

Complaints Policy

1. Policy Statement

1.1 As a result of the various activities of the Academy, the number of learners, customers, clients, parents and guardians involved and the large number of businesses and organisations with which the Academy works, complaints can, from time to time, arise.

1.2 In this context complaints are deemed to involve an expression of dissatisfaction, grievance or fault finding about the Academy.

1.3 All issues are logged, whether dealt with as a formal or informal complaint, to ensure fairness and to mitigate any further complaint.

2. Application and Scope

2.1 The Academy will thoroughly investigate any complaint, whether informal or formal, relating to the day-to-day operation of the Academy and the standards of service we provide.

2.2 Areas excluded from the policy are:

- Curriculum content or examination results where other forms of redress are more appropriate such as the examining body or the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and in the cases complainants should be referred to the appropriate body.
- Employment issues which are covered by staff Grievance Procedures.
- Any matter that is the subject of legal action.
- Any complaint which is deemed to be vexatious or malicious following investigation.

3. The Procedures

There are three main areas of the complaints policy and procedures; informal complaints, formal complaints and appeals:

3.1 Informal Complaints

3.1.1 There can be instances when a complainant may wish to remain anonymous or request that the issue be dealt with informally. Such individuals should be directed to the person who is directly concerned or best suited to resolve that issue. The details can be emailed to the relevant person if preferred. For learners, this is likely to be the Assessor or Monitor. In circumstances where these individuals are the source of the complaint then the IQA or Office Manager should be contacted. Details should be logged as 'informal' on the Complaints Log.

3.1.2 For those individuals who are unsure as to whom to contact then in the first instance they should contact the Reception desk of the Academy who will direct them to the relevant person to deal with the issue.

3.1.3 In most instances informal complaints will not receive a formal written response but nevertheless must be dealt with promptly.

3.1.4 Responsibility for the prompt follow up of informal complaints will lie with the Office Manager. The manager should endeavour to resolve the complaint but should refer it if it is evident that a resolution is not likely to be met. This should be done to prevent it becoming a more serious matter.

3.2 Formal Complaints

3.2.1 Formal complaints should be submitted in writing and addressed to the Office Manager or Hair Team Manager depending on the nature of the complaint.

3.2.2 Any other member of staff receiving a formal letter of complaint must pass the complaint to the Office Manager on the day of receipt together with any additional information they may hold on the incident. This may help to speed up the response time.

3.2.3 A written acknowledgement will be sent by the appropriate Manager within three working days and the details logged on the Complaints Log for checking and reporting purposes. All correspondence will be filed securely.

3.2.4 Any letter submitted should clearly set out the circumstances of the complaint, any individuals or witnesses involved and any relevant dates or times.

3.2.5 Where possible, and to provide the greatest opportunity for the complaint to be actioned, complaints should be submitted in a timely fashion in order to facilitate a resolution.

3.2.6 Complaints will be investigated fairly and quickly with the intention of satisfactorily resolving the matter, identifying the causes and symptoms and upholding or rejecting the complaint for the benefit of all involved.

3.2.7 A considered Academy view on the complaint will be made by the Senior Management Team. They will ensure that a detailed response with evidence is sent to the appropriate Manager within the prescribed timescale where appropriate.

3.2.8 The Operations Director will respond in writing within fifteen working days from the date of the receipt of the complaint, detailing of the outcome of the investigation. If the investigation is going to take more than fifteen working days a further holding letter will be issued.

Where complaints are received within fifteen working days of a holiday period, or during a holiday period, it is expected that the complaint response will take longer than fifteen working days due to the absence of appropriate staff to investigate. This will be confirmed in writing.

3.2.9 Following the resolution of the complaint, where required, appropriate team member must complete an Action Plan to address the issues raised.

3.3 Appeals

3.3.1 If the complainant remains dissatisfied or aggrieved or in disagreement with the decision made or reasons given, they may appeal against the decision. A complainant has ten working days in which to submit an appeal. The reason for the appeal should be clearly stated in writing and sent to the Operations Director.

3.3.2 A written acknowledgement will be sent within three working days.

3.3.3 The Appeal Panel will consist of at least two members of the Senior Management Team or Governors who were not involved in dealing with the original complaint. They will consider all the documentation available relating to the issues raised. The Appeal Panel will respond within fifteen working days from the date of the receipt of the appeal. If the review of the complaint is going to take more than fifteen working days a further holding letter will be issued. The decision at the end of this stage is final and will be communicated in writing.

3.3.4 If the Academy cannot settle the complaint to the satisfaction of the person involved, then a complaint may be referred to:

- The Education and Skills Funding Agency if the complaint relates to Further Education: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>
- The Awarding Body or End Point Assessment Organisation if the complaint relates to the qualification: <https://www.cityandguilds.com/feedback-and-complaints>
- The Main Provider if the complaint relates to Subcontracted provision: <https://www.colchester.ac.uk/contact-us/#concerns-and-complaints>

3.3.5 The Operations Director will, if necessary, incorporate any actions in to the Academy's Quality Improvement Plan.