

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Document history

Version history				
Version	Date	Reason for release / version update	Amendments	Issued by
1.0	25.08.2022	First release		Emmanuelle Masquelier-James
2.0	17.08.2022	Annual review	Link to NCFE complaints policy added Link to Apprenticeship Service Support added	Emmanuelle Masquelier-James

Document approval		
Job Role	Name	Date approved
Head of Serco Education	Anne Thomas	17 th August 2022

This policy applies to all participants / learners registered on any qualifications delivered by Serco Education. This document sets out guidance of how to make a complaint and the procedure to follow.

Serco Education is committed to providing a duty of care to its learners and to deliver a high standard of customer service.

Introduction

We believe that service users / learners have the right to equal and fair access to learning, development, training and assessment that enhances their career and life opportunities.

All learners will receive full support and guidance throughout their learning journey, a learning and a working environment that recognises the need for equality and recognises diversity, and which supports and safeguarding the person's health and wellbeing.

Any service users / learners who believe they are being subjected to, or are suffering because of victimisation, discrimination, bullying, harassment or being excluded from equality of opportunity, will be encouraged and supported to execute these procedures and seek confidential information, advice and guidance and support that is intended to resolve that have initiated the appeal or complaint.

This appeals and complaints policy provides relevant and important guidance and support – any individual who makes a complaint or an appeal can be fully confident that any approaches or disclosures to our coaches and/or other appropriate staff will always remain private and confidential and treated with the upmost confidence and sensitivity.

Purpose

We pride ourselves on the level of service we offer to learners, employers and all other stakeholders.

All learners have the right to learn, be assessed and work in an environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. This policy provides a transparent, format and effective method to complain and appeal without fear of victimisation, discrimination and repression.

Formal complaints procedures

- You may raise a formal complaint at any stage of your studies by telephone, email or letter. All formal complaints are treated seriously and follow the procedures set out in this policy.
- Participants are encouraged to raise any areas of concern with their programme facilitator or coach (if applicable) as soon as they arise so that they can be resolved as quickly as possible. The facilitator / coach will then do everything possible to resolve the matters raised, and may request that the relevant Programme Manager review the formal complaint.
- Should the formal complaint not be resolved by the facilitator / coach, or a formal complaint is made at the end of the programme, then the complainant should contact Serco in writing at sercoprovider.support@serco.com. The query will then be directed to the relevant Programme Manager who is also responsible for the assurance of the programme. This individual will address the formal complaint, resolving it whenever possible.
- All formal complaints received will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt, with its resolution being completed within 15 days or to a mutually agreed date.
- We will keep a written record of the formal complaint and a letter will be sent to the complainant summarising the situation and confirming an agreed solution.
- We take formal complaints very seriously and as a result of any formal complaint (whether fully, partially or not upheld), we will ensure that our quality assurance procedures are reviewed in relation to the nature of the formal complaint.

Appeals procedure

Aims and objectives

- To enable the learner to enquire, question and appeal against any assessment decision/judgement that has been made.
- The learner may have an independent person to support them at any meeting relating to the raised concerns if deemed necessary

- To offer a process that enables the learner and Serco Education to reach an amicable agreement at the earliest opportunity.
- To maintain and promote standardised procedures that allow all appeals to be promptly investigated, discussed, and evaluated resulting in accurate and valid records of the processes followed.
- To promote openness, fairness, and confidence in the assessment practices.
- To facilitate a learner's ultimate right to appeal to the relevant awarding organisation where appropriate.
- To protect the interests of the learner and maintain the integrity of the assessment procedures and the assessment of the various qualifications being delivered by Serco Education

This appeals and complaints procedure is designed to offer the learner a formal and structured process to make an appeal against assessment decisions and judgments, this policy and procedure provides a mechanism that will allow any assessment decision, judgement to be revisited, investigated, and rectified if required.

This policy and procedure are intended to promote and maintain assessment practices that are fair and consistent for all learners, preventing any learners becoming disadvantaged or treated unfairly through the decisions and judgements being made.

The appeals procedure is a mandatory and standardised process which provides the service user/learner with a time bound, systematic, and documented procedure that we the training provider, service users and learners will implement and follow in the event of a formal appeal or complaint being made.

Serco will:

- Clearly communicate the appeals procedure at the enrolment, induction, and training sessions form in a critical element of information, advice, and guidance IAG services.
- Record, monitor and validate all appeals and complaints.
- Submit the appeal to the relevant organisation if the service user/learner continues to consider that a decision or occurrence disadvantages them after all internal appeals or complaints procedures have been exhausted.
- Keep accurate and legible records of all appeals for inspection by the relevant organisation for a minimum of 18 months.
- Have in place within the organisation/centre a formal and structured appeals procedure that is tested and workable.
- Take all the required and appropriate action to protect the interests of the service user/learner and protect the integrity of Serco, the centre and the qualifications being delivered, assessed, and examined.

- Have in place internal continuous professional development processes that support the centre assessment practices in the event of an appeal being upheld.
- Have in place robust monitoring processes that routinely review the appeals procedure.

The Appeals procedure Definitions

- **Informal:** Learner consultation with Programme Manager within a defined period.
- **Review:** Of assessment decisions/judgements by the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) and Programme Manager. The learner is formally notified of the appeals findings and agrees or disagrees in writing with the outcome.
- **Appeal hearing:** The Programme Manager or QAA /Quality Manager will appraise the appeal and make informed decisions to forward the appeal to the relevant awarding organisation.
- **External appeal:** The Programme Manager or QAA/Quality manager - will formally report the appeal to the relevant awarding organisation, defining the grounds and reasons for the appeal and providing any relevant supporting documentation that displays the assessment decisions/judgements made. This formal external appeal will be submitted to the relevant awarding organisation within the agreed procedure time frames.

Formal Appeal Stages

- **Stage 1:** The learner must appeal in writing by emailing Sercoprovider.support@serco.com within 10 working days of the judgement about which they wish to appeal to request an Appeals Form. The Programme Manager will have discretion to extend this time limit so that learners are not treated unjustly. When an appeals is made, the information should be presented on the prescribed form to include
 - The learner's name and contact address
 - Their organisation
 - The basis for their appeal

Learners should sign and date their completed form and sent to the address below:

*Appeals Process, Serco Education,
Pure Offices, Kestrel Court, Waterwells Drive, Quedgeley GL2 2AT*

Once completed and signed, the form may also be scanned and emailed to Sercoprovider.support@serco.com, but the original should also be posted to the above address.

Receipt of the appeals form will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt, and we will then review the judgement on your complaint. At this stage, the assessor will then feedback to the learner within 5 working days, explaining the assessment process and clearly explaining how they arrived at their conclusions.

- **Stage 2:** Learners who are not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 can then appeal in writing to their Internal Quality Assurer (IQA). The appeal does not have to contain the detail given before as the documents from Stage 1 should be passed to the Internal

Quality Assurer (IQA). The Internal Quality Assurer will confirm the findings in writing to learner within 5 working days.

- **Stage 3:** The Programme Manager or QAA/Head of Quality will consider the appeal using all information gained from the learner, the Assessor and the Internal Quality Assurer who are involved in the appeal. The Programme Manager or QAA/Head of Quality will make informed decisions and judgements to report the appeal to the relevant awarding organisation and inform the learner of the decision in writing within 10 working days.
- **Stage 4:** Serco Programme Manager or QAA/Head of Quality on behalf of the learner with **their authorisation** will have submitted the appeal to the relevant awarding organisation. The learner will receive confidential communications both verbally and in writing from the awarding organisation regarding the appeals procedures outcome.
- **Stage 5:** All learners will have to opportunity to escalate any complaints or appeals directly to the relevant awarding organisation, directly. If the learners making the compliant or appeal remains dissatisfied with the outcomes from both the Centre and the Awarding Organisation, further complaints/appeals can be made directly to the Apprentice Service Support (on 08000150600 or helpdesk@manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk)

Summary: At this point the Awarding Organisations appeals procedure will be followed and will involve the use of all the reports from Stages 1, 2 and 3. Your coach can provide you with details of this procedure if needed and will usually involve an investigation by the relevant External Quality Assurer (EQA) and at least one independent person.

Awarding Organisation Policies

We work with the following awarding organisations with their own policies therefore it is important that both learners and centre staff involved in the management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance of qualifications are fully aware of their contents and location. In addition, centres must have their own internal arrangements which learners can easily access if they wish to appeal against a decision

- CMI - [Policies - CMI \(managers.org.uk\)](https://www.managers.org.uk)
- ILM / City & Guilds: [Feedback and Complaints | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](https://www.cityandguilds.com)
- TQUK - [Complaints Policy - TQUK EPA](https://www.tquk.com)
- IEP - [The Institute Of Employability Professionals \(myiep.uk\)](https://www.myiep.uk)
- NCFE - [Appeals | NCFE](https://www.ncfe.co.uk); [Making a complaint | NCFE](https://www.ncfe.co.uk)