

Complaints Handling Policy & Procedure

NextStep Training Ltd

Our aim:

NextStep Training Ltd is committed to providing a quality service and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our learners and clients, and in particular by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right.

Therefore, we aim to ensure that:

- raising a concern or making a complaint is as easy as possible;
- we treat a complaint as a clear expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for an immediate response;
- we deal with it promptly, politely and, when appropriate, confidentially;
- we respond in the right way - for example, with an explanation, or an apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action taken etc;
- we learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally and dealt with quickly. Our aims are to:

- resolve informal concerns quickly;
- keep matters low-key;
- enable mediation between the complainant and the individual to whom the complaint has been referred.

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved initially by speaking to your assessor / tutor or your Internal quality assurer or The Sector Lead to raise issues. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Grounds for complaint

A complaint may be related to unsatisfactory service, unfair or discriminatory actions or decisions and situations that arise with NextStep Training Ltd's staff, (other than those which relate to the assessment process and decisions), for example, information provided on qualifications, selection procedures, support for individuals, time taken to deal with enquiries or unfair or discriminatory treatment by anyone acting on behalf of NextStep Training Ltd.

Resolution of the Complaint

Step 1

The individual who wishes to make the complaint must contact and the Quality Manager and state their complaint. S/he will then record the complaint and request that the person complaining completes a 'complaints form' within five working days.

Step 2

On receipt of the written complaint, the Quality Manager will, within five working days, identify the relevant person to deal with the complaint, review the information and make recommendations for its resolution. The relevant person may be:

- Internal Quality Assurer / Programme Manager
- A manager from within the employee's organisation
- An independent person

The Quality Manager will then write to the complainant with recommendations for resolving the issue.

Step 3

If the individual is unhappy with the action taken by the Quality Manager, s/he can write, within 10 working days expressing the concern. The Quality Manager will make a full report and discuss it with the Directors. S/he will then advise further action or support the initial decision.

If the complaint is in relation to the Quality Manager, s/he will submit the complaint and the action taken to the Directors who will deal with it. This may include involving an independent person to help resolve the issue or referring the matter to the appropriate awarding body.

Step 4

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the action taken, s/he can request that the complaint be submitted for the agenda of the next Directors meeting. If the time of the next meeting is more than three months from the initial date of the complaint, a special meeting will be convened to discuss the complaint. The meeting will take account of all previous action taken. The decision taken by the Directors will be final.

It is worth noting that the complaint may be the responsibility of another organisation, it can agree to refer the matter for resolution. For examples where the difficulty raises concerns about:

1. The National Standards and the delivery of the qualification, these can be referred to the Awarding Organisation
2. Manner and level of support for the qualification within a member organisation can be referred to that organisation in relation to their signed partnership agreement
3. The conduct of the Quality Manager these can be referred to her/his employer NextStep Training Ltd's Compliance Manager or Managing Director to resolve.

Recording and Monitoring

The Quality Manager keeps a complaint spreadsheet in which all complaints and actions taken are recorded. This will be shared with the External Quality Assurers as part of the

regular monitoring process. The Directors as part of the process of review and evaluation will also consider complaints in the wider context. Outcome of this discussion may result in changes to policy and procedures.

Complainants may also refer complaints to the Awarding Organisation they are registered with for their qualification, CMI / NCFE / ILM/ OCR, ESFA and their complaints procedures if they remain unsatisfied with the outcome of any complaint once all internal procedures have been followed.

Grounds for Appeal

The assessor role is to judge the evidence and then decide if the learner is competent or not yet competent. If the learner is unhappy with the assessor's decision or the way the assessment has been conducted, s/he can ask for the decision to be reviewed by the assessor. If this does not resolve the situation the learner has access to the following Appeals Procedure.

If the learner is unhappy about other aspects of the qualification, they can raise it within the complaints procedure or through the Awarding Organisation Appeals procedures.

