



## **APA Complaints policy, procedure and process**



## **APA Complaints procedure**

APA Procurement and Supply Training are dedicated to providing excellence in service to both learners and their employers.

This Complaints Policy provides the framework within which anyone who is dissatisfied with the organisation can raise their concerns. The framework also assists staff to effectively deal with complaints from learners, employers, contractors, visitors and other interested parties. Most problems can be dealt with simply and quickly.

The aim of this policy is to ensure we always maintain a high standard of customer service, ensuring all complaints are handled promptly and politely, and where appropriate, confidentially. We aim to learn from complaints and use them to improve the training service we are delivering.

Learners are requested to raise any complaint (informal or formal) within 10 working days of the date of the circumstances giving rise to the complaint. We will of course deal with complaints registered after this timeframe but we recognise that any delays in submitting the details may impact on our ability to most effectively investigate the complaint.

### **Informal Stage**

The main aim of this procedure is to resolve problems satisfactorily for all concerned; however, there may be other ways of resolving difficulties without using the formal procedure.

It is recognised that some concerns are raised informally, and these can and should be dealt with immediately.

An informal complaint should be raised directly with your course Tutor. If you do not feel comfortable talking to your Tutor, we are very happy to receive emails or letters that describe the issues you are facing or you may prefer to approach a different member of staff or anyone at the Education Network Management team at CIPS.

Any complaints registered with APA will be acknowledged within 2 working days and be resolved within 2 working days of acknowledgement. Where this timeframe needs to be extended you will be notified and told of the period within which we will have it resolved by.

We hope that the majority of complaints can be resolved informally quickly and effectively without the need to use the formal process.

### **Formal Stage**

If after following the informal route you do not feel your complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily, or if you feel the informal route is not appropriate for your

specific complaint, we ask that you follow APA Procurement and Supply Training's formal Complaints process as outlined below.

The formal procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Communicate the complaint in writing to the APA Training Centre Administrator: [sarah@apatraining.co.uk](mailto:sarah@apatraining.co.uk). To speak to someone in person about a complaint please contact Main Office on T.01793 228968

Please provide full details and the nature of the complaint:

1. Date the matter occurred
2. Consequences for you as result
3. Remedy sought
4. Supporting evidence

You will receive an initial response within 2 working days of receipt of your formal complaint.

Your complaint will be looked into and this may involve passing your complaint to the relevant tutor who will review the circumstances to identify the cause and may investigate or seek feedback where required from any other members of staff, or indeed require further clarification from yourself. If the tutor is the subject of the complaint, then the matter will be referred to the Head of Centre Ian Penman.

A response will be sent to you within 10 working days, detailing our findings.

*Every attempt will be made to ensure that a level of confidentiality is maintained. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality. Should this be the case we will inform you of this before we take action.*

## Appeal Stage

If you are not satisfied that your complaint has been dealt with effectively you should advise us within 28 days of the date of the decision. We ask that you contact Ian Penman, in person, by telephone on 01793 228968 or email [ian@apatraining.co.uk](mailto:ian@apatraining.co.uk) with the following details:

1. Your original complaint and all reasons relating to this complaint
2. The reasons why you are not satisfied with the outcome.

As a Senior Management Team member, who was not involved in the original complaint investigation, Ian will conduct a further investigation and assessment.

Once all information has been analysed, a final response will be sent via email (or letter if requested or more appropriate) detailing the findings and outcome. This will be within 14 days of receiving the appeal.

In the unlikely event that you remain unhappy after your complaint has been investigated and a decision reached, then you may escalate your complaint by either by contacting CIPS if the complaint is related to an aspect of the CIPS Qualification or the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if it is related to the apprenticeship programme.

### Escalating a Complaint to CIPS

Complaints about study centres that cannot be resolved by the study centre or are of such a serious nature as to warrant raising with an external party, should be addressed to the CIPS Education Network Manager at the registered office at Easton House, Easton on the Hill, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 3NZ. E-mail should be sent to: [enm@cips.org](mailto:enm@cips.org)

There is full guidance on complaints published by the CIPS website:  
<https://www.cips.org/learn/student-zone/policies-and-procedures/>

When you contact them about your complaint, you should provide them with the following:

- the name of our organisation
- details of what your complaint is, together with the relevant documents
- your reason for contacting CIPs rather than raising the matter with the study guide, or evidence that you have not achieved a satisfactory outcome through APA's complaints procedure
- if you are acting on behalf of a learner, evidence that you have their permission to do so

### Escalating a Complaint to the ESFA

The ESFA require individuals to have exhausted APA's own complaints procedure, including any appeal before escalating a complaint to them. Their guidance specifies that they will investigate complaints about organisation in receipt of apprenticeship funding 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)
- issues arising if the provider has stopped trading

The ESFA accepts complaints in writing, by email or letter. They can be contacted by email at: [complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk)

They can alternatively be contacted by letter at:

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

The ESFA requires provision on the following information in any complaint made:

- the name of the organisation which is being complained about
- details of what the complaint is, with relevant documents
- evidence that the subject organisation's complaints procedure has been exhausted
- permission to disclose details the complaint to the organisation concerned

On receipt of a complaint the ESFA will confirm whether the complaint is one that it can investigate, or alternatively signpost you to another organisation that may be able to help you.

**Approved by the Senior Management Team APA.**

Last reviewed February 2024.