



UNITED CENTRE
of
EXCELLENCE

End Point Assessment Policies

Complaints Handling Policy
GP09



Document History

Version	Date	Reason for Revision	Issued by
V1.1	July 2019	Initial release	Harj Dhanjal
V1.2	Nov 2020	Document review during COVID-19 (No Changes required)	Alan Bates
V1.3	Jul 2021	Review of policy for our submission for Ofqual recognition.	Alan Bates
V1.4	March 2024	Policy review, address change	Alan Bates
V1.5	July 2025	Policy review and updates	Alan Bates

Area	Original Policy	Updated Policy	Ofqual Reference
Regulatory Reference	Institute for Apprenticeships (IFATE)	Replaced with Skills England	Section B – Relationship with Regulators
Definition of Complaint	Broad but lacked clarity on exclusions	Clarified exclusions (e.g. appeals, FOI requests, grievances)	Section I – Appeals and Complaints
Third-Party Complaints	Allowed with consent	Strengthened GDPR compliance and added verification steps	Section C – Third Parties
Anonymous Complaints	Considered if sufficient info	Added whistleblowing reference and aligned	Section A8 – Malpractice and Maladministration

		with Public Interest Disclosure Act	
Timeframes	3-month limit, 20-day investigation	Reaffirmed timelines, added escalation protocol and mediation guidance	Section I – Complaints
Independent Review	Subject specialist review	Added requirement for independence and impartiality, with clearer panel process	Section I – Appeals and Complaints
Recording & Reporting	Internal system, apprentice folder	Added anonymised reporting to Skills England and Ofqual, trend analysis for IQA	Section D – Qualification Review
IQA Integration	Not explicitly mentioned	Embedded complaints trend analysis into IQA cycle for continuous improvement	Section A – Governance & Section D
V1.6	January 2026	Updated Office address	Amar Dhanjal

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Contents

Document History	2
Contents	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Raising Awareness.....	5
3. Definition.....	5
4. Maintaining Confidentiality	6
5. Anonymous Complaints	7
6. Complaints involving other organisations involved in EPA.....	7
7. The Complaints Handling Process	7
8. Time Limit for Making Complaints	9
9. Extensions to the Investigation Timeline	9
10. Mediation.....	9
11. Independent External Review	9
12. Recording and Reporting Complaints	10
Appendix A - Complaints Template	11



Complaints Handling Policy

1. Introduction

This Complaints Handling Policy (CHP) reflects the United Centre of Excellence's (UCE) commitment to valuing complaints. Our aim is to resolve issues of dissatisfaction as close to the initial point of contact as possible and conduct thorough and fair investigations of complaints so that, where appropriate, we can make evidence-based decisions based on the facts of each individual case.

Resolving complaints early saves time and resources and contributes to UCE's overall efficiency. Concentrating on achieving an early resolution of a complaint as close to the point of contact as possible will free up staff time and ultimately contribute to the continued positive experience of our apprentices and employers.

The CHP is set at UCE's discretion and is in accordance with Education and Skills Funding Agency Rules and the Skills England External Quality Assurance Framework.

2. Raising Awareness

This policy is made available to employers and training providers upon selection and appointment of UCE as the End Point Assessment (EPA) & service provider. It is also available on the UCE website www.UCE.org.uk

This policy must be made available to apprentices by their employer as part of their induction to their apprenticeship and at the gateway to EPA.

3. Definition

A complaint may be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, the standard of service, action or lack of action by or on behalf of the UCE.

A complaint may relate to:

- The quality and standard of the EPA service
- The quality of facilities or EPA resources
- Treatment by, attitude or behaviour of a UCE staff member or assessor
- The failure of UCE to follow an appropriate administrative process.



The definition of a complaint is comprehensive, and the list on the previous page is not exhaustive. However, not every concern raised with UCE is a complaint. For example, the following are not:

- A query on the operation of the EPA
- A request under the Freedom of Information Act or General Data Protection Regulation
- A request for information or an explanation of policy or practice
- A response to an invitation to provide feedback through a formal mechanism such as a survey
- An issue which is being, or has been, considered by a court or tribunal
- An appeal about an EPA grading decision
- A grievance, which is eligible for handling through the grievance procedure

The CHP covers complaints from anyone who receives, requests or is affected by our services. This includes, although is not limited to:

- An apprentice's experience during the EPA
- An employer's experience during EPA
- A training provider's experience during the EPA

Please note that training providers are not involved in the delivery of EPA activities but will be involved in the overall journey as the lead provider

- A UCE assessor with experience delivering EPA services on behalf of UCE
- Members of the public where they have a complaint about matters which are the responsibility of UCE

Sometimes, complainants may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint independently. UCE will accept complaints brought by third parties as long as the complainant affected has given their consent under the General Data Protection Regulation requirements. This usually means that the apprentice must give apparent written authority for the third party to act on their behalf. Complaints made by a third party with the explicit permission of the complainant will be dealt with according to the same timescales. Complaints can be sent via email (info@UCE.org.uk), Telephone (01332 987670), or letter (Regus Centre, 3 Centro PI, Derby DE24 8RF). They do not have to be on a formal template, but Appendix A has provided a template.

