

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines relating to complaints.

## STATEMENT

Gi Group strives for high standards in service delivery and welcomes feedback from Apprentices, individuals, employers and anyone who works with us, on all aspects of our services. Such feedback is invaluable in helping us evaluate and improve our service.

## PURPOSE

The objectives of the Gi Group Complaints Policy and Procedure are to:

- Ensure everyone knows how to provide feedback and how a complaint will be handled.
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within clear timeframes.
- Provide individuals with a fair and effective way to complain about our service.
- Ensure that complaints are monitored and used to improve our services.

## GI GROUP WILL ENSURE THAT WE

- Listen carefully to complaints and, where possible, treat complaints confidentially.
- Record, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- Investigate the complaint fully, objectively and within the stated timeframe.
- Notify the complainant of the results of the investigation and any right of appeal.
- Inform the complainant of any action that will be implemented in order to ensure that there is no re-occurrence.
- Report to the Leadership and Management Team twice per year the number of complaints received, the outcomes of investigations and any actions taken or changes made.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all Apprentices, employers and stakeholders.

## PROCEDURE

Email your complaint to [apprentice@gigroup.com](mailto:apprentice@gigroup.com). Upon receipt the steps listed below will be actioned:

This procedure also applies to informal complaints received via a third party e.g. member of staff.

The Lead IQA is responsible for managing and investigating all complaints:

- On receipt, all complaints are recorded on the complaints log.
- The complainant will receive an acknowledgement within 48 hours.
- The Lead IQA will investigate the complaint by gathering information and evidence from relevant members of staff.
- The complainant will receive a response to their complaint from the Lead IQA within 7 days of the original date of receipt.
- The Lead IQA will record details of their investigation and any outcomes on the Complaints Log.
- In the event that the complainant is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, they have a right of appeal and can escalate their complaint to the Head of ESL within 10 working days of the outcome being communicated to them. The Head of ESL will investigate and provide a written response to the complainant within 15 working days explaining the outcome of the complaint.
- If after this, the apprentice is not satisfied with the final decision made by Gi Group, they can raise their complaint to the relevant Awarding Body. Gi Group work with three Awarding Organisations – details are below.
  - Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance (HABC) and their appeals policy can be located on their website: [www.highfieldabc.com](http://www.highfieldabc.com). Alternatively please speak to the HABC team on 0845 2260350.
  - Pearsons Awarding Organisation, their appeals policy can be located on their website: [https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees/Enquiries\\_and\\_Appeals\\_on\\_Pearson\\_Vocational\\_Qualifications.pdf](https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees/Enquiries_and_Appeals_on_Pearson_Vocational_Qualifications.pdf) or alternatively email them on [vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com](mailto:vocationalqualitystandards@pearson.com).
  - EAL Awarding Organisation, their appeals policy can be located on their website: <http://eal.org.uk/centre-support/centre-support/policies-and-important-documents/38-appeals-policy-v4-november-2015/file>. Alternatively email them at [customercare@eal.org.uk](mailto:customercare@eal.org.uk).
- Should you address your appeal to the Awarding Body and remain unhappy with the outcome, you may then raise your appeal to ESFA.
- Complaints about qualifications, examinations and tests, should be directed to the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), who will carry out their own investigation and make a decision.
- The Head of ESL will record the outcome of the appeal on the Complaints Log.

## INFORMATION RELATING TO ESFA

They cannot re-investigate a complaint which has already been made to them. They can however review whether they investigated the original complaint in line with their procedure.

They can only investigate if you have exhausted Gi Group's own complaints procedure, including any appeal.

They can investigate complaints about Gi Group in relation to:

- the quality, management or experience of education and training
- undue delay or non-compliance with their published complaints procedures
- poor administration
- the quality of assessments for example, how an assessment or an end point assessment has been done (excluding outcomes)
- equality and diversity issues (except where there is a more appropriate mechanism for dealing with the matter, for example through the court, tribunals or other organisations)

- advanced Learner Loans
- apprenticeship providers from employers
- from employers, parents or other third parties on behalf of apprentice(s) (with written permission)

Do bear in mind that they cannot help with complaints about the following.

