

## Apprenticeship Complaints Policy

### Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is up to date and compliant with the latest legislation.

The policy was last updated in October 2023 and is due for renewal in October 2024.

This policy may also be updated before the renewal date if legislation changes or if monitoring and review of performance suggests that practices should be altered.

### Policy Statement

At ABA Procurement we care about complaints. Complaints matter for everyone training with us, who deserve an explanation when things go wrong and want to know that steps have been taken to make it less likely to happen to anyone else. They matter because every concern or complaint is an opportunity to improve. Complaints may signal a problem and we need to know as a business how to improve at all times and at all opportunities.

Complaints matter because they tell us about the quality of our delivery. They tell us about how responsive a member of staff is, how safe, effective, caring and well-planned they are.

ABA Procurement Training place feedback from people who use our services at the heart of our work, because every concern is an opportunity for us to improve the quality of our provision. We also want to hear about positive experiences so we can highlight good and outstanding services.

We take complaints seriously – and we expect our staff to do so too. All apprentice and learner inductions describe complaints handling. Poor practice will be found and acted on. Good practice will be shared.

We work to make it easier to give us good quality feedback, and work with our staff/associates to improve learners' experience.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we capture and respond to all complaints. We then use the information to review our policies and procedures and continually improve our operational performance and customer satisfaction.

### Scope

This policy applies to all apprenticeship provision provided by ABA Procurement Training.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The directors are responsible for the distribution of this policy to all staff, including trainers. The directors are also responsible for ensuring that all complaints are reviewed at all Senior Leadership Team meetings. They are also responsible for reviewing and resolving all complaints, including the restructuring of policies and procedures where improvement has been identified.

The Directors take responsibility for ensuring that all complaints are captured, that the student knows the procedure to follow to make a complaint, and for managing the informal stage of a complaint. They are then responsible for managing the formal stage of a complaint, and for setting up the complaints panel.

## Policy Implementation

We want to provide good-quality services for everyone, but things sometimes go wrong. If they do, we need to know about them so that we can put them right and learn from them. This will help us to improve our performance.

## How will we do that?

We will make it easy for all apprentices and learners to make a complaint in the following ways:

- in person to their trainer
- by email: [cips@abaprocurement.com](mailto:cips@abaprocurement.com)
- by phone: 01603 251754

## What is a complaint?

Anyone who feels that they have had a poor service from us, or from someone providing the service for us, and have tried to get the problem solved by speaking to someone in the relevant department. This will affect you and will need a particular response from us.

## What happens then?

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and ABA Procurement maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality (with each complaint judged on its own merit). Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

## Response from us

We will acknowledge your complaint within two working days of receiving it. We will tell you the name of the person who is dealing with your complaint. You will receive a full response within five working days. If this is not possible, we will send you a letter explaining why there is a delay and saying when you will receive a full response.

## Solutions

If your complaint is accepted, the person involved will try to solve the problem by doing the following.

- Apologising to you and explaining what went wrong
- Providing the service, you are entitled to receive
- Changing procedures so that the mistake is not repeated
- Asking you to detail any recommendations of areas where we can improve our performance concerning the information, advice and guidance given

## Escalation

If the complaint is made by an apprentice and is not resolved by the main provider, this can then be escalated to the ESFA Apprenticeship Service Support on 08000 150 600 or [helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk](mailto:helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk)

## Equality and Diversity

Learners have the right to express dissatisfaction with the services they receive from ABA Procurement. Learners using this policy can expect to be treated fairly and without discrimination.

As part of the Prevent strategy we promote the Fundamental British Values to reflect life in modern Britain. These values are Democracy, Rule of Law, Respect and Tolerance, Individual Liberty. Fundamental British Values underpin what it is to be a citizen in a modern and diverse Great Britain valuing our community and celebrating diversity of the UK.

Fundamental British Values are not exclusive to being British and are shared by other democratic countries as a way of creating an orderly society, where individual members can feel safe, valued and can contribute for the good of themselves and others.

These will mirror our principles and values and all the work areas that we support. These will occur throughout our programmes and will be promoted by all staff.

## Dissemination of the Complaints Procedure

The Complaints Procedure shall be:

- Discussed on training courses
- Included in the learner/apprentice induction and Student Handbook
- Available in the Policies section of all Google Classrooms

## Complaints Procedure

The procedure has three stages:

- Informal
- Formal 1 – Quality Manager
- Formal 2 - Panel

### Informal

Learners who wish to raise issues about the conduct of skills trainers, or any other member of the team may request an informal meeting with a Director. The purpose of the meeting is to enable the learner to talk through and clarify any issues they have concerning assessment; a record will be kept of such meetings. The meeting should be requested within two weeks of the event occurring.

### Formal 1

If this meeting fails to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the learner then the Director will conduct a meeting with the skills trainer or staff member in question to explore the substance of the learner's complaint.

A record will be kept of action and timescale agreed and the Director will report this back to the learner within three working days. If subsequent action fails to resolve the matter, within the timescale, then the learner has the right to initiate the second stage of the formal complaint.

### Formal 2

If an learner wishes to complain, the complaint is lodged in writing with the Director, within ten days of the previous stage of the procedure being completed or expiry of agreed informal action timescale. The Operations Manager:

- Formally acknowledges receipt of the complaint.
- Sets a date for the complaint to be considered by a complaint panel.
- Notifies the external verifier that a complaint has been lodged and gives details of
- how it will be heard, including the composition of the complaint panel.

We would request that the complainant substantiates any complaints or allegations with as much written factual evidence as they can. It might be that we contact the complainant for further information if required in order to investigate any complaint raised, please ensure that these contact details are enclosed. This will assist in reaching a speedy conclusion to the complaint.

The complaint panel meets to consider the complaint within 28 working days of the date of receipt of the complaint form.

### Complaints Panel

The panel shall be small and formed so as to be objective and independent and will normally consist of:

- A member of the Senior Leadership Team

- A skills trainer for the relevant course (if applicable)

The panel will ensure that:

It has full accounts from all parties involved. The Director can support the learner in the preparation of the written report/account of the issue/complaint.

It will not have as members anyone involved in the complaint.

They will inform the learner that they have the right to be accompanied in the panel meeting.

## Outcome

The outcome of the complaint shall also be recorded, together with reasons for that decision, with the outcome falling into one of the following categories:

- Complaint resolved informally
- Complaint dismissed
- Complaint to be dealt with under another procedure
- Complaint upheld and the appropriate action deemed to be one of:
  - Counselling
  - Training
  - General supervision
  - Other management action including disciplinary

## Further Information

Education and Skills Funding Agency Complaints:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skillsfundingagency/about/complaintsprocedure#complain-about-a-post-16-training-provider-college-or-employer-we-fund>

Awarding Body Complaints:

- Contacts for each awarding body available from the Quality Manager.
- CIPS complaints procedure for complaints against a study centre:
- If a learner has a complaint which concerns an issue within the control of a study centre, he or she should address that complaint to that study centre in the first instance and copy any correspondence relating to the matter to the CIPS Networks Manager at the registered office at Eaton House, Easton on the Hill, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 3NZ. Email: [enm@cips.org](mailto:enm@cips.org)

### Assessment Examination or EPA Decision Appeals

- ABA Procurement aims to provide a high-quality service to all our apprentices and learners. However occasionally, individuals may be unhappy about some aspect of their training or assessment with an awarding body, which may give rise to concern. Each apprentice and learner has the right to appeal against an assessment decision if he/she feels that a decision is unfair.
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- This process is designed to ensure concerns are dealt with effectively and in the shortest possible time.

### How do I appeal?

#### General

- If the learner feels that he or she has been wrongly or unfairly treated, he or she should, in the first instance, speak to the skills trainer concerned to try and resolve the problem informally within 2 weeks of the assessment/feedback taking place.
- If the issue remains unresolved then the learner should submit a formal letter of appeal to the Director (within two weeks of feedback provided), with the details of the qualifications and any supporting evidence.
- A panel made up of Senior Leadership Team and skills trainer will meet to judge the evidence within 30 days of escalation.
- They will advise the learner of the decision in writing.
- Should the learner remain unhappy with the decision then the apprentice has the right to appeal to the relevant awarding body/EPA, within 7 days.
- The awarding body/EPA decision is final.
- CIPS Examinations
- If a learner feels that the assessment decision for an examination is unfair or have reason to dispute it, he or she should, in the first instance, speak to ABA to determine if they agree that there are grounds for an appeal.
- If ABA is in agreement, then the learner must follow the CIPS appeal procedures as presented on the CIPS website. For category A appeals, this must be within one week of the assessment date of the exams taking place, or for category B appeals within one week of the results

#### CIPS as EPA assessor

- An apprentice has the right to request a review of their grades for their EPA assessments. Should an apprentice wish to request a review, they should apply to the EPAO following the assessment review and appeals procedure, submitted in writing within 10 working days of the results release date.
- CIPS must review the request appeal within 10 working days of the results release date.
- CIPS must review the request appeal and provide a formal written response to the apprentice within 10 working days of receipt.
- The apprentice should speak to their skills coach in the first instance for support with this.

### Quality Assurance

- The Directors will monitor the appeals procedure, in order to ensure that quality standards and the effectiveness of the procedure are maintained.

- The Directors will ensure that records on any matters related to the Appeals Procedure are maintained. These records will be held securely and remain confidential to the parties involved.

### Further points to raise

- If at any stage of the appeal the learner requires any guidance, support or further assistance, then he or she should speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Alternatively, he or she could speak to his or her line manager or mentor (if appropriate). Any help they seek will be in the strictest confidence.
- It is important that if the learner makes the decision to appeal, then he or she appreciates that no one will proceed further with the appeal without his or her agreement. If the apprentice feels that their concern has been resolved, he or she may withdraw the appeal at any stage.
- Any learner who thinks that there are circumstances outside the course, such as health or personal problems, which could adversely affect their performance in any form of assessment should bring these to the attention of the skills trainer as soon as possible before the relevant assessment.
- Any learner who believes that the assessment is taking place in conditions, which could significantly adversely affect their performance, should bring these to the attention of the skills trainer at the time of the assessment.

### Customer Complaints Form

Name:	
Email:	
Company Name: (if applicable)	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Which service is your complaint about?	
Type of complaint:	
How do you think we should respond to your complaint? (please use this section to tell us what you think we should do about your complaint)	
Please detail any recommendations of areas where we can improve our performance concerning the information, advice and guidance given	



CIPS Centre of Excellence

(+44) 1603 251754

Henderson Business Centre, Norwich, NR5 8BF

CIPS@ABA-Procurement.com

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date complaint received:	
Complaint to be dealt with by:	
Date complaint resolved:	