

Procedure for Learner Complaints

Goddard Veterinary Group make every effort to deliver an excellent service and to avoid complaints. However, complaints do occasionally happen, and we take them very seriously. We reflect on complaints, and ask ourselves 'Could we have done anything better and how should we consider modifying the way we work?'

Scope

Provision of apprenticeships is regulated by the ESFA and inspected by Ofsted. All apprentices, prospective apprentices, employers, parents (where applicable) and local partners will be made aware of the complaint procedure. The process is embedded into our apprentice induction, within employer contracting and published on our website. All complaints are dealt with appropriate discretion and sensitively. The term "learner" within this document includes both apprentices and commercial learners.

A complaint is defined as an oral or written expression of dissatisfaction. The person making the complaint may not necessarily refer to it as being a "complaint", but it will still be treated as such where the above definition applies.

We encourage complaints to be made in writing but also take complaints face-to-face, by phone or by email. When a complaint is made, we document the nature of the complaint and refer it to the Head of Centre (Training Manager). Complaints are recorded, investigated and our KPI target is for complaints to be resolved within five working days.

In the Head of Centre's absence or in the event that the complaint relates to the Head of Centre the complaint should be directed to the College Principal.

On receipt of a complaint every effort will be made to investigate and resolve the complaint within five working days. If the complaint cannot be resolved within five days, the complainant will be made aware of the reason why and what they can expect by way of a revised timescale.

Complaints are reviewed by the Head of Centre, who decides how best to investigate the complaint and who should be tasked with seeing the complaint through to resolution. This will often be a lead tutor who will liaise with key parties (apprentice, employer, tutor, etc) with a view to determining an early resolution.

If the complaint cannot be resolved swiftly, the Head of Centre re-assumes responsibility and determines an alternative course of action.

The Head of Centre reports all complaints, trends and recurring issues to the management team monthly. Where a preventable issue or trend is identified, the management team will identify and agree quality improvement changes to ensure the issues do not re-occur.

Examples of actions taken to prevent incidents resulting re-occurring, include:

- Additional staff training
- Increasing resources
- Changing processes and procedures

The GVG College complaints policy is published on the website. Employers and learners can also access this information via induction documents, employer guides and Moodle (the virtual learning environment). College managers and other staff are given formal training on how to record, investigate and deal with complaints effectively. Where the outcome of a complaint is conveyed to the complainant and they remain unhappy, our procedure gives them a right of appeal.

Procedure for Lodging an Appeal

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they should contact the Head of Centre within 14 days of the outcome of the complaint being communicated.

When lodging the appeal, the complainant should:

- Set out the basis for their appeal; and,
- submit any additional evidence/ documents to support their point of view

The Head of Centre will discuss the matter with both the learner, tutor and other relevant parties prior to producing a written report on the appeal and clear recommendations.

At this point the appeal may be:

- dismissed (as the additional evidence presented or premise of the appeal is not sufficient)
- upheld
- referred to the College Principal for further consideration

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed in writing.

If a complainant who is on a programme which is funded by the ESFA remains unhappy after the appeal process, they have an ultimate right of appeal to the ESFA.

You should email complaints to 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

All of our systems, processes and procedures are underpinned by our Learner Voice groups. Our discussions with these groups allow us to gather and reflect on the feedback we receive. This leads to continuous improvements in our training and processes. These forums allow matters to be raised and addressed, long before they materialise as a complaint.

Our complaints processes and procedures are reviewed and updated annually by the Board.

Last reviewed July 2021

Review due July 2022