- Issues which are more than 12 months old, except for exceptional circumstances which they will make you aware of.
- Examination results, grades, marks assessment outcomes or curriculum content
- Safeguarding concerns, which are not covered by the complaints procedure but we will pass these onto the appropriate team within ESFA who will contact the provider. We may also contact other organisations such as Ofsted and local authorities.

## HOW TO COMPLAIN TO ESFA

ESFA only accept complaints in writing, by email or letter, except where they are required to make reasonable adjustments. You will need to let them know if this applies to you, either through a third party or by calling them. Following on from this they will arrange for someone to handle your complaint accordingly.

If you have difficulties in providing details in writing or if you are under 18, they will consider complaints made on your behalf by a third party. You will need to confirm that they can communicate with that third party on your behalf. If the complaint is on behalf of more than one person, they will need written permission from everyone.

You should email complaints to [complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk), or put them in a letter to:

Customer Service Team, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry CV1 2WT.

When contacting them about your complaint, you will need to provide the following:

- the name of the organisation you are complaining about.
- details of what your complaint is, together with the relevant documents.
- evidence that you have fully exhausted the organisation's complaints procedure, including any appeals process (for example, written correspondence confirming the outcome).
- permission to disclose details of your complaint to the organisation concerned.
- if you are acting on behalf of a learner, evidence that you have their permission to do so.

As they only investigate apprentices whose courses they fund, they may ask you for further information to help confirm this.

## THE ESFA PROCESS

On receipt of your complaint, the EFSA will check:

- if they fund the course/organisation.
- if it falls into one of the categories they can investigate.
- if the original decision or action complained about occurred more than 12 months ago.
- whether you have exhausted Gi Group's complaints procedure including any appeals process.

They will acknowledge receipt and send a copy of this procedure. They will also inform you of whether the complaint is one that they can investigate. If they cannot investigate your complaint, they may also signpost you to another organisation that may be able to help you.

They will appoint an officer with appropriate knowledge and expertise to investigate your complaint.

If they can investigate, they will email a summary of the complaint to you. In some complex cases, they will request that you agree to the summary. Where this happens, you will have 5 working days to respond.

Within 10 working days of agreeing a summary, they will send the information that you have provided along with a summary of the complaint to the provider. They will then ask Gi Group to share with them:

- details and copies of the relevant procedure.
- confirmation that their procedures have been exhausted.
- a response to the summary of complaint, together with relevant documents
- confirmation that they can share the information provided with the complainant.

If Gi Group's procedures have not been exhausted, they will let you know that they will not investigate the matter further until this has happened. If they decide Gi Group has unduly delayed resolving the complaint, or will not resolve the complaint within a reasonable timescale, they may continue to investigate.

If they need more information, they may contact those involved to get further information or evidence.

They aim to finalise the findings within 25 working days of your complaint summary being agreed. At which time they will notify you of the outcome and our findings, and that will conclude the investigation.

If at any point during the investigation, they encounter a delay in responding to you, they will notify you of the delay and provide details of when you can expect a response.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

To process a complaint, Gi Group will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides and which other people give in response to investigating the complaint. Gi Group will hold this data securely and only use it to help address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be made known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public by Gi Group. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in some circumstances, for example, where relevant legislation applies or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties. In this case the complainant will be

informed of who will need to know about the complaint.

## MONITORING

Complaints are an important tool which, alongside data provided by exit surveys, user feedback and focus groups, will allow Gi Group to learn about the services we provide. They provide a useful source of information about how individuals see our services and how we are serving them. To ensure we can learn the following data will be collected:

- Name
- Date of complaint and response date
- Nature of complaint
- Action(s) taken/recommendations made in response to the complaint
- Lessons learnt

The Complaints Log will be presented to the Leadership and Management Team twice per year. Wherever possible the data will be used to improve and develop the service.

The Complaints Policy and Procedure will be subject to review annually by the Lead IQA.

*Disclaimer: This policy is meant to provide general guidelines and should be used as a reference. It may not take into account all laws and is therefore not a legal document. The Company will not assume any legal liability that may arise from the use of this policy.*