

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS PROCEDURE

Introduction

Before having recourse to the Complaints Procedure, a stakeholder should make every effort to resolve a problem with the individual(s) concerned or consult his/her tutor for help and advice. Only when these steps have failed, or when the stakeholder has good cause for not pursuing these means of resolving the issue, should the Complaints Procedure be invoked. Submission of the Complaints Form initiates the formal Complaints Procedure.

The Complaints Procedure shall not apply to cases in which an individual wishes to appeal against an academic decision by the centre or an awarding organisation; in such instances the applicant should follow the Appeals Procedure, information on which will be given during learning inductions.

No action will be taken in the case of complaints made anonymously.

Stakeholders shall not be disadvantaged for lodging a complaint in good faith.

Procedure

Complaints received more than 6 months after the event in question will not normally be investigated.

The complaint should be in writing and addressed to the Operations Director.

The Operations Director shall acknowledge receipt of the Complaint within 7 days of the receipt of the completed Complaints form. The purpose of the first stage of the procedure is to ascertain the nature and details of the complaint. For this purpose the Operations Director may invite the complainant to a meeting (digitally or face to face) to clarify the complaint. The complainant may be accompanied by a friend or representative at this meeting and at any other meetings under this procedure. The friend or representative may make notes during the meeting.

The purpose of the second stage of the procedure is to gather all material evidence relating to the complaint and for the Operations Director either to reach an immediate decision on the complaint.

Subject to the written consent of the complainant, and sufficient evidence, the following provisions apply:

- In order to investigate the complaint, the Operations Director will seek information as necessary from anyone else likely to be helpful in resolving the matter, including the complainant. Information may be sought in writing, but may be discussed via other means.
- Once all necessary information has been gathered, the Operations Director shall decide whether it is possible to reach a final decision on the complaint. Any decision will be communicated in writing to all parties to the complaint, with a summary of reasons for the decision.

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- Appropriate action shall be taken in the light of the outcome of the investigation. The action will be intended to resolve the matter but may include the initiation of formal disciplinary action against a member of staff or a learner under the centre's disciplinary procedures.
 - On the completion of the investigation the Operations Director shall notify the complainant and other parties to the complaint in writing of the outcome and of any consequential action to be taken. This will include a summary of the reasons for the decision.
 - A complaint will normally be determined within 12 weeks from receipt of the complaint. However, you should be informed of the reasons should a longer period of investigation be required.

Appeals

A complainant may seek a review of the outcome of their complaint only on the ground of procedural irregularity on the part of the Operations Director.

A complainant wishing to lodge an appeal about the outcome of a complaint which has been investigated shall do so in writing, addressing the appeal to the Business Development Director at our registered address, within 14 days of notification of the outcome of the investigation. The Business Development Director will normally complete the review of an appeal within three weeks following its receipt.

If the Business Development Director, having reviewed the original complaint file and sought any evidence as appears to be necessary to reach a decision, considers there to be grounds for the appeal, he may make appropriate arrangements to have the complaint reconsidered. Any further action or outcome will be decided by the Business Development Director and will be final.

If a complaint from or on behalf of a learner remains unresolved after consideration by the School, there is provision for resolution of the complaint through a process which includes consideration by alternative external independent adjudicators who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and who are independent of the management and running of the School. All relevant paperwork needs to be provided to the independent adjudicators, who will consider and give their verdict within one month. A fee may be chargeable at this stage.

In the case of qualification-led programmes, The Business School (UK) Ltd reserve the right to make the contents, process and outcome of any complaint known to the relevant Awarding Organisation or regulatory authorities.

Monitoring

The Operations Director will monitor:

- The number of complaints made, and upheld or rejected;
- The nature of the matters raised and any remedial action recommended and taken;
- The ethnic origin, gender and other data relating to the complainants for diversity monitoring purposes.



Confidentiality

All information which a complainant, or anyone else, provides to the Operations Director during the course of an investigation of a complaint shall be treated as confidential, subject to the need to divulge information to investigate a case and any requirements of the Data Protection Act. It is equally important that the complainant also respects the need for confidentiality throughout the complaints process.

Please see our Safeguarding Policy. Any complaints made under areas considered relevant to Safeguarding will be reviewed in light of this policy, which may include escalating timescales.

Contact Details:

The Operations Director
The Business School (UK) Ltd
28 Rectory Lane
Thurcaston
Leicestershire LE7 7JQ
Email : helen@thebusinessschool.uk.com

The Business Development Director
The Business School (UK) Ltd
c/o 77A Cheap Street
Sherborne
Dorset DT9 3BA
Email : david@thebusinessschool.uk.com

This policy is also available on our Virtual Learning Environment at <http://vle.thebusinessschool.uk.com/>.