



Complaints

Introduction

This document sets out the ECITB complaints policy and procedures and is aimed at our Approved Centres, learners and all interested parties who encounter a direct or indirect service from ECITB Awarding Body.

We value all Approved Centres delivering our qualifications and the learners who undertake them and our aim every day is to meet or exceed the expectations of our customers.

We are confident of providing a high quality service and would be extremely disappointed if this is not the case.

Therefore, it is important that, should you feel you have encountered a level of service that is below both your and our expectations you raise any concerns you may have with us immediately so that we may address them and learn any lessons from them.

Scope

This policy covers the procedures for complaints that learners, members of the public or centres may wish to make in relation to the qualifications and associated services offered by the ECITB awarding body.

This Complaints Policy is not to be used to cover appeals in relation to final decisions made by ECITB. These areas are covered by our Appeals Policy. Should a complaint be submitted which is in fact an enquiry or an appeal we will respond to inform the relevant party that the issue is being considered, where appropriate, in accordance with the approach outlined in our Customer Service statement and Appeals policy.

If you are unhappy about the way an assessment has been delivered and conducted and you suspect malpractice or maladministration may have occurred, you should send your concern to us in accordance with the arrangements in our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

Approved Centres' Responsibility

Approved Centres should take all reasonable steps to ensure that their staff involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our qualifications, and their learners, are aware of the contents of this policy and that the Approved Centre has a complaints handling procedure and an appeals process in place to deal with complaints from learners about the services they receive. If an individual is unhappy about a service or activity being delivered by an Approved Centre it must first of all go through the Approved Centre's complaints process before bringing the matter to the attention of the ECITB or exercising the right of further escalation as detailed within this policy.

Review Arrangements

We will review this procedure as part of our continuous improvement arrangements and revise it, as and when necessary, in response to customer, learner or regulatory feedback (e.g. to align with any enquiries process established by the regulators) and to identify any trends that may emerge in the subject matter of enquiries received.

How Should I Complain?

All of our staff are trained to help our customers and they want to help, so you should first try to sort out any problem at the earliest opportunity by speaking to a member of our Customer Service Staff.

If they cannot help or you wish to speak to someone else, you can ask to speak to their manager.

If this is not possible, or if you are not satisfied with the help that has been provided, please send a written complaint, normally within one month of the event you are complaining about, and address it to us at the contact details outlined at the end of this manual.

Learners and/or members of the public who wish to complain about a level of service provided by an Approved Centre at which they have taken an ECITB qualification should have exhausted their Approved Centre's own complaints process before bringing the complaint to us. Learners can make the complaint directly to us, however, in exceptional circumstances, where they feel there was a significant breach of procedures by the Approved Centre.

If I Complain What Details do I Have to Give?

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

- a full description of your complaint (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 complaint

Complaints Brought to our Attention by the Regulators

Where the our Regulators notify us about failures that have been discovered in the assessment process or other activities of another Awarding Body, these will be reviewed in the same manner as other external complaints in accordance with the procedures below to ascertain if the same issue could affect ECITB qualifications.

Confidentiality and Whistle Blowing

Sometimes a complainant will wish to remain anonymous. However, it is always preferable to reveal your identity and contact details to us, and if you are concerned about possible adverse consequences please inform us that you do not wish us to divulge your identity. If it helps to reassure you on this point, we can confirm that we are not obliged to disclose information if to do so would be a breach of confidentiality and/or any other legal duty.

While we are prepared to investigate issues which are reported to us anonymously and/or by whistleblowers¹ we shall always try to confirm an allegation by means of a separate investigation before taking up the matter with those to whom the complaint/allegation relates.

What Will Happen to my Complaint?

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 2 working days, letting you know who is investigating your complaint.

We aim, where possible, to investigate the complaint within 5 working days. If your complaint is more complex, or involves people who are not available at the time, we may have to extend this. However, we will endeavour to resolve all complaints within a maximum of 20 working days. We may contact you within this period to seek further information or clarification (in some instances we may recommend a meeting). At the end of the investigation we shall write/email to inform you of our decision.

Successful Complaints and/or Issues Brought to our Attention

If any part of your complaint is upheld we will of course respond to the complainant accordingly and give due consideration to how we can improve our service and arrangements. We may, for example, review our procedures to assess the impact of the complaint on our qualification development, delivery or awarding arrangements and assessment process as relevant, or arrange for staff training.

In situations where a complaint has been successful, or where an investigation following notification from a regulator indicates a failure in our processes, we will give due consideration to the outcome and will take appropriate actions such as:

- (a) identify any other learner who has been affected by that failure;
- (b) correct, or where it cannot be corrected, mitigate as far as possible the effect of the failure; and
- (c) ensure that the failure does not recur in the future.

What if I am Not Happy With the Reply?

If you are dissatisfied with the decision you may request a further review of the complaint by ECITB. This request should be made, in writing, to the ECITB Director - Development & Quality. We will aim, where possible, to acknowledge this request within 2 working days and investigate and advise of our final decision within 10 working days.

Following the outcome of the further review, if you believe we have not applied our procedures consistently or those procedures were not followed properly, consistently and fairly you may be able to take the matter through our Appeal arrangements which are outlined in our Appeals Policy.

Right of Further Escalation

If for any reason you are not satisfied with ECITB's response to a complaint (or subsequent appeal where relevant) or believe that you have either not been provided with or unable to be provided with a satisfactory response, you can escalate the complaint to the regulator in Scotland, the

¹ ECITB defines whistleblowers as being current or ex members of staff (both permanent or contracted) or third party suppliers of an Approved Centre or ECITB and/or current or previous learners who disclose information about malpractice/wrongdoing or the covering up of malpractice/wrongdoing.

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA Accreditation): <http://www.sqa.org.uk>. Tel: 0303 3330330 (centres); 0345 279 1000 (candidates).

For complaints that relate to a Scottish Vocational Qualification being delivered by a Further Education or Public Service Body operating in Scotland, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) is the final stage for complaints. You may submit your complaint to the SPSO once the complaints procedures within an ECITB approved centre, ECITB awarding body and SQA Accreditation have been exhausted.

If a complaint is in relation to staff behaviour within a Further Education or Public Service Body, a complaint may be escalated directly to the SPSO once the centre's complaints policy and procedures has been exhausted.

The SPSO will not consider complaints about academic decisions, such as the outcome of an assessment. These types of complaints are to be treated as an appeal and should follow the Appeals Policy.

For further details on the complaints process for SPSO, please go to: <http://www.spsso.org.uk/how-complain-about-public-service>.

Contact us

If you have any queries about any aspect of this process, please contact:

VQ Administrator
Engineering Construction Industry Training Board
Blue Court
Church Lane
Kings Langley
Hertfordshire
WD4 8JP

☎: 01923 260 000

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🌐: www.ecitb.org.uk