feedback.

This is applied to the full range of services.

We strive to provide the best quality of learning and services that meet or exceed the expectations of learners and stakeholders. We will promote a culture that is responsive to feedback, whether complimentary or critical.

Comments about our services are actively encouraged and acknowledged as a valuable source of information that we can evaluate and use to improve the quality of our provision to learners and other key stakeholders. Occasionally services fail and where this leads to dissatisfaction we seek to address and resolve all complaints within a specified time frame, in a manner that does not intimidate and is supported by clear and accessible procedures that ensure thorough investigation and fairness. Likewise, we seek to identify what has worked well in order to enable the spreading of good practice.

## 2.0 Aim

The aim of the compliments, comments, feedback, and complaints procedure plays an important part in enabling the company to gain awareness of positive aspects of our services and areas that require further development.

This policy is in place to: -

- Help customers understand the compliments, comments, feedback, and complaints procedure.
- Enable customers to compliment, comment and feedback and complain.
- Address all complaints effectively
- Allow speedy handling with established time limits for action.
- Keep people informed of the progress of their complaint.
- Ensure a full and fair investigation (where required).
- Respect customer's confidentiality.

Collate and analyse complaints to assist in improving our service.

### 2.1 What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of NTIA.

### 2.2 Specific complaints

There are also specific procedures for those learners who express dissatisfaction with the outcome of their internal assessments. For these complaints, learners should use the Assessment Appeals procedure, not the complaint procedure.

### 3.1 How to raise a complaint

Firstly, complainants are requested to talk directly about their dissatisfaction with the individual(s) involved, to see if an informal resolution is possible.

Learners should try to resolve issues with their tutors/assessors in the first instance. Most complaints can be resolved quickly by informal processes at the level of immediate contact.

Only if these measures fail should the issue be raised as a complaint.

### 3.2 Stages of making a complaint

The process is in three stages as defined below.

#### *Stage 1: Informal resolution*

- Complaints should be raised locally, either in writing or verbally, to the staff member directly responsible for the delivery of the service, or their line manager if the complaint relates to the conduct of a staff member.
- A complainant should raise the matter informally within 10 working days of being aware of the issue with the member of staff concerned or that person's immediate line manager.
- Where the complaint relates to a series of events, then the concern should be raised within 10 working days of the last occurrence.
- Learners may seek assistance from delivery staff to help bring about an informal resolution, including identifying the appropriate member of staff to approach. All complaints are taken seriously and will be investigated.
- Before moving to a formal Investigation, we will look at the means by which an informal resolution was attempted. For informal complaints relating to the training programme, the learner should discuss the matter, (in the first instance), with their tutor or assessor, as appropriate.
- For complaints relating to other services, the complainant should discuss the matter, (in the first instance), with the person providing the service, or that member of staff's line manager or the Head of Quality & Compliance.

### *Stage 2: Formal Investigation*

- If a complaint has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at Stage 1, or it cannot be resolved informally; then a Stage 2 complaint should be made. A letter of complaint, in addition to any supporting documentation must be submitted by the Complainant to the Head of Quality & Compliance within 10 working days.
- The letter should detail the concerns about the training or service. This should include the following:
  - the specific concern about the delivery of the training or the service provided
  - the informal approaches used and why they were not successful
  - Indicate the outcome sought
- However, it is important to note the eventual outcome may be different from the one sought.  
An acknowledgment will be sent within 5 working days which will and a member of the senior management team will be nominated to formally investigate.
- A full written response will be provided to the complainant within 20 working days of the initial receipt of the complaint. Should circumstances require additional time to investigate, the investigator officer will advise the learner and will agree to a revised timeframe for the completion of the investigation.
- The investigating officer must ensure the complainant has an adequate opportunity to be heard. Learners have the right to request support in the preparation of their complaint from staff, if they require this level of support.
- The Investigating officer must consider all such statements presented by, or on the specific written authorisation of the complainant.
- Following the completion of the investigation, the Investigating officer may uphold the complaint in full, in part, or dismiss it.
- We will implement any such recommendations arising out of the complaint investigation.
- In response to allegations of staff conduct, if an investigation determines that any disciplinary or remedial action is required, this will be conducted in consultation with the Group Head of Human Resources division of the group.

### *Stage 3: Appeal*

- If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation at Stage 2 of the procedure, they can appeal against the decision and request a review of the complaint.
- An appeal must be submitted within 10 working days of the date of the Stage 2 outcome letter.

- Stage 3 constitutes a review and not a re-investigation of the complaint and can only be requested on the following grounds: -
- There were procedural irregularities in the Stage 2 investigation which had a material effect on the outcome.
- Based on the evidence available to the Stage 2 investigator at the time, the outcome is unreasonable.
- New evidence has come to light which the Complainant was unable (for valid reasons), to provide earlier in the process and which would have had a material impact on the outcome.
  
- The appeal will be reviewed by the Managing Director, who will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days. The Managing Director will consider whether the complainant has demonstrated grounds for appeal in full or in part (and suggest any action to resolve the complaint), or not at all.
- If the complainant has not satisfied the grounds for review, they will be notified in writing of this within 10 working days. Where the grounds for Appeal have been met, a review will be initiated and a full response will be provided within 20 working days of receipt.
  
- Following the completion of the investigation, the Managing Director may uphold the complaint in full, in part, or dismiss it. Outcomes of complaint reviews concerning staff conduct will be copied to the relevant line manager. If any disciplinary action is required, this will be conducted in consultation with the Group Head of Human Resource division.
  
- Finally, once the complaint procedure has been exhausted and all three stages have been completed, there exists a right to complain to the Education Skills Funding Agency.

#### 4.0 Next Steps

The Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) - for Learners and Apprentices. The ESFA will investigate complaints about all courses that the ESFA funds and those courses funded by an Advanced Learning Loan. The ESFA will not usually investigate complaints until the provider's procedure, (including the appeal), has been exhausted. If the ESFA believes that the provider is not dealing with a complaint appropriately or effectively, they may decide to intervene before the provider's procedure has been exhausted.

Complaints Team, Education Skills Funding Agency,  
 Cheylesmore House,  
 Quinton Road,  
 Coventry,  
 CV1 2WT  
 or by email to [complaintsteam@esfa.bis.gov.uk](mailto:complaintsteam@esfa.bis.gov.uk)

#### 5.0 Monitoring and reporting

The Head of Quality & Compliance will collate a summary analysis report of Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments which will be presented to the Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis.

An annual KPI report will be produced to compare year on year data, identifying any significant trends and include a year-on-year analysis of complaints received from learners by age, gender, ethnicity and disability.