4. Maintaining Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an essential factor in conducting complaint investigations. UCE will always consider any



legislative requirements, such as data protection legislation, as well as internal policies on confidentiality and the use of complainant information.

Complaints will be handled with an appropriate level of confidentiality, and information will be released only to those who need it to investigate or respond to the complaint. No third party will be told any more about the investigation than is strictly necessary to obtain the information required from them. Upon request, an anonymised summary of complaints and resolutions will be shared with the relevant EQA.

5. Anonymous Complaints

Complaints submitted anonymously will be considered if there is enough information in the complaint to enable UCE to make further enquiries. If an anonymous complaint does not provide enough information to enable us to take further action, we may decide not to pursue it further.

If the complaint relates to “whistle-blowing,” it will be dealt with in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act. For further information, please refer to the malpractice and maladministration policy.

6. Complaints involving other organisations involved in EPA

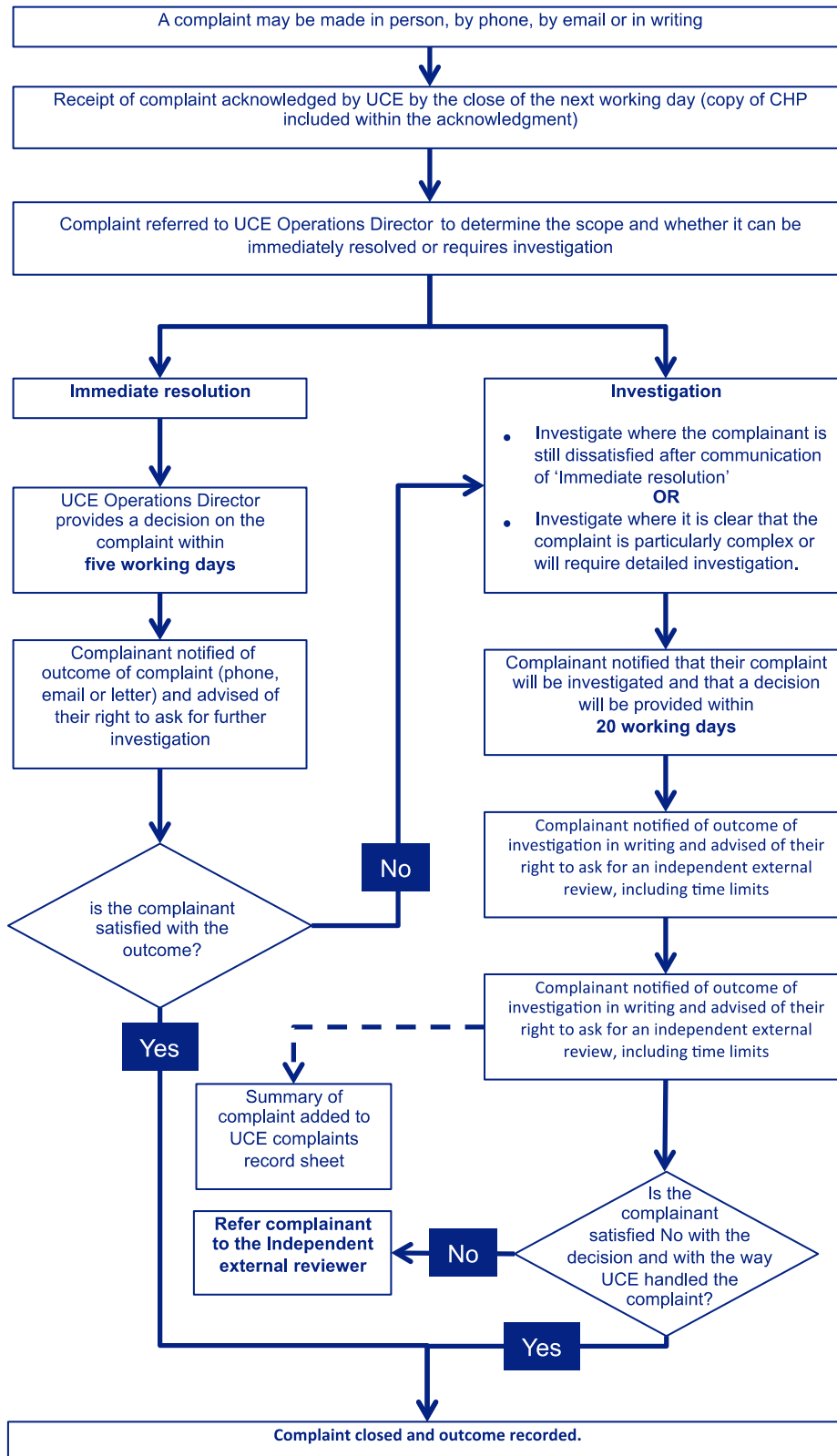
This relates to complaints that involve services provided by a separate organisation (such as certification bodies). If enquiries to an outside organisation about the complaint are required, care will be taken to comply with data protection legislation and the guidance on handling personal information. Such complaints may include, for example:

- A complaint made about the provision of third-party services, for example, IT systems
- A complaint made to UCE about apprenticeship certification where the dissatisfaction relates to the service the certification body has provided

If a complaint is received about the service of another organisation, but UCE has no involvement in the issue, the complainant should be advised to contact the appropriate organisation directly.

7. The Complaints Handling Process

The CHP is intended to provide a quick, simple and streamlined process with a strong focus on early resolution (See diagram)





8. Time Limit for Making Complaints

Complaints should be raised with UCE when problems arise to enable prompt investigation and swift resolution. This CHP sets a time limit of three months to raise a complaint with UCE, starting when the complainant first became aware of the problem, unless there are special circumstances for requesting consideration of a complaint beyond this time.

Beyond the three-month time limit, UCE will exercise discretion in how the time limit is applied.

9. Extensions to the Investigation Timeline

Not all investigations will be able to meet the 20-day deadline; for example, some complaints may require investigation involving others.

Where there are clear and justifiable reasons for extending the timescale, the head of UCE will exercise judgment and set time limits on any extended investigation, with the complainant's agreement. In such circumstances, the complainant must be given a revised timescale to conclude the investigation. It is expected, however, that this will be the exception and that UCE will always strive to deliver a definitive response to the complaint within 20 working days.

10. Mediation

Some complex complaints (where, for example, the complainant and/or other involved parties have become entrenched in their position) may benefit from a different approach to resolving them. Mediation can help both parties understand what is driving the complaint and may be more likely to result in a mutually satisfactory conclusion. Where UCE and the complainant agree to mediation, revised timescales will be agreed upon.

11. Independent External Review

If a complainant is not satisfied with the result of the investigation, they are entitled to request an independent external review. The request must be in writing within ten working days of the notification of the outcome of the investigation. The independent external reviewer will be an independent subject specialist with no prior involvement in the complaint or connection to the parties involved, ensuring impartiality in line with Ofqual's General Conditions of Recognition. The independent external reviewer may call a panel to review the complaint and has 15 working days from notification to decide. The decision of the independent external reviewer is final.



12. Recording and Reporting Complaints

All complaints will be recorded on the internal UCE confidential data collection system. Anonymised summaries of complaints will be shared with the relevant bodies. Information reported internally will include the following:

- Response and resolution timescales
- Complaint categories
- Resolution levels (immediate, investigation or independent panel)

Outcomes of complaints and the actions taken in response, including examples to demonstrate how complaints have helped improve services

Complaint records will be held in the UCE's secure complaints log and IQA records.



Appendix A - Complaints Template

Name of the Complainant:		
Contact Details:		
Are you (please tick one of the options below):		Name/details
Apprentice		
Employer of an Apprentice		
Training Provider		
Other Organisation (please specify)		
Relative to the Apprentice		
Other (please specify)		
Date the complaint relates to:		
Nature of the complaint:		
Title and level of the apprentice		
Date of EPA:		
Date complaint submitted:		



UCE Administrative Use

Date complaint received:	
Name of UCE representative who acknowledged the complaint:	
Date of acknowledgement:	
Complaint referred to:	
Resolution:	
Date of resolution (closure):	
Signature of UCE representative:	
Date:	

The independent review process will be overseen by the Quality Assurance Lead to ensure compliance with Ofqual's impartiality requirements.

Complaints data will be reviewed quarterly as part of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) cycle to identify trends, inform training needs, and improve service delivery.



Anonymised complaints data will be shared with Skills England and Ofqual as part of regulatory reporting obligations.