This procedure covers the process for raising appeals against an academic decision that has been made. Should a learner feel that proper process has not been followed or that the academic decision was not made in accordance with the regulations of the programme of learning then they may appeal to The Operations Manager from Nextstep training via one of the following methods:

Call: 020 3441 3490

E-mail: ahmed@nextsteptrainingltd.co.uk

Write to: Ahmed Khan

Unit A2 Ment House, 1B Mentmore Terrace, London, E8 3DQ

Examples of areas where an appeal may be raised are as follows:

- If the learner believes that Nextstep training has not applied our procedures consistently or that procedures were not followed properly, consistently and fairly;
- If the learner is not satisfied with the conduct of the assessment and believed it disadvantaged them; and
- If the learner feels that the premises/environment for assessment has disadvantaged them.

(Should a learner wish to appeal against a decision made after a complaint has been investigated then please refer to our Complaints Procedure).

When you contact us, please give us your full name, contact details, and include a daytime telephone number along with:

- A full description of your appeal (including the subject matter and dates and times if known);
- Any names of the people you have dealt with so far;

- Copies of any papers or letters to do with the appeal; and any other factors for consideration such as any extenuating circumstances that the learner either did not address at the time or believes that were raised but were not taken into consideration when the decision was made.

Appeals will be investigated and a review panel may be formed in order to reach a decision. We aim to investigate and respond to appeals within 10 working days from receipt of the appeal.

This will be the final route of escalation within our company. Therefore, if you remain unhappy after following our own internal appeals procedure then please contact the Awarding Organisation directly.

Should you address your appeal to the awarding organisation and remain unhappy with the outcome you may then raise your appeal to the relevant qualification regulator. A representative of Nextstep training will be able to offer you guidance on the appropriate qualification regulator in each instance and provide contact details.

Appeal Process

Step 1

Contact the Programme Manager to discuss the problem. The Programme Manager will record the problem and attempt to resolve it in writing to all concerned within ten days of receipt of the appeal.

Step 2

If the learner is not satisfied with the Programme Manager's response, s/he can write within ten days to the Quality Manager requesting that the matter be reconsidered. The Quality Manager will review the material and make recommendations in writing to all concerned within ten days of receipt of the appeal.

Step 3

If the learner is unhappy with the decision of the Quality Manager, s/he can appeal in writing to the Appeal Panel, which will be responsible for making the final decision. The Appeals Panel will respond within four weeks of receiving an appeal.

Appeal Panel

Membership	The panel will comprise an independent Chair, an internal quality assurer and an assessor, neither of whom have been associated with the learner. The Quality Manager will arrange for an observer to take notes.
Responsibility	An Appeal Panel will meet within four weeks of the learner notifying the Quality Manager that they are not satisfied by the decisions of the internal verifier or the Quality Manager. Once they hear the evidence, they will reach a decision and record it.

Decision

If the Appeal Panel find in favour of the learner, they can recommend one of two things:

1. Either the tutor/assessor reconsiders the decision
2. Or another tutor/assessor repeats the assessment

When an appeal is unsuccessful, the learner will continue to have access to assessment, however changing the assessor will be discretionary and agreed on the advice of the Appeal Panel in conjunction with the Centre Manager.

A report from the Appeal Panel will be made to the Directors and the Awarding Organisation.

If a learner remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Appeal Panel the Quality Manager will inform the learner that s/he has a right to appeal to the relevant Awarding Organisation in writing and then onto OfQual should a further decision be needed.

Recording and monitoring

The Quality Manager keeps a record in which appeals are recorded. S/he will ensure that detailed and accurate records of any appeals are kept in a safe and secure place. The nature and content of appeals at all stages will be monitored so that appeals can be reviewed, and recommendations are made to the Directors in order to resolve consistent difficulties.

The grievance procedure is available to anyone involved with the Centre. It is separate from the Appeal procedure, which relates to the assessment process and decisions only.

If you have any queries about the contents of this policy, please contact the Compliance Manager directly on 020 3441 3490 or email: agnes@nextsteptrainingtld.co.uk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Khan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Date: 21/09/2022

Ahmed Khan: Head of centre/ Managing Director

NextStep Training Ltd Complaints Follow up Form

NextStep Training Ltd Actions:

Centre Follow up/Actions:

Date Complaint Closed:

NextStep Training Ltd
Director

Name: Signature: