

ITC First

**P16
Complaints Policy [3.2]**

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ITC First

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Website www.itcfirst.org.uk

Website Access

For all policy statements and downloadable documents

Upload to:

Ofqual Portal	SQA Accreditation Share Point	ITC WebOffice Support Resources	ITC Public Website	ITC Google Drive
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Complaints Procedures

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Overview

- 1.1 ITC is committed to providing an open and accountable quality service for all. One way in which we can continue to improve is by listening and responding positively to all complaints and by correcting mistakes and instigating preventative actions.
- 1.2 We aim to ensure that:
 - a) making a complaint is as easy as possible;
 - b) we deal with complaints promptly, politely, fairly, factually and confidentially [where appropriate];
 - c) we deal with complaints as an expression of dissatisfaction with our services which calls for prompt response;
 - d) we respond in the right way, with explanation, apology or information as appropriate;
 - e) we review and learn from complaints, improving our service.
- 1.3 We recognise that many concerns may be raised informally and dealt with quickly. However if concerns cannot be resolved informally, immediately or the matter is serious then the formal complaints policy will be followed.
- 1.4 Complaints regarding teaching, assessment, administration and quality assurance in a Centre approved to offer ITC qualifications should be referred to the Centre concerned in the first instance, who will investigate the matter following their own internal complaints procedures.
- 1.5 If you are dissatisfied with a decision made by an ITC approved Centre then ITC Appeals process must be used, detailed in ITC document 'P5 Appeals Policy'
- 1.6 Complaints regarding ITC as an Awarding Organisation/Body or as an End Point Assessment Organisation or as a business or against a member of ITC staff (Director, Manager, Office Staff or External Quality Assurer) should be made following this policy.

2. Complaint or Appeal?

- 2.1 An appeal occurs when a judgement decision has been made. E.g. Learners may appeal assessment decisions and Centres may appeal external verification decisions.
- 2.2 Any individual or organisation that is affected by an assessment decision made by ITC First or their approved Centres is eligible to take advantage of the appeals process.
- 2.3 ITC Appeals Policy [P5], found on the home page of the ITC public website, details the appeals process.

3. Formal Complaints to ITC

- 3.1 This formal complaint procedure is intended to ensure all complaints are handled fairly and consistently.
- 3.2 A formal complaint should be instigated if informal methods have not resolved the concern.
- 3.3 ITC will:
 - a) respond to all formal complaints in writing within 5 working day from receipt either to give a response or to indicate that a full investigation requiring third parties is required (see 3.3 b);

- b) work within a set time period for a response that requires investigation with third parties involved. The time period normally being 20 working days (4 weeks): 15 working days to investigate and provide a verbal response with 5 further working days to provide a written response;
- c) log complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction on the electronic log RE2 (held within the Policy Committee Action Plan). This register will be shared with the Policy Review Committee quarterly, with an additional annual review, for trends and appropriate actions to mitigate further occurrences;
- d) deal reasonably and sensitively to the complaint;
- e) take action where appropriate.

3.4 The complainant should:

- a) complain in writing. Where learners are unable to do this and have special considerations, telephoning will be considered;
- b) use the word 'complaint' to avoid any misinterpretation of any comment, or other statements or correspondence received;
- c) raise concerns and explain clearly all details, the consequences that have arisen as a result and the form of redress or change in operations that are sought;
- d) complain within 8 weeks of the occurrence.

3.5 If the complainant is not satisfied with the response then they can then appeal following the Appeals Policy (P5).

3.6 If the complaint has not been resolved via these processes and if the complaint is against these processes/operating systems of the awarding organisation/body, then there is the possibility to complain to the Regulators of Qualifications in England (Ofqual) and Scotland (SQA Accreditation).

3.7 If the complaint has arisen against a public body in Scotland e.g. a Further Education College in Scotland, then as a user of public bodies (including FE Colleges & SQA Accreditation) in Scotland an individual will have the right to complain to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) as the final arbiter of any complaint. The College, ITC and SQA Accreditation complaints procedure must be exhausted before the SPSO will consider a complaint, and it must usually have been raised within the previous 12 months. The complaint cannot be under consideration in a court of law.

3.8 If the complaint has not been resolved and involves ITC as an End Point Assessment Organisation, then the complainant can complain to the External Quality Assurance Organisation for the Apprenticeship Standard involved. ITC can provide the relevant details on request or they are available from The Institute for Apprenticeships.

3.9 Relevant web addresses in regard to this policy are:

Ofqual	http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/
SQA Accreditation	https://accreditation.sqa.org.uk/
SPSO	http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk
Institute for Apprenticeships	http://www.instituteforapprentices.org/

4. Unacceptable Complaints Behaviour

4.1 ITC aims to deal with all complaints fairly, honestly, consistently and appropriately. ITC does acknowledge though that on occasions, complainants may act in an unacceptable manner. When this arises, ITC retains the right to restrict or change our complaints processes.

4.2 ITC is aware that at times an individual may act out of character particularly if under stress, and that there may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances that lead up to the complaint to ITC. However an individual that is angry, demanding or unreasonably persistent may result in unreasonable demands or unacceptable behaviour towards ITC staff.

4.3 Specifically ITC deems unacceptable behaviour to fall under 3 main categories:

Aggressive or abusive behaviour – behaviour or language that causes ITC staff to feel afraid, threatened or abused;

Unreasonable demands – expecting responses within unreasonable timeframes, and repeatedly changing the substance of the enquiry or complaint, or raising unrelated issues or additional complaints.

Unreasonable levels of contact – when an individual refuses to accept that ITC cannot assist them any further but persists in continuing to pursue the complaint without any new information, or when the level of communication is such that it is taking up a disproportionate and unreasonable level of ITC staff time.

4.4 If the situation with a complainant degenerates to unacceptable behaviour towards a member of ITC staff, and this does not desist after the intervention of a Senior Officer of ITC, then ITC may take the decision to restrict contact with the individual. This decision to be formally agreed with the Chief Executive Officer and to then be communicated in writing to the individual concerned. The restriction of contact may be permanent or may be timebound, at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.