

Complaints Policy

Complaints Policy

Scope :

This procedure applies to complaints raised by learners in relation to the services provided by Opportunity Learning Academy.

It does not apply to:

- Employment issues raised by staff.
- Suppliers and contractors

Aims and Objectives:

Opportunity Learning Academy will consider all complaints and deal with them fairly, honestly and consistently.

We will provide sufficient opportunity for any complaint to be fully discussed and aim to resolve it through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

We endeavour to:

- *Make the procedure easily accessible and publicised*
- *Make the procedure simple to use and understand*
- *Carry out an impartial investigation*
- *Allow for swift handling with established time-limits for action and keeping people informed of the progress*
- *Ensure a full and fair investigation*
- *Respect people's desire for confidentiality, wherever possible (some information sharing may be necessary to carry out a thorough investigation)*
- *Address all points of issue, providing an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary*
- *Use complaints to continually improve our business*

1) Informal Stage

It is recognised that concerns may be raised at any stage. These concerns should be dealt with immediately by the member of staff to whom the concern has been raised so that the issue does not escalate or impact on others. Opportunity Learning Academy aims to resolve informal concerns quickly and to reach a satisfactory resolution. To ensure that we can deal quickly with any concerns, informal complaints must be raised within one month of the issue's occurrence.

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2) Formal Complaints

STAGE 1 – submitting a formal complaint

If you feel that a concern has not been resolved appropriately through informal discussion with the appropriate staff member or it is of serious concern and you wish to have the matter formally investigated, you can make a formal complaint in writing to the Managing Director Garry.Costain@caremark.co.uk 01843 235910.

Where the complaint is about the leadership of the business, the complaint should be referred to the Open College Network West Midlands where they will need to send a formal complaint by either letter or email and submitted within one month of the event being complained about.

The written complaint should be returned, marked confidential, to the respective person, indicating at which stage you are making the complaint.

It would be helpful if the following information could be included in the complaint to enable us to deal with the complaint as efficiently as possible:

- Your Name
- Your Address
- Postcode
- Daytime telephone number
- Evening telephone number
- Email address for correspondence
- Details of the complaint
- What action if any, you have already taken to try and resolve your complaint (who you spoke to and what their response was)
- What action you feel might resolve the problem at this stage

The person dealing with the complaint will contact any parties involved and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 working days after receiving it. You will also be provided with a copy of our Complaints Procedure. The complaint will be investigated, and a response sent to you within 21 calendar days. If it is not possible to conclude the investigation within this time frame, we will keep you advised of progress and a revised date for a resolution.

If the nature of the complaint is of a serious nature and could constitute gross misconduct by a member of staff, the matter will be referred to the Managing Director immediately.

Examples may include theft, inappropriate behaviour, bullying/harassment, discrimination, bribery, fraud, breach of safeguarding, breach of legislation or procedures etc. To ensure that a thorough investigation of a complaint is made, we expect to be able to collect appropriate information from all the parties involved.

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Where a complaint is made anonymously this is not possible and therefore, no action will normally be taken in the event of an anonymous complaint being raised, although it would be sent to the relevant person to investigate and take appropriate action where required. A complainant may be invited to discuss the complaint or attend a meeting to establish further details regarding the cause of dissatisfaction or explore possible solutions.

-All information received as a result of a complaint investigation will remain confidential to those involved in the process. However, it should be noted that all parties involved in the complaint have the right to know the full details of the complaint, including its source. Potential complainants may want to obtain advice regarding the procedure prior to submitting a complaint, ACAS will be able to provide guidance. Under no circumstances will complainants be victimised or harassed for submitting a complaint. If a complaint is submitted falsely or with malicious intent, the Academy reserves the right to invoke relevant disciplinary procedures.

STAGE 2 – Appeals

-If the concern/complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved under Stage 1, you have the option to request an appeal. This must be submitted in writing to: Garry Costain, Opportunity Learning Academy, Margate Business Centre, Unit A5A Continental Approach, Margate, Kent. CT9 4JG.

Appeals must be submitted within 14 calendar days of receipt of the outcome letter, clearly stating the grounds on which the appeal is being made. Please note that appeals will not be accepted if the original complaint was upheld. If appropriate, the managing director will appoint a senior manager who has not been involved in the original complaint to investigate the matter. A response will normally be within 21 calendar days and you will be informed about the actions which will be taken to investigate your complaint.

Monitoring and Review

The Academy Manager monitors the Complaints Procedure on an annual basis, to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. They review all formal complaints received by Opportunity Learning Academy, scrutinise how they were resolved and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

Related policies and procedures

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy

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Policy/Process Review Date

This policy/process is reviewed every 12 months with the next review date being 30th April 2023